

# OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

*Uptown Grand Rapids, Inc. brings together people, partnerships, and possibilities to sustain a strong and vibrant urban district through planning, coordinating, and communicating with and between all sectors of the Uptown community and beyond.*



**Uptown, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 6632  
Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6632



*“Uptown exists  
to support your small business”*



@UptownGR  
#grandrapidsuptown #whatsuptown

## INGRID MILLER *Executive Director, Uptown, Inc.*

Hello Friends,

It is an honor to present to you Uptown's accomplishments from the last 18 months. Having joined this impressive organization less than a year ago I must first take a moment to acknowledge the contribution of our volunteer boards and committees as well as the tireless dedication of Corridor Manager Christine Helms-Maletic, who laid the groundwork for much of our current success.

In 2020 we look forward to celebrating many exciting new projects and programs. We will contribute to our first facade improvement project on Cherry Street; launch a dynamic website that will attract visitors and support our business community; raise the standard and frequency of communication; strengthen relationships with business and neighborhood associations; support increased transit options; introduce new crosswalks; and fund capital improvements in our districts, and more.

The list above is just a sample of what is on the horizon and is indeed a heavy lift only made possible by our hardworking team of volunteers, contract staff, and community partners. We are incredibly grateful for the support that makes Uptown a thriving, dynamic, and eclectic area in Grand Rapids.

All my best,



### By the numbers:

- > 4 new bike repair stations
- > 50 street trees planted
- > 13 district and neighborhood special events sponsored or hosted
- > 1 street tree inventory completed
- > 1.75 miles of tree wells and right-of-way maintained
- > 64 branded trash receptacles serviced weekly
- > 4,263 Facebook followers, increased by 20%
- > 2,995 Instagram followers, increased by 35%

For a full financial report please visit: [grandrapidsmi.gov](http://grandrapidsmi.gov)

# Uptown Grand Rapids, Inc. Board of Directors

- Ted Lott, President** - East Hills Council of Neighbors  
**Jaye Van Lenten, Vice President** - Easttown Business Association  
**Mark Stoddard, Treasurer** - Midtown Neighborhood Association  
**Arielle Leipham Ellis, Secretary** - Fulton Heights Neighborhood Association  
**Jessica Solis**, City of Grand Rapids Economic Development Dept.  
**Matthew Franko**, Uptown Corridor Improvement Authority  
**Tami Sytsma**, Uptown Business Improvement District  
**Mark Tobin**, East Hills Business Association  
**Mary Reagan-Shapton**, Wealthy Street Business Alliance  
**Alexis Middleton**, East Fulton Business Association  
**Shannon Cunningham**, Easttown Community Association  
**Marion Barerra-Young**, Baxter Neighborhood Association  
**Kaleena Kowalkowski**, At-large



## Volunteer of the Year: Matthew Franko

"Matt's commitment to Uptown is evidenced by all of the time, energy, and passion he puts into his many committees! We're lucky to have someone as knowledgeable as Matt and he deserves to be the volunteer of the year." - Arielle Leipham Ellis

"Matt serves on multiple boards and committees and is a good representation of what Uptown is all about. He owns businesses and buildings and shares his passion for equity and fairness with all who meet him. Matt is dedicated to making Uptown and its surrounding communities thrive." - Peter Jacob

CURRENT CIA/BID BOARD MEMBERS

### Uptown Business Improvement District Members

- Tami Sytsma, Chair** - Wealthy Street  
**Lynn Happel, Vice-Chair** - Easttown  
**Matthew Franko, Secretary** - East Hills  
**Stephanie Johnson** - East Fulton  
**Jaye Van Lenten** - Easttown  
**Paul Lee** - Wealthy Street  
**Peter Jacob** - East Fulton  
**Ted Lott** - East Hills  
**Commissioner Nathaniel Moody**

### Uptown Corridor Improvement Authority Members

- Matthew Franko, Chair** - East Hills  
**Paul Lee, Vice-Chair** - Wealthy Street  
**Peter Jacob, Secretary** - East Fulton  
**Lynn Happel** - Easttown  
**Joana Hively** - East Hills  
**Matthew Franko** - East Hills  
**Stephanie Johnson** - East Fulton  
**Tami Sytsma** - Wealthy Street  
**Commissioner Nathaniel Moody**  
**Mark Stoddard**, Resident Representative

## UPTOWN...

### THRIVES:

We sustain economic growth. Grow the local economy while preserving the distinct character of each of the business districts.

- hosted small business trainings and business networking events
- new business welcome packets
- developed new business association support program

### ORGANIZES:

We establish Uptown Inc. as the collaborative planning, management, and fundraising organization for Uptown, its business districts, and the neighborhoods.

- hired first Executive Director
- contracted Social Media Specialist
- adopted five year strategic plan
- adopted employee and financial policies
- conducted all-boards annual retreat and program evaluation

### INVITES:

We attract people through place making and activities that increase desirability and vibrancy of Uptown.

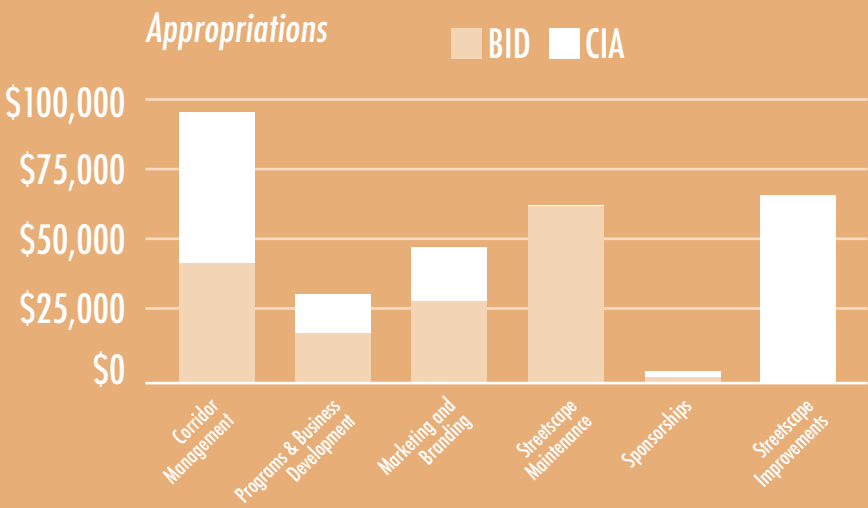
- sponsored and hosted district special events
- funded Cherry Park fence upgrade
- funded Fulton Street Farmers Market seating
- completed StoryBrand process
- distributed business directory
- launched Facade Improvement Program
- partnered with Friends of Grand Rapids Parks to conduct street tree inventory and planting
- maintained districts clean and green initiative
- increased social media presence

### MOVES:

We accelerate and/or enhance City strategies to improve mobility to and within Uptown.

- installed four bike repair stations
- added eight new crosswalks and in-street pedestrian crossing signs

A copy of our strategic plan is available at: [uptowngr.com/2019-2023-strategic-plan/](http://uptowngr.com/2019-2023-strategic-plan/)



For a full financial report please visit: [grandrapidsmi.gov](http://grandrapidsmi.gov)

"Connect with Uptown and make an impact in the place that you love"



## WITH THANKS

Please join us in thanking the former board members for their contribution and service to Uptown:

- MARY O'NEILL of Atomic Object (served as CIA Board Chair in 2019)
- SEAN CARRIGAN of Hair Carrigan
- HEATHER HAVENS of Michigan Fibre Studio
- LORI SLAGER WENZEL of The Sparrows

We would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to **Janette Tazzia** and her team at **Tazzia Lawn Care** for five years of impeccable landscape maintenance. In 2020 we welcome **Tricia Alonso** of **Simply Gardens** to carry-on the high level of service keeping Uptown clean and vibrant.

