

THE DISTRICT DEBRIEF

Cascade DDA Newsletter

2026 | 1ST EDITION!

Dear DDA District Property Owners & Businesses,

If you are not already aware, your business/property is located within the Cascade Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) District. I am reaching out to you to introduce myself, as well as the DDA. In an effort to build a better connection with those who make up our District, the DDA will be sending out a newsletter periodically to businesses and commercial property owners to keep you informed with what is going on in the district.

The DDA works to support the continued growth, improvement, and vitality of the District. To better serve our community, we want to hear from you, learn more about your needs and priorities, and ensure you have access to information about community events, opportunities, programs, projects, and ways that you can get involved.

To better get to know you and connect, we encourage you to take a few minutes to complete the survey linked to the QR code shown to the right of this page, which is also available on the Township Website. The survey will allow us to update our contact information, keep you connected with DDA updates, share ways to get involved, and provide an opportunity for you to share your feedback.

I hope you will take a few moments to review the information within this newsletter. This is the first edition of what I hope will become a regular way for us to share important updates moving forward. I would love the chance to connect with you directly to further introduce myself, and learn more about how the DDA can best support you.

Sincerely,

Ryan Sennett

DDA Manager



Please see the following pages for information on:



How to stay connected



What is a Downtown Development Authority



DDA Grants & Opportunities



Projects



Community Events & How to Get Involved

DDA Business Survey

Please take a few minutes to scan the QR Code and complete the survey.



www.cascadetwp.com

STAY CONNECTED

DDA BUSINESS SURVEY



SCAN THE QR CODE TO:

- ✓ Update your business contact information
- ✓ Join the DDA email list to:
 - Receive project updates
 - Learn about grants and business resources
 - Receive updates on upcoming community events and vendor opportunities
- ✓ Share feedback with the DDA

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The survey link can also be found on the Township's website and the DDA Facebook page.

www.cascadetwp.com

CONTACT THE DDA

Ryan Sennett

Downtown Development Authority Manager



☎ (616) 250-0753

✉ rsennett@cascadetwp.com

📍 Cascade Township
5920 Tahoe Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

DDA BOARD MEETINGS

3rd TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

🕒 **Time:** 5:30 PM

📍 **Location:** Cascade Branch of
Kent District Library
Wisner Center
2870 Jacksmith Ave

*These meetings are open to the public. Business owners, property owners, and residents are encouraged to attend. Please visit the Township Website for accurate meeting times and agendas.

Kent County Sheriff's Office: Community Services

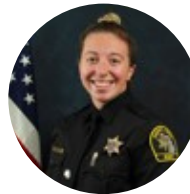
The East Precinct is comprised of the townships of Ada, Cascade, and Grand Rapids. Two of the precinct's Community Policing Officers include Deputies Zachery Jackson and Chelsea Schaap. If you have any safety or security concerns at your business/property, or would like to connect, they can be contacted via the contact information below.



Zachery Jackson

P: 616-289-1594

E: zachery.jackson@kentcountymi.gov



Chelsea Schaap

P: 616-632-6050

E: chelsea.schaap@kentcountymi.gov



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

The Cascade Downtown Development Authority recently launched a dedicated Facebook page. To stay up-to-date on activities in the district, scan the QR code and give us a follow!



Watch DDA meeting recordings on YouTube at youtube.com/@cascadechartertownship.

WHAT IS THE DDA?



	Grace Lesperance	SUPERVISOR Township Supervisor
	Michelle Kleyla	CHAIR Resident
	Steve Stephan	VICE CHAIRPERSON Culver's
	Kristin Carlson	MEMBER Bridal Elegance
	Rishi Makkar	MEMBER International Beverage
	Scott Vogel	SECRETARY Nothing Bundt Cakes
	Chris Bingham	MEMBER DDA Resident
	Scott Preston	MEMBER DDA Resident

The DDA is governed by a board of directors consisting of nine members. The Board members represent businesses, property owners, and residents of the community.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), as established by Public Act 197 of 1975 (now Public Act 57 of 2018), is:

- To halt property value deterioration
- Increase property tax valuation
- Eliminate the causes of deterioration
- Promote economic growth
- Create and provide for the operation of the DDA

The Cascade Downtown Development Authority was established in 1993. It was expanded in 2003 to include the Interchange area and again in 2004 to include Centennial Business Park.

FUNDING

The DDA's fiscal year runs from January 1 – December 31 and receives its revenues from Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

- The DDA can capture the taxes generated by subsequent growth in the district.
- Taxing jurisdictions always receive the tax revenues from the base taxable value.
- The DDA receives tax revenues generated from any taxable value growth from the base year, for the duration of the TIF Plan.
- Local school millages and the State Education Tax are not subject to capture – they continue to receive tax revenues on growth.



Cascade Charter Township DDA District Boundaries

GRANTS & OPPORTUNITIES



DDA SITE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

The DDA determined that a portion of their capture should be invested into supporting building and site improvements for nonresidential properties. They developed a grant program to provide financial incentives to business-owners for high-quality building and site conditions beyond regular maintenance. If you are interested in applying for a project in 2027, please contact DDA staff for more information.

DDA SECURITY GRANT

The DDA Security Grant was created in 2026 for businesses interested in enrolling their security cameras in the Kent Safety Network. This program allows businesses to voluntarily integrate existing security cameras to share the feed directly with the Kent County Sheriff's Office during an emergency. The grant helps cover any associated costs with enrollment. If you are interested in enrolling, please contact the KCSO or the Township Office.



EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

The DDA periodically helps provide educational events for local business owners and entrepreneurs. This is often done through collaboration with business associations in the area, other DDAs, and/or local businesses. If there is a particular topic you feel would be beneficial for businesses in the community to learn more about, please reach out to DDA staff, or follow us on social media to stay updated with upcoming events.

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONIES

The DDA works with new businesses in the district to hold a ribbon cutting ceremony and assist with promoting the opening of a new business/location in the district. This applies to other celebrations as well, such as grand re-openings or business anniversaries.



CURRENT DDA PROJECTS

Reimagining Tassell Park

The Cascade DDA is investing in an exciting project within the community—the transformation of Tassell Park. The DDA is doing so because it believes a vibrant, connected public space is an important part of a thriving downtown district. Located along the Thornapple River and at a key gateway into the community, Tassell Park has the potential to become more than just a park. The planned improvements aim to create a destination that attracts residents and visitors, encourages people to explore nearby businesses, and strengthens the overall identity and appeal of the DDA District.



Project Details

The project will focus on transforming this corner of the village, as well as providing additional amenities to the park. Highlights include:

- **Community Hub Potential:** The former Tuffy Muffler site will be transformed into an inviting public space featuring a water feature and sunken plaza area. This will serve as a gateway into the village area. Other improvements such as the addition of a new pavilion, board walk, splash pad, play area, community fire pit, and other additional amenities, are designed to enhance resident engagement and use.
- **Improved Safety:** The project includes creation of a safe pedestrian crossing under the Cascade Road Pedestrian Bridge utilizing the former Verburg's Automotive site. The goal of this addition is to make the busy intersection more pedestrian friendly, and provide a safe crossing to connect visitors with the rest of the village area.

Following public input received at open houses in December 2025 and March 2026, the Township Board and DDA intend to move forward with issuing bonds in 2026 to fund this project and other improvements throughout the DDA District.

Construction of the first phase has been awarded, with work anticipated to begin in fall of 2026. For more details on the project and Phase 1 construction, please visit the Township website or contact the Township Office.

DDA & COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Cascade DDA is involved in multiple community events throughout the year. In recent years, this has included sponsoring events in the village such as Metro Cruise, and the Tree Lighting Ceremony. The Township puts on a number of events throughout the year, many of which provide opportunities for businesses to get involved.

Township Events



Metro Cruise



Cascade Summer Concerts



Independence Day



Bounce Back to School



Halloween Hustle



Tree Lighting



Easter Egg Hunt



Cornhole (Series)



Euchre (Series)



Mahjong (Series)

Want to Get Involved?

The DDA is always looking for new opportunities to partner with local businesses on events. This could mean:

- Setting up a table, booth, or tent at a Township Event
- Becoming a sponsor for a Township Event
- Collaborating with the DDA/Township on community events hosted by district businesses.

If you are interested in getting involved in Township events, please contact the DDA Manager at rsennett@cascadetwp.com, or call (616) 949-1500

RECENT EVENT



Cascade Metro Cruise Warmup & Pit Stops August 20th & August 22nd

The Metro Cruise events bring thousands of visitors to the Cascade DDA district during one of West Michigan's premier automotive weekends. The DDA sponsors the warmup event in the Thornapple Center parking lot as well as two pit stops in the DDA District.

These events recently took place on August 20th and August 22nd. **The DDA is looking to receive feedback on how the event impacted nearby businesses.** Whether you were aware of the event or not, we encourage you to take the survey attached earlier in this newsletter, and answer a couple of questions pertaining to the event. If you would like more details on the event for the future or to provide further feedback, please contact the Township office.

UPCOMING TOWNSHIP EVENT

Halloween Hustle October 29, 2026 @ Cascade Rec Park

The Halloween Hustle is an annual event put on by the Parks Department at Cascade Recreation Park. This event features a 1 mile running/walking loop through the park.

The Township is looking for businesses interested in setting up a table, tent, or booth along the route.

Businesses are welcome to hand out candy, have activities, or hand out promotional materials. There is no cost for businesses who participate. Please contact the DDA Manager or Township Office if you are interested.





Cascade Charter Township

5920 Tahoe Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616-949-1500
Cascadetwp.com

Township Office Hours

Monday-Thursday: 7am - 4pm
Friday: 8am - 12pm

