

# 2024 Annual REPORT



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🌐 [www.downtownelpaso.com](http://www.downtownelpaso.com)



# A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**DEAR FRIENDS,**

It is my honor to share with you a recap of the Downtown Management District's accomplishments in 2024. Across many efforts, our Downtown witnessed a year of growth and activation. From work to keep our downtown clean, support events, and welcome visitors to celebrating new business investment and growing our local economy, our efforts are contributing to a stronger and more vibrant Downtown for El Pasoans and visitors to enjoy.

In 2024, Downtown El Paso experienced 11.2 million visits, matching our previous high from 2023 and a far cry from the low of 5.5 million visits during the pandemic year of 2020 (according to Placer.ai). The Downtown Welcome Ambassador program was expanded from seasonal to year-round to serve as a friendly face and resource for our guests. The framework for a Residential Conversion Utility Upgrade Grant Program was established to fulfill a strategic objective and spark residential investment. This program will take effect in 2025. In addition, property values, a key indicator of Downtown's redevelopment, increased by an impressive 16% for FY2024-2025. It's the highest year-to-year percentage growth in nearly 20 years.

The DMD also worked to share our story and engage the public with our businesses. Events like the Tasting Tour series and Downtown Employee Appreciation Day drew thousands of El Pasoans, and our social media presence continue to grow, with over 120,000 followers across various platforms and more than 10,000 subscribers to our weekly e-newsletter, the Downtown Insider.

We don't stand alone in our efforts and would not be as successful without the efforts of our many stakeholders and the interests of our community. Thank you to the DMD Board of Directors, Downtown stakeholders, and our community partners for helping us build a vibrant Downtown. Together, we're shaping a brighter future for El Paso.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Gudenrath". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized "J" and "G".

Joe Gudenrath  
Executive Director

**DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**



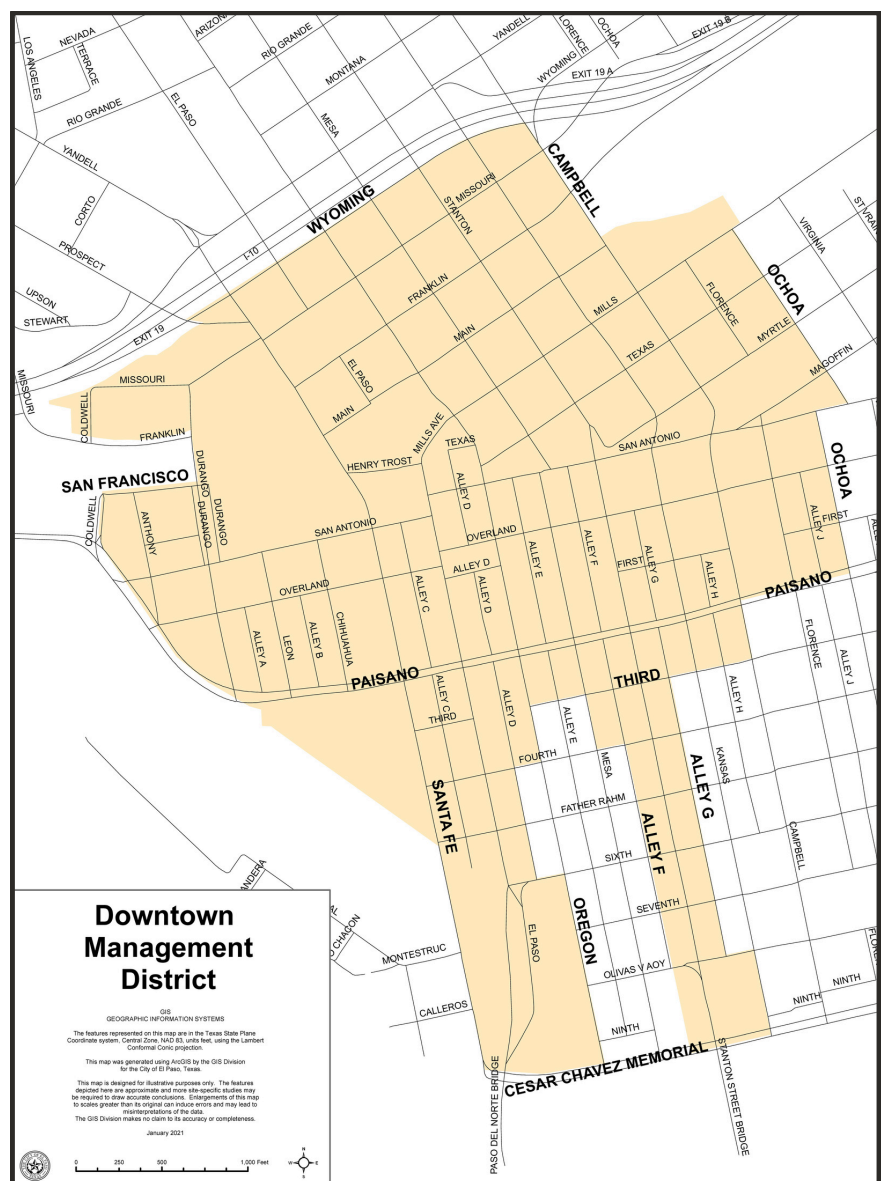
# GET TO KNOW THE DMD

The El Paso Downtown Management District (DMD) stands as a dynamic municipal entity dedicated to spearheading economic development initiatives, projects, programs, and services. Committed to cultivating a lively and inviting atmosphere, the DMD operates under the guidance of a 21-member Board of Directors made up of property owners, business tenants, and a resident. This board not only approves the annual budget but also offers strategic direction to fulfill the organization's principal mission to serve as a valuable and compelling driving force in facing the challenges and opportunities impacting Downtown El Paso.

The organization is funded in part by assessment revenue from properties within the district and supplemented through collaboration on specific projects and programs with the City, County, and other local organizations and individuals.

## OUR DISTRICT

Downtown El Paso is vibrant and ever-evolving. Over time, distinct districts have emerged, each as unique and diverse as the people they attract. These five districts—El Centro, Union Plaza, Las Plazas, the Office District, and the Government District—are shaped not only by the activities they host but also by the people who frequent them. Commerce, culture, community, and historical influences have all played a role in defining the character of each district, collectively forming the heart of Downtown El Paso.

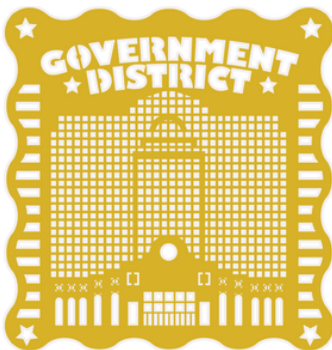




**El Centro**, the heart of Downtown El Paso, thrives as a vibrant shopping district blending history, culture, and commerce. Anchored by El Paso Street and stretching to the U.S.-Mexico border, it showcases open-air markets, multicultural influences, and over a century of architectural legacy. With landmarks like El Segundo Barrio and the Stanton Street Bridge, El Centro celebrates bi-cultural harmony through its food, retail, and rich heritage.



**Union Plaza**, distinguished by the historic El Paso Union Depot, has transformed from industrial roots into a mixed-use space. It houses restaurants like Chilabox and the Tiki Room, a candy shop, nonprofits such as the Tom Lea Institute and Creative Kids, co-working spaces, the unique Boxstel hotel, lively entertainment venues, and the world-renowned Rocketbuster Boots.



Downtown El Paso's **Government District** is the center of democracy in action, hosting the Federal Courthouse, the El Paso County Courthouse, City Hall, and various City of El Paso and county buildings. Here, politics, policy, and justice unfold daily, reflecting the core functions of governance.







The **Las Plazas Arts District**, the cultural and recreational heart of Downtown El Paso, is home to iconic landmarks like San Jacinto Plaza, Pioneer Plaza, and the historic Plaza Theatre. San Jacinto Plaza, known as “La Plaza de los Lagartos,” features a sculpture honoring the alligators that once lived there. The Plaza Theatre, opened in 1930, was the first air-conditioned public theatre in the U.S. and underwent renovation in 2006. The district also includes Southwest University Park, the El Paso Museum of Art, the Convention Center, and the Anson Mills Building, La Nube Stem Discovery Center, and the Mexican American Culture Center drawing visitors for art, entertainment, and community events.



The **Office District** thrives with daytime commerce and transitions to a lively social scene in the evening. Home to high-rise buildings housing employers, hotels and housing. It also features local gems like the nationally recognized Tap bar and restaurant, famous for its nachos, and the historic Gardner Hotel, operating since 1922 and hosting notable guests like John Dillinger. The district offers a blend of business activity and unique dining and nightlife experiences.





# DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT - OVERVIEW

The Downtown Management District (DMD) achieved significant progress in FY 2023-2024, focusing on engagement, advocacy, and activation to support stakeholders and attract visitors to Downtown El Paso.

## Key Highlights:

- **Visitor Growth:** Downtown welcomed 11.3 million visits in 2023, a 6.6% increase over 2022, with 8.1 million visits recorded in the first nine months of 2024.
- **Economic Impact:** Property valuations grew by 16% for FY 2024-2025—the highest year-over-year increase in two decades.
- **Strategic Initiatives:** Expanded the year-round Ambassador Program, enhanced outreach, and developed a Residential Conversion Utility Upgrade Grant Program to support growth.
- **Events & Engagement:** Successful events like the Tasting Tour series and Downtown Employee Appreciation Day drew thousands of attendees.
- **Social Media Growth:** DMD's digital reach surpassed 120,000 followers across platforms, with over 10,000 Downtown Insider newsletter subscribers.



The DMD remains committed to fostering a thriving Downtown El Paso through collaboration, innovation, and strategic investment.



# STAFF

## Joe Gudenrath

Executive Director

## Terry Mais

Office & Project Coordinator

## Richard Bustamante

Operations Manager

## Lupe Diaz

Marketing & Communications  
Manager

## Marilu Aleman

Special Events Coordinator

## Ruby Mijares

Downtown Lead  
Ambassador

## Salvador Martinez

Downtown Ambassador

## April Hinojosa

Downtown Ambassador

## Luis de la Cruz

Sanitation Team Lead

## Albert Mendoza

Sanitation Team Lead

## Daniel Palacios

Sanitation Team Lead

## Adam Munoz

Sanitation Staff

## Jason Saenz

Sanitation Team Lead /  
Special Projects

## Buddy Hernandez

Sanitation Staff

## Mario Sanchez

Sanitation Staff

## Rudy Zaragoza

Sanitation Staff



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Mark Osborne**

Board President

**Nadia Baem**

Board Vice President

**Yolanda Giner**

Board Secretary

**Joanne Richardson**

Board Treasurer

**Kathrin Berg**

**Beto Burton**

**Manuel Burke**

**Arlene Carroll**

**Daniela Caro**

**Kristi Daugherty**

**Guillermo Garcia**

**Jose Garcia**

**Edgar Lopez**

**Patrick Merrick**

**Michael Parra**

**Maxey Scherr**

**Peter Spier**

**Brad Taylor**

**Kelly Tomblin**

**Eugenio Mesta**



## EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS

**Chris Canales**

City Council Representative

**Lina Ortega**

State Representative

**Dionne Mack**

City Manager

**Ricardo Mora**

El Paso Chamber President & CEO

**David Stout**

County Commissioner



# BUDGET

## FINAL ACTUAL FY 2023 - 2024

### ANNUAL REVENUE

Assessment	545,951
Interlocal Agreements	376,498
Other Income	210,552
Total Income/Revenue	1,113,001



### ANNUAL EXPENSES

General Administration	50,469
Economic Development	185,956
Infrastructure/Security	71,007
Marketing	240,020
Sanitation	445,681
Transport & Parking	58,609
Total Expense	1,051,742

## APPROVED FY 2024 - 2025

### ANNUAL REVENUE

Assessment	568,926
Interlocal Agreements	431,655
Other Income	336,316
Total Income/Revenue	1,336,897



### ANNUAL EXPENSES

General Administration	60,468
Economic Development	416,251
Infrastructure/Security	84,170
Marketing	291,673
Sanitation	483,919
Transport & Parking	67,914
Total Expense	1,404,395



# GRANTS

## PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR



IN PROCESS

Property Owner:	The Place at Union Plaza, INC
Applicant:	Pride and Passion, LLC
Address:	115 S. Durango St. Suite A
Amount:	\$2,872.50

## MURAL



IN PROCESS

Property Owner:	Mary Snortum, Nevena Christi
Applicant:	Rocketbuster Handmade Custom Boots
Address:	115 Anthony St. Lot 3
Amount:	\$2,374.92

## FACADE IMPROVEMENT



IN PROCESS

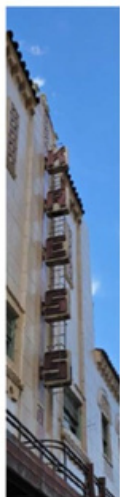
Property Owner:	Mills Plaza Properties V, LP
Applicant:	Mills Plaza Properties V, LP
Address:	123 W. Mills Ave. Suite 600
Amount:	\$30,000.00

# SIGNATURE SIGNAGE & LIGHTING



COMPLETED

Property Owner:	Artspace El Paso Lofts Housing, LP
Applicant:	EP Frozen Assets, INC DBA Gozo's
Address:	601 N. Oregon Suite 1
Amount:	\$25,000.00



Oregon



Mills



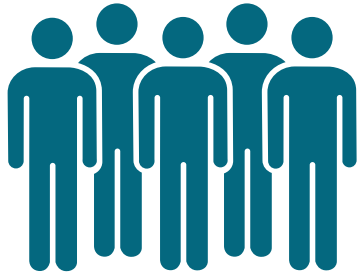
Mesa

IN PROCESS

Property Owner:	Mills Plaza Properties V, LP
Applicant:	Mills Plaza Properties V, LP
Address:	123 W. Mills Ave. Suite 600
Amount:	\$25,000.00



# ANNUAL SURVEY

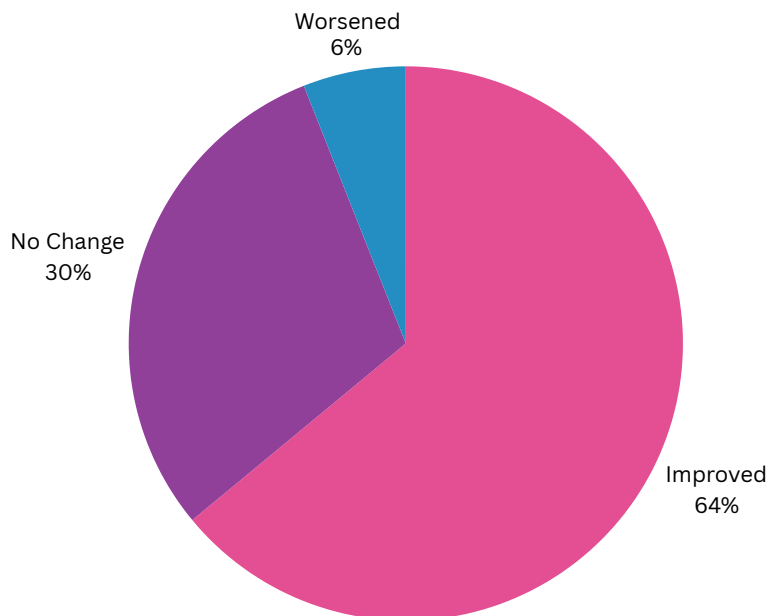


# 980

Survey Participants

918 English / 62 Spanish

## Perception of DTEP in past 12 months



## Top 3 Important Elements For Downtown Redevelopment



Family-Friendly Atmosphere and Businesses

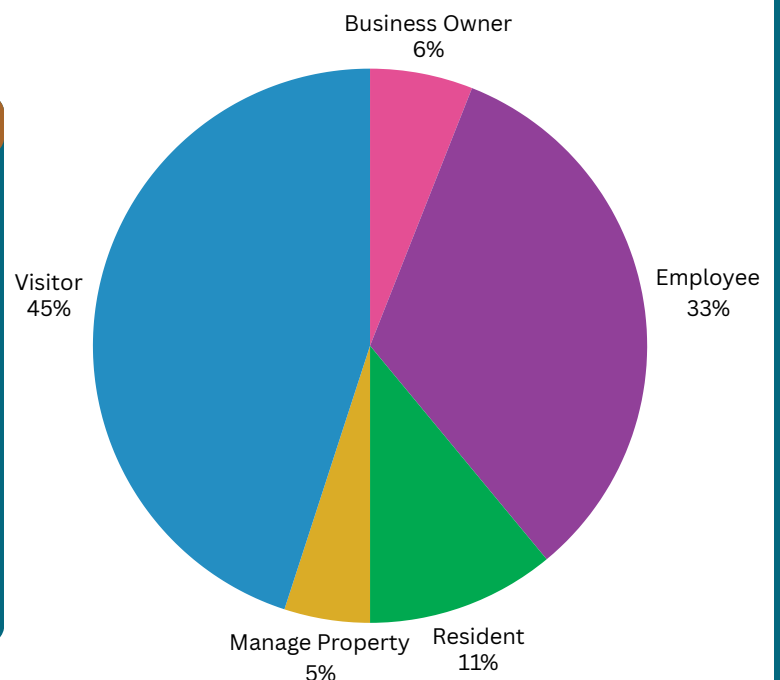


Safety and Security



Events

## Participants' Connections to DTEP



## Primary Purpose To Visit DTEP



48% Events



10% Shopping



13% Attractions



4% Business



25% Restaurants, Bars, Nightclubs

# SANITATION PROGRAM: KEEPING DOWNTOWN EL PASO CLEAN

The El Paso Downtown Management District (DMD) spans 118 blocks, welcoming thousands of visitors daily. To maintain a clean and inviting environment, the DMD launched its Sanitation Program in 1997, working alongside the City of El Paso to supplement municipal services.

The DMD Sanitation Team ensures streets, sidewalks, and alleys remain clean, addressing issues like graffiti, litter, and illegal dumping.

## Key Services:

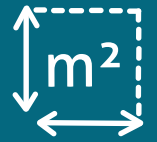
- Litter and trash collection
- Illegal dumping cleanup
- Graffiti removal
- Sidewalk power-washing and gum removal
- Street light pole banner management

Through their dedication, the Sanitation Team helps make every visit to Downtown El Paso an enjoyable experience.



**960**

Public Assets  
Power washed



**8,463,040**

Linear Feet /  
Public ROW for  
litter abatement



**159,360**

Linear ft. Sidewalk  
Canvassed for Gum  
Removal



**1,557**

Illegal Dumping



**498**

Sidewalks  
Powerwashed



**1,976**

Graffiti Removal



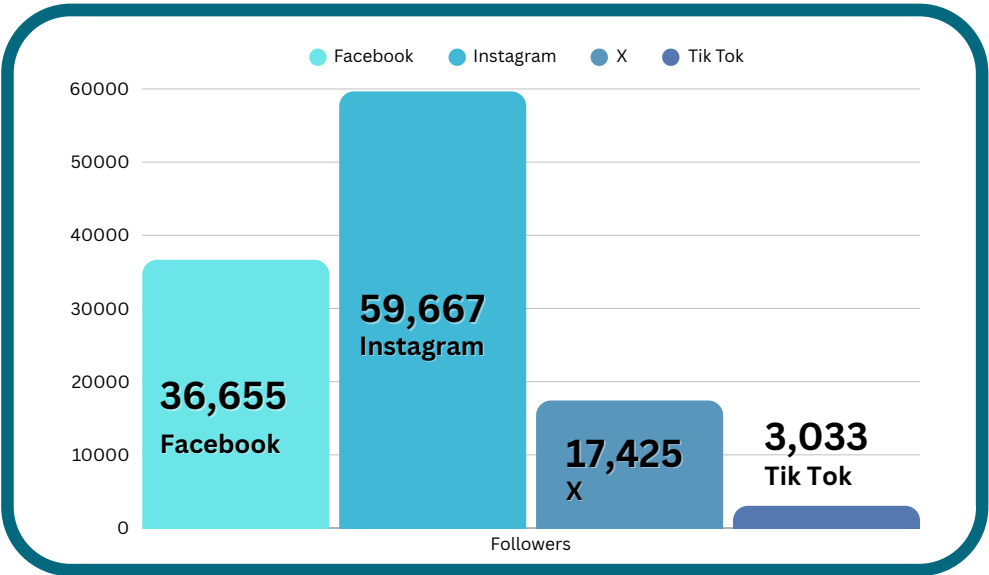


# SOCIAL MEDIA

## Followers



116,779  
Total Followers



## Top Posts

**Downtown El Paso DMD** is in Downtown El Paso, Texas.  
Posted by Instagram  
Dec 6, 2024 · 🌐

Big news, El Paso! WinterFest has been named the #2 Holiday Market in the Nation by USA TODAY's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards! 🌟 ... See more

See insights and ads   **Boost post**

👍❤️ 961   53 comments   195 shares

**downtownelpaso**  
elpaso · Original audio

Looking for something to do? There is still ...

2,421   27   333

**Downtown El Paso** · 2024-10-25  
Get ready to dance! 🎶 Our first Downtown Fiesta Latina...

Peter · That's what's up! 🎶

EPT: Devin-915  
he'll NA we want DJ JAVI he knows to get down 10x better!

## Post Analytics

5,027  
Posts

3,313,383  
Impressions

9,737  
Shares

57,688  
Reactions

## Downtown El Paso Insider E-letter

10,316  
Contacts

44%  
Open Rate

## El Paso DMD Text Message Platform

2,535  
Contacts



# DOWNTOWN AMBASSADORS



The Downtown Ambassador Program is a hospitality initiative that the El Paso Downtown Management District first launched in 2016. Originally, it operated as a seasonal program, running from May to September for the summer season and from November to January during the WinterFest season. The program places friendly, knowledgeable, and easily identifiable ambassadors on the streets and in public spaces to greet, welcome, and assist visitors to Downtown El Paso.

After being on hiatus for two years, the Downtown Ambassador Program was relaunched in the Winter season of 2023 with three part-time employees. Since its relaunch, the program has transitioned from a seasonal initiative to a year-round operation, expanding to include up to five part-time employees. In October 2024, the program further grew with the addition of a Team Lead position to enhance operations and provide leadership support.





# EVENTS

Throughout the year, the El Paso Downtown Management District (DMD) organized a robust lineup of events designed to promote economic activity, foster community engagement, and celebrate the unique vibrancy of Downtown El Paso. These events included established favorites and exciting new additions that further solidified DMD's commitment to enhancing Downtown as a destination.

## Signature Events

The DMD's signature events in 2024 included the Downtown Barstool Open, Tasting Tour, Downtown Restaurant Week, and Downtown Employee Appreciation Day. These events achieved the following:

- **Downtown Barstool Open, Tasting Tour, and Downtown Restaurant Week:** These events aimed to stimulate foot traffic to local food and beverage establishments. By encouraging ticket holders to explore participating venues, these events introduced attendees to new dining experiences and hidden gems in Downtown El Paso, driving greater patronage and support for local businesses.
- **Downtown Employee Appreciation Day:** This event celebrated the hard work and dedication of Downtown employees who play a crucial role in enhancing the experience and operations of the district. The day featured activities, giveaways, and opportunities to engage with community partners, fostering a sense of camaraderie and recognition among the workforce.





# EVENTS



## New Event Introductions

In 2024, the DMD expanded its roster of signature events by introducing two new highlights:

- **Downtown Business Mixer:** This networking-focused event was designed to bring together Downtown stakeholders, including business owners, property owners, and community leaders. Attendees had the opportunity to connect, share ideas, and learn about impactful projects such as the Downtown Deck Plaza and the Warner Brothers Film—a project with the largest footprint of any movie to date filmed in Downtown El Paso.
- **Downtown Fiesta Latina:** Created to reactivate the vibrant corner of Texas Avenue and Mesa Street, this event featured an evening filled with live music, dance competitions, food trucks, and vendor pop-ups showcasing local Downtown businesses. The Downtown Fiesta Latina brought the community together for a night of celebration, culture, and fun, further enriching the cultural fabric of the district.

Through its signature events and innovative new additions, the DMD continues to play a pivotal role in driving foot traffic, fostering connections, and enhancing the vibrancy of Downtown El Paso. Each event underscores the district's dedication to supporting local businesses, celebrating the contributions of its community members, and creating unforgettable experiences in the heart of the city.



# THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our incredible sponsors for their support in making Downtown El Paso a vibrant and exciting destination. Your contributions have helped bring unforgettable events and community celebrations.

Thank you for being a part of our mission to keep downtown thriving!



# SPIRIT OF AMIGO RECIPIENT: JOE GUDENRATH

Visit El Paso proudly honored Joe Gudenrath with the 2024 Spirit of Amigo Award during the National Travel & Tourism Week Luncheon on May 16, 2024. Nominated by the El Paso Downtown Management District's former Board President, Steve Ortega, Joe was surprised with this well-deserved recognition.

As the Executive Director of the El Paso Downtown Management District since 2014, Joe has dedicated a decade to revitalizing Downtown El Paso. His career began in Omaha, Nebraska, where he served as chief of staff in the mayor's office and later saved Omaha's Downtown Management District from disbandment through innovative leadership.

Joe's impact extends beyond El Paso as a board member of the International Downtown Association, The Rotary Club of El Paso and the Downtown Deck Plaza Foundation. Recognized as an Emerging Leader in Place Management in 2018, Joe's expertise and passion for El Paso's unique culture continue to shape a thriving downtown community.

Congratulations to Joe Gudenrath for this outstanding achievement and his unwavering commitment to making Downtown El Paso a vibrant destination!





# DMD DEVELOPMENT

The Downtown Management District (DMD) continued to deliver outstanding services while preparing for future growth and opportunities during the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024. With a focus on engagement, advocacy, and activation, the DMD strengthened support for stakeholders, encouraged investment, and attracted visitors to Downtown El Paso.

According to Placer.ai, Downtown experienced 11.3 million visits in 2023, a 6.6% increase from the prior year, with 8.1 million visits recorded in the first nine months of 2024. Property valuations also saw a significant 16% year-over-year growth for FY 2024-2025, marking the highest increase in two decades. These milestones highlight the success of the DMD's ongoing efforts.

## Key Highlights:

### Visitor and Economic Growth

- **11.3 Million Visits in 2023:** Downtown El Paso saw increased foot traffic, reflecting its growing appeal as a destination for business, dining, shopping, and events.
- **16% Property Valuation Growth:** FY 2024-2025 marked the largest year-over-year increase in two decades, demonstrating investor confidence and redevelopment momentum.

### Strategic Initiatives

- **Year-Round Ambassador Program:** The expansion of this program ensured ongoing support for stakeholders, visitors, and businesses while improving cleanliness and visitor experience.
- **Residential Development Incentives:** A new Residential Conversion Utility Upgrade Grant Program was developed to encourage residential growth in Downtown, with a planned launch in early 2025.
- **Enhanced Stakeholder Outreach:** Annual meetings with elected officials and data-driven decision-making strengthened DMD's role as a trusted advocate and resource.

### Events and Activations

- **Tasting Tour Series:** These sold-out events showcased Downtown's diverse culinary scene and brought foot traffic to local restaurants.
- **Downtown Employee Appreciation Day:** In its fourth year, this event celebrated Downtown workers with giveaways, entertainment, and networking opportunities.
- **Networking Events and Activations:** New programs were introduced to foster connections and engagement among Downtown stakeholders.

# DMD DEVELOPMENT

## **Advocacy and Project Support**

- **Public and Private Sector Projects:** The DMD facilitated communication and coordination for projects like CBD IV roadway improvements, the Mexican American Cultural Center, La Nube, and private investments such as the Kress restoration.
- **Film Production Support:** The DMD played a key role in organizing and assisting with the filming of a major motion picture in Downtown El Paso.

## **Marketing and Communication**

- **Social Media Growth:** The DMD's platforms saw tremendous growth, with over 120,000 followers across Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok.
- **Downtown Insider Newsletter:** Reaching over 10,000 subscribers, the newsletter served as a vital channel for promoting events, businesses, and initiatives.

## **Grant Programs**

- **Investments in Downtown:** While no Commercial Facade Improvement Grants were issued, other grant programs supported investments in signage, lighting, murals, and pedestrian corridor improvements.
- **Environmental Assessments:** With support from an EPA grant, the DMD completed an inventory of Downtown properties to identify redevelopment opportunities and assist property owners.

## **Collaborative Leadership**

- **Board of Directors:** The DMD Board remained active and engaged, achieving quorums at all 10 meetings and welcoming six new members in September 2023.
- **Stakeholder and Sponsor Support:** Generosity from stakeholders and sponsors generated nearly \$74,000 in support for DMD projects and initiatives.

The DMD is proud of these achievements and remains dedicated to fostering a vibrant and dynamic Downtown El Paso for businesses, residents, and visitors alike.

















**El Paso Downtown Management District**  
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**downtownelpaso.com**



**@downtownelpaso #downtownelpaso**