



Public Space Activation Program - 2019

Brief Summary:

The Downtown New West BIA invited individuals, businesses and not for profits to submit proposals for unique and innovative activations in Downtown New West public spaces. We were able to support 3 projects with \$3500 each in cash, and staff support in terms of making connections, navigating bureaucracy at City Hall to aid in permitting, and by providing logistical and marketing support.

Opportunity/Need:

How do we leverage our small team and small budget to make more great things happen in Downtown New West? We seek out people who have amazing ideas, hoping to enable them to make things happen. We use our knowledge and connections to lift those people up, fostering their unique ideas and skillsets. By engaging others, we were hoping to access ideas and skills that we don't have, creating ambassadors for our Downtown in the process.

Program Goals:

- Foster activations in public spaces that are safe, welcoming and inclusive
- Build community by encouraging people to connect with each other in public spaces
- Test new ideas and help identify/remove barriers that discourage activations of public spaces

Audience:

ANYONE was eligible to apply for the grants, we targeted residents, businesses and not for profits who we knew would be most engaged in the goals of the program and asked for their help in spreading the word. One of the criteria for the projects was that they must be safe, welcoming and inclusive to EVERYONE. Public space is for EVERYONE.

Implementation:

Through an online application process, we set low barrier criteria to encourage anyone and everyone to submit their ideas:

- Activations could include dance, music, art, or hopefully something we haven't even thought of before! The one thing it MUST be is safe, welcoming and inclusive to everyone.
- Activations could be a single event, recurring pop-ups, or a seasonal installation.
- Ongoing or previous activations within Downtown New West do not qualify.

DOWNTOWN NEW WESTMINSTER

- Applicants must be prepared to take on all aspects of producing the activation including staffing and funding (with the help of the grant of course).
- Activations must take place before December 15th, 2019.
- Applicants must acquire appropriate insurance naming the Downtown New West BIA and the City of New Westminster as additional insured parties.
- The activations must happen in a public space within Downtown New West as defined by the BIA boundaries.

Funding:

We wanted to fund 3 projects in 2019 for up to \$3,500 each. This funding would go towards the costs of producing the activation, and could include materials, artist fees, insurance, marketing, equipment rental, and supplies. The funding was not eligible to cover charitable donations or liquor purchases. The Downtown New West BIA also provided promotional and logistical support, and guidance in acquiring necessary permits/permissions with the City of New Westminster.

Timeline:

- Applied for City of New West partnership grant October 2018
- Awarded \$5000 from the City in February 2019
- Public call for proposals launched February 26th
- We received 23 submissions by the deadline of March 29th
- BIA staff reviewed all submissions and asked our top 8 picks for more robust proposals to be submitted by April 15th
- Our volunteer jury chose 3 winning submissions on April 16th
- All 3 projects were executed in June, July and August, 2019

Winning Submissions:

Kids Sidewalk Art

For kids, public space is an important part of growing up, a requirement for social interaction and the development of social identity. Local resident Vera Kobalia has executed several Kids Sidewalk Art installations bringing traditional games loved by all kids to sidewalks of Downtown New West. Hopscotch, dance pads, twister and other semi-permanent stenciled art will allow for kids (of all ages!) to engage in physical activity and play. These were installed with the help of Emily Carr and Kwantlen College Fine Arts students along Front Street, on the overpass to the riverfront and at River Market. Snap of a photo of how you interact with these fun and whimsical installations using the hashtag #playnewwest



Augmented Reality Mural “You Are Home”

Vera Kobalia submitted several ideas, and the jury couldn't resist choosing 2 of them support in 2019. Vera envisioned Metro Vancouver's first “augmented reality” mural in Downtown New West to highlight the City's new initiatives in the technology sector, provide an opportunity for local artists to showcase their work and to boost resident's health and happiness by installing public art. The Downtown New West BIA connected Vera with the Union Gospel Mission who agreed to the installation on their McKenzie Street building. Artist Cynthia Vo painted the mural and a group of Vancouver Film School students did the coding to develop an augmented reality lens using Snapchat geolocation, the mural can be activated via a phone's lens to come “alive”. The official unveiling took place during Fridays on Front on Friday August 16th.

See our video on how it works here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIptla32QQQ>



DOWNTOWN NEW WESTMINSTER

Festival of Circus Arts

Local resident Peter Leblanc's daughter has enjoyed circus arts for years, which was his inspiration for bringing together several partners in producing a free, interactive circus arts festival at Westminster Pier Park on August 25th, 2019. He worked with the Vancouver Circus School, West Coast Flying Trapeze (owned by Downtown New West residents) and others to offer an afternoon of workshops and demonstrations culminating in a circus show at 6pm. Through the workshops and demonstrations, the organizers ensured that there were opportunities for all to participate regardless of experience or skill level and succeeded in providing a safe and welcoming space for all. They welcomed 1000 people to their first festival and hope to build on that success by hosting this festival annually from now on.



Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Society
8-552 Columbia Street, New Westminster, British Columbia V3L 1B1
T: 604.524.4996 E: info@downtownnewwest.ca
www.downtownnewwest.ca

Results/Measuring success

Our inaugural program was an amazing success and exceeded all expectations. The quality of all submissions was much higher than expected, and the 3 finalists executed their winning ideas with very little time invested on our part. We received extremely positive feedback from all involved (and continue to receive great feedback from everyone who enjoys the legacy of these projects).

We were able to foster activations in public spaces that are safe, welcoming and inclusive to all, building community by encouraging people to connect with each other in these spaces. Whether it's enjoying the augmented reality mural for years to come or helping to launch an event that will now become a part of the annual slate of festivals hosted here, we were able to support three incredible projects that will leave a legacy for many years to come.

Feedback from the grant recipients was overwhelmingly positive with these highlights:

- Low barrier application process was ideal and worked smoothly
- Support from BIA staff was invaluable, from marketing and logistics, to making connections and liaising with the appropriate City of New West staff to make these projects happen
- The recipients said they would not have produced these projects had it not been for this program and are now motivated to continue to make things happen in our community now that they know how easy it can be.
- The amount of the grant (\$3500) was enough to make all 3 projects happen without additional financial support or sponsorship.

In terms of testing public spaces and better understanding the barriers to more people activating them, the feedback from the winning submissions was that navigating city bureaucracy and finding the right community connections were the biggest barriers. The BIA staff support component of this program is therefore critical in helping grant recipients follow through on their ideas.

For the budget, the team at the BIA would never have been able to accomplish these three projects when factoring in staff time and resources. And, we didn't even know what an augmented reality mural was before Vera Kobalia educated us! The program showed us how important it is to engage locals in this work, there is a plethora of ideas and skillsets out there, all you have to do is engage & support!



Budget:

Expenses

Revenue

BIA Staff Time	\$ 1,500.00		
Marketing & Advertising	\$ 500.00	City of New West contribution	\$ 5,000.00
Photography	\$ 500.00	BIA contribution	\$ 8,000.00
Funding direct to winning submissions	\$ 10,500.00		
(3 projects X \$3500 each)			

\$ 13,000.00

\$ 13,000.00