



February 1, 2019

Dear Members of Calgary City Council,

As judges for the ActivateYYC Community Microgrant program, we are delighted to share this letter as part of Administration's reporting back on a first, one-of-a-kind, municipal program to inspire community scale activities.

Our role involved reviewing submissions, scoring each individually and then together selecting the best ideas for funding. Other duties involved recruiting applicants to apply and giving advice we felt would strengthen submissions. A total of 6 days were dedicated to meeting together to discuss and award the microgrants.

Highlights:

Highlights of the program are the excellent management and marketing by The Federation of Calgary Community and the huge successes in terms of media response, collaboration and community connections that resulted from the ideas. The program, in our opinion, also connected our organizations as a continuing legacy of the Walk21 conference to advance our common goals in a more aligned way. For so many reasons, it was a success resulting from a small budget amount that should continue into the future.

The program theme was deliberately broad with marketing for ideas around walking, playing & neighbourliness. The theme and scale should be revisited in future rounds as 150 ideas was too aspirational in a first offering, and consideration is needed on whether the grants placed sufficient emphasis on walking.

An important goal of ActivateYYC was to help The City of Calgary reduce red tape and make it easier for residents to affect change at the local level. It is our opinion that the culture has become more supportive by staff but that there are still significant hurdles for residents to find answers and permission space. The buddy system helped many applicants, but needed to be more robust or the theme could be more targeted to affect strategic trigger points. As an example, a next round could focus on engineered walkways (catwalks), wayfinding or another universally relevant space needing attention in Calgary.

Applicants were predominantly passionate community volunteers representing all Calgary wards. Greater interest came from north of the river and certainly from older communities. As a judging team we at times wanted to see more creativity from the applicants, however seeing the results and how meaningful they were reminded us that Calgary communities grow, walk and play in different ways. Neighbourhood leaders are best at knowing priorities so we tried to find a place where we judged plans on whether they were realistic, new for them, and appropriately budgeted.

Findings Report – ActivateYYC Judges



Judge's Debrief: successes, shortcomings and recommendations

Awarded applications:

Small details made applications shine, though there are so many – here is a bit of the magic we observed:

- Evergreen's scavenger hunt that deliberately mixed teams to help neighbours meet
- Suburban applications showed their love and focus to support kids play and shared gardens
- Beltline crokinole & Bridgeland Passeggiata were the best multigenerational activities
- Bridgeland 'polka dots intersection neckdown' showed the most volunteer determination
- Renfrew's Edmonton Trail Day was among the most complex and hosted by a very new Community Association board
- Calgary Police Service shined when they supported a local street hockey game by closing the street with service vehicles and joining the game
- Create Coventry proved how large a volunteer group can assemble and that art encourages more walking

Judging:

We as judges benefitted greatly by the in-person sessions and chance to semi-regularly hear from colleagues and the perspectives of our own experts in Calgary. The face time was encouraged by our employers and allowed us to share other research, and be reminded to collaborate. All organizations hope to continue to remain involved going forward given the positive outcomes that match community and our employer aspirations.

Recommendations:

A new round of ActivateYYC should again be managed by the Federation of Calgary Communities. Their staff did a lot of up front work coaching applicants and were really very creative in their promotion tactics – with lots of hustle! Most applicants required more funding and the Federation helped link them with other grants as well. They also supported connections and as a result, partnerships formed: businesses provided materials, seniors baked cookies for younger volunteers, and street dances became subsidized.

Interesting alliances make a difference and help change culture at the local level. The buddy program by The City, where projects are sheparded through Administration should be formalized and expanded to help new ideas be successful, given new ideas are more uphill.

Administration needs to do more to simplify rules including creating a comprehensive checklist and a custom intake within Special Events for small and medium scaled ideas. Reinforcing the City of Calgary's role in the marketing will also help grow ties between staff and residents.

In close, we wish to thank Calgary City Council for their leadership in supporting the Pedestrian Strategy through the ActivateYYC initiative as well as the Federation of Calgary for their effective coaching of us in

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our role and residents on their applications. The 103 projects together show the spirit of Calgarians reminiscent of collaboration during the 2013 flood: resourceful, inclusive and community-focused.

Respectfully and committedly,

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