



# [ATTACHMENT 3 - ADMINISTRATION FINDINGS]

Findings and recommendations by City of Calgary Administration



## Introduction.

On 2017 April 10, Council awarded \$172,500 from Council Innovation Fund to introduce Walk21 Community Microgrants, later marketed as ActivateYYC. The ActivateYYC microgrant program revealed examples of support by City Administration for community leaders and has helped Administration focus on improvements that will help the delivery of projects that contribute to *walking, playing and being neighbourly*.

Specifically, the purpose of this Attachment is to summarize the lessons learned throughout the program from multiple viewpoints (principally the applicants, the Federation of Calgary Communities, and the ActivateYYC judges) to:

- highlight the areas where Administration positively supported applicants
- highlight those areas where Administration should improve
- describe the specific changes needed and underway within Administration

### Overview.

The ActivateYYC program awarded small grants of around \$750 for community leaders to encourage walking, playing and being neighbourly. Additionally, the grants were designed to draw out community priorities while also helping Administration to refine its permitting processes for more positive outcomes at the local level.

Judging of the community submissions was by a Walk21 Legacy committee made of local experts from organizations including Alberta Health Services, University of Calgary, Sustainable Calgary and the Calgary Foundation.



Culture Shock  
Falconridge



## What worked.

Overall, the ActivateYYC program showed measurable enthusiasm both within and outside The City.

### Interest.

242 applications were received from all areas of Calgary and these projects showed:

- A broad range of ideas
- Communities generally indicated they would repeat their activities or take on a more ambitious plan in future
- Relationships were formed as well as process capacity that were shared among community leaders and in turn enabled future projects



Girl Power  
Abbeydale

### Administration & enthusiasm.

Culture change in support of resident ideas took place over the two years of this program. While difficult to measure, positive interactions such as this street use permit issued to MRU students adds to the enjoyment of contributing to public space. Celebrating these instances helps empower staff to continue to put resident needs first.

Location:	37 St SW (Bow Trail - Richmond Road)
Purpose:	Temporary Use of Sidewalk for Students
Authorized To:	Use of sidewalk at noted address to accommodate Mount Royal University student project involving sidewalk chaulking and other materials. Students must all pass this assignment otherwise permit must be paid for in full at our permit office located @ 2808 Spiller Road SE. Safe pedestrian access must of course be maintained at all times. Sidewalk chalk must be removed upon completion - unless it's too beautiful to remove.

FIGURE 1: STREET USE PERMIT ISSUED TO MRU STUDENTS

### Staff.

Residents expressed their thanks for City participation in their ideas. Most often mentioned include Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators, members of Council, 311 call centre and the Liveable Streets Division. Specific thanks related to showing support, connecting the applicant with information and permission space as well as removing administrative barriers. Overall, approximately 74 % of applicants

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considered The City a supporter, while 35 % described The City as a Collaborator and 10 % as an obstacle (applicants could select more than one response).

### Application process.

ActivateYYC applicants used an online form received directly by the Federation of Calgary Communities. This form and the questions that were posed allowed the applicant to describe the value of their idea and then be contacted by The Federation of Calgary Communities for coaching on strengthening their idea. Conversely, when residents apply for many City permits, the forms require details that do not always investigate or prompt the applicant for the value proposition of their idea. Below are excerpts from ActivateYYC and a Street Use Permit.

Please describe the project or event you be doing Who will be involved Any additional partners	: The community will be hosting a paint the pavement event to bring awareness to the community regarding a busy intersection where kids are playing and people are frequently crossing. We will be designing a mural with the help of two artists that will incorporate children's art from the neighbourhood. The mural will be outlined on the pavement and then all the kids from the neighbourhood will be invited to help paint the colours in. Cloverdale paint is offering a community association discount on the paint. <a href="#">Read more»</a>
How will this project event encourage people to walk	: CKE is already a community full of members who enjoy walking in our neighbourhood. Our goal is to make this intersection more safe for those persons, bringing awareness to driver's that they must come to a full stop before proceeding <a href="#">Read more»</a>
How will this project event encourage people to play	: We are inviting all members of the community , not just our children, to join in the painting of the pavement. We want to make the streets safe for our children to play on and not have the additional concerns of drivers not stopping at the 4 way stop. Making this 4 way stop a safer zone will allow the parents and the children in the community to feel safe playing in their front yards, riding their bikes etc. The sidewalks surrounding the 4 way stop is also a popular place to meet with our neighbours, catch up on events and meet new people in the community. <a href="#">Read more»</a>
How will this project event encourage people to be neighbourly	: By inviting the whole community to participate, we are attempting not to single out any individuals out with punishments; but bringing awareness that a complete stop is only a few moments in time and our neighbours who are on foot are important as well. <a href="#">Read more»</a>
How do you plan to communicate your project or event to the community	: We will be advertising on our communities webpage, monthly communications booklet, Facebook page. We will also be delivering flyers to those houses that we feel will be most affected by the street closure and inviting any comments or questions. <a href="#">Read more»</a>
Give us a sense of your project event timeline	: We are in the current stages of planning, meeting with the artists as well as gathering kids art for the mural. The permit to the city has been applied for to close the intersection for two days. The event will take place Sept 9 and 10th. Photos will be posted to Facebook as well as on our webpage <a href="#">Read more»</a>

#### EXCERPT: KELVIN GROVE ACTIVATEYYC APPLICATION





## Apply Online

**Permit Type:**

Step 1: Details   Step 2: Street Address   Step 3: Applicant Information   Step 4: Review and Submit

**Next >>**

Please fill in the required information for the permit. ( \* ) is required.

**Permit Type \***  To learn more about Permit Types click [here](#).

**Permit Dates and Times**

**Start**

**End**

**Description of Work \***

**Next >>**

**STREET USE PERMIT PROVIDES LIMITED INFORMATION BY APPLICANTS**



## Learnings and sticking points.

Reviewing applicant feedback in detail exposed several projects where The City of Calgary can take further steps and be a more supportive partner.

### Rules.

About one third of applicants required permission for their ActivateYYC grant. Permission typically was needed to close a street, reserve a park, or store equipment on public property. In some cases, applicants required permission from multiple Departments requiring additional coordination and clarity. One such example is Kensington's Eyes-On-The-Street that required separate permissions from Parks, Calgary Transit and Roads. In this case it was not obvious how or who might coordinate these permissions / permits.



Eyes-On-The-Street  
Kensington

Perceptions of fairness were also raised in three cases related to processes like the paint the pavement program. Given the process was under development, applicants felt as though rules were applied differently. Further, complaints were made that some permit conditions did not sufficiently relate to risk exposure including North Haven's sidewalk art design. This design had to be changed to accommodate a gap in the artwork every 30 cm, a rule not initially communicated.



Neckdown Artwork  
North Haven

### Bylaws.

At times City recommendations were to direct citizens to ignore or break bylaws, including the Bowness Chalk the Walk group who were instructed they could proceed without a permit and that the graffiti bylaw

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would likely not be applied. Though this advice may be reasonable, it is not the intent of the program that residents should need to break bylaws nor is it the purpose of bylaws to restrict contributing behaviours.



Chalk the Walk  
Bowness

### Equipment.

The City of Calgary often lends street closure and recreational equipment to support block parties and other events. The feedback showed that the lending process can improve. In Crescent Heights, Cone-versation applicants were required to rent traffic cones at a high and unaccounted for cost. Using tents was also a challenge as they became unavailable and require a building permit at a certain threshold. This latter example hints at the challenge faced by many communities of straddling between a small community function while at times taking on sophisticated elements that trigger concerns of safety to individuals, the environment or infrastructure. Simplifying rules is needed and is evolving as Administration encounters more and new community applications.



Cone-versation  
Crescent Heights

### Risk.

ActivateYYC showed Administration gives community permission through individuals and that front line staff feel a tremendous responsibility towards the safety of the public, the environment and our infrastructure. Further, staff may sense a risk of granting community permission due to reputational fears or in anticipation of 311 complaints. This fear of risk lends to staff saying "no" to anything that falls outside

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well defined parameters. In the case of Bridgeland's Passeggiata they experienced significant challenges in receiving permission for a community-scale walk.



Passeggiata  
Bridgeland

### Insurance.

Further to better framing risk, many of the tools and conditions do not align with risk exposure, particularly requiring permit holders to hold liability insurance for many activities. While this requirement may be quite achievable for some community groups, others may be prevented access. This has the unintended consequence of promoting vital and healthy communities only where local affluence features. All applicants to ActivateYYC were required to have liability insurance.



DIY Flower Shop  
Chinatown

### Appetite.

In a few cases including Edmonton Trail Day, ActivateYYC ideas were declined in such a way that implied Administration did not value the idea presented or that the impacts could not outweigh the benefits of the idea.

A declined permit with little explanation (or no context beyond which a rule would be contravened) and no suggestions for how to modify or supplement the submission to achieve a workable proposal fails to

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demonstrate that the idea was given real consideration and that The City recognizes the underlying values expressed through the application.

In the case of Edmonton Trail Day, they were initially informed the traffic impacts were too severe. Ultimately the project proceeded on Saturday, August 18 with equipment from Parks, Urban Strategy and Transportation.



Edmonton Trail Day  
Renfrew

### Cost estimating.

Applicants faced uncertainty in achieving permission as well as budget uncertainties around what City services cost. This represented a considerable planning challenge.



## Progress: removing barriers.

Calgary has a strong policy base for community led initiatives indicating that many barriers are more tactical or educational in nature:

- A City of Inspiring Neighbourhoods gives value to citizen led initiatives
- This is My Neighbourhoods adopted a community led approach in its second wave

Day to day decisions are still challenged by managing perceived risks.

### Paint the pavement.

Roads Traffic Division recognized that the Paint the Pavement process was important to residents and needed updating. They were the sole business unit to make use of ActivateYYC process improvement funds to work with a City of Calgary Business Change and Process Consultant to change an existing process as part of the program. Though the new Paint the Pavement application process is now available online and provided lessons to guide other permission space exploration within The City of Calgary:

- Staff conducted broad engagement with community experts and Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators
- The project team worked to complete a balanced document including enough detail to guide staff while remaining user friendly enough to help citizens through the process
- Before rules were in place, residents were not aware of the approval criteria which often times led to back and forth communications
- Prior to the new process, decision making required significant time by senior management
- Some rules may not yet link with risk exposure
- The application is standalone and does not link with other City services
- The approach is suited to a specific kind of project but does not scale well to larger ideas

### Tiger Team – Risk.

Recognizing concerns by staff represented a significant impediment to granting permissions to Calgarians, a framework and tool was initiated by Administration's Tiger Team and Risk Analysis team. The Tiger Team is a group that includes problem solvers from across the Corporation, including external guests, that meets monthly on a new challenge related to increased collaboration.

A risk tool designed around community initiatives is under development and will inform staff of the many risk approaches as well as typical risks associated with empowering communities safely. The tool will be used in future education by The City's Risk analysts and describe topics such as positive risks (associated with missing out on an opportunity), and information on approaches to risk treatment that are aimed to help staff go beyond making yes / no decisions. In fact, staff in relation to risk can:

- **Avoid the risk** by refusing the project
- **Mitigate the risk** by asking an applicant to adjust their plans or have contingencies in place
- **Accept or retain the risk** by giving permission and extending City protections
- **Transfer the risk** to communities

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The tool will also share with staff where they might learn more about risk, find help and learn about citizen ideas – as an example that no injuries were reported in the ActivateYYC pilot.

### Tactical Urbanism Library

Based on feedback about the difficulty in acquiring and reusability of many common materials, a first tactical urbanism library is being implemented in coordination with Crescent Heights community association. This will make many city owned tools, like cones, available to residents. Lending of materials will be managed by community volunteers, both to engagement events by Administration, as well as to local and regional community events. This first location is also intended to help businesses along a local corridor scheduled for construction and is hoped to “take care of business during construction” by building a relationship between The City, residents and a forming BIA.



Humpty Hollow Park  
Bankview



## Recommendations.

ActivateYYC pilot program has been an opportunity to hear the community-level priorities of Calgarians and observe the support they receive by Administration. The following recommendations are made to focus efforts by Administration on becoming a better partner for the benefit of communities and their enjoyment of public spaces:

1. Because community projects can highlight infrastructure gaps including disconnected pathways, insufficient maintenance and aging or out-of-date facilities at community gathering points:  
**It is recommended that Administration explore ways for citizen identified priorities at the local level to inform capital investments or cost sharing.**
2. Because risk and liability are often misunderstood and exaggerated when considering community requests:  
**It is recommended that Administration prioritize the development of tools and training on risk for process owners and gatekeepers across the Corporation, including typical costs.**
3. Because several of Calgary's bylaws are not in alignment with liveability and City advice around when permits are required:  
**It is recommended that Administration actively survey community-minded behaviour that falls outside current bylaws and make adjustments that favour liveability.**
4. Because the ActivateYYC partners and judges provided valued support to Calgarians and to Administration including a friendly intake process and offering additional community grants:  
**It is recommended that Administration streamline its intake process and maintain relationships that further align grants and opportunities to make it simpler and more effective for ideas to succeed.**
5. Because the buddy approach used to support this ActivateYYC pilot helped support several of the more complex projects:  
**It is recommended that Administration identify a well-positioned resource to provide this service including for citizen-led initiatives beyond this specific program.**