

## \$1.5M in Funding to Complete Two Public Realm Projects!

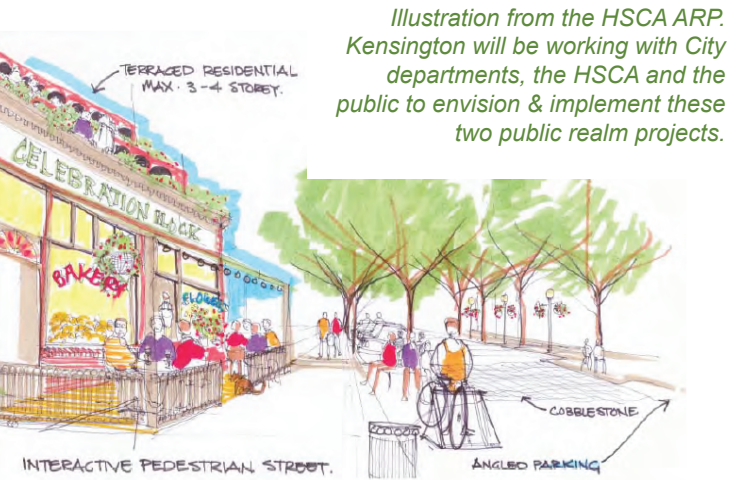
Advocacy, lobbying, networking, whatever you want to call such work is often a 'hard to quantify' part of the work your executive director does on your behalf. But some recent advocacy work has resulted in great news for Kensington that is very easy to measure. Two projects have received significant funding:

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Public Realm

*Improving the south side of 3rd Ave between 10th Street and the LRT tracks by narrowing the road, widening the south sidewalk and improving the public realm.*

The south side of 3rd Avenue NW, despite being narrow and unwelcoming, is well used. Increasing the width of the sidewalk in order to better accommodate bike parking and pedestrians will improve accessibility to and from the LRT into the area. Added trees and benches will significantly improve the cyclist and the pedestrian experience.

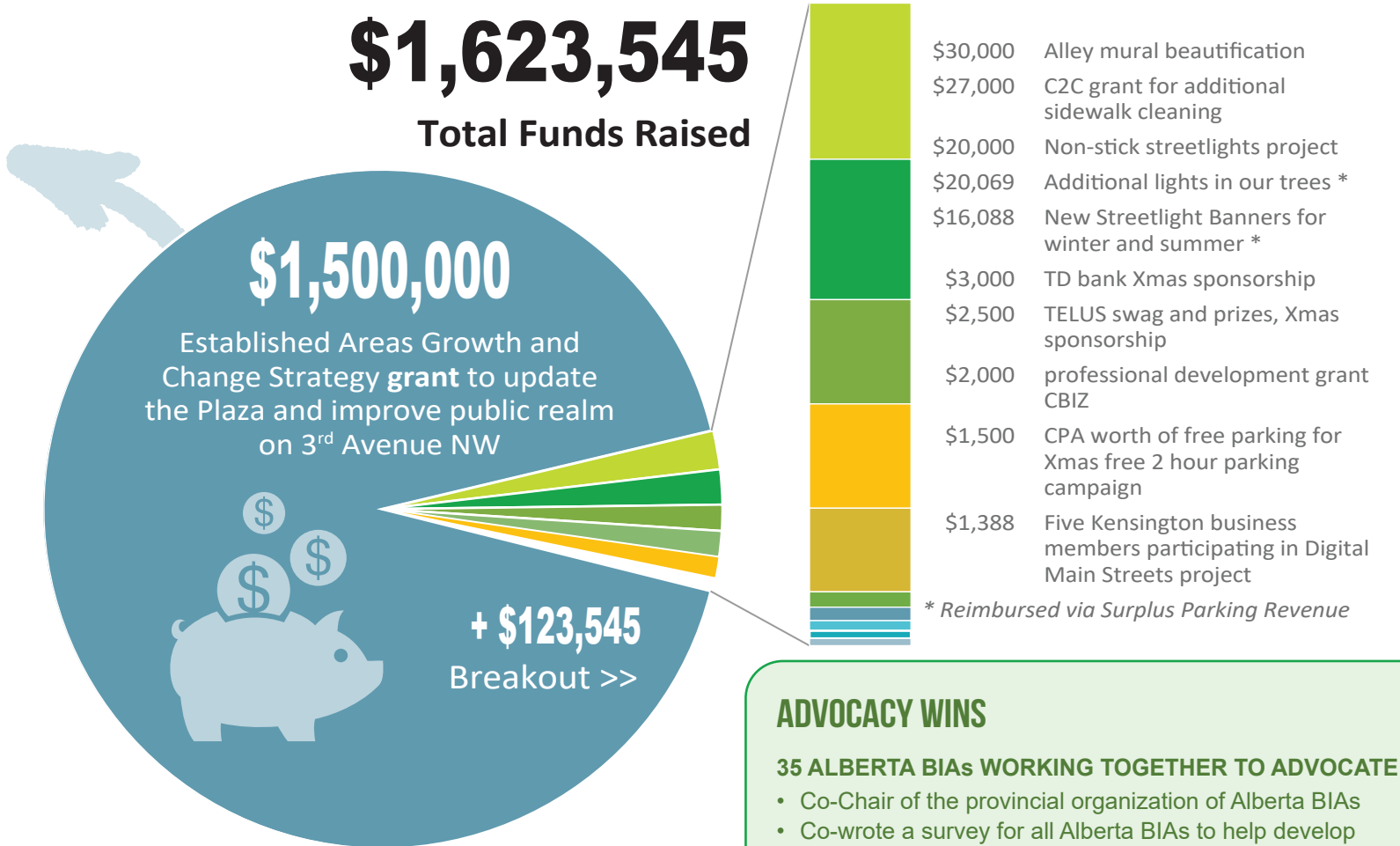
3rd Avenue is a well-used route from Hillhurst to the LRT for local residents who work elsewhere and young students of nearby schools. Improving the transit experience for these commuters benefits Kensington and Hillhurst/ Sunnyside residents and employees as well as tourists and Calgarians generally. Improving this connection between 10th Street and the LRT station will improve accessibility and walkability and put Kensington's best face forward to transit users.



### The "Plaza Plaza"

*Updating the plaza area in front of Pages Bookstore and the Plaza Theatre*

Kensington has almost 10,000 residents living locally. Residents without their own back yards increasingly view surrounding streets/public plazas and park spaces as places to enjoy meeting friends and family. The BRZ sees an increasing need to look to the walkability, to the need for welcoming outdoor meeting and sitting places. Our plaza area in front of the Plaza Theatre and Pages Bookstore is in sore need of updating. The City's long-term goal of increasing inner City density and thus improving sustainability in neighbourhoods is reflected in the funding of these projects.



### Past Advocacy

*Kensington has helped pioneer numerous innovative strategies for funding our inner city densification.*

- First inner-city area to be designated for TOD planning.
- Implemented improvements to 2nd Ave between 9A St. NW and 10th St. NW narrowing the road and widening the sidewalk in 2013 using BIA in lieu parking funds, City and developer funding.
- One of the first recipients of funding through the City's prioritization matrix for growth management and a more sustainable City. Improving the public realm in the rest of Kensington was achieved in 2014-2015 using surplus parking revenue. (Kensington won two international awards for downtown leadership and management for this project.)
- The BIA and the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association jointly used a bonus density process with local developers to benefit the public realm. These funds accumulate in a Community Amenity Fund approved by Council. \$566,000 was used in 2019 as seed money to raise \$4.5M for the Bow to Bluff project to upgrade the parks along the LRT adjacent to Kensington.
- Helped negotiate a surplus parking revenue strategy to fund public realm improvements for those Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) with pay parking.
- Participated in the Established Areas Growth and Change committee work to develop guidelines for City investment in inner city communities undergoing growth and change.

## 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



### COMMITTEES SERVED ON

- Established Areas Growth and Change Committee
- Financial Task Force (one of 12 Calgarians invited to join) resulting in 35 recommendations made to Council for new sources of revenue to offset property taxes
- Business Sector Support Task Force (Re: COVID)
- Letters to federal, provincial and municipal governments for assistance for members (Re: COVID)
- Joint ABBIA (Alberta BIAs) and IDA (International Downtown Association)-Canada (Re: COVID)

### ADVOCACY WINS

#### 35 ALBERTA BIAs WORKING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE

- Co-Chair of the provincial organization of Alberta BIAs
- Co-wrote a survey for all Alberta BIAs to help develop province-wide advocacy platform in Alberta
- Co-chaired 2 province-wide webinars for key messages
- Co-wrote 4 advocacy letters to the provincial government

#### CANADIAN BIAs WORKING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE

- Invited panelist for second national webinar about COVID-19 and BIAs. Key messages: rent relief not deferral, property tax relief not deferral, levy relief and easier access to government programs

#### RE-OPENING GRANTS

- Co-wrote letter on behalf of all Alberta BRZs/BIAs to the province asking for grants of \$5,000 for small/medium businesses for re-opening costs
- Met virtually with provincial government staff to negotiate grant funds for re-opening costs including rent, wages, replacing inventory and/or purchasing protective equipment.

#### SOCIAL DISORDER

- Co-wrote letter on behalf of all Alberta BRZs/BIAs asking for a portion of the \$48M set aside for social disorder issues to be made available to BRZs/BIAs to help address increasing social disorder in our areas.

#### EXPANDING RETAIL CAPACITY

- Retail shops allowed sidewalk sales anytime.

#### SHOP LOCAL

- City-wide 'Shop Local' campaign Nov 2019 – Feb 2020 (asked Mayor, Calgary Tourism and Calgary Economic Development to organize and pay for campaign)

### COMMERICAL RENT BILL

- Co-wrote letter on behalf of all Alberta BRZs/BIAs to the Province asking for no commercial evictions due to non-payment of rent (attended meeting)
- Met with provincial staff to discuss provincial rent assistance.
- Wrote a letter to the PM and MPs with copies to the Premier and the Mayor asking for changes to the Commercial Rent Bill to allow more small businesses to access rent assistance.

### POP UP PATIOS PILOT PROJECT

- Pilot project launched as a result of BIAs advocacy
- Collectively the BRZs/BIAs will advocate for this pilot project to become permanent.

### SHOP HERE DIGITAL MAIN STREETS PILOT PROJECT

- Wrote a letter to Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments asking for a portion of the federal funding allocated to the Digital Main Streets project be allocated to Alberta.
- Grant for \$25,000 received for pilot project in Calgary BIAs as a result of City advocacy through the BSSTF.

### BIA LEVY SMOOTHING ADVOCACY

- BIAs collectively proposed to City administration that levy shortfalls or surpluses be smoothed across 3 or 5 years in order to mitigate the impact in any given year.

### CENTRE CITY ENTERPRISE AREA EXPANDED

- Centre City Enterprise policy relaxes change of use and exterior renovations DP regulations so it is cheaper and quicker for new businesses to get up and running.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION ABOUT BRZs/BIAs

- Two Calgary Herald editorials about the importance of BIAs (fall 2019 and Sept 2020)
- A Calgary BRZs/BIAs brochure highlighting our value to the City



\$220,000

Levy / Budgeted  
(no increase in 5 years)

246 Members

9 new businesses  
4 businesses pending

\$51,580

Levy Dollars  
Spent at Member  
Businesses

500+

One-on-one interactions  
with member businesses  
by phone, text or in person

\$39,604

Surplus Parking  
Revenue

55

Member eNewsletters  
incl. 33 COVID Info Updates

2020  
YEAR IN REVIEW



## Strategic Plan Updates

**CBiZ/City** – Advocacy work with: Business Sector Support Task Force (BSSTF), Established Areas Growth and Change (EAGCS) Advisory committee, EAGCS financial and funding tools working group, EAGCS policy and planning working group, Community Amenity Fund, Shop Local campaign, City Financial Task Force.

**MGA** – BRZs work is complete; policy changes on hold until revised MGA is proclaimed by provincial government.

**AbBIA (provincial BRZs organization)**  
2 meetings, COVID advocacy

**Parking** - Park(ing) Day event. Christmas Parking Elves free two hour parking, use of Purr lot for night markets

**Governance** – Pivot to COVID focus

**Kensington Society** – Annual return filed, bylaws updated

**Streetscape** – Non-stick streetlights pilot and project, another safer crosswalk installed, alley mural, new summer and winter banners, additional tree lights added.

**Member Engagement** – 3 Member walk-about, phone call to each member during COVID, updates to website to provide more member resources including a new member resources page on the website, web links document for members and all member newsletters posted on website.

**Website** – More improvements plus COVID pivot.

**Succession Planning** – On hold

## Events Organized

- Xmas in Kensington with late night shopping
- Commercial Taxes Listen and Learn session for members
- Social Media Listen and Learn session for members
- Business Coaching Listen and Learn for all Calgary BIAs
- Re-opening campaign (window decorating contest + I Spy contest)
- Welcome Back Re-opening Campaign with letter, #Kensingtonlove buttons and door stickers for members
- 4 Night markets

## Projects Completed

- Pedestrian flashers installed Kensington Road and 11A Street Calgary Roads Dept covered the cost
- Alley Mural (value \$30,000, sponsors)
- Non-stick Streetlights (value \$15,000, grant received)

## Advocacy Letters

**4 letters to PM, MPs, Premier, MLAs, and the Mayor re:** Rent relief, Digital Main Streets funding for small businesses, Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA), and financial support for cities

**3 letters to the Premier, Alberta MPs, and MLAs and the Mayor re:** Social disorder funding, retrofitting / re-opening grants for small businesses, and rent evictions

**3 letters to the Mayor and Council MGA re:** BIA membership, the value of BIAs, and 50th anniversary of BIAs

**City of Calgary, Tax Assessment Department** regarding non-residential property taxes and possible levy shortfall

**2 op-eds in Calgary Herald** advocating for BIAs, small business and shop local campaign

**International Downtown Association**  
*Website post January 2020*

**National Canadian Network**  
**Community Discussion**  
**Innovation & Municipal Finances**

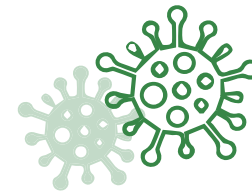


In our roles, we are all called to think outside the box. One of our colleagues who has clearly demonstrated that skill is Annie MacInnis, Executive Director of the eight-block Kensington BIA in Calgary; Chair of CBiZ, comprised of Calgary's fourteen BIZ/BIA districts; and most recently, appointed as the only BIA representative on the City of Calgary's 12-member Financial Task Force. She has all the qualifications. She has a Masters in Economics, lots of life experiences, and served as a journalist for twelve years before assuming her current role which she has occupied for seventeen years.

Annie is bold, resolute, and innovative. She leapt to national prominence in 2014 when she convinced the City of Calgary to give her its whole parking revenue surplus of \$4.5 million. She promptly parlayed that into \$6 million which she invested the following year in her Kensington District, providing new sidewalks, street lights, street furniture, tree replacement, and deeper tree wells. This led to Annie working with six colleagues - each of whom were responsible for districts which had civic on and/or off-street parking - and the City to craft the Parking Revenue Allocation Policy:

<https://www.calgary.ca/Transportation/TP/Pages/Strategy/Parking-Revenue-Allocation-Policy.aspx>

## COVID-19 RESPONSE & PLANNING



Kensington immediately pivoted it's focus on communications and planning in response to COVID. Our members and the general public benefitted from our communications to members and the public alike through social media and our website.

Our member communications focused on resilience and retention - advocating for help for small businesses and sought to:

- Help members access financial aid and provide business advice via links to help businesses.
- Align our branding with helping provide information and encouragement to all Calgarians.
- Reflect the fears of customers, members business and employees by communicating sensitively about this crisis

### Plan for Recovery

Continue to advocate for ongoing support for businesses not just through this current situation but for at least a year once the new normal starts. COVID work plan is divided into two streams:

- Communication to and about our members
- Advocacy on behalf of our member businesses

### 55 eNewsletters Sent in 2020

To facilitate quick communication and allow our members to access opportunities and the most current information regarding COVID, our ED began sending our weekly updates. Recent topics included:

- Engaging with your landlord
- Employee help
- Mask bylaw
- Mental health of our members
- Digital Main Street grants
- Re-opening Grant for Small/Medium Businesses
- BLM Protest Information
- Rent Relief Info
- Commercial Property Tax Educational Seminar
- 33 Weekly COVID Information Updates

## 28,500+ Social Media Followers



**Facebook**  
+ 238 new  
5,055 current



**Twitter**  
+ 31 new  
8,716 current



**Instagram**  
+ 1,800 new  
22,600 current  
165 posts this year



Top Instagram image of 2020  
♥ 519 🗨 22

## 2020 MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

### #KensingtonLove Re-Opening Campaign & Business Packages

Packages delivered with:  
• Large window stickers  
• Buttons for giveaways  
• I Spy Card  
• Letter from Annie

Media coverage of campaign:  
• Morning News Talk 770 AM  
• CBC Homestretch  
• Global Calgary  
• CTV



**#KensingtonLove Video**  
Filmed for social media and website use, broadcast through City of Calgary channel takeover in August.

### Additional News Coverage (unpaid):

March 14th - Global Calgary  
May 11th - Global Calgary  
May 11th - Breakfast TV  
May 24th - CTV Calgary  
May 25th - Global Calgary  
May 26th - Global Calgary  
June 9th - Global Calgary

### Window Decorating Contest

- 15 storefront businesses participated
- Over 400 comments for public voting

**Kensington "I Spy" Activity Card**  
(scavenger hunt campaign highlighting members)

- Over 60 participants
- 5 winners selected

