

Project Description

This program and its associated projects use methods of tactical urbanism to engage with spaces across Calgary. While many social problems have million-dollar resolutions, this program thrives on offering communities microgrants (\$1,000-\$10,000) that enable citizens to pilot and test initiatives that may contribute to part of the solution. Often these modest and simple projects end up having major impacts that reignite communities, fostering new connections between neighbours, and unlocking new neighbourhood amenities and gathering spaces.

Calgary's one and only tactical urbanism program has funded and supported Calgary's most grassroots landmarks, such as 'Under the Rainbow' in Sunnyside, or the initial pilot/engagement stages of 'Flyover Park'. Over the most recent years, it has uplifted new initiatives such as the 'Dark and Dingy Underpass' project in Ramsay, or the 'Shawnee Evergreen Community Association Chair Project' where dozens of blue plastic Adirondack chairs beautifully renewed park spaces in the suburban neighbourhood. Many schools have also benefitted from the "Paint the Pavement" initiative within the program, which promotes community partnerships and traffic calming in school zones. These projects bring the most inspiring volunteers together, to create incredibly impactful projects in the public realm, all while maximizing the microgrants the organization provides.

On top of the projects this program support, the initiative has been able to build its own portfolio of "space to place" transformations, through 'Placemaking Expos' at established community events such as Beakerhead and Market Collective, displaying budget friendly strategies to create effective public gathering spaces. The program also successfully implemented 'SweetLights' at the Chinook Blast Festival, these glowing-and-revolving lanterns were then donated to local community associations and organizations to spread the light and joy around the city. The program also hosted and reignited the 'PARKing DAY' Festival, which was dormant in Calgary for 2 years post-covid, which allowed for students, citizens, designers, and artists to temporarily prototype parklets on main streets in Calgary and allowing members of the public to engage with new forms of urban design in spaces that were formerly parking stalls.

In the past year, the program also launched a 'Placemaking Workshop' that has invited community members and citizens into the process of implementing 'cheap and cheerful' public realm improvement projects. With the goal of continuing to build a network, these workshops bring in past project leaders to share the impact that their projects had on their neighbourhoods, and to inspire and support the next generation of placemakers. This workshop has allowed for increased awareness as to how citizens can have a substantial impact on the ways their communities can be safer, more vibrant, and more activated.

This program has become a leader in Calgary in creating opportunities for low-cost interventions that promote engagement and vibrancy within urban design at the neighbourhood scale. It relies on an incredible network of amazing community volunteers and enthusiastic citizens that work to make Calgary a more beautifully designed place to live, one place at a time.