

Entry 2 - Downtown Kelowna

Meet Me on Bernard - Downtown Kelowna

Programming & Partnership

July 1, 2021 through Labour Day

Meet me on Bernard is the closure of 4 blocks of Bernard Avenue for the summer tourist months. 2021 was the 2nd year for the event that was initiated by Mayor & City Council initially as a reaction to the Pandemic and accompanying restrictions in 2020. In year 2 the initiative was improved with new, colourful signage, programming, and expanded participation. The first year was put together quickly by the City. In 2021 we had time to plan and improve the initiative through the creation of a collaborative partnership with the city and Tourism Kelowna.

One of the DKA's core responsibilities to its membership is Marketing and Promotion of the Downtown core. The closure of the 4 main blocks of Downtown has a tremendous affect on traffic, parking and the overall look and feel of Downtown Kelowna. We saw three opportunities with Meet me on Bernard: 1) To create an all-encompassing Marketing program to create excitement around the closure. 2) To invest in making the visual appearance of the closure for inviting and on brand. 3) To create a partnership with the City's Event Department and Tourism Kelowna. Opportunities came from reviewing the first year of the closure and realizing that with time to plan we could do this better in 2021. The problem with the 2020 version of the closure included the fact that the initiative had no brand identity. It also lacked planning as the idea was initially broached with Executive Director Mark Burley by Mayor Colin Basran in April. Support was sought from the DKA Board of Directors and then the idea went to a City Council meeting. Approval was only achieved a month out from closing Bernard. Public Health Orders at the time restricted programming of the space and 2020 was only a "closure" of 4 blocks. Need filled: - To get people out and back Downtown after months of changing Public Health Orders - Re-engage the public with Downtown Kelowna as a whole - Restore the DKA image as an essential part of the Downtown community, the city and the Okanagan. Opportunity: - Build relationships with our partners - Create a brand for the initiative - Create and build a brand to market

- To make the closure of Bernard Avenue the city's signature annual event - Create a brand for the initiative - Improve the look and feel of Bernard Avenue for the summer of 2022 - Create a high frequency marketing campaign using traditional and digital media

Both residents of Kelowna and the large tourist population in the city for summer.

Strategy - Create the partnership between the City Events Department and Tourism Kelowna - Create a brand with accompanying guidelines for executive - Improve programming in light of relaxed PHO's at the time of planning (we can always cancel programming if that changes...which it did) - Utilize local radio stations to market the event was coming, it's open and it's happening. - Utilize local digital platforms Castanet & KelownaNow for marketing - Utilize our well subscribed Instagram and Facebook accounts for marketing - Promote the 6m wide walk way - Use an Agency partner to create the theme of the marketing Implementation - The committee created within the partnership with the City Events Department and Tourism Kelowna worked together and created the "Meet me on Bernard" brand. - DKA area of responsibility was the creation of the restaurant patio fencing scrim and lead marketing. - City Events took on programming the space o Engaged the community to design, build and install parklets in 2 of the 4 blocks where there are fewer restaurants o NOWCanada created a info location with a branded van o Interactive IR art was installed throughout the 4 block closure o Blocks were named Community Square, Neighbourhood Square and Restaurant Row (2blocks) o Wayfinding signs were installed at 3 intersections within the closure - DKA purchased and installed 100 pieces of patio scrim signage using branding that was created on colours that matched the branding guidelines for the new Downtown Kelowna website. - DKA paid for and supervised installation of 4 different Seacans branded with Downtown Kelowna, Meet me on Bernard and Only Good Vibes Here and downtown radio station

partners - Summer students staffed the blocks setting up flags, tables and chairs and life size games daily - Marketing started 2 weeks prior to the closure on June 28 and continued through the closure. o Instagram and Facebook ads were booked o Radio advertising was booked using creative with "two kids" creative o Castanet and KelownaNow ads booked o A video was launched online for virtual sharing 3 weeks prior to the closure o Summer students produced a series of videos about Meet me on Bernard that were shared on Social channels with the content living on our website o Distill Media produced 3 videos over the course of the closure highlighting different aspects of not only Meet me on Bernard but Downtown Kelowna as a whole - Signage budget was \$30,000 - Marketing budget was \$20,000

- Measurable outcomes are difficult to derive given the length of time the initiative lasts - The early part of the summer was extremely busy with foot traffic - Stores, restaurants, and all business were operating under relaxed Public Health Orders and traffic was vibrant - The Heat Dome hit us as we were setting up on June 28 - Wildfire smoke overtook the whole Okanagan Valley by the 3rd week of July - Public Health Orders changed on July 27 requiring the return of distancing and masks for the public at large and reduced capacity and partitioning were re-introduced in restaurants - Heat and smoke affected traffic and programming end of July and early August - Surveys showed a prevalent positive reaction by visitors to Downtown during Meet me on Bernard - Lack of the ability to consistently deliver our programming hindered the initiative's execution. - Planned events such as live entertainment and live radio broadcasts were cancelled because of wildfire smoke - The City continues with the event in 2023 with expanded programming and events within the closure throughout the summer

From a small reactionary gesture in light of a never before experienced pandemic to a city's annual signature event in two short years, Meet Me on Bernard is the very essence of a BIA victory. With a solution that lays in a freshly developed partnership still in its infancy, Meet Me on Bernard only promises to grow and become the annual attraction for visitors and residents alike in Downtown Kelowna and the city as a whole.