

## Entry 1 - Uptown Rutland Business Association

URBA Uptown Mural Project

2019 - present

Programming & Partnership

Incorporated with the city of Kelowna in 1973, the community of Rutland is an older residential and commercial neighbourhood with a central business core along Highway 33 and Rutland Road. The arts have the power to revitalize neighbourhoods & promote economic health. A creative community working together can renew a neighbourhood & improve quality of life outcomes for all its members. The Uptown Mural Project celebrates diversity with murals that portray community values & will complement & enhance other multi-cultural & community-driven projects. Taking a step back, the year prior to the re-brand launch, 2019, was the first year of the Uptown Mural Project. As a BIA, beautification is mandated and URBA was approached by a University of British Columbia Fine Arts professor about launching a mural project in Rutland. In retrospect, 2019 was the beginning of the re-brand process by shifting priorities from producing community events that had little ROI for members to developing the Uptown Mural Project and, secondly, expand URBA's digital presence & brand recognition for both the UMP & URBA itself. Public art in the post-COVID19 era: during this especially challenging time we are reimagining the power & function of art in public spaces. We are working towards mending holes in the fabric of our communities left by the closures of our businesses & the imposition of social distancing practices. URBA is taking a lead role in the Okanagan Valley by creating long-lasting impacts within our communities through public art & strongly believe that the UMP will offer dynamic energy & inspirational hope, not only in Rutland but throughout the Okanagan. Peachland has been inspired to start its own mural project. The pandemic became the perfect opportunity for URBA to take the time & effort to re-evaluate itself & its priorities. This led to a re-brand, new logo & three-year strategic plan. From these exercises, URBA's new mission statement emerged: Uptown. Down to Earth: To grow and strengthen Rutland's hard-working business community through authentic connections & strategic opportunities. And its vision statement reads: RUTLAND PROUD: To attract and expand development, business and prosperity with pride and purpose. After completing its third year in 2021, URBA's Uptown Mural Project, now boasts 18 world class street art murals located throughout Rutland's community centre with 6 additional murals planned for 2022. URBA/Uptown Mural Project is currently a finalist in the Arts & Entertainment Category for the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards to be held March 30.

ONE: BEAUTIFICATION – STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY IDENTITY: The mission of the project is to democratize art & revitalize the urban landscape while supporting & improving the economic, cultural & social vitality of Rutland. This urban art initiative, unique to the Okanagan, is driven towards the beautification of Rutland, encourages community involvement & strengthens community identification & pride. This dynamic collection of street art has been inspirational to the people of the Okanagan Valley, with the city of Kelowna proud to present it as a key component of the city's public art collection. These murals have become a touchstone of hope & inspiration for the Rutland Community. Further, art contributes significantly to quality of life, mental health & brings the community together even when we're apart. TWO: DIVERSITY The diversity of the artists contributes to the value of the Uptown Mural Project with representation from the South Asian community, Indigenous/Syilx & Metis nations, the LGBTQ+ community & Rutland youth. Each year, during the artist selection process, the 'style' or 'genre' of each artist is considered to ensure their works are community inclusive & educative. Our World-renowned artists hail from Montreal, Toronto, Victoria, Vancouver & most notably and proudly, the Okanagan. THREE: SAFETY: The murals emphasize that Rutland is a safe and desirable place to conduct business with a clear vision and established values reflected in each of the murals. The murals increase foot/bike/car/e-bike & e-scooter traffic to view the artworks. By increasing the beautification and walkability of Rutland, the neighbourhood remains vigilant in keeping its mural investments untarnished, resulting in decreased vandalism, graffiti and tagging. FOUR: INSPIRE YOUTH: The Uptown Mural Project is designed to educate and inspire youth, and to contribute to their sense of community and ownership of place. They have been involved in community engagement, assisted with defining the community vision, they were mentored by professional artists

as they created their own large-scale artwork in a public space by muraling the public washroom at Lions Park in Rutland.

Prior to the project starting, BIA businesses assisted with community engagement & public responses; membership surveys were conducted by high school & university students; & URBA received letters of support & endorsements from its membership to pursue this initiative. URBA received letter of support from City Mayor & Council & additional support from city staff public art & finance dept's; letters of support from building owners interested in having murals painted on their buildings & a letter of support from the Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art. Beyond general interest, URBA determined its audience to be multi-faceted. During the uncertainty of the pandemic, URBA took the opportunity to provide a public art experience for anyone interested in touring Rutland while ensuring participants felt safe through social distancing. Specifically, the mural audience is envisioned to encourage an intermingling of diversity, much like the diversity of the murals and artists themselves, so the audience focus is inclusive, welcoming a mix of motivations, insights & backgrounds. In more general terms: population of Rutland 35,000 population of Kelowna 130,000 Our city has a comprehensive cultural plan & strong support for the arts. Thousands of local residents, including those from nearby Okanagan towns and cities as well as thousands of tourists.

By creating exciting and energetic works of public art, URBA's goal is to transform Rutland into dynamic open-air art galleries. In 2019, this ambitious project was launched with funding secured through grants from the Central Okanagan Foundation, the city of Kelowna and URBA itself. The Uptown Mural Project increases community health, social and cultural connections. It inspires community pride and sense of place and neighbourhood. It ties into URBA's mandate of promoting business and Rutland's economy and assists with crime reduction while beautifying Rutland, all of which are weaved into the city of Kelowna's new Official Community Plan. URBA decided that the murals would be original artworks that are community-driven and fully accessible to the public, with the goal of encouraging further engagement, with local businesses, community groups, and enhancing the public's image of Rutland. With the guidance of a Fine Arts professor specializing in mural production from the University of British Columbia Okanagan, the project planning process began in the fall of 2018 with six building owners and the city of Kelowna agreeing to have the Lion's Park public washroom to be designated as a youth-specific project. Artists from across Canada were respectively matched with specific buildings that lended themselves to each artist's skillset and techniques. A stable annual budget of approx \$60,000-\$65,000 City of Kelowna: \$20,000 each year. Central Okanagan Foundation: \$10,000 in 2019 & 2020 Due to the pandemic, URBA did not have to fund community events, an admin assistant position, or transportation costs for the artists. In 2020 & 2021, artists were intentionally selected from BC & the Okanagan to keep transportation costs to a minimum. Artists' fees: \$5,000 Received reduced costs from paint & equipment suppliers. A Kelowna hotel also offered discounted room rates

As the project is ongoing, there have been year over year additions that have enhanced it based on the success of the previous year. A mural marketing plan has evolved and will continue to do so. **BEAUTIFICATION & COMMUNITY IDENTITY: 2021 Marketing initiatives:** • 6-month digital marketing campaigns on Castanet & Kelowna Now in an effort to promote & improve visibility of URBA as an organization (Castanet) & to highlight specific Rutland businesses through a series of contests (Kelowna Now). To date, these contests have garnered more than 1,700 entries & 6,000 article reads. The Castanet ads, to date, have received 17.8 million impressions and 6,500+ click thrus. These ads highlighted Mural Walking Tours throughout the summer. • Mural Digital Passport Working with Tourism Kelowna, a mutually beneficial partnership began in 2021 continuing into 2022. One of Tourism Kelowna's mandates is to promote attractions beyond the downtown core of Kelowna. It developed a 'digital passport' download #EXPLOREKELOWNA UPTOWN RUTLAND MURALS (see supplemental materials) that has locations, descriptions, photos of all murals for tourists & locals to self tour. Adding to the 'fun factor', the app includes a scavenger hunt where a multiple choice question is asked at each mural & answers are submitted to win a prize. To promote the passport, a portion of one mural is window-screened at the Visitor Centre. Over 125 people from across Canada & two from the USA downloaded the app in 2021 with 256 redemptions for 60 Rutland restaurants and businesses. Tourism Kelowna's Facebook page received 31 positive comments. • A video, (see supplemental materials) highlighting the murals & various Rutland businesses, was produced so URBA members will be able to play on their restaurant TVs, medical office reception TVs & the Kelowna

Chiefs hockey team will be livestreaming it during its hockey games. • URBA worked with CTQ Consultants, to have Rutland's murals GIS mapped on CTQ's website: <https://www.ctqconsultants.ca/muralmap/> • Who has been seen taking photos with the murals is very interesting - antique car aficionados, Kelowna Chiefs hockey team, someone posted their car for sale parked in front of a mural among other various community groups. DIVERSITY: No two murals are the same, nor will there be, to say the least. The diversity & inclusivity of the artists themselves & their art truly reflects the equal amount of diversity that is the community of Rutland. SAFETY: The Uptown Mural Project ties URBA's mandate of promoting business & Rutland's economy and assists with crime reduction while beautifying Rutland, all of which are weaved into the city of Kelowna's new Official Community Plan. Vacant building walls, that for years remained canvas for incessant tagging, became top priority becoming the first murals of Rutland & contributing towards the betterment of the community's commercial landscape. The murals have shaped the public eye of Rutland, where vandalism, graffiti & tagging have no place. They emphasize that Rutland is a safe neighbourhood with a community that values growth & evolution. YOUTH: The Uptown Mural Project celebrates & enables professional, emerging and student artists to produce artwork in public spaces & increase public awareness of art. Partnering with Rutland Senior Secondary, the Youth Muraling Project has been completed in Lions Park. Having students participate builds future community connections. Summer 2021 saw URBA begin its free Mural Walking Tours with the goal of improving community engagement. The tours were guided by two summer students from UBC Okanagan Fine Arts Dept, hired through the Canada Summer Student Grant Program. New for 2022: Mural merchandise available at Tourism Kelowna Visitor Centre & online. URBA will be creating its online store. A percentage of sales will be given to artists & help fund UMP.

URBA's Uptown Mural Project, now boasts 18 world class street art murals located throughout Rutland's community centre. These last two years have been a critical time to provide supports to businesses, residents & our community; creative & inspiring projects such as the Uptown Mural Project help as we come out of the pandemic building community spirit. This urban art initiative, unique to the Okanagan, is driven towards the beautification of Rutland, encourages community involvement & strengthens community pride. It emphasizes that Rutland is a safe & desirable place to conduct business with vision & values reflected in each of the murals. By increasing the beautification & walkability of Rutland, the murals decrease vandalism, graffiti & tagging. #RutlandProud