

# Calgary business revitalization zones fuelling city economy

Represent 20 per cent of all businesses in the city

BY MARIO TONEGUZZI, CALGARY HERALD JANUARY 31, 2014

Presented By:



Bhawana Clark, owner of a jewellery store in her name, along the busy 9th Avenue S.E. main drag in Inglewood.

CALGARY - For Calgary small business owner Bhawana Clark, the benefits of having a business revitalization zone in certain neighbourhoods is pretty clear.

Clark, owner since last March of a jewellery store under her name along the main drag of 9th Avenue S.E. in Inglewood, said the zones help businesses in the communities succeed.

“They organize events throughout the year which I think is awesome. For example, they have a Girls Night Out sometimes in the spring and we had huge traffic flow from that (last year) and it gave my store a lot of exposure especially just being new. And we generated a lot of revenue that day as well too. So it’s very, very good for our business,” she said.

“It gives Inglewood a lot of exposure and puts the word out there and promotes Inglewood. I think it’s great to have them (BRZs) . . . Most of the businesses are pedestrian. What’s so key and so important is to have that foot traffic.”

In a new and first-ever report, C-Biz, which is the umbrella organization for Calgary’s 10 BRZs, said 20 per cent of Calgary businesses in 2012 were in a BRZ which totalled 5,200 business members. They paid \$47 million in annual business taxes, generated \$11 million in parking revenue, accounted for more than 220 city blocks of business, and attracted 600,000 visitors to festival/public events.

Annie MacInnis, chair of C-Biz, said BRZs are areas of intense usage as the streets have a lot of foot traffic and vehicle traffic as well as transit access.

“We’re the eyes on the street. So when we see graffiti we report it, when we have dirty sidewalks we call and get them cleaned,” said MacInnis, who is also the executive director of the Kensington BRZ. “We do the intense management that these streets of intense usage need. And also we’re the incubators of small business. Most businesses when they’re transitioning to bricks and mortar will often go to a BRZ because that’s the place where there’s some leadership, it looks nice, the sidewalks are clean, there’s banners, there’s activity, there’s foot traffic.

“I think BRZs are important to a city. I think people are longing for that 1950’s main street feeling. BRZs offer that in a way that malls do not.”

Bruce Graham, president and chief executive of Calgary Economic Development, said business revitalization zones bring character, street appeal and authentic community to cities.

He said the BRZs played an important role in the city’s rebound from the devastating flood in June which affected a huge number of businesses.

“The flood recovery work demonstrated the importance of having that mechanism and that cohesion,” said Graham. “They define community in any city. They’re employers and business people. But they are community as well.”

He said the collaboration model offers a much bigger bang for your buck for a small business owner in terms of marketing, advertising and promotion. The BRZs by virtue of their geographic orientation will take on promotions such as festivals, cultural events and street fairs which have become quite popular in Calgary over the years.

“That in turn helps define the city and creates an appealing (attraction) ..... That’s important to us. Attracting and retaining a workforce. People come to cities and stay in cities because of the experiences you can have. Those experiences happen through BRZs in many cases,” said Graham.

[mtoneguzzi@calgaryherald.com](mailto:mtoneguzzi@calgaryherald.com)

Twitter.com/MTone123

© Copyright (c) The Calgary Herald

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)



Bhawana Clark, owner of a jewellery store in her name, along the busy 9th Avenue S.E. main drag in Inglewood.

