

# Abstract Submission for Recovery Project Category

## Introduction

Coming out of the pandemic, it was clear downtowns were struggling and required strategic partnerships and investments that would help support renewal. The City of North Bay quickly embarked on a significant redevelopment project, the first of its size in nearly 40 years, to help with revitalization and support the implementation of the [City's Downtown Waterfront Master Plan](#). The infrastructure project was coined "[Making Over Main Street](#)" and includes investments in interlocking brick roadway and sidewalks, curbs and gutters, retaining walls, stairs, railings, benches and lighting.

Alongside this multi-million-dollar investment, construction of new [splash pad](#), [multi-use recreational courts](#), [playground](#) and [all wheel park](#) are being completed to help reshape North Bay's downtown core. Collaboration with the Downtown Improvement Area (DIA) has been key to these initiatives and the associated economic development partnership project that ran in parallel.

## Project Highlights

Undertaking a major 5-block construction project coming out of the pandemic was carefully planned in partnership with the DIA. Although measures were taken to contain reconstruction to one block of Main Street at a time to minimize disruption to businesses, it was recognized additional efforts would be required to help attract people back to the downtown core in the near term. Coming out of the pandemic, foot traffic, tourism and events were more important than ever, and the construction posed a new challenge.

As such, the City of North Bay's Economic Development Department partnered with the DIA and Tourism North Bay to access the federal Tourism Recovery Fund Program to undertake a 2-year marketing and product development initiative aimed at driving visitors back to the downtown waterfront area. In addition to actively participating on the project team, the Economic Development Department was able to leverage its investment with a total project value nearly 20 times greater than the financial contribution.

The project included:

- The creation of a comprehensive marketing plan;
- Redevelopment of Tourism website, additional of calendar of events and updated marketing imagery for virtual platforms;

- Downtown waterfront marketing to encourage and inform visitors during construction;
- Focus on arts, culture, and heritage with packaged signature experiences.
- Acquisition and deployment of mobile kiosks to support community promotion and visitor attraction.

## Project Outcomes

The project resulted in a formalized approach to collaboration among project partners and the development of:

- A joint marketing plan setting the foundation for future partner collaborations;
- Creation of 3 new experiences; [“Wet Your Whistle”](#) a signing tour of downtown venues, [“Cookie Crawl”](#) showcasing signature creations of downtown restaurants and [“Pop-Up Picnic”](#) provides baskets of treats from downtown merchants that can be enjoyed during the [City’s Summer Concert Series](#) and [Arts & Culture nights](#) every Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.
- Reactivating the downtown waterfront area through promotions, new experiences and 5 kiosks housing virtual tours and tourism information.
- Joint branding, imagery/video content, construction signage, tourist maps, directory, and media campaign.

Downtown Waterfront construction projects will conclude this fall so North Bay’s downtown revitalization efforts can be celebrated as part of the city’s upcoming Centennial.