

ACTIVATION AWARD

Souly Austin supports the vision of a Merchants Association by providing seed funding for organizational development and district projects. The Souly Austin Activation Award is a small grant provided to the business district upon formation of the business district’s merchants association. The award provides direct resources to support the district in building upon the economic vibrancy and sustainability of the district.

Award Goals Include:

- Support district development activities
- Provide initial seed funds for association formation/activities
- Nurture cohesive, collaborative, consensus amongst association
- Develop project management capacity
- Support projects/activities in District Economic Strategy

Project Description

The East Cesar Chavez Merchants Association (ECCMA) Activation Award was awarded in July of 2018 upon successful formation of their merchants association. The Activation Award is designed to provide funding to emerging associations for organizational and project development, as determined by the Board of Directors. ECCMA allocated Activation Award funding towards the execution of a creative installation project. The project’s goal are to increase district awareness, celebrate historical and cultural heritage, and increase business visitorship.

Upon selection of the Activation Award project, the ECCMA Board engaged local district artists to design a creative installation that would integrate design elements inspired by the district tagline “Experience the Heart of the East Side”. ECCMA requested business-district wide participation in the project and selected eleven (11) business locations for the installations. Eleven (11) local artists were engaged to complete the installations and provide each installation a unique design, .

To support the awareness of the installations the City assisted in production of a self-guided walking tour map



ACTIVATION AWARD

of all creative installation locations and provided support through social media campaigns. On Saturday, February 15th, the ECCMA hosted a day of district-wide business activation and guided walking tours of the installations by ATX Art Walk.

This project supported major goals of Souly Austin, the Economic Development Department, and the City of Austin, including revenue generation for small, local businesses, supporting Austin-based artists and creative professionals, promoting pedestrian-oriented amenities, and preservation and stabilization of culture and small, local businesses.

Artist Partners:

- Evan Voyles
- Selena Souders
- Todd Campbell
- Luis Angulo (Uloang)
- Erin Ashley Shook
- Bale Creek Allen
- Morgan Zator
- Chris Levack
- Miles Starkey
- Nathan “Sloke” Nordstrom
- Rachel Dickson

Business Partners:

- Swoon
- 1102 East
- Forge Hard Studios
- Long Motors
- Love + Roots Salon
- Dovetail Tattoo East
- Mr. Natural
- Stay Gold
- Something Cool Studios
- Juan and a Million
- Juniper

Metrics
Number of District Businesses Engaged - 18
Number of Partners - 34
Number of Creative Artists Engaged - 11
Media/News Hits - 20
Dollars Leveraged - \$9,500
Volunteer Hours - Estimated 200



ACTIVATION AWARD

District Strategy Alignment:

- **Economic Growth Strategies; Objective 1.** Maintain and promote business diversity within the District; Strategy 1.2 . Identify new opportunities and partnerships, new businesses, or potential events that will increase and retain the neighborhood clientele.
- **Economic Growth Strategies; Objective 2.** Promote and Brand the District; Strategy 2.3. Organize and host events and festivals that highlight the areas traditions
- **Beautification and Aesthetic Strategies; Objective 3.** Encourage Vibrant Storefronts and Walkways to attract foot traffic; Strategy 3.2. Activate blank walls or vacant lots to beautify the physical experience
- **Beautification and Aesthetic Strategies; Objective 4.** Preserve neighborhood character and entrances; Strategy 4.1. Highlight the gateways to the District to indicate when a visitor is entering or leaving the District and signage the celebrates the corridors cultural heritage

Challenges:

- Lack of capacity to accomplish project amongst Board
- Lack of City developed parameters and processes around project feasibility
- Clear communication between all project parties to ensure proper messaging for implementation
- Loss of momentum due to missed contractual deadlines

Successes:

- Leverage of private contributions to accomplish project
- Establishment of contractual agreements between association and private property owners
- Partnership with artists, businesses, property owners
- Positive media coverage