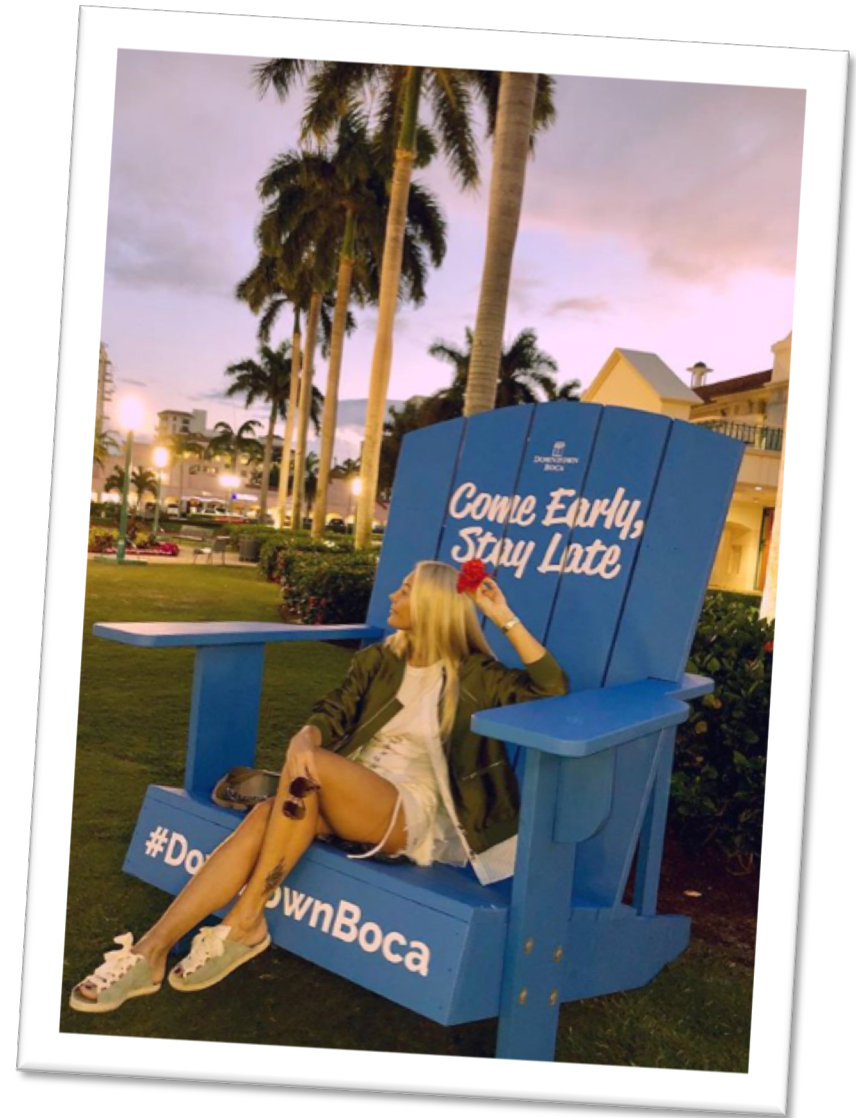


# DOWNTOWN BOCA

## Public Engagement Programming

2019 FRA AWARDS:  
Out of the Box



 @daiva\_fl

## 2018 Public Engagement Programming

Engaging residents, locals and visitors to Downtown Boca is a vital part of maintaining a vibrant and welcoming downtown district. The Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) continually strives to meet this vision, and has implemented new elements of **Public Engagement Programming** to further achieve its goals.

In collaboration with Downtown Boca's largest mixed use plaza, Mizner Park, and the City of Boca Raton, the CRA developed and installed interactive elements to entertain and engage visitors in underutilized public areas within the plaza and the downtown district. In addition, the CRA also installed creative pedestrian lighting designed to attract pedestrians traveling between the district's two main plazas and encouraging them to linger in Downtown Boca's green space – Sanborn Square.

# Innovation

Downtown Boca needed something new. Creating public engagement in underutilized public areas in the downtown was key in unifying Downtown Boca's two main plazas in the north and south ends of the district, and adding another level of enjoyment at Mizner Park and Sanborn Square.

The challenge was to create engagement in varied areas that met many goals:

- **Attract all types of visitors, both young and old – and their pets!**
- **Provide opportunities for interaction in various forms**
- **Create a big impact on a limited budget**
- **Develop long-lasting programming with easy manageability**
- **Encourage more and longer visitation to Mizner Park, Sanborn Square and the pedestrian promenade**
- **Reinforce Downtown Boca branding**

The combination of all the programming – Putt N' on the Plaza, seasonal LED penguins, giant chess/checkers, a big Adirondack chair and decorative streetscape lighting – was successful in creating meaningful activities for all in areas that were otherwise inactive.

# Innovation

## Public Engagement Elements

### **Large-Scale Chess & Checkers Set**

A large-scale, 8 x 8 feet board game is home to 25 inch and under chess pieces that are light enough to be moved around easily by players of any size. To add a little variety, the chess pieces will periodically be swapped out for checkers. Signage encourages photo ops and tagging.

### **Big Adirondack Chair**

The big bright blue Adirondack chair can fit 2-3 people at a time and provides a fun place to sit and enjoy the view of Mizner Park, read a book or chat with friends. Painted on tagline and hashtag drive social media sharing.

### **Putt N' on the Plaza**

The mini putting green measures 20x20 feet, and features four holes, putters and balls. The putting green is available to use by individuals or small groups.

### **LED Penguins**

Two sets of LED penguins – each featuring a Mom, Dad and baby penguin and ranging from 2 to 4 feet – light up Mizner Park and Sanborn Square from November through February, delighting passersby. Signage encourages photo ops and tagging.

### **Street Pole Lighting**

Street poles along NE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, also known as The Pedestrian Promenade, feature wrapped LED lighting, which helps guide pedestrians traveling north and south in the downtown and creates an inviting streetscape.

### **Festoon Lighting**

The two tree-lined entrances into Sanborn Square along NE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue are adorned with pedestrian level festoon lighting, drawing pedestrians into the park and adding charm with vintage illumination both day and night.



# Innovation

## Mizner Park Installations



Putt N' on the Plaza



Giant Chess/Checkers



Big Adirondack Chair



LED Penguins

# Innovation

## Sanborn Square Area Installations



Festoon  
Lighting



Street Pole Lighting



LED Penguins



# Community Impact

The introduction of the public engagement programming has been overwhelmingly positive. The areas where the activities have been introduced are now heavily trafficked, enjoyed by all, shared on social media and add visual interest to the landscape, benefiting the passersby.

The new elements have also greatly benefited Mizner Park, which has experienced increased customer satisfaction, time spent at the plaza and consumer spending at retail tenants.

*“In addition to the great dining and shopping options we provide here at Mizner Park, we are thrilled to partner with Downtown Boca to activate the middle of the park. Every day we see families enjoying the chess game and taking photos in the giant chair. We love being the gathering place in the heart of Downtown!”*

**Dana Romanelli Schearer,  
Mizner Park General Manager**



# Funding

The CRA has worked closely with Mizner Park over the years on event logistics, parking improvements, tenant promotions and much more. This valued relationship helped make many of the public engagement elements a reality. Additionally, the CRA worked with the City's Recreation Services Department on securing the Putt N' on the Plaza installation. As the CRA has a limited budget and minimal staff, our community and City partners proved to be invaluable in the execution and ongoing maintenance of this initiative.

## Expenses:


▪ Large-scale Chess/Checkers Set*:	\$ 1,500	
▪ Big Adirondack Chair*:	\$ 2,500	
▪ Putt N' on the Plaza*:	\$ 0	<i>Costs covered by City of Boca Raton Recreation Services Dept.</i>
▪ LED Penguins (2 sets)*:	\$ 7,630	
▪ Street Pole Lighting:	\$ 1,750	
▪ Festoon Lighting:	\$ 2,425	
▪ Total:	<b>\$15,805</b>	

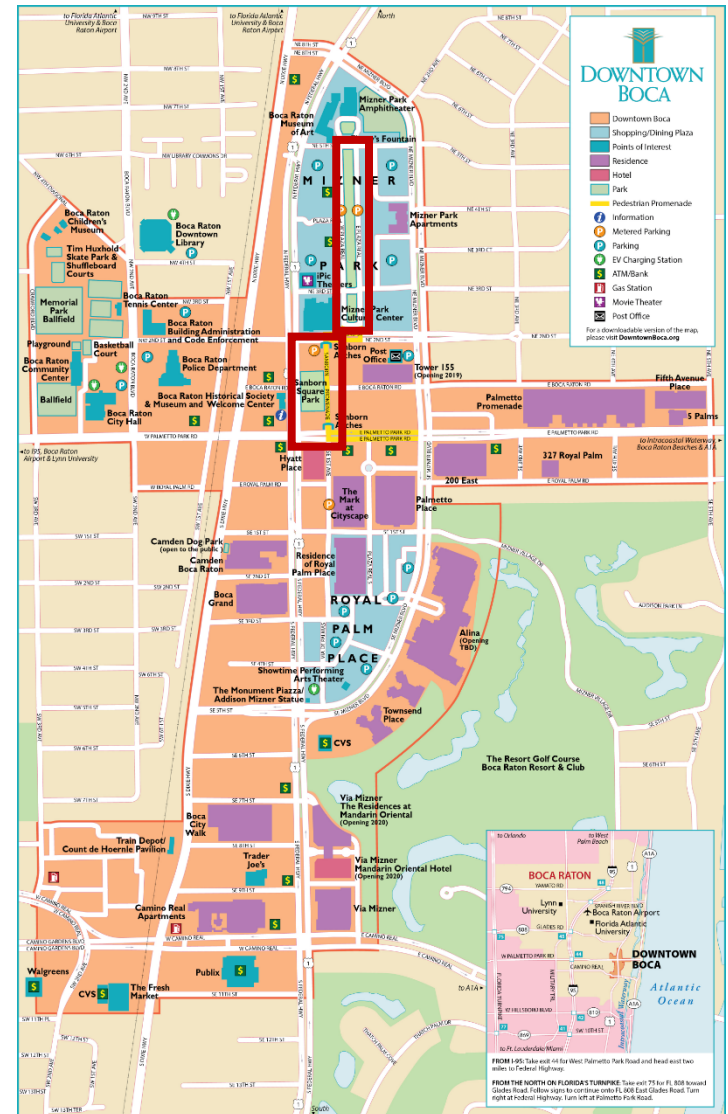
*\* Daily maintenance of all items located in Mizner Park provided **IN-KIND** by community partner Brookfield Properties, who manage Mizner Park.*

# Problem Solving

Downtown Boca has two main shopping and dining plazas – Mizner Park and Royal Palm Place – situated at the north and south ends of our district. While these destinations are popular within the community, the publicly owned area (POA) of Mizner Park and the pedestrian promenade connecting the two plazas have not generated as much interaction as was hoped.

The CRA envisioned the installations as a way to make these very central areas more engaging, providing visitors an opportunity to linger longer and more often, ultimately benefiting the many shops, restaurants and attractions in Mizner Park, along the promenade and in the general downtown district.

 = Underutilized public areas



## Applicability to Other Communities

Cities and towns in Florida and worldwide work hard to create inviting destinations for their residents and visitors. Utilizing public and community engagement elements is not new, but has become more and more popular, with a greater variety of programming options and tailored, out-of-the-box ideas.

This type of engagement provides a great community benefit, and can be achieved by districts of all sizes, with large or limited budgets. Low cost activities and community partner involvement make initiatives of this type achievable for all.

## A Local Hit!

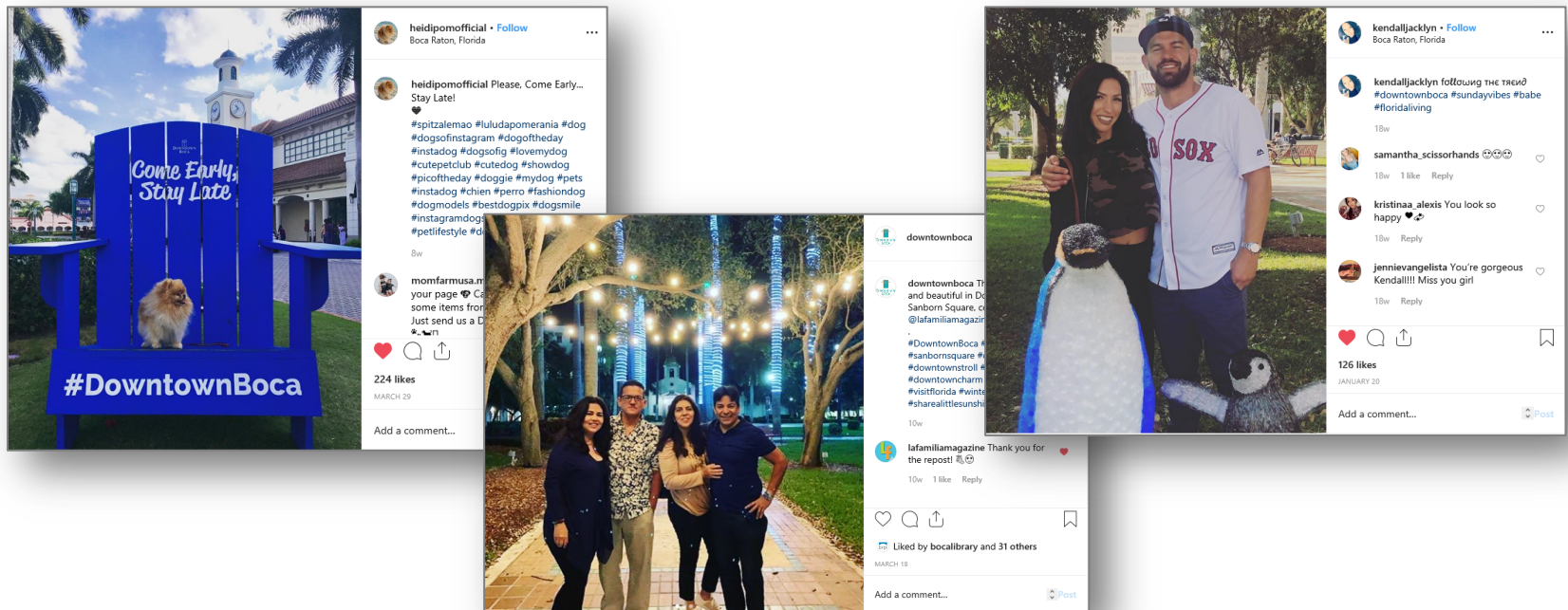
Two months after installation, the CRA was contacted by a nearby city commending the big Adirondack chair and requesting the vendor contact information.

# Other Things to Tell the Judges

## A Social Media Hit!

All of the new public engagement enhancements succeeded in providing visitors to Downtown Boca reasons to further interact and linger in underutilized areas during their time in the district.

The added bonus was a significant increase in social media mentions and shares for the Downtown Boca brand – the installations have been heavily promoting themselves and the CRA through social media from the start, generating thousands of impressions.





# Other Things to Tell the Judges

## A Social Media Hit!

