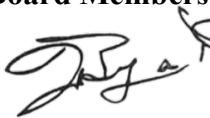




Memorandum

DATE: February 4, 2026

TO: Chair and Redevelopment Agency Board Members

THROUGH: Jackie Bryant, Executive Director 

FROM: Rachel Macintyre, Placemaking Manager

ENTITY: Redevelopment Agency

SUBJECT: District Activation Pilot

Summary

The Reno Redevelopment Agency (RDA) is launching the District Activation Pilot in the new year, expanding upon the success of the Downtown Activation Pilot implemented in 2024 and 2025. This pilot is part of the RDA's focus on expanding culture and entertainment opportunities throughout the various districts which was included in the FY 2026 approved budget. The District Activation Pilot will extend activation opportunities beyond downtown plazas to the Riverwalk, Brewery, and Midtown Districts, supporting new, community-driven events that strengthen neighborhood identity and economic vitality.

Pilot Overview

The District Activation Pilot builds on the original 2024 ARPA-funded activation effort that introduced recurring events in three priority downtown plazas. Those activations, now approved through the 2026 event season, demonstrated the value of consistent programming in activating public space, supporting local partners, and increasing vibrancy.

The Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board (RAAB) reviewed and supported this pilot.

This expanded pilot will support new, free, and accessible events produced by qualified third-party promoters within RDA districts. Priority will be given to recurring or multi-date activations such as concerts, markets, neighborhood festivals, art activations, and cultural celebrations. Selected promoters may receive up to \$15,000 per activation as a reimbursement grant for eligible operating expenses. Applications will be open through Submittable beginning February

3, 2026 through March 9, 2026, with activations anticipated to take place between June 1, 2026 and June 31, 2027. Interested parties can apply [here](#).

Impact

The District Activation Pilot is expected to generate the following outcomes:

- **Economic activity:** Increased foot traffic and customer exposure to nearby small businesses within Riverwalk, Brewery, and Midtown Districts.
- **Placemaking and vibrancy:** Regular programming activates underutilized public spaces and reinforces each district's unique character.
- **Community connection:** Free, inclusive events that foster social interaction, neighborhood pride, and shared public experiences.
- **Capacity building:** Support for local event producers and creative partners to pilot new concepts and develop sustainable programming.
- **Data-informed investment:** Event reporting requirements will provide attendance, marketing reach, and budget data to inform future redevelopment and cultural investments.

Next Steps

- Finalize and publish the District Activation Pilot Guide and application materials.
- Open the application window on February 3rd, 2026 and conduct targeted outreach to event producers and district stakeholders.
- Evaluate applications based on pilot criteria and budget availability.
- Notify selected partners in Spring 2026 and begin coordinated planning with RDA staff.
- Track performance metrics, community feedback, and economic indicators throughout the activation window and report outcomes to the City Council, RAAB, and the RDA Board.

The District Activation Pilot aligns with the Downtown Action Plan, the Truckee River Vision Plan, The Virginia St. Placemaking Study and broader City of Reno goals related to placemaking, activation, economic vitality, and equitable access to public spaces by fostering consistent, inclusive programming that strengthens neighborhood identity and supports small businesses.