

Downtown Hamilton Creative Placemaking Grant 2025 Funded Projects

Diaspora Vibes

Location: Jackie Washington Park, Ferguson Station, and Stewart Memorial Church (Ward 2)

Applicant: Afro Canadian Caribbean Association

Funding: \$14,999

Estimated timeline: August 2025

Project Description:

Diaspora Vibes is a three-part, community-led placemaking series designed to animate key spaces in downtown Hamilton through culturally rich and inclusive programming that reflects the Black experience. Each event is rooted in a location of cultural and historical importance to the Black community, providing opportunities to honour history, elevate underrepresented voices, and foster a stronger sense of belonging. Market of Memory will take place at Jackie Washington Park, Sound + Soul Saturday, will be held at Ferguson Station, and Freedom Walk will culminate at Stewart Memorial Church.

Common Threads

Location: John Rebecca Park (Ward 2)

Applicant: Open Heart Arts Theatre

Funding: \$14,975

Estimated timeline: July – September 2025

Project Description:

Open Heart is committed to addressing disparities regarding access to art opportunities, offering accessible, community-driven artistic experiences that elevate the voices and histories of those frequently overlooked. Common Threads is a large-scale collaborative pop-up cross-stitch project that encourages dialogue around personal connections with the park. Using large format wire grids mounted on rolling racks, members of the public are encouraged to collaboratively complete the cross-stitch by passing recycled cord through the racks to a participant on the other side, encouraging collaboration and dialogue supported by on-site facilitators.

Somali Week

Location: City Hall, Central Park (Ward 2)

Applicant: Somali Community

Funding: \$10,000

Estimated timeline: July 2025

Project Description:

Somali Week is a cultural celebration aimed at showcasing the rich heritage, history, and contributions of the Somali community in Canada. Taking place across four days at Central Park in Hamilton and other community spaces, this event will transform these locations into vibrant cultural hubs where people can gather, learn, and celebrate. The

project utilizes accessible public spaces to foster cultural exchange, bringing Somali traditions to a wider audience in a shared community environment.

Multicultural Art Performances

Location: City Hall Forecourt (Ward 2)

Applicant: Good Shepherd Centres Hamilton

Funding: \$7,938

Estimated timeline: August 2025

Project Description:

Inspired by the rich cultural heritage and artistic diversity within the Hamilton community, this event series integrates dance, Tai Chi, fashion shows, and singing to create a vibrant, inclusive space where people from all backgrounds can come together to celebrate and appreciate each other's cultures. City Hall, the heart of the city, has long been a place where various cultural groups come together, demonstrating unity and inclusivity. The project will be designed to animate the space by setting up activity stations, live performances, and cultural displays, inviting the community to engage with and experience the rich cultural diversity of Hamilton.

Good Hair: Film Screening & Fireside Fusion

Location: JC Beemer Park (Ward 3)

Applicant: Culture Matters Foundation

Funding: \$5,000

Estimated timeline: August 2025

Project Description:

A free outdoor film screening of Good Hair, followed by a facilitated fireside-style discussion, to be held at JC Beemer Park in downtown Hamilton. This event is a celebration of Black identity through the lens of hair culture and will create a welcoming, inclusive space for dialogue, learning, and community connection. JC Beemer Park is situated in an increasingly diverse neighbourhood and is known as a gathering point for a wide range of residents, including Somali, Caribbean, and other newcomer communities. Hosting the screening here makes it accessible, highly visible, and rooted in the everyday lives of the intended audience.

Interactive Circus Show, Dance Party!

Location: JC Beemer Park (Ward 3)

Applicant: Hamilton Aerial Group

Funding: \$5,000

Estimated timeline: September 2025

Project Description:

A circus/aerial show with stilt walkers, clowns, puppets, aerial rig with silks, hoop and trapeze performances will draw people to the vibrant and happy mood of the park, honoring its history as the former Victoria School (later Tweedsmuir School). Recalling the past through stories, artists will teach families how to skip rope and teach old

skipping songs, how to stilt walk, how to juggle and how to hula hoop. There will be an interactive aerial show and audience members will be invited to write love letters and poems on biodegradable wildflower seed cards. The event will culminate in a participatory dance party where aerialists will freestyle and dance in the air.

Share Your Verse: A Hamilton-Inspired Youth Literary Arts Storefront Installation

Location: Various storefront locations (Ward 2)

Applicant: Hamilton Verse

Funding: \$5,000

Estimated timeline: Summer/Fall 2025

Project Description:

Share Your Verse consists of five immersive storytelling installations, each inspired by a site-specific short story from Hamilton Verse’s 2025 youth-led anthology, *In the Shadow of the Mountain*. Each installation will feature a large poster displayed at a location directly tied to the story. The posters will include an excerpt from the story, an image of the young author, and a community engagement prompt inviting passersby to contribute a verse, line, or excerpt to the story. Led by racialized youth voices, this project encourages Hamiltonians to view their everyday surroundings differently while furthering our mission to amplify the voices of emerging, particularly racialized, youth writers to challenge traditional literary forms of storytelling.

Webfest v.1.0

Location: Central Park (Ward 2)

Applicant: Joint Selections: Arts & Culture Production Collective focused on collaborative multimedia curation (Group of residents led by Max Klein)

Funding: \$4,890

Estimated timeline: October 2025

Project Description:

Webfest v.1.0 will bring an under-utilized city space to life, gathering community and strengthening local connections. The project will highlight the beauty and importance of the role of insects in our shared environment, with weblike hammocks strung in the trees and eclectic music programming shifting from family-friendly sounds in the day to a more dance-oriented playlist as the sun sets. Projections and an illuminated web installation are designed to create a luminous spectacle for attendees and passers-by in the lead up to the Halloween season.

Interconnections: A Themed OPTICKS “Open Lab” in Beasley Park

Location: Beasley Park (Ward 2)

Applicant: OPTICKS

Funding: \$3,909

Estimated timeline: Fall 2025

Project Description:

An immersive, site-specific nighttime light installation at Beasley Park drawing inspiration from the park’s origins as a Grand Trunk Railway railyard, a place once threaded by metal tracks linking distant communities and moving goods. Multiple ‘tech’ stations will project onto different surfaces throughout the park, transforming existing park elements (trees, grounds, and infrastructure) into luminous storytelling surfaces. By invoking the concept of “network” and “connections”, the event will illuminate the park in imaginative ways that reflect not just its railway past, but also the many other networks that shape our world.

Coffee Ritual and Place-Conscious Dialogue

Location: John Rebecca Park (Ward 2)

Applicant: Pamoja

Funding: \$3,568.50

Estimated timeline: Fall 2025

Project Description:

Coffee Ritual and Place-Conscious Dialogue is a gathering that brings an East African tradition into conversation with Indigenous/Settler treaty knowledge. Held in John Rebecca Park, a vibrant and accessible downtown park in close proximity to organizations serving newcomers, such as the Immigrant Working Centre, YMCA, YWCA, and Empowered Squared, it is an ideal setting for inclusive, community-based engagement. This single-day event activates public space through intentional cultural practice, inviting participants into a shared experience of storytelling, reflection, and dialogue. More than a cultural demonstration; it is a living practice of relationship-building and communal care.

Salsa at the Station

Location: Ferguson Station (Ward 2)

Applicant: SalsaSoul Productions

Funding: \$2,770

Estimated timeline: Summer 2025

Project Description:

Salsa at the Station offers a community dancing space where everyone feels welcome and safe, drawing people to the downtown core outside of office hours to promote learning, moving, grooving, connecting and socializing. On four Thursday evenings during the summer months at Ferguson Station SalsaSoul Productions will offer 45-minute free and welcoming beginner salsa dancing lesson led by the community team followed by social dancing to Latin music for 75-minutes. Ferguson Station, with its unique urban location (and covered roof) makes it a very fitting space for inclusive and collaborative outdoor dancing of this street-style dance form.

PATCH: Hamilton Quilt Show

Location: Corktown Park (Ward 2)

Applicant: Hamilton Quilt Show

Funding: \$897

Estimated timeline: September 2025

Project Description:

PATCH: Hamilton Quilt Show is a one-day, accessible, outdoor gathering that transforms the fences of Corktown Park into a temporary gallery of handmade quilts, all created by local Hamilton quilters. Inspired by the quiet creativity of quilting—often a solitary act—and the power of gathering to share that work in public, this patchwork exhibition invites the public to experience the park differently—through colour, texture, memory, and the quiet beauty of collective craft.