

Bloordale, Baby Point Gates BIAs hope the Pan Am Games will bring new tourists

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There seems to be a consensus among some local Business Improvement Area (BIA) spokespeople about the Pan Am Games – they're hoping for a positive economic impact, but it's anyone's guess if there will be any effect at all.

Bloordale Village BIA's Dyan Marie said she was excited to learn the games would coincide with the organization's annual BIG On Bloor Festival, usually held in July.

In anticipation of this, Marie said she and organizers worked really hard to create lots of participatory activities and events for festival-goers, including tourists, to immerse themselves in.

The group was dismayed when unexpectedly the city informed the BIA that the festival would have to be rescheduled due to the games.

"They said traffic would be unmanageable," Marie told The Villager. "We thought it'd be great to have the festival during the games. It'd be a great impetus to go all out."

Marie, the BIA's special project co-ordinator, said she'd be more than happy to see an influx of visitors to the Bloordale neighbourhood during the games. Community leaders, merchants and residents along Bloor Street West between Dufferin Street and Lansdowne Avenue have been working hard to make their neighbourhood a vibrant area to live, work, shop and visit.

"We're hopeful people will visit," Marie said. "There's an interesting feel here with affordable restaurants and original small businesses."

Tourist attractions like the ROM will likely see a jump in visits, but Marie said she wonders if people will be brave enough to venture outside of the downtown core.

Danica Loncar of the Baby Point Gates BIA, says she is hopeful the games will attract people to the Jane and Annette streets-area.

"It's bringing a lot of people to the city. We hope it will spill over into our local area," she said.

The BIA just kicked off the season with its annual summer fest. Loncar's business, Art Works Art School, is getting into the spirit of the games. There will be Pan Am oriented camps and sports illustration courses, among a host of initiatives.

Loncar said it's likely local restaurants and eateries will get into the spirit.

Chair Darryl Kaplan admitted he's not sure how the games will impact the neighbourhood.

"It's not something we've spent a lot of time thinking about from a BIA perspective," he said.

Bloor West Village BIA's former chair and founder Alex Ling expressed his frustration about the lack of information and communication about the games.

"Because of the lack of publicity, we have no idea what's going on," he said, adding he has no idea how of if the games will have any impact on the Bloor West retail strip.

"There has been no communication. It's terrible," he said.



Baby Point Gates BIA member Danica Loncar is the owner of artWorks Art School.