

# **DENVER CREATES**

**A Collective Commitment to the Arts**

**Parks, Arts & Culture Committee Briefing  
October 7, 2025**





# AGENDA

- Arts and Cultural Planning in Denver
- Research Methodology
- **Introducing DENVER CREATES**
- Stewarding DENVER CREATES
- DAV's Initiatives
- Post-Launch Updates
- What's Next for DENVER CREATES





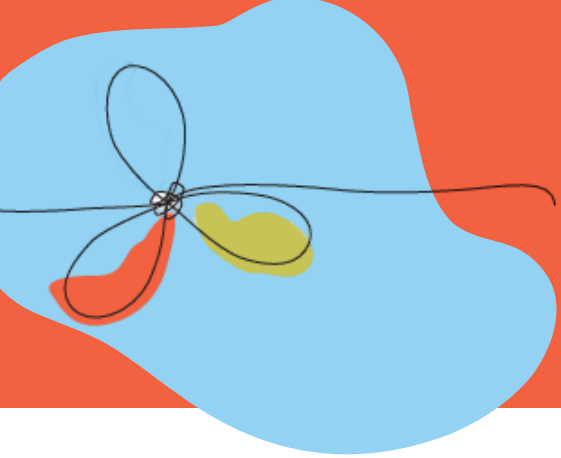


# A CITY IN FULL COLOR

Arts and culture shape Denver's identity—driving the economy, inspiring pride, learning, change, and daily life.

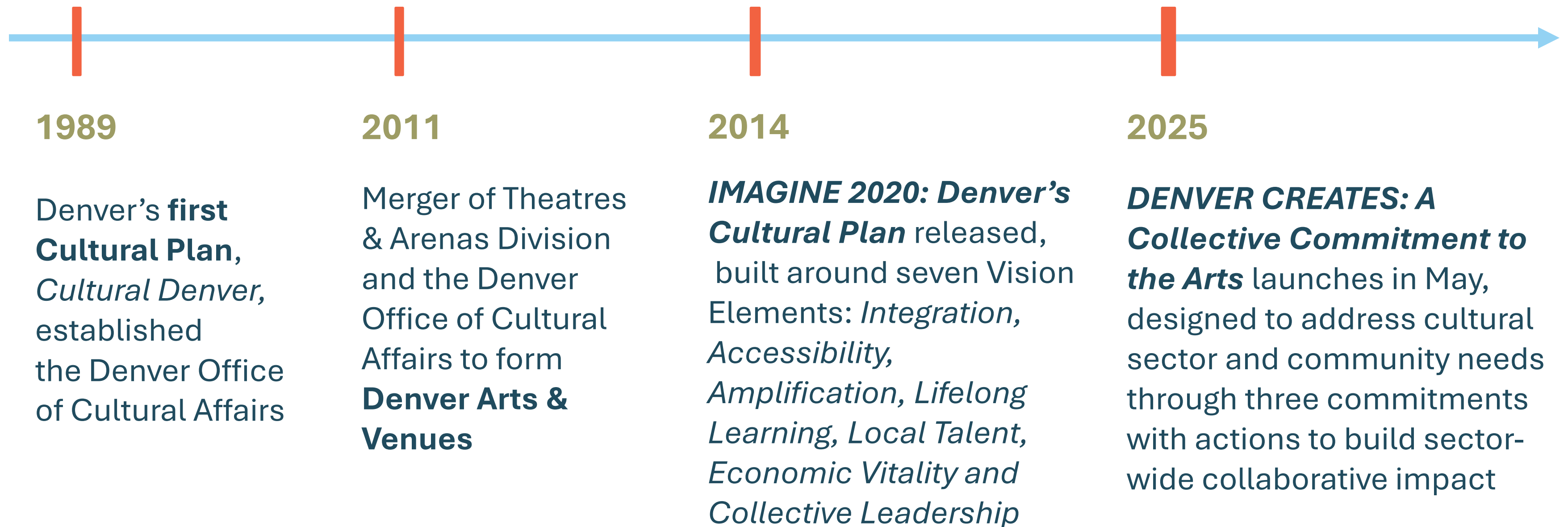
- *Residents overwhelmingly believe arts and culture create active, **unique neighborhoods** (87%), **attract tourism** (86%) and improve **quality of life** (84%).*
- *Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Denver residents view the city as an “**arts town**,” highlighting the cultural sector's integral role in **Denver's identity**.*



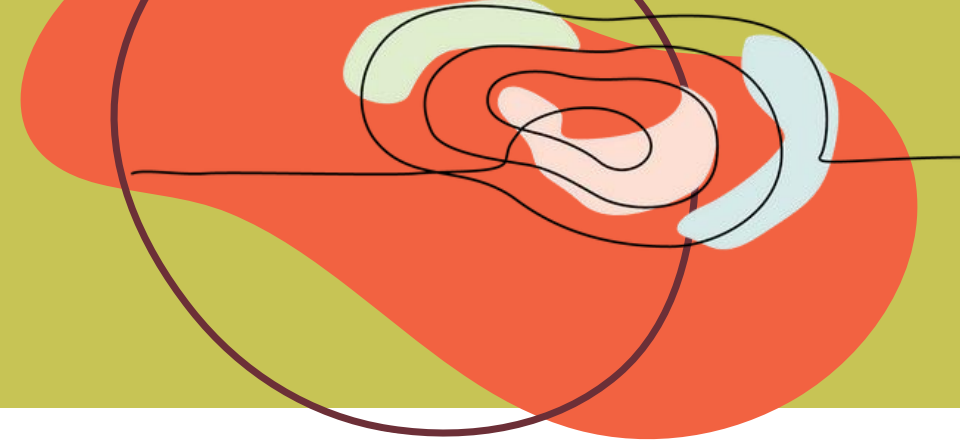


# CULTURAL PLANNING IN DENVER

**Strategic planning** is key to shaping a city's creative future and serves as a framework and practical guide to strengthen and grow the arts and culture ecosystem.



# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



**DENVER CREATES** was built on comprehensive, inclusive research and provides a framework that serves as a practical guide to strengthen and grow the city's arts and culture ecosystem.

Key steps of the in-depth and statistically valid research included:

- **Community Engagement:** Over 2,500 voices were heard.
- **Arts and Culture Sector-Specific Research:** More than 100 in-depth interviews were conducted.
- **Supplemental Data Analysis:** Trends in participation and funding were examined.
- **Collaborative Planning:** Community advisors, focus groups and targeted outreach ensured representation.



# DENVER CREATES

A Collective Commitment to the Arts





# THE GUIDING VISION OF DENVER CREATES

To grow and strengthen Denver's  
arts and culture ecosystem for  
everyone to enjoy.





# ACHIEVING THE VISION



**DENVER CREATES** is grounded in community input and years of tracking engagement in the arts. Centered on equity, access, and collaboration, it advances **three shared commitments** to build a more inclusive and vibrant cultural landscape.

This is our **collective invitation** to co-create a city where imagination thrives, expression is every where and creativity belongs to us all.



*I believe that art and culture is the glue that holds the community together.*

*~ Damon McLeese, Access Gallery*



# SHARED COMMITMENT #1



## BROADEN ACCESS TO ARTS & CULTURE

Expands access to arts and culture by:

- Increasing access to funding
- Increasing audience engagement
- Arts and culture in neighborhoods



## SHARED COMMITMENT #2

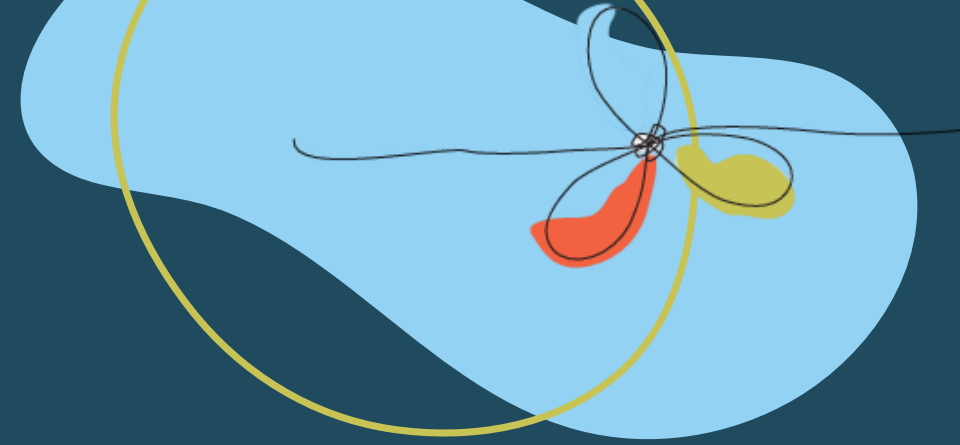
# CULTIVATE THE CULTURAL COMMUNITY

Strengthens Denver's Arts and Cultural Sector by:

- Promoting Denver's arts scene
- Cross-sector partnerships
- Artists directly involved in civic and community decision making
- Training for youth and early-career artists



## SHARED COMMITMENT #3



# SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC VITALITY OF DENVER'S CULTURAL SECTOR

Increases Resources for Arts & Culture to drive a strong economy through:

- Increase access to affordable spaces – rehearsal, performance and studio
- Cultivate arts and culture philanthropic funding
- Ensuring artists see a future career in Denver



# STEWARDED DENVER CREATES

Through DENVER CREATES, Denver Arts & Venues (DAV) aims to inspire collaboration within the arts community to collectively address sector challenges and bring the vision of this roadmap to life.

**DAV will steward DENVER CREATES and serve as a convener of the cultural sector through programs like:**

- **Biannual Summit**
- **Speaker Series**
- **Impact Teams**
- **Year in Review Reports**

*When artists feel supported, they collaborate. You see musicians and visual artists come together in different ways. The community bubbles up with energy, people feel excited, and they become engaged in conversations and the collective process.*

*By Johnson Roux Black Consulting*





# DAV'S INITIATIVES

In addition to stewarding **DENVER CREATES**, **Denver Arts & Venues** (DAV) will launch initiatives to support specific actions identified by the community, focusing on:

- **Stimulating creative economy**
- **Strategies for arts sector amplification**
- **Exploring cultural trust model**
- **Supporting youth arts programs**
- **Launch cultural partner program**

*I see arts, culture, and creativity as part of the civic fabric that helps us imagine who we want to be and what values we want to espouse as a city.*

*~ Aisha Ahmad-Post, Newman Center for the Performing Arts*





# **DENVER CREATES: POST LAUNCH UPDATES**





# ARTS AND YOUTH

- **\$30,000 investment**
- **Partnership with Denver Parks & Recreation**
- **Youth 12 y/o and up**
- **Out-of-school-time arts & culture**
- **La Alma Recreation Center**
  - **Night Moves Arts & Culture – 71 youth participants June – August**
  - **Additional Fall programming planned**



# IMPACT TEAM

- **First team's focus: Sector Branding/Marketing**
- **Facilitated conversation: Alchemy Group**
  - **September 5, 2025**
- **Brought together a group of arts and culture stakeholders to identify priority areas and determine a path forward for our first Impact Team**





# CAST

- **CAST - Community Arts Stabilization Trust**
- **CAST (Oakland) expands its work in Colorado to create more sustainability for artists and cultural organizations**
- **DAV will host CAST's Colorado office at Champa Arts**
- **Collaborative effort including Bonfils Stanton Foundation and others**





# **DENVER CREATES: WHAT'S NEXT**





# DENVER CREATES CONVERSATIONS

## Fall '25 DC Conversations event

- Topic: DAV shares DENVER CREATES multi-year data – How residents and the cultural sector feel about arts, culture and creativity

## 2-3 DC Conversations events in 2026

- Exploring locations throughout Denver
- Potential Commissioner involvement



# DENVER CREATES SUMMIT

- **First Summit in 2027**
- Exciting collaborations in the works
- Combining Summit with the Mayor's Awards
  - Mayor's Awards moves to biannual schedule
- **Commission** involvement
  - Potential for planning group and/or reviewing session proposals





**THANK YOU!**

