Reference #
15728749

# Public Hearings

## I am speaking/writing on (select one): / Hablo/Escribo sobre (seleccione uno):
25-0640: An ordinance approving a resolution requesting the renewal and extension of the RiNo Business Improvement District for an additional ten-year period. / Una ordenanza que aprueba una resolución para solicitar la renovación y ampliación del Distrito de Mejoras Comerciales de RiNo por un período adicional de diez años.

## First Name / Nombre
Diana

## Last Name / Apelido
Merkel

## I am a resident of: / Soy residente del:
District 9 / Distrito 9

## I am... / Estoy...
FOR the item / a FAVOR del artículo

## My testimony: / Mi testimonio:
Dear Honorable Members of City Council,
Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for the renewal of the RiNo Business Improvement District (BID). My name is Diana Merkel—former BID Chair, long-time resident, property owner, and practicing artist in RiNo since 2006. What follows is a
summary of my experience on the BID Board, some reflections on its evolution, and a personal example of how its programs have made a meaningful impact. I hope these insights are helpful as you consider the BID's renewal.
I joined the RiNo BID Board in 2019, bringing with me the perspective of both an artist and property owner. It was a valuable opportunity to engage in meaningful work alongside long-standing stakeholders, and to collaborate with RiNo staff, boards, and the City on initiatives such as the installation of stop signs and the conversion of Walnut Street to a two-way corridor. We also focused on affordability, support for artists and small businesses, and projects like the RiNo Art Park, No Vacancy, and the Studios on
Blake. During this time, we developed a Strategic Plan to guide future leadership as Tracy Weil stepped down from his role as Executive Director.

When the pandemic began, I moved into the role of BID Chair. It was an exceptionally challenging period marked by leadership transitions, the shift to virtual meetings, and the cancellation of key events. Rebuilding in the aftermath has taken considerable effort. RiNo staff and all district board chairs (BID, GID, KRW, RAD) dedicated countless hours to revisiting finances, re-establishing governance processes, recruiting new board members, surveying the community, and working closely with the Executive Committee.

Today, I feel the work has paid off, and the BID has never been more ready to take on the next ten years of vital infrastructure and cultural initiatives. Under the leadership of new BID Chair Adam Larkey, and with the support of external consultants, the organization is thoughtfully refining its structure and re-engaging with stakeholders in meaningful ways. The current board is a compassionate, capable and diverse group, deeply committed to sustaining a vibrant and inclusive Art District.

As RiNo continues to grow, so do the scale and complexity of its challenges and opportunities. A strong arts culture has long been a driver of place-making, economic vitality, and community identity. The BID's renewal assures that can continue.

On a personal note, the BID's and Art District's support has enabled me to transition from running a small branding shop to becoming a nationally recognized installation artist. Programs like No Vacancy and Art RiNo gave me the space to experiment,
develop my practice, and shape a new career trajectory. I know I'm not the only artist being impacted in this way by district initiatives. Having a seat at the table next to developers, small business owners, and district leadership came with it's challenges,
but I have grown so much over my time on the board and feel like I now have a voice in the community. We should celebrate wins like this, and use it to fuel our work going forward.

Thank you for your ongoing support of RiNo, The BID, and of the role arts and culture play in Denver's continued evolution.

Sincerely,
Diana Merkel
Former RiNo BID Chair
Resident, Artist, and Property Owner

## Finish Time

2025-05-15 17:54:28

Reference #
15733657

# Public Hearings

I am speaking/writing on (select one): / Hablo/Escribo sobre (seleccione uno):
25-0640: An ordinance approving a resolution requesting the renewal and extension of the RiNo Business Improvement District for an additional ten-year period. / Una ordenanza que aprueba una resolución para solicitar la renovación y ampliación del Distrito de Mejoras Comerciales de RiNo por un período adicional de diez años.

First Name / Nombre
Andrew

Last Name / Apelido
Warshauer

I am a resident of: / Soy residente del:
District 9 / Distrito 9

I am... / Estoy...
FOR the item / a FAVOR del artículo

My testimony: / Mi testimonio:
I'm writing to show my strong support for renewing and extending the RiNo Business Improvement District (BID) for another ten years.
As someone who lives in RiNo (29th and Arapahoe), I've seen how much the BID has done for our neighborhood since I moved here over 3 years ago. Thanks to the BID, RiNo is cleaner, safer, and more vibrant. We have better public spaces, more public art, and events that bring people together and support local businesses. The BID gives our community a voice and helps keep RiNo unique and creative.
I know there's always room for improvement, but overall, the BID has been a huge asset. Please approve the renewal so we can keep making RiNo a great place to live, work, and visit for the next decade.
Thank you for your time and consideration.
Best,
Andrew Warshauer

Finish Time

2025-05-18 16:25:24

Reference #
15735062

# Public Hearings

I am speaking/writing on (select one): / Hablo/Escribo sobre (seleccione uno):
25-0640: An ordinance approving a resolution requesting the renewal and extension of the RiNo Business Improvement District for an additional ten-year period. / Una ordenanza que aprueba una resolución para solicitar la renovación y ampliación del Distrito de Mejoras Comerciales de RiNo por un período adicional de diez años.

First Name / Nombre
Jenna

Last Name / Apelido
Cruff

I am a resident of: / Soy residente del:
I don't know /  No sé mi número de distrito

I am... / Estoy...
FOR the item / a FAVOR del artículo

My testimony: / Mi testimonio:
Good Evening,
I am writing in support of RiNo Art District and the BID renewal. I am an artist at Walnut Workshop, one of the local artist and creative studios. RiNo Art District has had an incredibly positive impact on my practice, to the point that without it I'm not sure I would have any exposure in the neighborhood. They are the reason we have First Fridays and are able to connect with the community, bring them into our studios, and show them our art. I have gotten multiple gallery shows and commissions simply from people looking through the RiNo directory of artists and finding me. The outreach and community engagement they foster is what makes RiNo an art district. Without their continued support the artists in RiNo will disappear, not because we will go away, but because we won't have an organization actively keeping us visible in the community. An arts community in a business oriented neighborhood doesn't happen organically, it requires intentional organization which they provide. Art connects people to each other and brings life and identity to a community. Without the BID, I don't believe RiNo will continue to be known for arts, it will become just another gentrified city neighborhood without an art culture and no identity unifying the community. I encourage you to vote for the BID's

continuation.
Thank you,
Jenna Cruff
JACruff Art
jacruff.net
401-524-9884

## Finish Time

2025-05-19 08:58:38

**Tracy Weil**
Chair, RiNo Art District
1320 27th St. G, Denver, CO 80205
tracy@weilworks.com | 303-913-7508

**May 15, 2025**

Denver City Council
c/o Councilman Watson, District 9
1437 Bannock St., Room 451
Denver, CO 80202

**Dear Honorable Members of Denver City Council,**

As Chair of the RiNo Art District, I am writing in strong support of the renewal of the RiNo Business Improvement District (BID). On behalf of our board, members, and the broader creative and business community, I want to underscore the value and importance of the BID and the essential services it provides to the district.

The BID has played a critical role in maintaining cleanliness, supporting mobility, and ensuring thoughtful infrastructure improvements that benefit everyone in our area—including Five Points, Elyria-Swansea, Globeville, and Cole. These services directly contribute to the health and vitality of the RiNo Art District. We've seen firsthand how they help make our district a more welcoming, accessible, and vibrant place for businesses, residents, and visitors alike.

Equally important is the BID's longstanding support for artists, creatives, and small businesses. Over the years, this support has helped sustain the unique cultural identity of the RiNo Art District and uplifted the very people who gave the district its character. From public art initiatives and community-driven programming to small business assistance and inclusive partnerships, the BID has shown a deep commitment to elevating creative voices and fostering innovation.

As we face continued economic uncertainty, including high vacancy rates in downtown Denver, the engagement of artists, creatives, and small businesses is more important than ever. These groups are essential to maintaining the energy and identity of our city. Their presence not only brings life and culture to our streets, but also plays a direct role in attracting visitors, investment, and development.

The BID should continue—and expand—its support for these vital contributors. By investing in local talent, creative initiatives, and small business programming, the BID can help build a more resilient and vibrant urban core.

The RiNo Art District has partnered with the BID on extensive community outreach during this renewal process, helping to ensure that stakeholders are informed and engaged. These efforts reflect our shared commitment to transparency and to shaping a BID that continues to reflect the values of the community it serves.

While the administrative model is changing, it is important that the BID stays true to its original mission and ordinance. With the RiNo Art District's help, the BID has served as a national model for shifting the paradigm of how BIDs can operate—demonstrating that these districts can go beyond basic services to actively support arts, culture, and community well-being. The BID should not become just another tax district focused solely on development. It must continue to be a steward of inclusive growth—one that supports social impact, protects affordable spaces for artists and entrepreneurs, and advances equity for all who live, work, and create here. This commitment is the key to our success and is what sets RiNo apart as a model for how creative districts can thrive while remaining rooted in community.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and continued support. We look forward to working together to keep the RiNo Art District a thriving, inclusive, and inspiring place for all.

**Warm regards,**

**Tracy Weil**
Chair & Co-Founder, RiNo Art District