



STRATEGIC PLAN 2019

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OUR STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee for the Durango Creative District started meeting in the summer of 2018. Since then, it has grown to include a coalition of representatives from different organizations, businesses and nonprofits. The Steering Committee meets once a month to advise the implementation of the stakeholder working groups, community outreach, and fundraising. We sincerely thank the dedicated leaders in this group!

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Local First

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Carver Brewing Company

NICOL KILLIAN

The City of Durango

JACK LLEWELYN

Durango Chamber of Commerce

SCOTT SMITH

Creative Economy Commission
Imagesmith Photography

ANTONIA CLARK

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Durango Area Tourism Office

TIM WALSWORTH

Business Improvement District

JULIE TAPLEY-BOOTH

Center for Southwest Studies at
Fort Lewis College

CHARLES LESLIE

Creative Economy Commission
Community Concert Hall at
Fort Lewis College

WAYNE LABAR

The Powerhouse Science Center
& MakerLab

DAVID MOLER

Durango Rivertrippers
Business Improvement District

SUSAN LANDER

Lander & Associates
Colorado Creative Industries Council

TIM WHEELER

Local First

BRENDA MACON

Durango Arts Center

KIRK KOMICK

Rochester Hotel
& Leland House

TORI OSSOLA

The Strater Hotel

JEROEN VAN TYN

Stillwater Music

DEBRA MAY

Durango Friends of
the Arts

KARREN LITTLE

Durango Friends of
the Arts

SPECIAL THANKS

CREATIVE KICKSTARTERS 2018-2019

The City of Durango
First Southwest Bank Foundation
Durango Bootlegger Society
Sara Olsen & Associates
Stallings Design Co.
Alpine Bank
The Durango Herald
Durango Land & Homes
Premier Vacation Rentals
Dear Family Fund
Durango Chamber of Commerce
Imagesmith Photography
The Powerhouse
Ballantine Family Fund
Fort Lewis College
Carver Brewing Company
Susan Lander

OTHER SUPPORTERS

Community Foundation Serving SW Colorado
Durango Business Improvement District
Julie and David Thibodeau
Salomon Family Fund
Looking Glass Art Group
Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad
Sorrel Sky Gallery
Bill Carver

INTRODUCTION

DURANGO'S UNIQUE HISTORY

Durango, Colorado has a rich multi-cultural history dating back to its founding in 1880. Nestled in a mountainous, isolated basin with the beautiful Animas River running through it, our town was built upon railroading and transportation of silver and gold ore.

Currently, our strongest tourism draw is our historic coal-powered train that takes passengers on an excursion to the small mining town of Silverton, CO. We are also known for our fantastic outdoor recreation, being in close proximity to Mesa Verde National Park, and for having the highest amount of restaurants per capita in the nation (according to research done by the San Francisco Travel Association, 2018).

OUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Through impact studies, we have come to find that members of our creative community want a unified form of marketing and ways to exhibit that we are much more than just an “adventure town” -- we are home to many creative and artisan industries that keep our town vibrant and discoverable. In addition to the local artisans that produce valuable crafts and goods for local use and export, we have ample craft food and brewery establishments, design firms, performing arts spaces, studios and galleries, cultural and heritage sites and manufacturers, among many other creative enterprises. We want to exemplify the makers that live and thrive here while attracting new creative businesses and tourism to Durango.

In 2017, the City of Durango held a large-scale public process to discover the community's vision for the future. This led to the revision of the Comprehensive Plan to include an Arts, Culture and Creative Economy section, which describes our town's commitment to “enhance the quality of life and regional economy by coordinating,

focusing, empowering, and celebrating the community's creative and cultural resources” via accommodating and equitable policy choices.

Forming a Creative District in Durango is one facet of this revised Comprehensive Plan. Creative leaders, City officials and the larger community are excited about the formation of this organization and the positive outcomes that will come from it. Our community has determined the ultimate vision for our Creative District:

A thriving local economy stimulated by essential creative experiences.

Here in Durango, we strongly believe that our creative enterprises are vital fuel for our local economy. Our town celebrates spending and creating locally, and the Durango Creative District will be a fitting organization to produce metrics on this notion. The future work and programs of the Creative District will harken back to our ultimate mission:

To unite, celebrate, and expand our local creative economy.



The historic Strater Hotel in downtown Durango. Photo by Imagesmith Photo.

THE STAKEHOLDER PROCESS



*Our initial stakeholder meeting in October was attended by 60 people.
Photo by Local First.*

PROGRESS

An astounding number of community members have been participating in our stakeholder process to form a Creative District. From June 2019 to September 2019, we have assembled key stakeholders to form a steering committee of over 17 members.

Our first stakeholder meeting was attended by approximately 60 people, and over 300 individuals have registered their creative assets with us. Throughout the past year, we have held numerous working groups with the community, resulting in a unified vision and plan for our own Creative District.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Durango Creative District opted to conduct the D.I.Y. Call Yourself Creative stakeholder process offered by Colorado Creative Industries.

Our first step was to get broad community support and financial buy-in. We held an initial stakeholder meeting on October 4 to get the community's support to move forward with this year-long process.

We also held an initial fundraiser that yielded approximately \$15,000 for the stakeholder process. We presented to several major entities in efforts to recruit them to our steering committee and get them involved in a working group. We broke our working groups into the following categories:

1. Steering Committee
2. Shared Vision & Strategic Plan
3. Legal Structure & Funding
4. Creative Assets & Geographic Inclusion
5. Branding

CREATIVE CONNECTION HOURS

Beginning in February 2019, we launched regular networking events called Creative Connection Hours. These events, which occur every other month, allow creatives a chance to meet new people and experience different venues in Durango. They have been widely successful, with approximately 75-100 people in attendance per event.



Our first Creative Connection Hour at Sorrel Sky Gallery was attended by 75 people. Photo by Imagesmith Photo.

STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUPS

1. STEERING COMMITTEE

Our Steering Committee began meeting in the summer of 2018. We hold regular meetings on the last Tuesday of every month. During these meetings, Steering Committee members checked in on the stakeholder process, brainstormed ways to engage the community and fundraise, and approved critical decisions for the burgeoning Creative District.

2. SHARED VISION & STRATEGIC PLAN

The Shared Vision & Strategic Plan working group held several discussions about our ultimate goals, how arts and culture are currently positioned in our community, and how we can use the Creative District to help creatives better achieve their goals in the future.

3. LEGAL STRUCTURE & FUNDING

The Legal Structure & Funding group included community leaders who provided great insight into the pros and cons of a variety of legal structures for the Durango Creative District.

This group ultimately decided that a 501(c)3 structure is the best fit for the Durango Creative District along with strong partnerships with the City of Durango and the Steering Committee members.



Branding Group meeting on February 20, 2019. Photo by Local First.

A formal MOU between the Durango Creative District and the City of Durango has been drafted and will be considered in Fall of 2019. The Durango Creative District utilizes the SW Community Foundation as a fiscal sponsor and is staffed by Local First. A stand alone 501(c)3 organization will be considered by the end of the 2019 calendar year.

4. CREATIVE ASSETS & GEOGRAPHIC INCLUSION

The Creative Asset & Geographic Inclusion group instituted an online registry for people to list their creative assets, whereby 208 assets were self-registered on this form! The group utilized the City's GIS system to make a density map.

This information helped the group determine which areas of town could be included in our physical boundary. **See Page 11 for our Creative District boundary map.**

The group also concluded that while the physical district has to be a section of Durango, we want our greater service area to include all of La Plata County. We have strong regional ties in Southwest Colorado and want to use this platform to promote our neighbors in the towns of Bayfield and Ignacio.

5. BRANDING & TAGLINE

The Branding group worked with marketing consultant Sara Olsen to hold a community workshop on the importance of branding and design on February 20, 2019.

We posted an open call for logo designs and received 11 submissions from professional designers in the community. We held a public vote on the logos, of which 98 people engaged.

Using the metrics from this vote, the Steering Committee, the Branding leads determined the finalist design concept from local designer Brett Stallings. He worked with our Steering Committee to make final revisions and help us achieve an identity that felt most fitting for Durango.

See full spreadsheet of meetings and attendance in Appendix A.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS LAUNCH:

*Initial launch on October 4, 2018
60 attendees*



STEERING COMMITTEE

*11 meetings
167 attendees*

VISION & STRATEGIC PLAN

*3 meetings
42 attendees*

LEGAL & FUNDING

*6 meetings
65 attendees*

ASSETS & MAPPING

*5 meetings
269 people engaged*

BRANDING & TAGLINE

*4 meetings
107 people engaged*



CREATIVE CONNECTION HOURS

*4 events in February, April, June, August
340 attendees*



295 newsletter subscribers



128 Facebook followers



1,143 Instagram followers



**33 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS
2616 ENGAGEMENTS**

For a full list of meetings held between 2018-2019, please see Appendix A.

HOW WE DEFINE “CREATIVE”

During working group meetings with the community, we had multiple discussions that harkened back to the same question: What is considered “creative”?

We researched how Colorado Creative Industries and other Creative Districts defined “creative”, and we landed upon a simple answer:

Anything that is made or produced in La Plata County, whether it is tangible or in the mind, is considered creative.

Anything that contributes to the uniqueness of our town is considered creative. For Durango, this was broken up into the following categories:

VISUAL ARTS

- Painting
- Sculpting
- Photography
- Ceramics
- Mixed Media

DESIGN

- Graphic Design
- Architecture
- Interior Design
- Fashion
- Advertising

ARTISAN PRODUCTS

- Textiles & Fashion
- Beauty Products
- Health Products
- Jewelry
- Pottery

PERFORMING ARTS

- Acting
- Dance
- Music
- Comedy
- Writing
- Festivals

LITERARY & PUBLISHING

- Journalism
- Writing
- Publications
- Blogging

CULTURE & HERITAGE

- Events
- Agriculture
- Recreation
- Museum
- History
- Cultural nonprofit



Photo courtesy of Carver Brewing Co.

CULINARY ARTS & CRAFT BEVERAGE

- Craft Food
- Craft Beer
- Craft Liquor
- Coffee Roasters
- Farmers & Growers

HISTORIC HOTELIERS

- Recognized historic hotels

VENUES

- Theaters
- Performing Spaces
- Events

FILM & MEDIA

- Film
- Videography
- Media
- Advertising

EDUCATION

- School
- Nonprofit
- Arts & Culture classes

OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Trails
- Custom outdoor products
- Festivals

DURANGO CORE VALUES

Durango is home to a wide demographic of experimental people. Dubbed by some stakeholders as “one big playground,” people of all ages work hard so they can play hard. It is common to meet folks who are involved with multiple jobs, boards, committees, clubs and creative pursuits. Our local, independent business community is close-knit and believes in cooperation.

While we acknowledge our reliance on our tourism, the stakeholders in our community agreed that the Creative District will prioritize serving the local creatives first.

Among our Shared Vision and Branding groups, we found these core values that “Durangotangs” have in common.

FRIENDLY ECLECTIC
GRITTY QUIRKY INNOVATIVE VIBRANT
CONSCIOUS LOCAL
COLLABORATIVE
DOWN-TO-EARTH DYNAMIC
SUPPORTIVE
FREE-SPIRITED HISTORIC
WILD ENGAGED OUTDOORSY
MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

*Results from community poll:
“What is one word you would use to describe Durango”*

- **We value our landscape and our sense of place.**

We live in a beautiful and inspiring part of Colorado where the desert meets the mountains.

- **We value our remoteness and isolation.**

Scarcity makes us more cooperative, more resourceful, and more conscious of our actions.

- **We have a rich heritage and history.**

This is evident when walking past our historic downtown buildings, riding our 1800s steam engine train, and visiting our museums. We strive to preserve our city’s unique story.

- **We value access to multiple forms of self-expression and individualism.**

Whether it’s learning to salsa dance, being a craft beer connoisseur, or trying your hand at photography: Durango warmly welcomes dabblers and experts alike.

- **Durango has a high cost of living, and people work hard to live here.**

We want Durango to be affordable for everyone, especially people the creative sector.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve our mission of uniting, celebrating, and expanding our local creative economy, the community identified the following goals and objectives:

GOAL 1:

Foster more collaboration among creatives.

Objectives:

- Plan and host “Creative Connection Hours” every other month as a space to network, exhibit creative venues, and showcase talented locals.
- Organize skill share groups and creative development classes.
- Better utilize, promote, and financially sustain existing collaborative facilities, including:
 - Cooperative/shared working spaces (City Objective 23.4, policy 23.4.1)
 - Shared theatre/performance spaces
 - Shared facilities/equipment
 - Creative “safe spaces” (with access to wifi, printer, etc.)
- Coordinate a large fair/expo for entrepreneurial creatives.
 - Can include support for existing fairs, including the Durango Arts Center’s Autumn Arts Festival, The Durango Farmers Market, or the Animas City Night Bazaar.

GOAL 2:

Create value for people that work in creative sectors.

Objectives:

- Work with the City to invest more public funding in Arts & Culture.
 - Investigate local procurement policies, ballot measures, and a percentage of the City’s general fund as modes of investment.
 - City Comp Plan Policy 23.1.2: Continue to allocate lodger taxes for tourism marketing, and encourage the investment of some of these dollars to support and promote local creative economy assets.
 - Policy 23.1.3: Make strategic investments in arts and culture resources to achieve City goals.
- Quantify our creative economy through impact studies.
 - City Comp Plan Policy 23.1.3: Continue to conduct, interpret, and strategically apply economic research to expand the understanding of the impact of the creative economy on Durango’s economy and quality of life.



Batucada de Durango band. Photo courtesy of Stillwater Music.

- Build upon our current Prosperity & Economic Impact study.

- Share individual and organizational success stories online and on social media.

GOAL 3:

Increase education and resources for creatives.

Objectives:

- **Form an accessible and approachable online directory of creatives in the area, instituting a “shared marketplace”.**
 - Charge low advertising fees for inclusion in the directory as a method of fundraising for the Durango Creative District.
- **Support creatives through business development workshops and seminars.**
- **Host a Creative Business Roundtable to foster business partnerships and innovative business models.**
- **Host creative “TED”-style presentations from locals and guest speakers.**
- **Institute the “Well-Fed Artist Movement”, a campaign to educate the community on the importance of paying for creative services.**
 - Can include video, print and social media campaigning.
 - Hold discussions about price-setting, the creative’s “bottom line” and fair compensation by relative scale in La Plata County, and the value of pro-bono work.

GOAL 4:

Position Durango as a thriving place to live, work and visit for creativity.

Objectives:

- **Repeat our Creative District’s branding, tagline and mission through all marketing channels.**
- **Increase print and digital marketing for arts and culture in Durango.**

- **Release quantified data and metrics from impact studies to the general public.**
- **Implement signage for the Durango Creative District in-town, on our River Trail, and on state highway.**
 - Includes Digital map, Google maps
- **Offer creative tours for visitors.**
 - Can be in-person or through a map
 - Partner with the Durango Lego Bomber as a unique “scavenger hunt” for art.
- **Utilize the Creative District as a central marketing component in connection with the Durango Area Tourism Office, the Durango Business Improvement District, Local First, and more.**
- **Offer regional marketing promotions for neighboring Creative Districts.**
 - Become included in or design our own “Creative Corridor”-style map with Mancos, Telluride and other neighboring towns
- **Utilize the City’s trail systems to connect creatives Support the construction of a connector between the Animas River Trail with downtown Durango.**
 - *City Policy 23.4.2: Foster development of spaces that support creative activities along the Animas River Trail from the Rec Center to Santa Rita Park*
- **Link history to the Creative District.**
- **Support development and maintenance of historical signs, landmarks and informational outlets within the Creative District boundary.**



“Native Views Native Visions” exhibit in the Center for Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College.

GOAL 5:

Recognize, utilize, and sustain affordable & cooperative working spaces.

Objectives:

- **Recognize, utilize and financially sustain creative organizations and venues through a proposed 3-tier funding model, including:**
 - The proposed Durango Arts, Conference, and Events Center
 - The proposed Stillwater Music shared performance/theatre space
 - The proposed Ewing Mesa Amphitheatre Project
 - The existing Fairgrounds
 - The existing Powerhouse Science Center & MakerLab
 - The existing Durango Arts Center
 - Fort Lewis College



Open studio live figure drawing at the Durango Arts Center.
Photo courtesy of the Durango Arts Center.

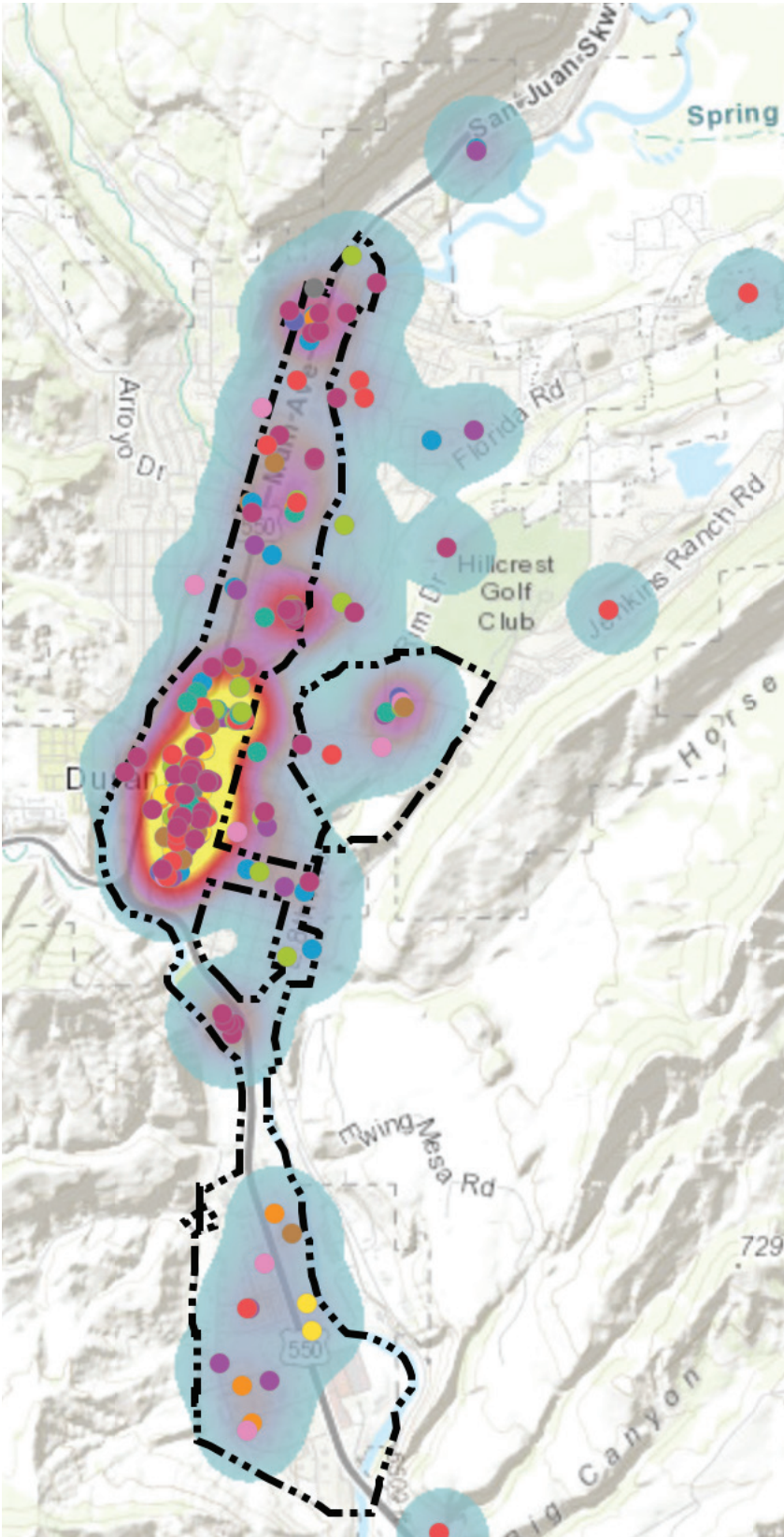
GOAL 6:

Increase funding and capital for creative entrepreneurs and organizations.

Objectives:

- **Develop a grant program for creative entrepreneurs and organizations.**
 - *City Policy 23.4.6: Establish a revenue for support of the creative economy (e.g. facilities, organizations, events, programs, and small enterprises) through an extension of the lodger tax, special assessments, grants, or other funding mechanisms.*
- **Be the catalyst between First Southwest Bank in a creative loan fund program.**
- **Assist organizations in maintaining and building facilities through a 3-tier funding model.**
- **Develop an online store/marketplace for creatives (i.e. a localized Durango “Etsy.com”).**
 - Work with regional Creative Districts to include them in this marketplace
- **Hold discussions with the City about offering tax incentives/breaks for creatives.**
- **Develop a local currency to support creatives and bartering.**

MAP & BOUNDARIES



The Creative District's northernmost point starts between 34th and 35th Street in the North Main District, and the southernmost point ends at Turner Drive in Bodo Park. The dots on the map represent creative assets that were accounted for in the decision-making process by the Creative Asset and Geographic Inclusion group.

The district is connected and accessible by car, public trolley, or by taking the Animas River Trail by foot or bike. The scenic trail is the connecting "artery" of our town and possess several artworks from the 5-mile stretch to the southernmost part of the Creative District.

The District is incorporates several zones: **North Main, Downtown, College Drive, Fort Lewis College, and Bodo Park.** Each of these areas is unique unto itself and possesses different forms of creativity that are worth experiencing!

North Main features a variety of local restaurants and shops, the historic Animas Museum, public art, the Durango Public Library, and several schools.

Downtown features iconic historic buildings, the Durango Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad station, a plethora of eateries, shopping outlets, galleries and music venues.

College Drive features local eateries, shopping outlets, the Durango Natural Foods Co-Op, and several works of public art.

Fort Lewis College features a number of yearlong events at several buildings including the Community Concert Hall, and the Center for Southwest Studies, public art pieces and galleries. The drive around Fort Lewis College's rim is also notable for panoramic overhead views of the town.

Bodo Park features the notable Ska Brewing Company and several industrial arts businesses.

DCD BRANDING



PROCESS

Beginning in April 2019, the Durango Creative District steering committee partnered with marketing consultant Sara Olsen to come up with a community branding process that was unbiased, thorough, and equitable. The Branding group worked to:

- **Hold initial meetings (of which approximately 20 community members attended) on branding.**
- **Gather anonymous feedback, votes and data from the community.**
- **Provide a fair representation to volunteer logo designers (of which we had 6 professional design volunteers from the community who submitted 11 logo concepts).**
- **Hold ranking review with the Steering Committee on the Top 3 finalist logo concepts to ensure an objective selection process.**
- **Make one recommendation on a design based on findings and professional experience.**

ABOUT THE LOGO

The final concept, presented here, was submitted by Brett Stallings, owner of Stallings Design Co.

Brett's intention was to submit a logo design of our iconic mountains and river that would be ubiquitously understood and recognized by locals and tourists alike. He depicted Perrins Peak, Hogsback Mountain, Animas Mountain, and the Animas River in artistically exaggerated colors that felt true to this region.

The logo does not depict one particular form of creativity, because Durango is home to a multitude of creative industries. The type treatment alludes to some of exquisite type treatments you will find on historic buildings in downtown Durango, with a "fresh" and "quirky" spin that resonates with how residents described themselves in the Branding group.

IMPLEMENTATION & INVESTIGATION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION

- Temporarily house the Creative District in our fiscal sponsor's office, the Local First Foundation, located at 1309 E. 3rd Avenue #1, until an official office space can be obtained.
- Retain a part-time interim director from August-December who will concentrate efforts on fundraising, grant-writing, marketing, managing our website, and exploring our Goals & Objectives.
- Assemble a board of directors for the Creative District and develop board bylaws.

Members of the steering committee will be invited to join the board of directors.

- Create all necessary operation systems, including board/employee manuals, board binders to contain all legal documentation, accounting procedures, and other aspects of nonprofit management.
- Develop an online advertising directory as an opportunity to highlight creatives in the area and collect yearly fees.
- Meet with City officials to discuss and request to receive a grant from the City for years 2020 and 2021.

Our ultimate goal is to become the conduit organization that has a tiered block grant program for creative institutions and nonprofits, developed alongside the City.
- Meet with County officials to discuss and request to \$30,000 in the years 2020 and 2021.

INVESTIGATION

- Explore possibility for a 501(c)3 designation if/when the organization's capacity grows beyond the scope of Local First.
- Create a viable, long-term funding plan.

Continue to hold working groups and meet with City officials in preparation for a proposed ballot measure in 2021.
- Seek private and public sponsorships.
- Work with key partners to develop print and digital marketing collateral, including but not limited to: signage around our boundary area, print materials, regional Creative District maps, videos, and merchandise.
- Continue to explore and implement specific programs outlined in our Goals & Objectives.



Artists Sarah Sturm and Allie Wolfe creating a mural for Local First, now complete and displayed at Durango Joes Coffee on College Drive. Photo by Jennaye Derge.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS RECORD

Committee	Date	Type	Location	Attendance
General, Meeting Launch	10/11/18	Stakeholder launch	Durango Rec Center	50
Steering Committee	10/17/18	First meeting	Smiley Building	8
Steering Committee	11/26/18	Ongoing leadership meetings	Smiley Building	11
Shared Vision/Strategic Planning	12/4/18	Vision, values of Durango	Durango Rec Center	25
Steering Committee	12/19/18	Ongoing leadership meetings	Smiley Building	12
Creative Assets/Geographic Inclusion	1/7/19	Identifying creative assets	Durango Public Library	13
Creative Assets/Geographic Inclusion	1/31/19	Identifying creative assets	Durango Public Library	10
Steering Committee	1/29/19	Ongoing leadership meetings	Alpine Bank	16
Creative Connection Hour	2/6/19	Community gathering of creatives, happy hour	Sorrell Sky	75
Branding Meeting	2/20/19	Discussion with graphic design community about design/brand	Durango Arts Center	18
Steering Committee	2/26/19	Ongoing leadership meetings	Alpine Bank	11
Shared Vision/Strategic Planning	2/27/19	Ongoing shared vision discussion	Durango Rec Center	10
Legal Structure/Funding	3/13/19	Initial legal structure discussion	Smiley Building	6
Creative Assets/Geographic Inclusion	3/20/19	Continued creative asset discussion, mapping	Durango Public Library	12
Steering Committee	3/26/19	Ongoing leadership meetings	Alpine Bank	16
Creative Connection Hour	4/3/19	Community gathering of creatives, happy hour	Powerhouse	90
Legal Structure/Funding	4/17/19	Ongoing legal structure/funding discussion	Smiley Building	6
Steering Committee	4/30/19	Ongoing leadership meetings	Chamber of Commerce	16
Creative Assets/Geographic Inclusion	5/1/19	Creative district mapping	Durango Pubic Library	12
Shared Vision/Strategic Planning	5/6/19	Strategic Plan development	Fort Lewis College	7
Branding Meeting	4/3/19	Public Logo Vote (digital and in-person)	Durango Rec Center	92
Legal Structure/Funding	5/15/19	Lodgers tax discussion	Alpine Bank	18
Creative Connection Hour	5/19/19	Community gathering of creatives, flim showing	Animas City Theater	75
Steering Committee	5/28/19	Ongoing leadership meetings	Chamber of Commerce	10
Legal Structure/Funding	6/5/19	Ongoing legal structure/funding discussion	Smiley Building	9
Steering Committee	6/25/19	Ongoing leadership meetings	Chamber of Commerce	14
Legal Structure/Funding	7/10/19	Final decision about legal structure	Smiley Building	7
Creative Assets/Geographic Inclusion	7/18/19	Final decision on creative district map	Durango Pubic Library	10
Branding Meeting	7/19/19	Informal logo color vote	Smiley Cafe	10
Steering Committee	7/30/19	Ongoing leadership meetings	Chamber of Commerce	17
Presentation prep group	8/7/19	Preparation for City Council presentation	Smiley Building	7
City Council Presentation	8/8/19	Presentation for City funding request	Carver Brewing Co.	15
City Council Presentation 2	8/13/19	Presentation to two City Councilors for funding request	Powerhouse Science Center	5
Legal Structure/Funding	8/20/19	Ongoing legal structure/funding discussion	Smiley Building	8
Presentation to Lodgers Association (DAHLA)	8/21/19	Presentation to DAHLA, our Lodgers Association	Strater Hotel	40
Tagline Meeting	8/26/19	Development of the DCD official tagline	R Space	5
Steering Committee	8/27/19	Ongoing leadership meetings	Chamber of Commerce	19
Creative Connection Hour	8/28/19	Community gathering of creatives, artisan vendors	Animas City Night Bazaar	100
Creative Assets/Geographic Inclusion	8/30/19	Finalization of DCD boundary map and asset compilation	River City Hall	4
CCI Application	9/5/19	Work on CCI certification application with City staff	River City Hall	3
Legal Structure/Funding	9/11/19	Ongoing legal structure/funding discussion	Smiley Building	11
TOTAL # OF ENGAGEMENTS	<i>By Individual</i>			903
TOTAL # OF MEETINGS	42			

Note: Some of these metrics were included in our Stakeholder Process metrics chart on Page 5.



COMPARISON:

THE DURANGO CREATIVE DISTRICT and THE CREATIVE ECONOMY COMMISSION

CREATIVE ECONOMY COMMISSION (CEC)	DURANGO CREATIVE DISTRICT (DCD)
Public Body Created by City Council	Nonprofit with a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor
Mission: Enhance the quality of life and regional economy by supporting, empowering and celebrating the community's creative and cultural resources through public art, economic development, advocacy and education.	Mission: Unite, celebrate and expand the local creative economy
Enhance public spaces by building and maintaining a quality, accessible public art collection that represents Durango's creative culture and economy	Develop regional marketing materials with neighboring Creative Districts (Mancos, Telluride, Ridgeway, and soon-to-be Ignacio)
Expand the City Public Art Program to recognize and tell stories of Durango's geology, diversity, heritage, environment and aspirations	Pursue dedicated ballot funding and become the conduit organization to disperse block grants to creative institutions through a proposed 3-tier system
Integrate and encourage art into private development projects	Connect creatives through an approachable and affordable online directory
Approval of Durango Creates! Grants	Implement and sit on the advising committee for a creative loan fund partnership with First Southwest Bank
Ensure art and culture are sustainably integrated into policies, practices and decision making	Pursue federal, state, and private funding opportunities for the creative sector
Identify funding sources for strategic investments in arts and cultural resources to achieve City goals	Provide support to creative organizations throughout Durango
JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES	
Support a diverse, sustainable economy that fosters creative people, places, businesses and industries	
Continue to conduct, interpret, and strategically apply economic research to expand the understanding of the impact of the creative economy in order to inform policy decisions	
Identify funding sources for strategic investments in arts and cultural resources to achieve City goals	
Develop a more collaborative and engaged creative and cultural sector capable of marshaling its resources for the improvement of the wider community through the support of a Creative District	

11 Arts, Culture & Creative Economy Element

11.1 Context:

The people of Durango celebrate their city's beautiful terrain, boundless creativity, and history as well as optimism for the future. It's an inclusive and active community engaged with the natural environment, civic endeavors, social activity, and its people's many stories. Durango extends a welcoming and helpful hand to neighbors, visitors, and newcomers alike. Together, the people of Durango value and pursue ongoing learning, continuous problem-solving, and sustainable ways of living.

Arts and culture are vital components of Durango's life and the local economy. An increasing array of locally made products, arts, crafts, and cultural activities are consumed locally and exported. A growing commitment to keep spending local also stokes the economic engine.

Local artists and crafts people produce valuable goods ranging from paintings, jewelry, and ceramics to clothing and leather accessories for local use, export, and sales to visitors.

Multiple historic, natural and cultural attractions bring many tourists to and through Durango. Three of the most significant include:

- The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, a steam-powered train that began operation in 1882 and now carries passengers on a 90-mile round trip through the scenic Animas River valley from downtown Durango to the historic mining town of Silverton;
- Mesa Verde, a National Park and United Nations World Heritage Site west of Durango contains spectacular, multi-story cliff dwellings of ancient Pueblo peoples unoccupied for about 800 years; and
- Purgatory Resort, (formerly Durango Mountain Resort) just north of Durango, one of Colorado's major ski slopes with year-round activities and the site of the annual Music in the Mountains festival.

These and other assets help drive many sectors of the local economy, with visitors being attracted to the City's wealth of cultural assets. Visitors often

Definition the Creative Economy: For purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, an inclusive definition is employed, one that embraces human diversity and ways of life and the different ways people form community, learn, and express themselves. Included are the arts and cultures of Durango celebrated and supported through formal and informal nonprofit and for-profit organizations and individuals. They involve the creative arts, cultural traditions or practices, historical recognition, and scientific exploration and activities related to producing, presenting, learning/teaching, and preserving these forms. They include dance, music, theater, literature, visual arts, film and media arts as well as other forms of creative and cultural expression. Business enterprises in the creative sector also include advertising, architecture, crafts, design, games, fashion, publishing, research and development, software, toys, radio and TV. Additionally, and especially important to the culture of Durango, are activities in which people interact with, experience, celebrate, and steward the natural environment as well as practices and traditions related to production, preparation, and collective enjoyment of food. It is understood that individuals and groups of different ethnic, national, or cultural backgrounds make, experience, and share creative and traditional cultural forms, and explore the sciences differently. The City endeavors to recognize, accommodate, and support them through appropriate and equitable policy choices.

decide to stay upon discovering the City's wealth of social and community involvement opportunities, walkable town center, cultural and educational activities. Fort Lewis College is an important element of this attraction, bringing not only dollars and new people but creative and entrepreneurial thinking to the community. Durango's increasingly mixed local economy and human resource pipeline have increased stability and the potential for growth.

The relative isolation of Durango is considered positive by many who live there, and surely is by most who visit as it has helped preserve much of the historic and natural environment. The Pueblos at Mesa Verde sat untouched for hundreds of years. Hundred-year-old buildings in downtown Durango were largely spared, due partly to preservation activists over the past 30 years. Isolation brings added benefits in terms of a spirit of interdependence.

The duality of independence and interdependence is recognized as community assets. Participation in civic activities is high and institutions such as the library, local schools, Powerhouse Science Center, Durango Art Center, Animas Museum, and several local theater companies are highly valued and pushed to achieve greater quality of service. Similarly, the quality of local cuisine is widely regarded.

The aesthetics of the natural environment and opportunities for immersive experiences are highly valued. Historic structures and a downtown core built at a scale and speed of people and horses are also highly valued – although perhaps taken for granted. The open and welcoming community favorably distinguishes Durango from other Colorado mountain communities where growing wealth disparities have become a barrier between people and community involvement. In Durango, pride in place is palpable and the creative economy is a vital source of this pride and the City's quality of life.



The creative economy is central to every aspect of life in Durango. Economic data shows that the formal nonprofit arts and cultural sector accounted for \$9.1 million in economic activity in Durango in 2011 (Americans for the Arts Economic Prosperity IV Study) Tourism and education account for a very significant portion of the local and regional economy as well. The Colorado Tourism Office reported that 77.7 million visitors in 2015 spent an all-time high of \$19.1 billion state-wide, generating \$1.13 billion in state and local taxes, an increase of almost 7 percent from 2014. The Durango Area Tourism Office reports similar year-over-year increases in tourism. A 2014 Economic Impact and Analysis Study conducted by Fort Lewis College found that the institution contributed more than \$150 million to the regional economy in 2012 and 2013.

11.2 Why Include the Creative Economy in the Durango Comprehensive Plan?

Creativity, the arts, culture, science, and heritage (collectively, referred to as the creative economy) stand out in Durango as in few other places. As a community, Durango is strongly associated with, and its economy is driven by, its unique identity and by ways of life valued by its residents and visitors. The regional economy is tied to the imaginations of those who live in the region, their close relationship to the physical environment, and the historic and natural resources in and near the City. People here have long raised livestock and crops, extracted precious ores, oil, and gas, grown a variety of farm products, and shared enjoyment of the region's dramatic seasons, slopes, and waterways.

On a day-to-day basis, artists, performers and other creative people harvest the beauty and intrigue of Durango. They put it on canvas, the page and the stage. Residents, visitors, and students who identify with a wide variety of cultures both enjoy and contribute to the social and economic life by celebrating and sharing foods, music, and other cultural practices with neighbors and tourists. Learning about creative and cultural practices is

central to education for people of all ages and to forming a highly functional, inclusive community. Capacity for communication and dialog across differing subgroups of the community and capacity for problem solving that considers those differences is directly linked to the development and exercise of creativity and empathy – both direct outcomes of a strong arts and cultural community.

Research has also shown that arts activities in communities help revitalize neighborhoods, attract and develop talented workforces, and increase levels of innovation and productivity across all kinds of industries.

In addition to the economic impacts, researchers around the world have explored social impacts of participation in the creative economy. In at least several arenas it has become clear that participation improves lives. Specifically:

- Creative economy activities and celebrations bring people together in a shared identity and shared sense of place that promotes stewardship and civic engagement.
- Arts participation in early childhood promotes social and emotional development. For example, teachers report fewer instances of shy, aggressive, and anxious behavior among preschoolers taking dance classes, and toddlers receiving music instruction demonstrate increased social cooperation with other children.
- Student participation in structured arts activities enhances cognitive abilities and social skills that support learning, such as memory, problem-solving, and communication.
- Participatory arts activities help maintain the health and quality of life of older adults. Singing improves mental health and subjective wellbeing; taking dance classes bolsters cognition and motor skills; dancing and playing a musical instrument reduce the risk of dementia; and visual arts generate increases in self-esteem, psychological health, and social engagement.

- Arts therapies contribute to positive clinical outcomes, such as reduction in anxiety, stress, and pain for patients. Music interventions tend to dominate studies in this area.

11.3 Creative Economy Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 23: Enhance the quality of life and regional economy by coordinating, focusing, empowering, and celebrating the community's creative and cultural resources.

Objective 23.1: Creativity as a Community Resource: Advance understandings of the ways the cultural and creative sectors contribute to the community fabric, economy, and well-being of the people of Durango and the region; strategically apply this knowledge in ongoing decision-making.

Policy 23.1.1: Highlight and enhance the value of Durango's local art along with other locally made products by including them in economic development investments and incentives.

Policy 23.1.2: Foster a unique tourist experience by promoting the city's historical and creative character:

- Continue to allocate lodger taxes for tourism marketing, and encourage the investment of some of these dollars to support and promote local creative economy assets; and
- Employ unique creative and cultural assets when developing City character districts to best complement their identity and capitalize on district assets.

Policy 23.1.3: Continue to conduct, interpret, and strategically apply economic research to expand the understanding of the impact of the creative economy on various aspects

of Durango’s economy and quality of life. To carry out this policy:

- Work with economic development, and arts entities to collect and evaluate data on the entire creative sector and identify policy and investment choices that strengthen the creative economy;
- Engage with Colorado Creative Industries, Americans for the Arts, and other research organizations to identify relevant data to illustrate benefits leveraged by the cultural and creative sector; and
- Make strategic investments in arts and cultural resources to achieve City goals.

Policy 23.1.4:
Enhance education opportunities for young people by expanding partnerships with area arts, heritage, and science organizations and schools as well as other community organizations.



Policy 23.1.5:
Identify synergies, partnership opportunities and complementary relationships to achieve the City’s creative economy goal and objectives.

Objective 23.2:
A Naturally Creative and Welcoming Community:
Foster and promote an internal and external brand identity grounded in Durango’s breadth of cultural activities, wealth of creative people, and welcoming nature.

Policy 23.2.1:
Expand collaborations among educational, tourism, governmental and creative sector organizations of all sizes to incorporate and represent the full range of activities and events into Durango’s creative economy scene (e.g. from Rodeos to Ragtime and from Bear Dances to Beethoven) and adjust messaging and branding to reflect the community’s diversity.

Policy 23.2.2:
Create a stronger presence for local artists and cultural offerings within tourism promotion and coordination efforts through:

- Partnerships with entities that promote local and regional tourism through direction of funding to support collaborative promotion activities between tourism and local creative and cultural entities and activities; and
- Coordination and promotion of tours of artist studios, makerspaces, and other creative sites.

Policy 23.2.3:
Ensure that the City’s Community Relations Commission, the Youth Advisory Commission and Creative Economy Commission (See policy 23.3.1) work closely with each other to build a more diverse and inclusive community by partnering to support surveys, community dialogues, and other activities.



Policy 23.2.4: Support celebrations that include diverse cultural groups (e.g. Fiesta Days Cinco de Mayo, Pride Festival, festivals at Fort Lewis College, Pow Wows, Taste of Durango, and others) by exploring ways to expand funding for community celebrations and working with appropriate representatives.

Policy 23.2.5: Nurture constructive relationships between the City, School District 9R, Fort Lewis College, Southwest Colorado Community College, and other educational entities and engage with student organizations and their leaders in ongoing cultural activity planning and promotion. Ensure input to the Creative Economy Commission (See policy 23.3.1) from educational entity representatives and representative student groups.

Objective 23.3: **Communicate, Convene, Collaborate:** Develop a more collaborative and engaged creative and cultural sector capable of marshaling its resources for the improvement of the wider community.

Policy 23.3.1: Form a **Creative Economy Commission** to serve as a collective voice and coordinative body that includes among its goals and activities to:

- Foster coordinated scheduling among event and cultural activity programmers, tourism attractions, the City, educational entities, and civic organizations;
- Help identify and coordinate opportunities for shared spaces for performance, exhibitions, celebrations, meetings and other needs of artists, cultural programmers, and tourism promoters;
- Explore shared administrative or back office operations among key nonprofits;

- Provide City staff support for Commission activities;
- Support the development of marketing, business, and professional development assistance; and
- Identify and pursue dedicated funding sources.



Durango Trail by Annette LeMaire

Policy 23.3.2: Structure the Creative Economy Commission to include broad interests of the community to best advance goals and objectives established in this Plan; provide the Commission with appropriate authority for making recommendations on policy and distribution of allocated funds from public or private sources.

Policy 23.3.3: Formulate a plan for a creative district that achieves recognition by Colorado Creative Industries (CCI); and join networks of such districts, learn from others, and tap into related funding networks. The planning process should:

- Include and convene key stakeholders, of an identified geographic area, and make application to CCI; and
- Maintain active membership through staff and key volunteer involvement in training, annual gatherings, funding partnerships, and other activities of CCI.

Policy 23.3.4: Support and promote creative entrepreneurs and artists working with economic development and tourism leadership. Adjust definitions of business start-ups and small businesses to include artists and creative sector enterprises.

Objective 23.4: **Space to Make and Partake:** Improve and expand facilities and spaces needed for creative and cultural activities, artist live/work spaces, and for support of arts and cultural organizations.

Policy 23.4.1: As part of economic development strategies, identify opportunities and facilitate establishment of artist working spaces, maker spaces, and co-working spaces. These efforts should:

- Seek appropriate spaces for varied types of uses including heavier uses among industrial and former industrial areas;
- Develop working studio spaces needed by artists and other makers (e.g., like those within Smiley Building; potentially the firehouse when it relocates; industrial buildings in Bodo; and others);

Policy 23.4.2: Foster development of spaces that support creative activities along the Animas River Trail from the Durango Recreation Center to Santa Rita Park.

- Facilitate development of affordable creative workforce housing; explore partnership with Colorado Creative Industries, Artspace and similar entities, to develop new live/work housing; and
- Explore opportunities to create additional live/work and live/work/sell units in appropriate zoning districts.

Policy 23.4.3: Participate in the Area Plan for Ewing Mesa to explore opportunities to support the creative economy, including:

- Support development of an outdoor music and events venue within Durango to accommodate 5,000 to 15,000 people.
- Support La Plata County efforts to relocate the existing fairgrounds and to explore creative reuse of the existing fairgrounds site.

Policy 23.4.4: Assess the need for and feasibility of establishing a new moderate-size indoor performance facility by engaging with key community groups, performing/presenting entities, and others to review best options and collaborative agreements for widely shared use. To make the most efficient use of available resources, consider the creation of a flexible facility to address the needs for conferences and performing arts.

Policy 23.4.5: Assess opportunities for expansion of spaces for visual arts exhibitions within existing public buildings, retail spaces and other appropriate venues.

Policy 23.4.6: Establish a revenue stream for support of the creative economy (e.g., facilities, organizations, events, programs and small enterprises) through an extension of the lodger tax, special assessments, grants or other funding mechanisms.

Objective 23.5: **Stories of Place and Legacies:** Expand the City Public Art Program to recognize and tell stories of the City's geology, diversity, heritage, and aspirations in meaningful places across the City.

Policy 23.5.1: Continue and focus efforts to enhance the appearance of State Highways and development along critical corridors and key entry points to commission and install iconic public art that reinforces the identity of the City's character districts and improves the visitor and daily traveler experience.

Policy 23.5.2: Allocate a portion of City capital construction costs for public art, with a set-aside for maintenance.

Policy 23.5.3: Consider a development assessment or other source for establishment of public art throughout the City.

Policy 23.5.4: Target key public transit hubs, (e.g. the Transit Center, Ft. Lewis College, Mercy Hospital, and the Library) for public art projects to denote and improve aesthetics and function of these destinations.

Policy 23.5.5: Formalize public art opportunities in conjunction with the City trail system for commissioning artwork that celebrates and educates about meaningful cultural, natural and historical sites and enhances user experiences.

