IMAGINE DENVER,
A city filled with dreamers, where the summertime pavement is alive with possibility, glistening bits of loose gravel smiling at the sun. Here, a thriving community of creators who have always learned to make what we need, have made this city our home. We, who pour ourselves over horizons in unmistakable color. We who have found, and have always been, the frontier.

We, who have learned the weight of expansion. The rich lives we build carefully, persistently, holding command over every element, staring and stirring until only the best emerges, teaching a corner of the sky to stand still with a glance and the crook of a finger, wielding hips and hands and moving parts until each person has a place at our table.

We stretch and shift the reach of our arms, encompassing each other in perfect mosaic. We, the soil, roots, the leaves, making and marking our own history. We, the air, the water, the fiery new morning illuminating a city alive with our dreams. What is art if not us?

IMAGINE DENVER,
Where we lift our voices, use the power of our words and dreams to build lives. Where the amplification of our harmony shakes the ground, opening new trails to forge. Where we speak together, listen and understand.

Imagine what we will create together.

Suzi Q. Smith, Executive Director, Poetry Slam Inc. Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs (2017)
My family and I became refugees as a result of the Viêt Nam War. After losing everything, we realized our culture is the only aspect we were able bring with us. Ai Weiwei succeeded in making the zodiac animals, a symbol of Asian culture, more visible and accessible for all of us. I’m proud that a gifted and renowned Asian artist who looks like me has created these globally-recognized works of art, now displayed here in Denver for our community to appreciate.

Nga Vuong-Sandoval, Denver Asian American Pacific Islander Commission, on bringing the Ai Weiwei exhibit to Denver

“It’s our goal that the presence of vibrant student art in an otherwise pedestrian location will brighten up the monotony of the Hampden corridor and will serve as a point of pride for Thomas Jefferson High School and DPS, the neighborhood and all SE Denver residents.”

Spring Hericks, DPS, on the student-led community bus shelter and bus bench project

“My family and I became refugees as a result of the Viêt Nam War. After losing everything, we realized our culture is the only aspect we were able bring with us. Ai Weiwei succeeded in making the zodiac animals, a symbol of Asian culture, more visible and accessible for all of us. I’m proud that a gifted and renowned Asian artist who looks like me has created these globally-recognized works of art, now displayed here in Denver for our community to appreciate.”

Nga Vuong-Sandoval, Denver Asian American Pacific Islander Commission, on bringing the Ai Weiwei exhibit to Denver
LITTLE SWALLOWS EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTREACH PROGRAM

- Recognizing how music education improves language, math and creative thinking, Swallow Hill partnered with McGlone Academy in Montbello to provide weekly music instruction to 60 preschool students through a year-long pilot program.
- Limited resources create major barriers for accessing music programs, Little Swallows provides music education to those children who wouldn’t otherwise have the same opportunity.

“Edify was thrilled to bring the world of music to 30 first graders at Roots Elementary in 2016. With many of them having limited to no prior exposure to music education, it was wonderful to see these Roots scholars using our MusiQuest software to learn the fundamentals of music and compose original songs as beautiful and diverse as the school itself.”

Jacob Zax, Edify Technologies, on exposing youth to the joy and creativity of the arts

COMMUNITY CYPHER

- Creative Strategies for Change created “Community Cypher,” a community-based arts leadership program to provide a public forum for youth to showcase their growing artistic skills, using social imagination to share their “under told” stories.
- Through storytelling, music, applied theater, hip hop and spoken word, the performance troupe addresses issues related to the school-to-prison pipeline and other pressing social disparities that hit close to home for many in their communities.

“Alix Corboy, Friends of Chamber Music, on The Harlem Quartet’s five-day residency in Denver

“It was an extraordinary week bringing classical chamber music out into the community and providing access to many residents who might be unable or unsure about attending similar kinds of programs in a traditional concert hall. The Harlem Quartet was exciting and charismatic and easily able to relate to all of the different members of the Denver community who participated.”
MOLINA SPEAKS: ROOT THE FILM

• In creating “ROOT the film,” artist Molina Speaks has engaged 100+ citizens from across the Denver metro area and more than a dozen artists commissioned specifically to contribute to the film.
• There will be a short version that is more arts centered and a full-length educational version supplemented with curriculum for high school and college students.
• Molina Speaks envisions thousands of people directly impacted by this film project across artistic, educational and cultural events through the year 2020.

“As a growing city, we must work harder than ever to preserve space for artists to safely nurture their skills and talents. The Safe Occupancy Program gives us a critical tool to halt displacement while pulling together the resources and support needed to find ways to keep creative spaces intact, affordable and safe.”

Jamie Licko, RiNo Art District, on the new, conditional building occupancy program designed to improve the safety of buildings for occupants and visitors

PHONE IT IN FILM FESTIVAL

• At the first “Phone It In” film festival in Denver, a show dedicated to videos captured with mobile devices, filmmakers from across Colorado came together to share their work with 170+ attendees.
• With over 20 films entered, many were first attempts in film or created by teams working together for the first time, creating new opportunity for artists.
• “Phone It In” will continue to expand its efforts to inform and educate the creative community.

“Five Points Jazz Festival has an incredible impact on Coffee at The Point and the community that I work in, live in, and love. To have a free festival with so many stages of entertainment centered around the heart of Five Points has had a great draw of diverse people from all over. This day is our best day of the year and has really helped to financially sustain my business after the event. The economic impact is also felt with our staff as tips for this one day are paid out triple of what they would be for an entire week.”

Ryan Cobbins, Coffee at the Point, on the economic impact of Five Points Jazz Festival
COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP
Leading Cultural Development to 2020 and Beyond

ARTIVISM AND COMUNIDAD: I AM DREAMING OF...
• Renowned artist and immigration rights activist, Favianna Rodriguez, joined Art Students League of Denver (ASLD) and the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR) to discuss her work and the role of “artivism” to inspire change in ourselves and in the world.
• ASLD and COLOR co-hosted a lecture, workshops and a voting registration booth for both Spanish and English language speakers during Rodriguez’s time in Denver.
• 250+ families and individuals participated in the events, sharing stories about their hopes and dreams for their community.

“Denver Parks and Recreation strives to create healthy relationships within communities. By partnering with Mirror Image Arts to create “Speak Up, Speak Out!” we have developed an innovative way to amplify the voices of young adults in the La Alma community. Allowing them to become leaders and advocating for change within their community.”

Tiffany Tungate, MY Denver, on the collaborative effort to engage youth in the La-Alma Lincoln Park neighborhood

AND MORE IMAGINE 2020...

WE HAVE SO MANY GREAT EXAMPLES FROM OUR COMMUNITY.

ArtForward
Cleo Parker Robinson Dance
Art in Beds: Tree of Transformation
Civic Center Conservancy
Art Reaching Kids
The Art Garage
A Beckwourth Spirit
Randle Media Properties
The Barnum Piñata Parade
Concerned Citizens of Barnum
Connections_Our Civic Ecology
Santa Fe Drive Business Improvement District, Our Community Speaks, Café Cultura
Denver Access Conference and Consortium
VSA/Access Gallery
Literary Hide and Seek in City Park
City Park Alliance/City Park Neighborhood Advisory Committee
Quigg Newton Housing Development Dumpster Beautification Project
BirdSeed Collective
Southwest and Far Northeast Denver Mural Collaborative
Gang Rescue and Support Project
Voices
West Colfax Association of Neighbors

*Images courtesy of local organizations
Together with the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs, Denver Arts & Venues continues to steward Imagine 2020 through ongoing implementation, community engagement, outreach and reporting. Here’s a snapshot of what we’ve been up to this year.

Arts & Venues

Five Points Jazz Festival

Urban Arts Fund

Youth One Book, One Denver

The Next Stage Now

Council District Cultural Mapping

Mayor’s Awards for Excellence in Arts & Culture
SPEAKER SERIES

• Now in its third year, this original series was created to inspire implementation across all aspects of the cultural plan and offer a forum for collective conversation
• 23 Speaker Series and Interactive Workshops to date
• More than 4,100 registered attendees plus drop-ins

2016–2017 EVENTS

July 2016: Artist As...Citizen, Neighbor, Change Agent
Kemi Ilesanmi, The Laundromat Project

October 2016: Developing Youth Leadership and Engagement Through the Arts
Kevin Coval, Louder Than a Bomb and local panelists

October 2016: Strategies for Attracting Millennial Audiences to the Arts
Denver Center for the Performing Arts & The Wallace Foundation

October 2016: The Art of Relevance: Mattering More to More People
Nina Simon, The Participatory Museum

March 2017: Kevin & The Storytellers with Stories on Stage
Kevin Kling with local storytellers

September 2017: Storytelling to Make Your Organization Stand Apart From the Rest
Kyle Dyer, Kyle Dyer Storytelling

October 2017: Looking Forward: Demographic Change, Economic Shifts, and the Role of the Arts
Manuel Pastor, Ph.D., University of Southern California

November 2017: Audience Development: Changing Patterns of AudienceBehaviors and Expectations
LaPlaca Cohen & Corona Insights

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSIVENESS INITIATIVE

• ART & CULTURAL DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT
• ARTS EDUCATION FUND
• ARTSPACE
• CITY COUNCIL ARTS TIME
• CULTURAL PARTNER PROGRAM
• IMAGINE 2020 FUND
• McNICHOLS PROJECT
• P.S. YOU ARE HERE
• SAFE CREATIVE SPACES

CHANCE TO DANCE
This has been an important year for commissioners to work closely with City Council, as we are now three years into implementing the cultural plan. We continue to act as liaisons, informing each councilmember of the great activity occurring in their districts and helping them identify opportunities to advance leadership, foster local talent and create new points of accessibility to arts and culture at the neighborhood level.

Josh Comfort, Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs