



# TIME TO THRIVE

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 - 2025









## ABOUT US

DENVER ARTS & VENUES

## PURPOSE

So all may *thrive!*

## MISSION

Denver Arts & Venues enriches and advances Denver's quality of life and economic vitality through the advancement of **arts, culture, and entertainment opportunities for all.**



# OUR IMPACT

Arts & Venues is the City and County of Denver agency responsible for operating some of the region's most renowned facilities, including **Red Rocks Amphitheatre, the Denver Performing Arts Complex, Colorado Convention Center, Denver Coliseum and McNichols Civic Center Building.**

Funds generated by the agency are invested into the community through grants for artists and arts organizations, free community cultural events, public art and venue maintenance, arts education and other resources to move Denver's cultural sector forward. Good times at one of these venues promotes thriving communities, enriches Denver through arts and culture, and helps ensure our legendary entertainment spaces stay that way, for good.



**2.4M**  
Attendees

**1,300**  
Events



**\$2.03M**  
Total Grant &  
Program Support

**372**  
Grants Awarded

**155**  
Artists & Orgs.  
Receiving COVID-  
Relief Dollars



Based on 2021 figures. Grant total includes CARES ACT, ARPA Reactivation and program support. Attendees and event count excludes the Colorado Convention Center.



# STRATEGIC APPROACH

**Time to Thrive** is a strategic planning initiative spearheaded by Denver Arts & Venues (DAV) to define the agency's goals, impact and position through the lens of Arts, Culture, and Entertainment (ACE). Over the next three years, Time to Thrive aims to refocus the agency as it recovers from the impacts of COVID and recommits to the delivery of ACE activities in Denver.



## PROJECT GOALS



Create **alignment**



Prepare for city leadership **transition**



Build a strong **foundation**



**Sustain** and **innovate**



Guide future DAV funding and program development **decisions**

## STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

### Project Coordinating Team

- Ginger White Brunetti**    Executive Director
- Molly Wink**    Deputy Director
- Mark Najarian**    Director of Strategic Projects

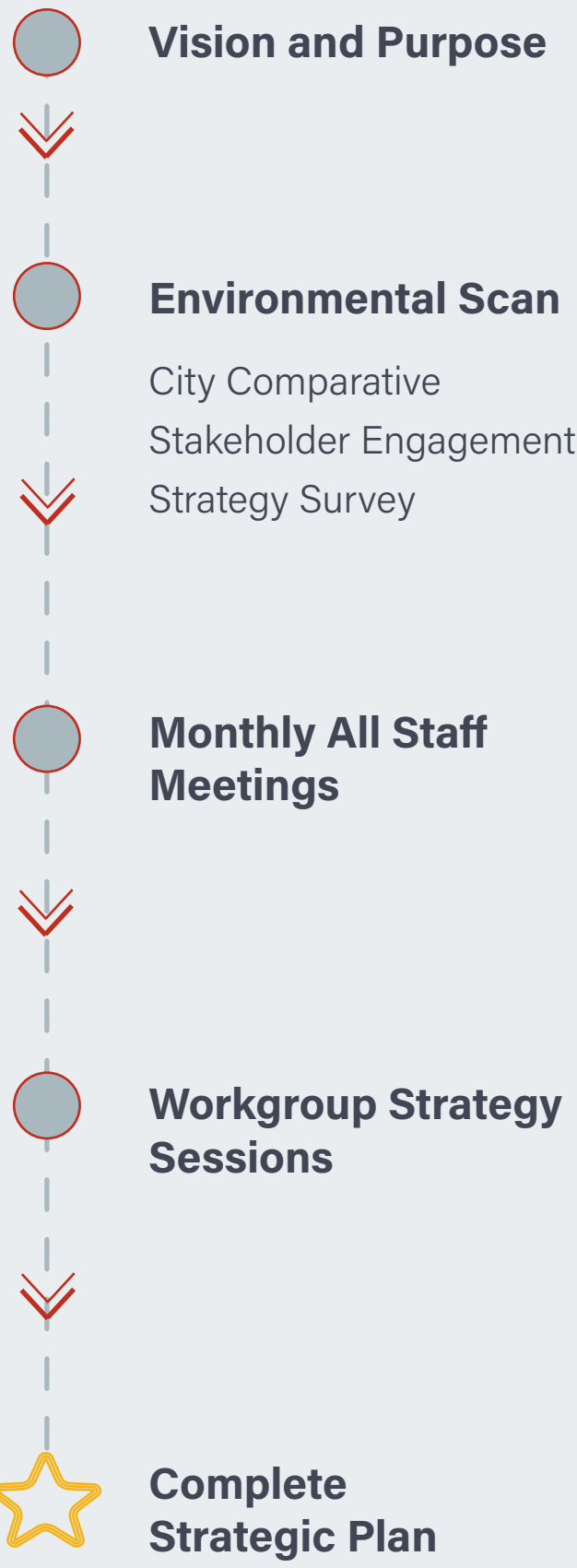
### Strategy Workgroup

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Tad Bowman</b>     | <b>Kelly Graham</b>   |
| <b>Brian Cardenas</b> | <b>Jody Grossman</b>  |
| <b>Megan Deffner</b>  | <b>David McCammon</b> |
| <b>Brooke Dilling</b> | <b>Chris Miller</b>   |
| <b>Jon Graham</b>     | <b>Tariana Navas</b>  |

### DAV Staff

All business units, **75 team members**

## PLANNING PROCESS





# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The Planning Process included a three-part environmental scan to **capture a 360-degree look at DAV:**

01

## City Comparative Analysis

02

## Stakeholder Engagement

03

## Strategy Survey

### OVERVIEW

A Comparative Analysis of four U.S. cities benchmarked Denver against peer and stretch cities. The four cities examined included: Seattle, WA, Austin, TX, Dallas, TX, and Chicago, IL.

Seven focus groups and eight interviews with key DAV Stakeholders were designed to capture voices of business partners, arts and downtown organizations, artists, civic leaders, and cultural workers. The in-depth discussions were conversational in nature.

We distributed an online survey to individuals with a myriad of relationships to DAV, including DAV employees and employees from other city agencies, Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs, partners, sponsors, artists, and arts organizations.

### PURPOSE

The analysis explored how comparable cities approach the advancement of community arts, cultural and entertainment opportunities in their communities.

The interviews and focus groups were designed to encourage dialogue and capture input on DAV's current state and inspire discussion about how DAV can evolve to deliver ACE in the future.

The primary purpose of the Strategy Survey was to achieve broad-reaching stakeholder engagement, while creating a safe environment to express ideas and opinions.

### OUTCOME

The insights gleaned from the environmental scan informed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis and a strategic roadmap of DAV's goals, strategies and tactics.



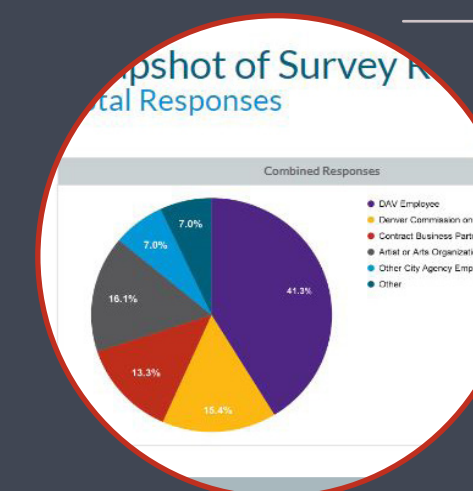
#### 01 Neighborhood Approach

Cities such as Austin, TX focused on the impact of art and cultural offerings in each neighborhood.



#### 02 Community Artists

Many stakeholders mentioned amplifying local artists as a key function of DAV.



#### 03 Survey Insights

Strategy survey responses provided several key insights from employees and key stakeholders.

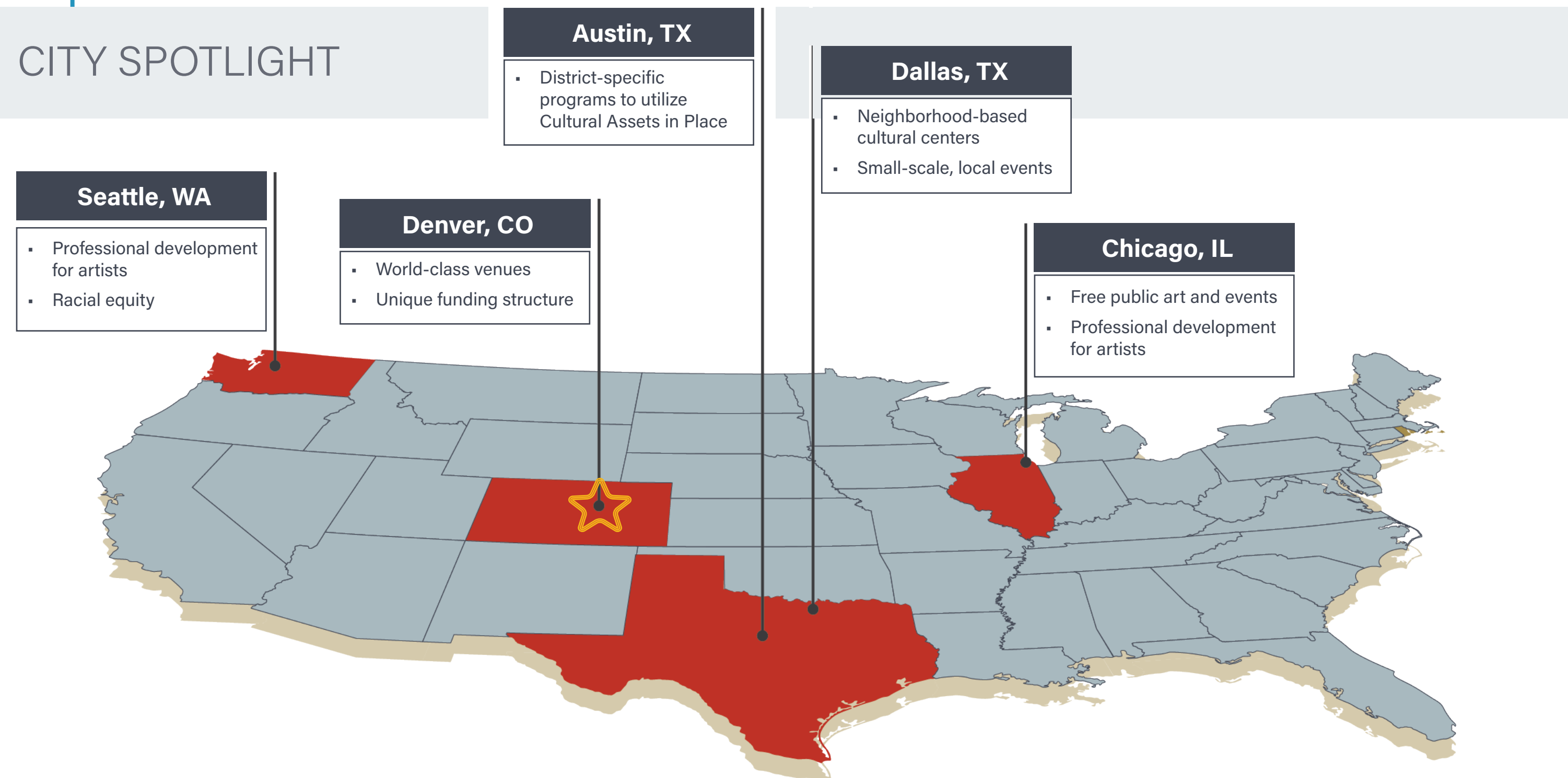


# 01 CITY COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The goal of the four city Comparative Analysis was to benchmark DAV against peer cities while examining alternative approaches to the advancement of community ACE opportunities. This effort focused on city-owned venues, grants, programs, funding sources, and each comparable city's position within their local government.



## CITY SPOTLIGHT



## FINDINGS

- > Cities serve their communities culturally in many ways depending on a city's landscape: supporting artists, access to art, access to art space, public art, etc. Many cities are finding success by taking a localized neighborhood-specific approach to their arts and cultural offerings.
- > Supporting artists is different from supporting art for the community.
- > Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts, particularly racial justice in the arts, are increasingly important across all cities surveyed.
- > Significant Federal COVID-relief funding is being used for grant programs relating to the arts.
- > Unlike Denver, most cities' art and cultural departments are not self-funded.
- > Denver is in a unique position to utilize large performing venues to give a voice to local artists and art organizations.



# 02 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The focus groups and interviews helped us gain a 360-degree understanding of DAV and its functions in the Denver community. We **engaged community voices** using a structured interview guide along with open dialogue focused on future opportunities and threats to arts and entertainment experiences.



## FOCUS GROUPS

 Comprised of

Resident Companies	Colorado Ballet, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Opera Colorado
Cultural Partners	Biennial of the Americas, Youth on Record, Access Gallery, Denver Art Museum, Michael Warren Contemporary, More Matter, Denver Film, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, Gay Men's Chorus, RedLine
Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs	Past and present members
Downtown Denver Partners	Civic Center Conservancy, Downtown Denver Partnership, Downtown Theater Districts
Denver Arts & Venues Senior Leadership	Agency Directors
Colorado Arts Organizations' Leadership	Scientific & Cultural Facilities District, Colorado Business Committee for the Arts, Colorado Creative Industries, Denver Art Museum
City of Denver Agencies	Parks & Recreation, Community Planning & Development, Development of Transportation & Infrastructure, Office of Special Events, Denver Public Library



## IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Interviewee	Affiliation
Evan Dreyer	Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Gary Steuer	Executive Director, Bonfils Stanton Foundation
Richard Scharf	President & CEO, Visit Denver
Rachel Benedick	Executive Vice President, Visit Denver
Brent Fedrizzi	Co-President and COO, AEG Presents Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Northwest
Kent Rice	Former Executive Director, Denver Arts & Venues
Jack Finlaw	Former Executive Director, Theater & Arenas
Erin Trapp	Former Executive Director, Denver Office of Cultural Affairs



There's an opportunity for DAV to continue to leverage its assets to young, old, every color, every ethnic group, every race — there's an opportunity to *engage and uplift and celebrate.*



## FINDINGS

- > A broad group of stakeholders rely on DAV for economic opportunities and entertainment options. Attendees of the interview and focus groups praised DAV for the value it creates for our community. The discussions also highlighted DAV's shortcomings and thoughtful ideas to help DAV evolve and amplify its impact.
- > External factors such as rising rent, gentrification, and concerns surrounding safety in the downtown area pose a threat to the health and vibrancy of the creative community.
- > Opportunities exist for DAV to expand and diversify its offerings to be more inclusive of different ages, ethnicities, geography and socioeconomic status.
- > Denver would benefit from a stronger artistic ecosystem. DAV has the opportunity to fill this void by supporting local artists and art organizations with the infrastructure and resources to thrive.



## 03 STRATEGY SURVEY

The Strategy Survey explored DAV's strategic landscape by gaining input from those inside the organization and those who partner with the organization. The primary purpose of the survey was to have broad reaching stakeholder engagement while giving people a safe environment to openly express their opinions.

# 149

### SURVEY RESPONSES



#### Respondents

<b>41%</b>	DAV Employees
<b>15%</b>	Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs Member
<b>13%</b>	Partner or Sponsor
<b>16%</b>	Artists or Arts Organization
<b>7%</b>	Other City Agency Employee
<b>7%</b>	Other (e.g. former employees, city council members, former commissioners)



#### Survey Sections

Context

Alignment

Benchmarking

Horizon

SWOT



What should Denver & Venues look like three years from now?



### FINDINGS

- > Voices from the community shared their thoughts on external threats impacting DAV such as upcoming administration changes, uncertainties related to COVID-19, and perceptions of safety downtown. Respondents also voiced internal concerns about issues such as staff burnout.
- > Five Points Jazz Festival, public art and Red Rocks were viewed as bright spots for DAV.
- > Respondents recognized DAV for its world-class venues and offered creative solutions for the agency to augment how these venues can be used to serve the broader community.
- > Investing in innovation was a key theme among respondents. By leveraging technology and digital experiences, the agency can better support growth.



# SWOT ANALYSIS

The insights gleaned from the three-part environmental scan helped inform the SWOT analysis.

The analysis identified DAV's top internal advantages and disadvantages, as well as external opportunities that could benefit DAV, and negative trends that pose potential threats.



Internal

## STRENGTHS

1. Staff
2. Leadership Caliber
3. Venues
4. Arts Expertise
5. Connecting & Convening
6. Responsiveness to community
7. Business Model (Self Funding)



External

## OPPORTUNITIES

1. Grants & Funding
2. Technology
3. Diversify programming & partnerships
4. Emergence from COVID
5. Community Engagement (untapped audiences, local talent)
6. Alignment with City Priorities & City Agencies
7. Leverage Sponsor Relationships

## Internal WEAKNESSES



1. Understaffed
2. Leadership Capacity
3. Silos
4. Third-Party Relationship Management
5. Over Reliance on Red Rocks Revenue
6. Lack of Agility
7. Strategic Communications and Storytelling
8. Professional Business Processes
9. Knowledge Retention
10. Measuring Agency Performance

## External THREATS



SWOT



# GOALS & STRATEGIES



## ACCESS

Address and improve the accessibility of ACE opportunities for all.



Ensure Experiences and Physical Spaces Can Be Enjoyed By All

Expand Into Underserved Neighborhoods

Explore Convener, Connector Role

## ALIGN

Strengthen agency talent, culture, internal workflows and communication. Enhance relationships with stakeholder groups (such as city agencies, community leaders, and residents).



Enhance Organizational Effectiveness

Professionalize Systems and Processes

Strengthen Internal Communication

Expand Partner-driven Outcomes

## ADVANCE

Expand efforts to advance arts, culture, and entertainment for all by providing resources and opportunities for local artists, championing policy reforms around the arts, and bringing forward unified plans to secure and protect funding streams.



Ensure Competitiveness of Venues

Diversify and Preserve Revenue Streams

Foster Relevant and Vibrant Communities

Strengthen Denver's Creative Sector

Plan For the future

## ASSESS

Define and track DAV's measurable impact in the community; gather data to identify gaps, make strategic modifications and inform future decisions.



Enhance Connection With the Community

Evaluate Community Impact

## AMPLIFY

Amplify DAV's story and brand across internal and external channels to increase awareness, attract more diverse audiences, and effectively advance ACE.



Improve Awareness and Understanding of DAVs Brand, Programs and Venues

Ensure a Welcoming and Enhanced Patron Experience

Highlight Local Talent

GOALS

STRATEGIES

+

DAV has developed a tactical plan that supports the Goals and Strategies in the Time To Thrive strategic plan and will monitor its implementation through the Strategic Management Process.



# CONTRIBUTORS

A special thanks to all that contributed to the Time to Thrive strategic plan.



DAV Employees



<b>Laura Aldrete</b>	<i>Community Planning and Development</i>
<b>Rachel Benedick</b>	<i>Visit Denver</i>
<b>Mark Bernstein</b>	<i>Denver Parks &amp; Recreation</i>
<b>Gil Boggs</b>	<i>Colorado Ballet</i>
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<b>Brian Cardenas</b>	<i>DAV Senior Leadership</i>
<b>Greg Carpenter</b>	<i>Opera Colorado</i>
<b>Cristin Crampton Day</b>	<i>Colorado Business Committee for the Arts</i>
<b>Frank Delmonte</b>	<i>DAV Senior Leadership</i>
<b>FloraJane DiRienzo</b>	<i>Biennial of the Americas</i>
<b>Evan Dreyer</b>	<i>Mayor’s Office</i>
<b>Jami Duffy</b>	<i>Youth on Record</i>
<b>David Ehrlich</b>	<i>Denver Theater District</i>
<b>Brent Fedrizzi</b>	<i>AEG</i>
<b>Jack Finlaw</b>	<i>Former DAV Executive Director</i>
<b>Andrea Fulton</b>	<i>Denver Art Museum</i>

<b>Scott Gilmore</b>	<i>Denver Parks &amp; Recreation</i>
<b>Rick Griffith</b>	<i>More Matter</i>
<b>Happy Haynes</b>	<i>Denver Parks &amp; Recreation</i>
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<b>Margaret Hunt</b>	<i>Colorado Creative Industries</i>
<b>Michelle Jeske</b>	<i>Denver Public Library</i>
<b>Deborah Jordy</b>	<i>Scientific &amp; Cultural Facilities District</i>
<b>Brian Kitts</b>	<i>DAV Senior Leadership</i>
<b>Eric Lazzari</b>	<i>Civic Center Conservancy</i>
<b>Bobby LeFebre</b>	<i>Denver Human Services</i>
<b>Louise Martorano</b>	<i>Redline</i>
<b>Mike McClung</b>	<i>Michael Warren Contemporary</i>
<b>Damon McLeese</b>	<i>Access Gallery</i>
<b>Coreen Miller</b>	<i>Colorado Symphony</i>
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<b>Tony Pierce</b>	<i>Colorado Symphony</i>
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<b>Malik Robinson</b>	<i>Cleo Parker Robinson Dance</i>
<b>Michael Sattler</b>	<i>Gay Men’s Chorus</i>
<b>Richard Scharf</b>	<i>Visit Denver</i>
<b>Janice Sinden</b>	<i>Denver Center for Performing Arts</i>
<b>Kevin Smith</b>	<i>Denver Film</i>
<b>Gary Steuer</b>	<i>Bonfils Stanton Foundation</i>
<b>Katy Strascina</b>	<i>Office of Special Events</i>
<b>Molly Wink</b>	<i>DAV Senior Leadership</i>