



PEOPLE
Downtown Denver Partnership

PLACE

Annual Report

BUSINESS 2014-2015



DOWNTOWN DENVER
PARTNERSHIP, INC.

Downtown Denver Partnership: 60 YEARS OF CITY BUILDING

For 60 years, our work at the Downtown Denver Partnership has been driven by our mission to create an economically vital and vibrant center city. We do this by focusing on the people, places and businesses that play an important role in achieving our strategic vision of a world-class center city, as outlined in the 2007 Downtown Area Plan.

As we look at our accomplishments over the past year, and reflect back on the Partnership's entire 60-year history, it is important to acknowledge the high-impact strategies and projects that have defined our urban core. It can be easy to forget, even over the course of one year, just how impactful our work has been. And whether you reflect on one year or six decades, it is through the collaboration of many that our progress has been significant.

In reviewing our 2014-15 accomplishments, you'll see numerous new records created and higher standards set. From record-breaking attendance at our signature programs and events, to launching unparalleled initiatives, these feats reflect and celebrate all that can be achieved by true engagement and collaboration. Through public sector leadership and aligning the passions and skills of our boards of directors, 650 member businesses and organizations, the Partnership team, civic leaders and community partners, you'll see we have a lot to be proud of.

Moving forward, we remain steadfast in pursuing our city building mission. To sustain this positive momentum, we will continue to focus on policies, initiatives and projects that support building a premier organization, creating energized public spaces and districts, and growing the economic base of Downtown, all while connecting everyone to everything through greater mobility options.

On behalf of the Board and the Downtown Denver Partnership team, thank you for playing a key role in our success, and we look forward to another 60 years of innovation, creativity and city building.



Tami Door
President and CEO
Downtown Denver Partnership



David Kenney
Board Chairman, 2014-15
Downtown Denver Partnership



Joe Vostrejs
Board Chairman, 2015-16
Downtown Denver Partnership

2014-15 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Growing the Economic Base

If You're Starting Up, Start Here

In May, the Downtown Denver Partnership celebrated the opening of **The Commons on Champa, a public campus for entrepreneurship**. Through a partnership with the City and County of Denver and Colorado Technology Association, and with the support of 39 businesses and organizations, The Commons is a unique gathering place for Downtown's diverse community of business builders and innovators.

The Commons is a distinct evolution of the Partnership's commitment to support a thriving entrepreneurial community, exemplified by its continued leadership in co-producing **Denver Startup Week**, North America's largest, free entrepreneurial event of its kind. The program's third year featured more than 180 community-driven events, engaged more than 700 companies and nearly 8,000 individuals, and helped secure Denver's spot on numerous national rankings of best cities in the U.S. to start a business.

On its first day, #DENStartupWeek trended nationally on social media and continued to trend locally throughout the event, which was tweeted nearly 18,000 times to reach 41 million people.

An Amenity-Rich Center City

The Partnership continued to identify and pursue Downtown amenities attractive to existing and future residents. In late 2015, the efforts of public and private-sector collaboration will be celebrated as the **first full-service grocery store opens Downtown**. In addition, the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School is thriving as the center city's first new school in more than 100 years, and this year the Partnership supported school leaders in securing a new charter to open a **Downtown middle school by 2017**.

Through its comprehensive **Retail Development Plan**, the Partnership saw success in recruiting first-to-market retailers to Downtown, with commitments from Uniqlo and Kit and Ace to bring unique retail offerings to the urban core. In addition, the Partnership **met with 34 national and international retailers** at three International Council of Shopping Center conferences to showcase Downtown as a desirable retail location for new stores and expansion.



The Best Place to Live and Work

The Partnership joined and funded advocacy efforts of the Homeownership Opportunity Alliance to support state-wide **construction defects legislation** reform, which made it further in the legislative process than previous attempts before the bill was defeated in committee. The Partnership believes this legislation is a critical step to encourage for-sale residential development Downtown and will continue to support future state and local legislation.

All City offices, including 13 Denver City Council seats, were up for a vote in the **Denver Municipal Election** in May 2015. The Partnership convened a taskforce of 20 board members to identify top issues facing Downtown, educate candidates, and survey and interview nearly 50 City Council candidates to understand and garner their commitment to Downtown.

Working closely with commercial and residential brokers, the Partnership **led 12 tours of development projects** and hosted several presentations showcasing the variety of existing and planned developments throughout the city center neighborhoods. In addition, focused efforts to **revitalize Arapahoe Square** as the City's next great neighborhood included launching re-zoning efforts and leading tours with developers and investors designed to incent catalytic development in the area.

Marketing to Maximize Investment

Through research publications and associated events, including the **State of Downtown Denver, quarterly and annual Downtown Denver Development Maps, quarterly Economic Development Updates, Oil and Gas Industry Economic Impact Study** and **Commuter Survey**, the Partnership showcased the economic vitality of Downtown by telling the story of the center city to a diverse group of stakeholders including business leaders, developers, brokers, City officials and the public.

As reported in the 2015 State of Downtown Denver, 120,871 employees work Downtown, and there are nearly 70,000 residents in Downtown and city center neighborhoods.

Creating and Energizing Public Spaces and Districts

Rehabilitation and Activation of the 16th Street Mall

The Partnership is committed to building a culture of community support and engagement for the 16th Street Mall through consistent rehabilitation and activation efforts.

In June, Downtown stakeholders were introduced to **IKE, a first-of-its-kind interactive kiosk experience**, designed to enhance information, economic development and encourage two-way communication. A collaboration between the Partnership and Street Media Group, and developed with several Colorado-based businesses, the pilot program supports the Downtown Area Plan goal to provide a comprehensive wayfinding system that leverages technology and helps welcome international visitors to the center city.

Numerous events funded by the Downtown Denver Business Improvement District (BID) and managed by the Partnership energize and activate the Mall year-round. **Meet in the Street (MITS)**, held twice in 2014 and expanded to five Sundays in 2015, was awarded the Mayor's Design Award in 2014. During the event, the 16th Street Free MallRide service is detoured off the Mall, and unique programming encourages people to enjoy the Mall in new and different ways. MITS is also a place-making pilot project to aid in the research and planning for **The Mall Experience: The Future of Denver's 16th Street Mall** study conducted by the City and Partnership, and with consulting support from world-renowned Gehl Architects. The study supports ensuring the Mall reaches its full potential as a world-class destination and premier public space.

Patio 16, the first outdoor dining area in the median of the Mall, opened in August to provide a safe, clean and family-friendly area for people to enjoy a wide variety of menu options from nearby **Marketplace on the Mall** vendors. Through the **Your Keys to the City** public piano art program, visitors enjoyed spirited staccatos and alluring art through 10 pianos placed throughout the Mall from May to September, and again in December. **The Garden Block** also offers an urban oasis to relax and enjoy cultural programming through a partnership with the Denver Botanic Gardens. And those who enjoy **Winter in the City** were treated to **substantially updated holiday lighting**, including increased quality and quantity of lights along the Mall from Tremont to Arapahoe Streets.

Safety and Sustainability

Ensuring the Mall is a place where people feel safe and comfortable, and the sidewalks and streets are attractive and well-maintained, remains a dedicated focus. In 2014-15, the Partnership participated in an RTD-led process that completed the detailed design for **pedestrian areas of the first 3.5 blocks identified for rehabilitation in the 16th Street Mall Plan**. In addition, the Partnership, BID and Visit Denver joined together to hire off-duty Denver Police Department officers in summer 2014 to patrol three blocks of the Mall from Welton to Champa Streets for 12 hours a day, seven days a week. **Walking the Beat** returned in summer 2015 after its successful first year in building community and encouraging positive behavior.

89 percent of those surveyed noticed the increased police presence, and 56 percent felt safer because of the additional officers through Walking the Beat.



2014-15 ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONTINUED

An Outdoor Downtown

As a result of the work of the Partnership and the BID, Skyline Park is a destination for locals and visitors alike throughout the year. Beginning as a hub for family-friendly **Summer in the City events**, the park is home to **Skyline Park Games**, popular lawn games and a nine-hole miniature golf course featuring iconic Downtown attractions, **Summer Movie Series** and more. As the weather turns colder, Skyline Park is transformed into **Southwest Rink at Skyline Park**, sponsored by Southwest Airlines, where a record 48,986 ice skaters enjoyed the rink in its fifth season. The rink hosted bands, broomball and other events to continue to promote Downtown as a premier winter destination.

Ensuring that parks and plazas remain prominent places for events and activation, the Partnership secured a contract with RTD to begin permitting events at **Wynkoop Plaza**, the welcome mat of Denver Union Station, and is co-funding and co-managing **Denver's Outdoor Downtown** plan with the City to support the development of this parks and public spaces master plan.

Re-Thinking Alleys

Alleyways are important connectors in Downtown, and through unique visioning from the Partnership and City, are also the newest, pedestrian-friendly public spaces. The Partnership hosted **alley activation events**, including creating a demonstration alleyway on 16th Street between Champa and Curtis Streets, complete with semi-permanent, festive lighting and artwork through a partnership with the BID, OneWall Project and four local galleries. These efforts change the character of an alley to support re-thinking and use as public spaces. Eight alleys in the core blocks of the Mall, and additional alleys off the Mall, also received lighting upgrades **through \$100,000 of funding** from the Partnership.

Signature Events

One of the best ways to engage people with the strategic vision for Downtown is to help them experience all that it has to offer. More than **one million people** came Downtown to enjoy the Partnership's signature events, including the **31st annual A Taste of Colorado**, **40th annual 9NEWS Parade of Lights**, **Grand Illumination** and **New Year's Eve Fireworks**. The two-night Parade of Lights featured a bright new Mighty Mouse balloon, and a 42-foot-long, 15-foot-tall new snow tiger balloon sponsored by American Furniture Warehouse. Fireworks at A Taste of Colorado and a diverse collection of bands added additional excitement to the weekend's festivities.

Connecting Everyone to Everything

Creating a Bicycle City

Building a premier environment for both bicycles and pedestrians is an important element of the Partnership's place-based economic development strategy to make bicycling more convenient, and Downtown more attractive to its future workforce and residents.

The Partnership is a strong advocate for building a robust bicycle transportation network that includes more protected facilities within and through Downtown, including ensuring the successful installation of **protected bike lanes on Arapahoe and Lawrence Streets**, scheduled for completion in late 2015. The Partnership secured \$120,000 in funding for protected bike lanes and led a successful **crowdfunding campaign to raise an additional \$35,000 from more than 200 donors**, including property owners, businesses, employees and residents.

To support providing clear bicycle connections into and through Downtown, the Partnership **maximized its effectiveness as a Green Lane Project city** by participating with key City and business leaders on a study tour of innovative bicycle infrastructure in Copenhagen. This trip inspired advocacy efforts that led the City Council to pass an ordinance allowing **cycling in the 16th Street Mall transit lanes on Saturdays**, in addition to the previously-allowed Sundays, which took effect in May.

Enhancing Streetscape Designs and Transportation Options

The Partnership joined with regional partners to celebrate the opening of Denver Union Station, and continued to focus its efforts on ensuring Downtown remains the region's largest, most comprehensive and convenient transit district. The Partnership provided significant funding for the **21st and Wynkoop Streetscape Plan** and the **Civic Center Transit District Plan**, helping to select the consultant teams and serving on the project management teams and stakeholder advisory groups for both initiatives.

After working closely with the City to convert one-way streets to two-way streets to support greater walkability and retail development, **18th Street was converted to a two-way street in Lower Downtown** in November. Plans also progressed to convert 19th and 20th Avenues to two-way streets in 2016.

Building a Premier Organization

Grow and Engage a Community of City Builders

Denver becomes the epicenter of city building through signature programs produced by the Partnership, including the Rocky Mountain CitySummit and CityBuild Denver. This year's fifth annual **Rocky Mountain CitySummit** drew record attendance of 650 business and civic leaders from across the Rocky Mountain West to Downtown Denver for a day-long program focused on creating vibrant center cities and spanning topics including inclusivity, culture, public spaces, walkability and economic competitiveness.



CityBuild Denver, the Partnership's initiative to engage Downtown's next generation of leaders, drew 1,000 people to events that promoted A Love Affair with Denver, provided transferable skills and specific outcomes through rapid prototyping at the DenverUp Scrimmage, and fostered collaboration, connections and activating public spaces through CollaborEAT, an outdoor dining experience in Arapahoe Square.

The dialogue continued online through **CityTalk**, a community engagement gateway that is a place to share and develop new ideas, discuss community challenges and inform the public on programs and initiatives. The online engagement platform drew more than 2,300 people to the site to view or submit 400 ideas on topics ranging from the vision for the redevelopment of Arapahoe Square to the best holiday traditions in center cities.

Leadership and Engagement

The Partnership engages its members to strengthen their collective voice through a variety of opportunities for involvement in **boards, committees, councils and task forces**. In addition, Partnership efforts to create a **valuable member experience** resulted in a record number of new members, membership renewals and sponsorships, as well as more guests than ever - 1,050 - attending the **54th Annual Downtown Denver Awards Dinner** to recognize seven outstanding city building initiatives.

2014 Downtown Denver Award Winners:

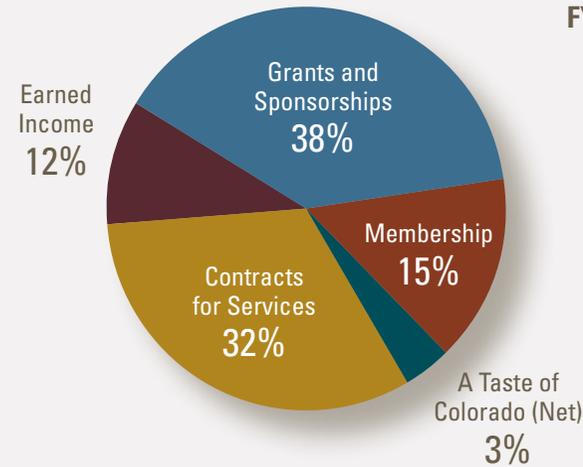
- Denver Public Library 125th Anniversary
- Mile High United Way Morgridge Center for Community Change
- Renaissance Denver Downtown City Center Hotel
- Emily Griffith Campus and Downtown Denver Expeditionary School
- Stout Street Health Center and Renaissance Stout Street Lofts
- Regional Transportation District's Free MetroRide
- Denver Union Station

The **Downtown Denver Leadership Program**, an intense immersion in urban issues, policies and practices for more than 100 leaders, saw the 2014 class transform Downtown spaces into places through its efforts to Reimagine Your Downtown, and the 2015 class begin to tackle how to create a 24/7 city by growing Downtown's residential population.

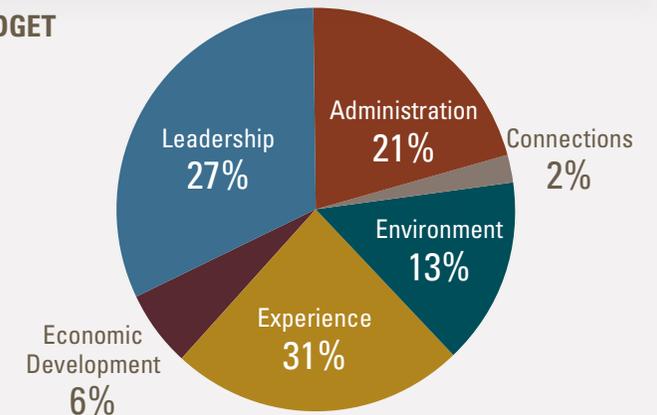
The Partnership also led nearly 110 public, private and non-profit leaders on the **Urban Exploration** trip to San Francisco. Attendees focused on San Francisco's complex yet progressive multi-modal transportation network, activation strategies of parks and public spaces, rich culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as how it addresses social issues and serves its homeless population.

2015-2016 PROJECTED FINANCIALS

FY 2015/16 REVENUE SOURCES



FY 2015/16 ALLOCATION OF BUDGET EXPENDITURES TO PRIORITIES



LOOKING AHEAD

In 2015-16, the Partnership will continue to align its activities to the high-impact strategies of the 2007 Downtown Area Plan, with a focus on building a premier organization, creating and energizing public spaces and districts, growing the economic base of Downtown Denver, and connecting everyone to everything through greater mobility options.

Efforts will emphasize the need to complete or significantly advance key plans, including Denver's Outdoor Downtown, The Mall Experience: The Future of Denver's 16th Street Mall, Civic Center Transit District Plan and the 21st and Wynkoop Streetscape Plan. Specific to the planning and vision for the long-term sustainability of the Mall, the Partnership will develop and begin implementation of a comprehensive security action plan to ensure continued improvement of safety and the public's perception of Downtown's primary corridor.

Downtown's culture of innovation and entrepreneurship will advance with community-building and programming at The Commons, as well as co-producing the fourth annual Denver Startup Week. We will also continue to advocate for policies and programs that sustain Downtown as a premier location for employers.

In addition, the Partnership will not only grow our signature events, but also further their relevancy and sustainability. Fostering the success of strategic initiatives like the IKE wayfinding pilot program, including encouraging roll-out in other areas of the center city, also supports Downtown activation.

Our work will also include growing our membership base and increasing the engagement of individuals and organizations throughout the region to produce and build events and initiatives such as CityBuild, the Downtown Denver Leadership Program, member forums and more.

And throughout the year, the Partnership will tell the story of Downtown through a robust research and communications program; advocate for important policy initiatives, including specifically addressing the housing needs in the center city; and create opportunities that build a healthy, growing and vital Downtown.

The opportunities to experience our center city and make it stronger are vast. We look forward to collaborating with our members, community partners, civic leaders and Downtown's exceptional community of residents, visitors and employees to realize our vision of a prosperous center city.



Downtown Denver Partnership, Inc.

511 16th Street, Suite 200, Denver, CO 80202

Phone: 303-534-6161

Info@downtowndenver.com

www.downtowndenver.com

[#DowntownDenver](https://twitter.com/DowntownDenver)

