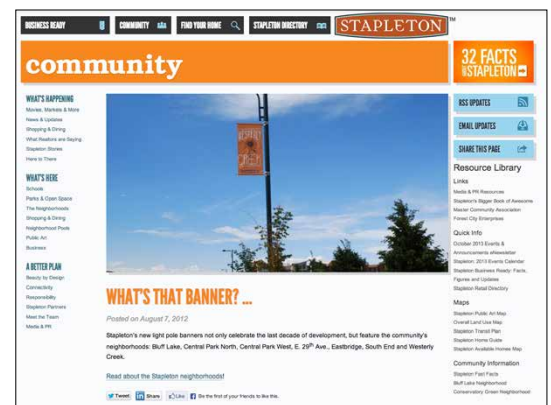


Creating a Roadmap/Strategies for Success

The creative district webinar news series, so far, has helped provide guidance on how a district defines its unique and authentic offer, how a cultural brand is built around that and how you communicate both of those things to the appropriate audiences. Tackling these steps provides the foundation for your work towards developing a vibrant district. Building on the foundation with a roadmap for the future is the next step. To create a sustainable, thriving district you must make sure your vision is clear and the path to achieve that vision is well defined.



In this webinar news we talk about how you identify a clear vision and goals for your creative district and then how you develop strategies to achieve those goals through impactful projects and programs. Finally, we'll look at how you prioritize, implement and deliver through a clear implementation strategy.



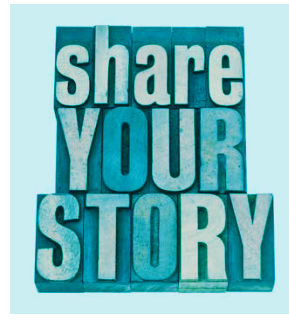
A Clear Vision

Do you know where you are going? Many creative districts start out with energy, enthusiasm and motivation to do something to make an impact. And in their early days, that's where resources are focused - on doing projects and facilitating programs that tackle issues and leverage opportunities. These little things done here and there begin to build momentum for a bigger effort. It's at this point that many districts get stuck. They are great at doing but not so great at planning for the future.

Having a clear vision - a clear goal in mind for where you ultimately would like to see your district go and what you ultimately would like to achieve - is critical to moving things forward. While it should be grounded in some realities, the vision ideally should be aspirational and motivational. It should give people something to aspire to and something to achieve. The vision can be words or descriptions. It can be images or pictures. Just make sure that it's a collective vision - one that is well supported by everyone in your district and one which everyone can relate to on some level.

Setting Goals

Once you have your vision established, set goals and try to be fairly specific about these goals. Instead of saying *we'd like more visitors at our events*, say *we'd like to increase our event attendance by 20% in five years*. Instead of saying *we'd like more businesses*, say *we'd like to recruit five new creative businesses and five new restaurants by 2015*. Give people something to work towards and something to aspire to.



Strategies for Success

Once you have a clear vision and well-defined goals, it's all about understanding how you can get there and affect change in your communities. You have the ability to create programs to tackle nearly every challenge in your district, working with both the public and private sectors in the area. The following are key strategy areas you should consider as you work to put together a plan for your district:

Retail/Economic Strategies – Filling Space

You can play an active role in helping to shape the makeup and character of your creative district by developing targeted strategies to fill space with desirable uses through targeted retail and economic strategies. Many times, this includes the district taking leadership in helping to curate a mix of businesses and uses they'd like to see in the shops. Creative districts can then take an active role in helping to recruit or incubate these business types and develop business support programs as well as incentives to help fill space in your district with uses that work well together.

Public Realm Strategies – Creating Place

Visitors to your creative district should be able to tell when they've arrived and they should get a good sense of who you are and what you are all about by the physical environment they see around them. Creating place and ambiance is a very important part of creative district development. To start, think about how you can turn your district inside out, showcasing the creative businesses and entrepreneurs that are within your shops on the outside. Utilize colorful signage and banners, implement public art, paint murals, plant flowers and create a sense of place that encourages visitors to explore.

Communication/Marketing Strategies – Telling the Story

We've previously talked about how to create an effective communications and marketing strategy and this should be an integral part of your strategic plan as well. Don't forget to clearly identify how you will tell your story and promote your work while ensuring everyone is clear about the vision and goals you have in place.

Activation Strategies – Feet on Streets

Finally, make sure you're developing strategic events and programming that puts feet on streets and gives visitors a reason to come back to your district again and again. Activation strategies should be developed for different target audiences - all ages, families, couples, etc. - and should be offered throughout the year and at different times. Bringing people to the district exposes them to who you are and what you have to offer. Bringing them back again and again means they get an opportunity to be part of the positive change you are working towards.

Getting it All Done

Finally, make sure you have a clear implementation strategy in place, one which identifies quick win strategies as well as short-, mid- and long-term projects to focus on. Your roadmap and strategic plan should also clearly identify how you will manage and fund the implementation, something we will talk about in future webinar news.

For more information and assistance in developing a vision and a clear strategic plan for your organization, please visit the following websites:

Colorado Nonprofit Association - coloradononprofits.org

Community Resource Center - crcamerica.org

Colorado Nonprofit Development Center - cndc.org



Colorado Creative Industries
A Division of the Colorado Office of
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