



**RINO ART DISTRICT**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2023**

# Centering Arts + Equity

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**Convening  
Community**

# OUR MISSION

RiNo Art District is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit grassroots organization dedicated to fostering a welcoming, creative community where a diversity of artists, residents, and businesses thrive.

The District is inclusive of four historic neighborhoods: Globeville, Elyria-Swansea, Five Points, and Cole. Over the last decade, the RiNo Art District has helped form both a Business Improvement District (BID) and General Improvement District (GID) along with a community arts educational nonprofit (Keep RiNo Wild). Together, the RiNo Art District family of organizations funds and supports the Denver community through advocacy, infrastructure improvements, artist support, community programming, business support, events, and more.



FOSTERING CREATIVITY & INCLUSIVITY





# LETTER FROM THE RINO TEAM



To Our Community, Partners & Supporters:

On behalf of the RiNo Art District Board of Directors and staff – thank you! With your support and ongoing engagement throughout 2023, we continued the work of keeping RiNo Art District an inclusive, accessible, wildly creative place where community, art and businesses thrive.

With efforts in 2023 directed at supporting our Strategic Plan Goals, the RiNo Art District allocated \$565,000 in artist stipends to more than 91 artists and granted \$75,000 in social impact grants to local organizations working to champion social justice, equity and the eradication of racial discrimination. We distributed \$100,000 in creative/entrepreneurial support and engaged our community through year-round events and programming.

Throughout the year, we celebrated major milestones at RiNo ArtPark, including welcoming the internationally acclaimed (and locally loved) Comal Heritage Food Incubator and opening our new 4,000-square-foot flexible performance space, the Truss House. This new space, created through a unique partnership with the City and County of Denver's Parks and Recreation Department, will provide much-needed affordable, flexible performance space for the community.

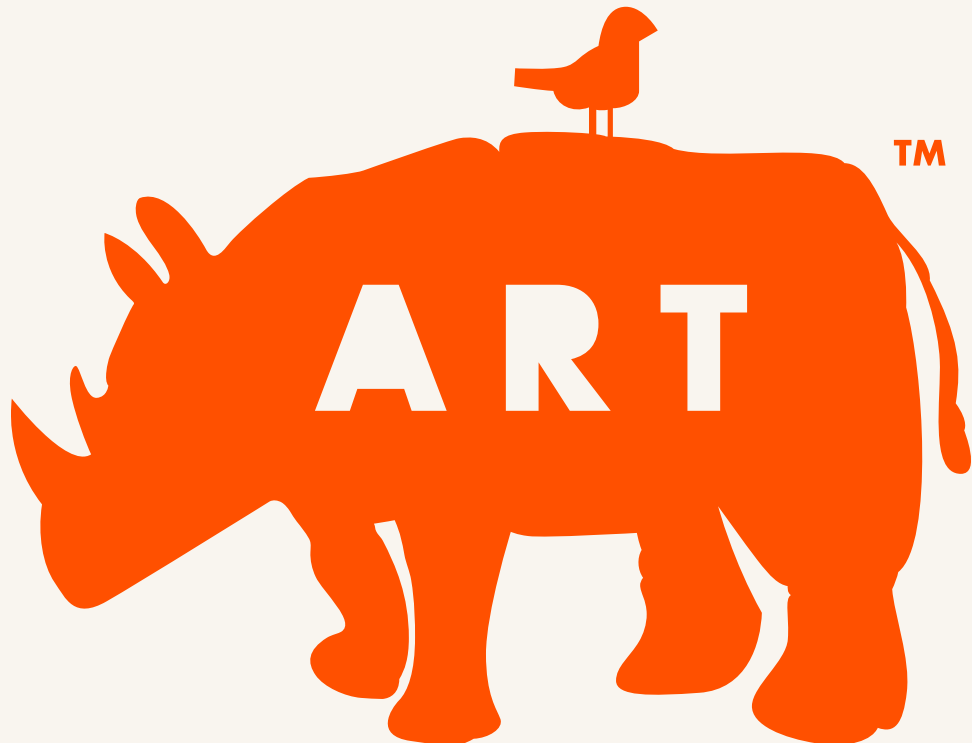
As the presenting sponsor of the inaugural DENVER WALLS mural festival in September, we helped bring more than a dozen street art-centric events to the District, drawing in crowds to see murals from globally renowned artists alongside local street art legends. We also re-launched First Fridays as a dynamic, community-led event that added vibrancy and foot traffic for businesses throughout the district.

Looking ahead to 2024, our focus remains on supporting local businesses, strengthening connections with historic neighborhoods, and empowering the creative community through initiatives like marketing, public realm improvements, streetscape maintenance, creative programs, and continued event sponsorship. None of this would be possible without your support, and we look forward to sharing our progress with you in the year ahead!





# 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## 2023 RINO ART DISTRICT TEAM

- Charity Von Guinness | Executive Director
- Alye Sharp | Deputy Director
- Sarah Cawrse | Director of Urban Strategy & Design
- Edwin Rapp | Chief Financial Officer
- Molly Paillet | Programs Director
- Adrienne Villa | Operations Manager
- Brittany Ross | Membership Manager
- Robert Gray | Facilities & Events Manager
- Eva Zimmerman | Website Director
- Tracy Weil | Co-Founder



### RiNo Art District Board Members

- Tracy Weil, Board Chair
- Jonathan Power, Treasurer
- Gerald Horner, Secretary
- Anne Hayes
- Bernard Hurley
- Diana Merkel
- Kirsty Greer
- Andrew Feinstein
- Tom Kiler
- Julian Donaldson

### RiNo Business Improvement District (BID) Board Members

- Diana Merkel, Board Chair
- Adam Larkey, Treasurer
- Carla Mestas
- Jevon Taylor
- Obe Ariss

### Keep RiNo Wild Board Members

- Anne Hayes, Board Chair
- Tracy Weil, Treasurer
- Bryant Palmer, Secretary
- Jayne Buck
- Liz Adams
- Kellie Owens

### RiNo General Improvement District (GID) Board Members

- Kirsty Greer, Board Chair
- Liam Girard, Treasurer
- Jamie Roupp, Secretary
- Teresa Ortiz
- Edee Anesi
- Andrew Katz
- Karen Good, DOTI Representative
- Darrell Watson, District 9 Councilmember

# RINO BY THE NUMBERS

- **\$550K+** IN ARTIST STIPENDS
- **\$435K+** IN MARKETING & ADVOCACY
- **\$75K+** IN SOCIAL IMPACT GRANTS
- **\$400K+** IN EVENTS & PROGRAMMING
- **\$2M+** IN PUBLIC REALM INVESTMENT
- **161** TOTAL MEMBERS
- **45** NEW MEMBERS



# REVIEW OF

# STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

- 1 Foster a healthy, welcoming and inclusive art district**
- Cultivate community connections to enhance safety in RiNo
  - Engage stakeholders and implement a strategy to maintain a clean environment
  - Steward growth to help maintain RiNo's unique character
  - Foster an inclusive art district

- 2 Cultivate creative programming for all**
- Deliver a large-scale annual art event and support grassroots events held by others
  - Nurture ArtPark as a creative hub through programs, relationship building and partnerships
  - Support and expand creative programming

- 3 Increase affordable creative and small business space**
- Advocate for affordable creative and small business space through policy and community organizing
  - Create and steward RiNo-operated affordable spaces
  - Partner with property owners, brokers, corporations, and developers to identify and create access to space

- 4 Nurture RiNo's public realm with art, infrastructure, mobility and green initiatives**
- Improve mobility and accessibility
  - Ensure art is incorporated into all relevant infrastructure projects
  - Increase the urban tree canopy and support the delivery of sustainable urban landscaping practices

- 5 Strengthen relationships and communication with RiNo's stakeholders**
- Implement outreach and communication strategies to specific stakeholder groups
  - Use RiNo's marketing and communications platforms to support and inform







**GOAL 1**

**“This fund will not only strengthen our mission to improve our neighborhoods and offer vital mental health art therapy programs but will also allow us to grow and get even closer to the community, effectively engaging residents in Elyria-Swansea and Globeville neighborhoods. Together, we will move forward toward promoting environmental and social justice, promoting health, and building a stronger, healthier community. Thank you for being a valued partner in our shared mission!”**

**– Sandra Ruiz Parrilla, CEO of EGS & Partners**



# Foster a healthy, welcoming and inclusive art district

## MARKETING AND ADVOCACY

- **\$435,000** was contributed towards marketing and advocacy to support businesses, advance RiNo’s work, and communicate projects, programs, and initiatives.

## SOCIAL IMPACT GRANTS

- **\$75,000** of Social Impact Grant Funding was distributed to support local organizations championing solutions to significant social issues.
- In 2024, **\$125,000** in Social Impact Grant Funding will be provided thanks to an expansion in budget.
- To date, **\$225,000** in Social Impact Grant Funding has been donated to support local organizations championing solutions to significant social issues in the community.

## SHOWERS FOR ALL

- The RiNo BID made investments to support housing-first programs like Showers For All, a nonprofit dedicated to providing mobile showers and laundry to the homeless of Denver. Support from the BID funded the [launch of a second trailer](#), enabling Showers For All to effectively double the number of mobile showers and laundry services available to Denver’s unhoused community.

## INFRASTRUCTURE WINS

- Successfully advocated for and worked with the city to implemented new stop signs to improve safety and accessibility.



[Click here to read story.](#)



[Learn more about Showers For All](#)





## GOAL 2

# Cultivate creative programming for all

### CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT

- **\$100,000** in grants provided to support **20** artists and creative groups hosting various creative projects and programs in Denver, including [Denver Fringe Festival](#), [Somebody's Friend Movement and Music Festival](#), and [Culture Movie Nights](#).
- **\$150,000** in grants will be provided in 2024 thanks to a BID-approved expansion of budget to support a diverse array of arts and creative programming.

### TOOLS FOR THE CREATIVE LIFE

- **11** free monthly workshops were hosted, providing **337** creatives with connections, new skills, inspirational capital, and tools to craft a healthy creative ecosystem.

### PARTNERSHIP WITH CREATIVE STUDY

- **170+** hours of courses watched through a partnership with CreativeStudy. Through this program, artists and creatives have free access to a library of online, video-based, and in-person courses and workshops focused on business and financial health to build and sustain careers in the arts.

### ARTPARK ALL-AGES COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

- **4** ArtPark Al Frescos, a free family-friendly art workshop featuring exciting and unconventional projects attended by **243** registrants; **3** Summer Art Markets drawing in **1,500+** attendees and showcasing **30+** local art makers; **4** river clean-up events along the Platte River in partnership with Denver Parks Trust and Patagonia; **4** Satellite Saturday events, a monthly workshop, artist talk, and social events.

### FIRST FRIDAYS RELAUNCH

- Successfully relaunched First Fridays, driving foot traffic to the District to support local businesses and artists through creative programming and events.







**GOAL 3**

# Increase affordable creative and small business space

## SUBSIDIZED AFFORDABLE ARTIST SPACES

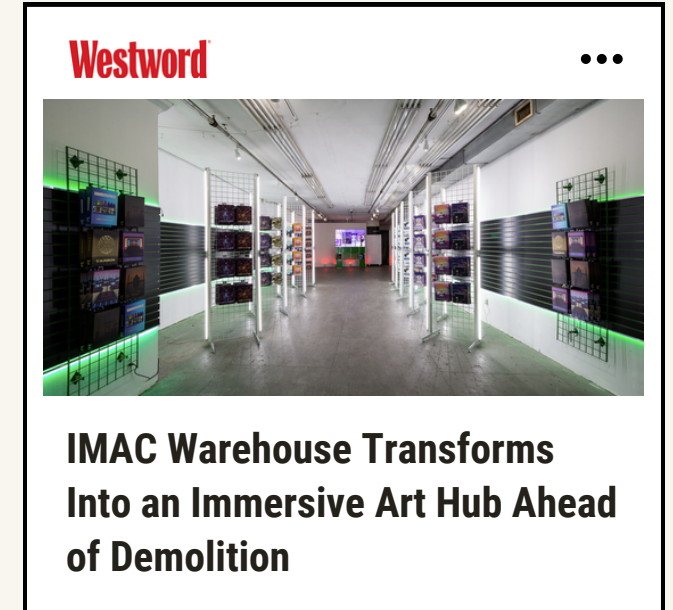
- **20** affordable creative studios were subsidized to support artists through a continued partnership with [Backyard on Blake Street](#) and [RedLine Contemporary Art Center](#)

## NO VACANCY

- **\$50,000** in artist stipends were provided for NO VACANCY, an artist residency program presented in collaboration with EDENS and sponsored by Davis Partnership Architects. Temporary studio space was provided for **5** artists to create solo and group installations inside an empty warehouse in RiNo.
- Showcases of the work attracted **1,000+** guests and positive local media coverage. ([Click here to learn more](#))

## COMPLETED TRUSS HOUSE

- Within ArtPark, a **4,000** square feet of affordable, adaptable performance space was opened in partnership with the City & County of Denver Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR).
- The ribbon-cutting of Truss House was celebrated on June 22 with Mayor Michael B. Hancock and representatives from DPR and local arts organizations.
- The opening of Truss House completes the second phase of ArtPark within Arkins Park. ([Click here to learn more](#)).



[Click here to read story.](#)



[Click here to read story.](#)





## GOAL 4

# Nurture public realm with art, infrastructure, mobility and green initiatives

### DENVER WALLS MURAL FESTIVAL

- RiNo Art District was the presenting sponsor for the inaugural DENVER WALLS festival, which welcomed **18** global and local artists to paint throughout The District. In total, the inaugural festival saw:
  - **1.7 million views** across social media channels; **158,000 visitors** to RiNo Art District during the festival; **40,000+ square feet** of new murals; **\$7,500 in scholarships** awarded to local students supporting art education; **365 gallons** and **3,500 cans** of paint used.

### INVESTMENTS IN ALTERNATIVE ART FORMS

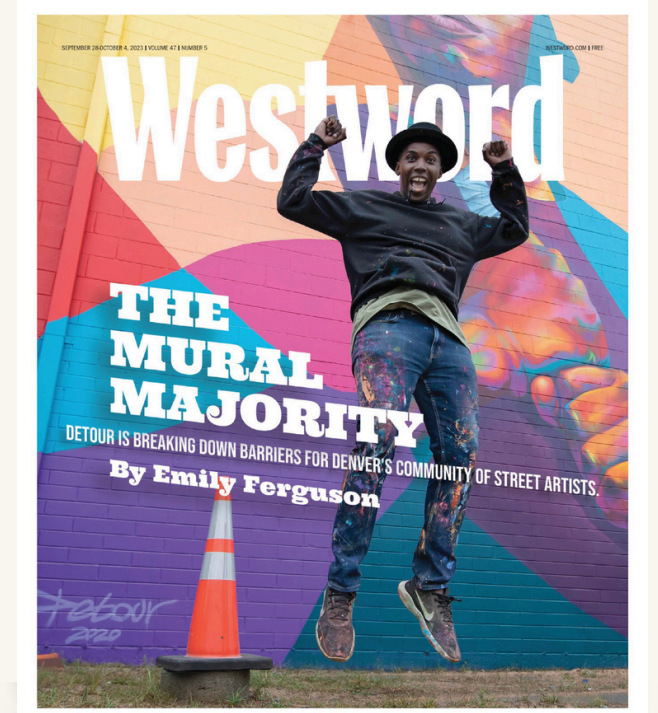
- Through **\$100,000** allocated to creative entrepreneurship support in 2023 (which will expand to **\$150,000** in 2024), we funded creative projects in performing arts (theatre and dance), video art ([Side Stories](#)), literary art ([Zine Fest](#)), and a variety of independent artist programs throughout the year.

### IMPROVED MOBILITY CONNECTIONS

- Collaborated with community members of Five Points, Curtis Park Neighbors, and Downtown Denver to advocate for the 5280 Trail and a Cultural Loop that would provide better mobility connections and improved pedestrian and bicycle-friendly infrastructure.

### BRIGHTON BLVD MAINTENANCE

- Spent just over \$94,000 maintaining the landscape and planters along Brighton Boulevard, including replacing 16 trees and doing fall and spring cleanups.



[Click here to read story.](#)





# GOAL 4 CONTINUED



## 2900 BLOCK LARIMER STREET

- The RiNo Art District engaged the community to collect feedback about the future of the 2900 Block Larimer Street through engagement opportunities such as an online questionnaire, in-person community information meeting, and other meetings. Over 2,300 people took the questionnaire and the community feedback showed that:
  - **84.4%** of all respondents reported that the 2900 block closure has had a positive impact on the community.
  - **92.8%** of all respondents reported they support keeping the 2900 block closed to vehicles in 2024.
  - **86.3%** of respondents who are property and business owners within the RiNo Art District, and residents who live within five blocks of the 2900 block street closure, support keeping the 2900 block closed to vehicles in 2024.

[Click here to access the full Community Feedback Summary Report](#)

## URBAN FOREST MASTER PLAN

- Progress was made on creating a clear master plan to improve and expand RiNo's tree canopy. The master plan will outline phases and implementation strategies to efficiently get trees in the ground.

## TRASH AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

- RiNo spent over \$71,000 on the recycling and landfill program and continued to contract with Denver Day Works, an organization who provides day labor jobs for individuals experiencing homelessness. Denver Day works serviced the trash and recycling bins and did litter removal on a recurring basis.
- Expanded service was provided to ensure the District was maintained during DENVER WALLS.
- The RiNo boards approved additional funding to expand the trash and recycling and streetscape maintenance services in 2024 and will be implementing a new Clean Team Ambassadors program.







## GOAL 5

# Strengthen relationships and communication with stakeholders

### ADDED NEW TEAM MEMBERS

- **3** new team members were added to the RiNo Art District in 2023, strengthening the organization’s ability to serve members and the community at large:
  - Sarah Cawrse (Director of Urban Strategy & Design); Edwin Rapp (Chief Financial Officer); Robert Gray (Events and Facilities Manager)

### RINO SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

- **1,572,216** annual impressions on Facebook; **3,495,783** annual impressions on Instagram; **23,079** annual impressions on LinkedIn; **58,700** annual impressions on Twitter / X; **15,000+** new followers across social platforms

### RINO NEWSLETTER

- We continue to share District news with our community via monthly newsletters, which are delivered to **6,000** recipients with a **45%** open rate.

### RINO TALKS

- **5** community meetings were hosted for RiNo residents, business owners, property owners, and other community members to connect and share information on RiNo events, programs, and District initiatives.

### DENVER ELECTION RESOURCES

- RiNo supported civic engagement by creating a 2023 General Election Guide to share information on how various candidates stack up when it comes to arts-related issues.

### 2900 BLOCK OF LARIMER STREET OUTREACH

- Conducted outreach and engagement to collect feedback about the future of the 2900 block of Larimer Street, which included an online questionnaire, in-person community information meeting, and other meetings.

Video recap from Annual Meeting





# RINO IN THE NEWS

Number of Features: 82 articles

Total Audience Reach: +220 million

## ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

**303 Magazine:** DENVER WALLS Brings International Mural Festival to RiNo Art District

**5280 Magazine:** Denver Walls Mural Festival Combines Street Art and Technology

**9 News TV:** New performing arts venue tailored to marginalized artists

**Axios Denver:** Denver weekend events: RiNo holiday market, Santa Bar Crawl

**CBS Colorado:** Denver Arts Week kicks off with bustling Blake Street Block Party

**Denver 7 TV:** Denver Walls Festival adding 17 murals in RiNo Art District

**Denver Gazette:** RiNo Art District opens legitimately affordable performing venue | Arts news

**Denver Post:** Denver-area holiday shoppers expected to spend "like it's 2019 again"

**FOX 31 TV:** Local artists to compete in Secret Walls illustration battle

**Rooster Magazine:** Denver Walls Festival: Merging Street Art & New Technologies

**Westword:** IMAC Warehouse Transforms Into an Immersive Art Hub Ahead of Demolition



# GET IN TOUCH

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IG: @rinoartdistrict

[www.rinoartdistrict.org](http://www.rinoartdistrict.org)

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