



## Denver City Council

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### Public Amenities Committee Meeting Summary

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**Date:** Dec. 5, 2006      **Time:** 11:00 a.m.      **Location:** Council Conference Room

**Committee Members Present:** Lehmann, Montero, Johnson, Robb, Rodriguez

**Committee Members Absent:** None

**Other Council Present:** None

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#### Agenda:

- **Mayor's Task Force on Creative Spaces; Creative Enterprises Revolving Loan Fund**
  - **Colorado Business Committee for the Arts Economic Impact of the Arts Report**
  - **Denver County Cultural Council**
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#### 1. **Mayor's Task Force on Creative Spaces**

Ginger White, Senior Economic Specialist with the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs (DOCA), and the Committee discussed the Task Force, which has been working since last January, and its findings and recommendations. The discussion included the following information.

- The Task Force was created to look at ways to preserve and foster affordable, creative spaces for artists and performers.
- Councilwoman Montero was Council's representative; Peter Park, Manager of Community Planning & Development, and Ms. White were co-chairs of the Task Force.
- The report presents 20 recommendations (see attached executive summary) in 4 categories: accessibility; awareness; regulatory improvements; and sustainability.
- Recommendations include utilizing space in recreation centers and the McNichols Building in Civic Center Park (originally the Carnegie Library); and changing zoning laws to allow studio and work space over detached garages.
- Some recommendations ask City agencies (Zoning, Planning) and other entities (Downtown Denver Partnership) to consider adopting policies and programs that would help.
- Creative spaces should be included in planning for the transit-oriented development around the FasTracks stations.
- The Denver Post published an article on the report in the Business Section that generated at least 3 phone calls of interest, including from property owners at the Gates site and on the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall.
- One problem is that when "creatives" (noun meaning "creative individuals") discover an area they can afford to live and work, the neighborhood becomes funky and desirable, prices increase, and the artist are priced out.
- DOCA maintains an email list of 900 "creatives" who share information on related topics.
- Based on examples from Boston, Seattle, Chicago and Toronto, manuals detailing development and licensing approval processes will be published.
- The report is available at [www.DenverGov.org/CreateDenver](http://www.DenverGov.org/CreateDenver).

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## 2. Creative Enterprises Revolving Loan Fund

Ginger White, Senior Economic Specialist, Denver Office of Cultural Affairs (DOCA) discussed a new loan fund established to help creatives.

- The fund was launched on November 27.
- The Office of Economic Development contributed \$100,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to help establish the loan fund.
- Maximum loan amount is currently \$20,000.
- Micro Business Development (mbd) was selected to administer the program.
- Part of the loan process is a Creative Micro Business Assessment to help ensure the viability of the business.
- mbd has a 96.4% repayment rate; its average loan is \$6,000.
- Inquiries have come from galleries, individual artists, and arts associations, and three loan applications are already being processed.
- The funds come from community foundations and private donations
- mbd is in the same building as Deproduction, the City's community access television producer, which offers opportunity for partnerships.
- Information on the loan fund is at [www.DenverGov.org/CreateDenver](http://www.DenverGov.org/CreateDenver).

## 3. Colorado Business Committee for the Arts

Debra Jordy, Executive Director of the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts (CBCA), presented the findings from its 2006 Economic Activity Study of Metro Denver.

- The major findings are summarized on a set of 5 coasters, easily distributed.
- Total economic activity created annually by culture is about \$1.4 billion.
- 14 million people attend cultural events and institutions in the Denver area, a number consistently higher than sporting events (4.5 million).
- The cultural economy generates about \$387 million in new money to the local economy.
- Cultural tourism is a strong draw, accounting for 2.4 visits.
- Visitors from outside metro Denver generate \$334 million in new money for local economy.
- Since 1997, there has been \$1 billion economic growth in the arts.
- Culture provides lots of jobs and economic activity
- Non-profit scientific and cultural organizations paid nearly \$95 million in wages to 10,800 employees and over \$16 million in seat, sales and payroll taxes.
- Each \$1 spent on a cultural activity creates \$1.32 for other businesses (i.e., babysitter, restaurant, parking).
- There are over 8 million free visits, courtesy of the SCFD.

## 4. Denver County Cultural Council (DCCC)

Jane Potts, DCCC Program Director, introduced two of the three new DCCC members, Chrissy Deal and Harry Sterling. Andrew Hudson was unable to attend today. She said the new members have different backgrounds and bring varied experiences, helping strengthen DCCC.

Ms. Deal said she works at the Daniels Fund and is pursuing a Master's degree in non-profit administration. She formerly worked at the Denver Art Museum, wants to stay involved in the arts,

and is excited about the opportunity to work with Tier III arts organizations.

Mr. Sterling, a Denver native and product of Denver Public Schools and the University of Colorado, started practicing law in 1958. He said the creation of the SCFD is one of the best things the Denver area has done in the last century to improve itself, and he is exciting about the growth and variety of arts organizations.

Ms. Potts gave the Committee the following information on the DCCC's activities:

- One of the most pressing issues facing DCCC to finding performance space for the smaller organizations. Several of them have to go outside of Denver to find appropriate space.
- SCFD has developed an on-line grant application, the E-Grant, which will be in place on January 1.
- The E-Grant is a streamlined application.
- The E-Grant requires Internet Explorer; SCFD will work with any organization that has any problems.
- She has been working with Denver Public Schools on after-school programs.
- Cultural enrichment will be the focus 2 days per week.
- Paying for transportation is a problem for some of the programs.

*Gretchen Williams*  
12-10-06

*S:committees/public amenities/summary*