

# WHERE ART IS MADE

*A White Paper on Placemaking and Cultural Identity in the Redevelopment of Denver's River North Art District (RiNo)*

*This document was prepared for the Bend Urban Renewal Agency, the Core Area Advisory Board, and relevant stakeholders responsible for transforming the Core Area- a light-industrial corridor into a mixed-use urban district.*

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## Executive Summary

**RiNo’s transformation from an underdeveloped industrial corridor into a nationally recognized cultural district was not the result of a master plan or developer’s vision.** Instead, it began with an artist-led branding effort in 2005, featuring a rhinoceros logo, the tagline “*Where art is made,*” and eight founding members. This initiative set the stage for all subsequent public investment, private development, and infrastructure improvements. [3, 4]

**The district’s success is built on a layered governance structure,** including a 501(c)(6) Art District, a Business Improvement District, a General Improvement District, and a 501(c)(3) fundraising arm, all coordinated with the City and the Denver Urban Renewal Authority. A disciplined placemaking program—featuring over 200 murals, anchor adaptive-reuse projects such as The Source, programmed third places, and a year-round event calendar—supports this structure. Tax-increment financing has been used strategically for key adaptive-reuse buildings rather than as a blanket subsidy. [1, 7, 16, 18]

**Adaptive reuse is the architectural language of the brand.** The Source (Zeppelin Development’s 2013 conversion of the 1880s Colorado Iron Works foundry at 3350 Brighton Boulevard, supported by DURA TIF), the TAXI campus, Catalyst HTI, and the upcoming Rock Drill RiNo redevelopment all preserve the foundry-warehouse-sawtooth-brick vocabulary that *is* RiNo’s identity. New ground-up construction is governed by published design standards intended to keep the same architectural language. [14, 16, 17, 19, 20]

**Public infrastructure caught up between 2014 and 2022 and unlocked private investment.** The \$30 million Brighton Boulevard reconstruction, the 38th & Blake A-Line commuter rail station, the \$90.8 million 39th Avenue Greenway, and the 9-acre RiNo ArtPark together translated a culture-led brand into a physically navigable district. The RiNo Art District estimated that these improvements helped attract \$850 million in private investment to the area. [4, 11, 12, 13, 26]

## Key Findings

**Identity was authored from the inside by working artists in 2005.** Painter Tracy Weil and illustrator Jill Hadley Hooper convened eight founding members in 2005 to formalize an arts district that, in Weil’s frequently quoted phrase, would “really just... sell more paintings.” They took the City of Denver’s 2003 *River North Plan* boundary, contracted “RiNo” from River North (because Chicago already had a River North), drew a rhinoceros logo, and chose the tagline “Where art is made.” The discipline of that early period — short distinctive name, memorable animal-based mark, one-line production-forward tagline, a recurring studio tour — set the cultural template for everything that followed. [3, 4]

**Murals became the district’s permanent visual brand layer.** By the early 2020s, the district had more than 200 active murals across roughly 400 acres. The institutional driver throughout the 2010s was the CRUSH Walls festival, founded by Robin Munro in 2010, which, at its 2019 tenth-anniversary peak, commissioned more than 80 walls in a single week. When CRUSH collapsed in 2020–2021 after sexual-assault allegations against its founder, the district transitioned to *Denver Walls* (a woman- and immigrant-owned festival launched in 2023 by artist Ally Grimm) without losing the underlying mural inventory or the year-round RiNo Mural Program launched in 2021. [1, 5, 6, 9, 10]

**Adaptive reuse is the architectural language of the brand.** The Source (Zeppelin Development’s 2013 conversion of the 1880s Colorado Iron Works foundry at 3350 Brighton Boulevard, supported by DURATIF), the TAXI campus, Catalyst HTI, and the upcoming Rock Drill RiNo redevelopment all preserve the foundry-warehouse-sawtooth-brick vocabulary that *is* RiNo’s identity. New ground-up construction is governed by published design standards intended to keep the same architectural language. [14, 16, 17, 19, 20]

**Food, beverage, and hospitality function as third-place placemaking.** The Source Hotel, The Ramble Hotel, Death & Co, Mission Ballroom (AEG’s \$40 million, purpose-built, 60,000-square-foot concert venue), Denver Central Market, Zeppelin Station, and dozens of breweries, distilleries, and restaurants generate continuous foot traffic that makes the mural inventory visible and the public realm activated. [2, 15, 21, 22]



Source: Uncover Colorado

**Public infrastructure caught up between 2014 and 2022 and unlocked private investment.** The \$30 million Brighton Boulevard reconstruction, the 38th & Blake A-Line commuter rail station, the \$90.8 million 39th Avenue Greenway, and the 9-acre RiNo ArtPark together



translated a culture-led brand into a physically navigable district. The RiNo Art District estimated that these improvements helped attract \$850 million in private investment to the area. [4, 11, 12, 13, 26]

**DURA used TIF surgically, not blanketly.** The 2012 Ironworks Foundry / Source URA (approximately \$1.115 million TIF on a \$4.7 million project) and the September 2025 Rock Drill URA (up to \$39.1 million TIF on a ~\$566 million project) are the two clearest RiNo TIF deals. TIF was reserved for irreplaceable adaptive-reuse buildings whose redevelopment economics could not pencil otherwise. [16, 18, 19, 20]

**A four-entity governance stack scales grassroots identity into civic infrastructure.** The RiNo Art District (501(c)(6), 2005), the RiNo BID (2015, ~\$3.5 million 2025 budget, renewed unanimously by Denver City Council in May 2025), the RiNo Denver GID (2015, infrastructure-only mandate), and Keep RiNo Wild (501(c)(3) fundraising arm) each do what their legal form is best suited for. [7, 8, 24]

## Details

### ***1. Historical Context: The Industrial Spine Northeast of Downtown***

The land the RiNo Art District now occupies sits between Park Avenue West on the south and Interstate 70 on the north, bounded on the west by the South Platte River and Union Pacific rail corridor and on the east by the alley between Lawrence and Larimer Streets. The district overlays parts of four historic Denver neighborhoods — Five Points, Curtis Park, Cole, and the Globeville/Elyria-Swansea corridor — and is bisected by Brighton Boulevard.

These neighborhoods were among the first in Denver to be platted. Brighton Boulevard originated as St. Vincent Street in the St. Vincent's Addition of 1874. Adjacent additions — the Ironton subdivision of 1881, among others — filled in around what became Denver's principal industrial corridor. Three rail lines paralleled the South Platte, and from the 1880s onward, the corridor accumulated foundries, pattern shops, blacksmiths, boiler works, lumberyards, and warehouses. The Colorado Iron Works brick foundry, built on Brighton Boulevard in the 1880s — later home to Hugh M. Woods Mercantile, Nichols Wire Sheet and Hardware, Oliver Farm Equipment Sales, and, finally, Bud's Warehouse — is today known as The Source. The Denver Rock Drill Manufacturing Co. complex at 39th and Williams produced pneumatic mining drills sold worldwide from 1910 onward. The Yellow Cab Company's central depot anchored the south end with a 25,000-square-foot dispatch and maintenance building whose internal hallways were wide enough for cabs to drive through.

These buildings shared a distinctive architectural vocabulary — load-bearing brick, sawtooth roofs over double-height shop floors, exposed steel-truss interiors, narrow windows for daylight, oversized freight doors — that would, decades later, prove to be exactly the architectural language creative-economy tenants would seek out. [19, 20]

As manufacturing left central Denver through the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s, the corridor emptied out. Public investment followed industry out: curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lighting, and stormwater drainage were never provided along most of Brighton Boulevard. As DenverUrbanism observed in 2016, the absence of standard urban infrastructure elements such as curbs, gutters, and sidewalks defined the Brighton Boulevard streetscape for decades, with the City content to allow the corridor to suffer with poor lighting, drainage, and pedestrian conditions until well into the 2010s. [11]

By the late 1990s, the corridor presented a particular combination of conditions: cheap, large-floorplate industrial buildings with structural character that creative tenants prize; profound infrastructure deficits that depressed land values and kept the area off the radar of conventional developers; proximity to downtown, Union Station, and the South Platte; and almost no established civic identity. It was the perfect substrate for an artist-led redefinition.

**Transferable Observation**

*Light-industrial districts on the fringes of growing Western city downtowns share a recognizable life cycle: rail-and-river-driven industrial peak through the 1920s, mid-century decline as logistics consolidated, urban-renewal-era clearance that left surface parking in place of demolished buildings, and freeway-era infrastructure that disconnected the district from its surroundings. A redevelopment agency taking on such a district inherits not only the physical condition but also a layered history of prior public interventions, several of which (especially the freeway-era street designs) may now need to be partially reversed.*

**2. The Founding of the Artist-Led Identity (2003–2010)**

Two formal documents and one informal social network set the stage for RiNo’s invention. The formal documents were the City of Denver’s *River North Plan*, adopted in 2003, which articulated a public vision for the corridor northeast of downtown Denver between Park Avenue West and Interstate 70, and the *38th & Blake Station Area Plan*, adopted by the Denver City Council in 2009 in anticipation of the FasTracks A-Line commuter rail. The informal social network was the small community of working artists who quietly moved into Brighton-corridor warehouses through the late 1990s and early 2000s, attracted by floor plates, rents, and industrial light unavailable elsewhere in Denver. [11, 25]

Tracy Weil — a painter and graphic artist who had bought a parcel near the South Platte just off Brighton in 2000 — is the figure most often credited as RiNo’s founding catalyst. In 2005, Weil teamed with his neighbor, the painter and illustrator Jill Hadley Hooper, and convened eight founding members to formalize an arts district that would, in Weil’s frequently quoted phrase, “really just... sell more paintings.” They drew a boundary around the studios and galleries they already knew, picked a name, and began throwing events. [3, 4]

The name itself was deliberate. As *Westword* recounts, Weil and Hadley Hooper took note of the River North Plan and adopted that geographic label, but a “River North” already existed in Chicago. They contracted the name to “RiNo,” which read aloud as “rhino,” and Hadley Hooper drew a rhinoceros logo. The tagline — “Where art is made” — was chosen because the district at that moment had more working studios than retail galleries. **Production, not consumption, was the brand promise.** [3]



Tracy Weil

In January 2006, the new RiNo Art District organized its first studio tour. Traffic to the new website spiked. The cause turned out to be an East Coast political writer whose post about “Republicans In Name Only” had been mistakenly linked to rinoartdistrict.org. The mascot was already doing cultural work. As Weil has said many times since, “Who doesn’t love a rhino?” [3]

The organization grew steadily through the late 2000s. As the *Denverite* reported in October 2019, the district, which started with just eight members, had grown to 225 by 2015 and, by 2019, comprised 475 artists and 190 studios. It was incorporated as a 501(c)(6) nonprofit business league, which gave it standing to advocate at City Hall, to apply for state designation as a Certified Creative District (received in 2014), and to operate as a Registered Neighborhood Organization. Throughout, leadership was artist-led, and the brand was protected by the artists themselves. [4]

### Transferable Observation

*The most durable district names emerge from the bottom up – coined by practitioners, refined through use, and adopted by institutions only after they have entered the local vernacular. The agency’s most value role in identity formation is not to invent the brand but to recognize or foster the existing one, support practitioners who carry it, and use this institution’s voice to amplify it.*

## 3. Placemaking I: Murals, Public Art, and the Visual Identity Layer

If the rhinoceros logo and “Where art is made” tagline were RiNo’s verbal identity, its visual identity is the murals. By the early 2020s, the district reported more than 200 active murals across roughly 400 acres, a



Source: Beacon Newspaper

footprint that has prompted national publications to describe RiNo as the “Street Art Capital of the U.S.” [1] The institutional driver of the mural inventory through the 2010s was a festival called CRUSH, founded in 2010 by the Denver artist Robin Munro. CRUSH (later CRUSH Walls) began as a small, grassroots, graffiti-focused event meant to give working street artists permitted walls to paint. It grew rapidly. By the late 2010s, CRUSH was producing dozens of new murals each year over a six- to nine-day production window in early September, drawing international artists — Shepard Fairey, Add Fuel, Faith XLVII, RETNA — alongside a rotating cast of Colorado-based

muralists. At its 2019 tenth anniversary, CRUSH curated 70 artists selected from 400 applications and commissioned more than 80 walls in a single week. [5]

CRUSH ended its association with the RiNo Art District in late 2020 after sexual-assault allegations against Munro became. The festival’s brand role was succeeded after a two-year transition by *Denver Walls*, a woman- and immigrant-owned festival launched in 2023 by the Denver-based artist Ally Grimm as the Denver edition of the international *World Wide Walls* circuit. Denver Walls’ inaugural 2023 festival featured 17 new murals by 18 artists from seven countries and drew 158,000 visitors. The



Source: 303 Magazine

institutional lesson: a major mural festival became, over a decade, the engine of the district’s most visible cultural product, and when its brand became compromised, the district substituted a new festival without losing the underlying placemaking asset. [6, 9, 10]

Outside the festival cycle, the district’s RiNo Mural Program (launched in 2021) installs murals year-round, roughly once a month, with about 25 to 30 new murals annually. Muralists are paid for the work, and selection criteria explicitly weight BIPOC and LGBTQ+ collaborations, women muralists, and cultural-history themes. City Councilman Chris Hinds summarized the logic: creating public murals gives new life to under-utilized areas, provides wayfinding, and instills a sense of community where there might not historically be community. [1]

**Transferable Observation**

*Mural programs are the single most cost-effective identity intervention available to a redevelopment agency, and they work best when curated rather than open-call, sited deliberately near anchor businesses rather than scattered across the district, and grounded in the existing artist community rather than imported from outside.*

**4. Placemaking II: Food, Drink, and Third Places as Cultural Anchors**

The earliest of the catalytic third-place projects, and the prototype for everything that followed, is **The Source**. Mickey and Kyle Zeppelin of Zeppelin Development acquired the vacant 1880s Colorado Iron Works foundry at 3350 Brighton Boulevard in 2012 and, working with Stephen Dynia of Dynia Architects and BRS Architects, converted the 25,000-square-foot Colorado-red-brick building into Denver’s first modern artisan market hall. It opened in phases between September and November 2013. The design choices were a curriculum in adaptive-reuse placemaking: the 40-foot peaked ceilings, original steel

foundry crane, glass garage doors, raw brick, and decades-old graffiti were preserved or selectively highlighted; a signature “Source blue” was used as the singular contrast color; tenant storefronts (Acorn, Comida, CapRock, Babettes Artisan Bread, Western Daughters Butcher, Crooked Stave brewery, Boxcar Coffee, Mondo Market) were designed to put production front-of-house. The building won the 2014 Denver Mayor’s Design Award and was a 2015 ULI Colorado Impact Awards finalist. In 2018, Zeppelin added a 100-room hotel tower with operable in-room garage doors. [14, 16, 17]



The Source’s catalytic role is acknowledged by the Denver Urban Renewal Authority itself, which provided tax-increment financing for the project. As DURA’s project record states, the Ironworks Foundry’s transformation into The Source has helped to support the revitalization of the River North District and Brighton Boulevard, an important arterial link to downtown Denver. [16]

The Zeppelins had been building toward this for more than a decade. Mickey Zeppelin’s earlier project, **TAXI**, occupies a 24-acre former Yellow Cab depot site on the South Platte. Acquired at roughly \$6 per square foot in the late 1990s, TAXI now comprises nine buildings — TAXI 1 (the original 25,000-square-foot dispatch building), TAXI 2 (44 residential units), DRIVE and DRIVE 2 (creative office), Freight (a converted shipping terminal), Freight Residences (48 rental units), and Flight (140,000-square-foot multi-tenant building anchored by BOA Technology) — plus Comal Heritage Food Incubator, Black Black Coffee, Openair Academy daycare, an outdoor cinema, and a recycled-shipping-container pool. TAXI’s importance to RiNo is the demonstration effect. [17]

Zeppelin’s third major RiNo project, **Zeppelin Station**, opened in March 2018 at 3501 Wazee Street, featuring 10 international food and beverage vendors. Zeppelin Station’s trajectory has been bumpier than The Source’s: a \$32 million Wells Fargo loan went into default in 2021, the property entered receivership in 2024, and the concept has been repeatedly reworked. [2, 23]

**The Ramble Hotel** at 1280 25th Street, opened in 2018 by locally based Gravititas Development as RiNo’s first independent boutique hotel, was deliberately conceived as a salon, drawing on 17th-century French *salons* as a model. The 50-room property houses the first non-New-York outpost of **Death & Co**, the East Village cocktail bar that has won “America’s Best Cocktail Bar” at Tales of the Cocktail; the reservation-only mezzanine cocktail lounge Suite 6A; the DC/AM breakfast bar; Super Mega Bien, a pan-Latin restaurant from James Beard-nominated chef Dana Rodriguez; and the Vauxhall live-music room. [21]

**Mission Ballroom**, AEG Presents Rocky Mountains’ purpose-built 60,000-square-foot concert venue at 4242 Wynkoop Street, opened on August 7, 2019, with an inaugural set by The Lumineers. AEG had spent nearly a decade looking for the right site; the *Denver Post* estimated construction at \$40 million. Designed by Portland’s Works Progress Architecture, the venue features a movable stage and a tiered-riser configuration that can accommodate 2,200 to 3,950 patrons. It anchors Westfield Company’s 14-acre North Wynkoop mixed-use district. [15, 22]

**Denver Central Market** at 2669 Larimer (in a former Italian grocery building) opened in 2016 as a smaller, retail-forward market hall complement to The Source.

**Catalyst HTI** at 3513 Brighton Boulevard, developed by Koelbel and Company with health-tech entrepreneur Mike Biselli and the Burgess family as landowners, opened in 2018 as a 180,000-square-foot “industry integrator” rather than a generic office building. Catalyst was curated to put healthcare startups, Fortune 500 health systems (UHealth’s innovation team is an anchor), academic partners, nonprofits, and device makers under one roof. [27]



**Transferable Observation**

*Adaptive reuse of a single distinctive industrial building can anchor a small district's identity for a decade or more, particularly when the building's history is retained as visible heritage and the reuse program brings together complementary independent operators rather than a single large tenant. The economics of such anchors typically require patient capital with a long return horizon*



## 5. Placemaking III: Events, First Fridays, and the Programming Calendar

First Friday Art Walks, a Denver-wide tradition, are anchored most visibly in RiNo. Galleries and studios — Plinth Gallery, Alto Gallery, Helikon, Pattern Shop Studio, Foolproof Contemporary, Walnut Workshop — extend hours, host openings, and coordinate with district-wide programming. The district has elevated this into a *First Friday Festival* series anchored at the RiNo ArtPark. **Denver Walls / CRUSH Walls** is the September anchor festival. The annual **RiNo Studio Tour** (the original 2006 event) has continued in evolved forms, alongside Brilliant RiNo (June solstice celebration), block parties, Secret Walls live-painting battles, and Denver Arts Week tie-ins.

The district runs year-round programming out of the **RiNo ArtPark**, a community park on the South Platte River that opened in phases beginning in 2021. The park is the result of an unusual public-private-nonprofit collaboration: the City of Denver partnered with the RiNo Art District, The Greenway Foundation, and the Trust for Public Land to develop a 9-acre park and promenade; the Art District raised approximately \$5 million in grants, capital campaign, and loan financing to renovate two existing buildings on the site (which it advocated to save rather than demolish) and entered an operating agreement with the City to manage and program the buildings. Phase 1 included the Bob Ragland Branch of the Denver Public Library, affordable artist studios, and a gallery operated in partnership with RedLine Contemporary Art Center, the CoCuA culinary incubator, the Truss House community performance venue, sound studios, a makerspace, and a greenhouse patio. [28]

By 2025, foot traffic and event visitation were generating about \$10.6 million in sales tax revenue, and *Denverite* reported in April 2026 that the district had hosted more than 12.4 million visitors in the prior year. [8]

### Transferable Observation

*A recurring annual or seasonal festival anchored across multiple district venues produces more identity benefit per dollar than nearly any other agency intervention, because it converts episodic visitation into habitual visitation and creates a national press hook that extends the district's reach beyond the local audience. Festivals that start small and are founded by local cultural organizers reliably outperform agency-organized events because they retain authenticity as they scale.*

## 6. Branding, Wayfinding, and the Public Realm Expression of Identity

The rhinoceros logo, drawn by Jill Hadley Hooper in 2005, has been used consistently since on banners, building signage, website headers, social-media avatars, sponsorship deliverables, gateway sculptures, and merchandise. The City installed three wrought-iron gateway slabs at key entrances to the district, displaying the word “Art” alongside the RiNo rhinoceros-and-bird mark. The Denargo Market Park, opened in 2025, includes a large climb able rhinoceros sculpture as a play element. The mark is unusually well-suited to district branding: distinctive, animal-based, memorable, lends itself to playful variation, works in monochrome and color, and signals personality.



The verbal layer — “Where art is made” — is similarly disciplined. The district has resisted brand drift toward “where art is curated” or “where art is sold” precisely because the production-first framing is its competitive moat against more polished downtown gallery districts.

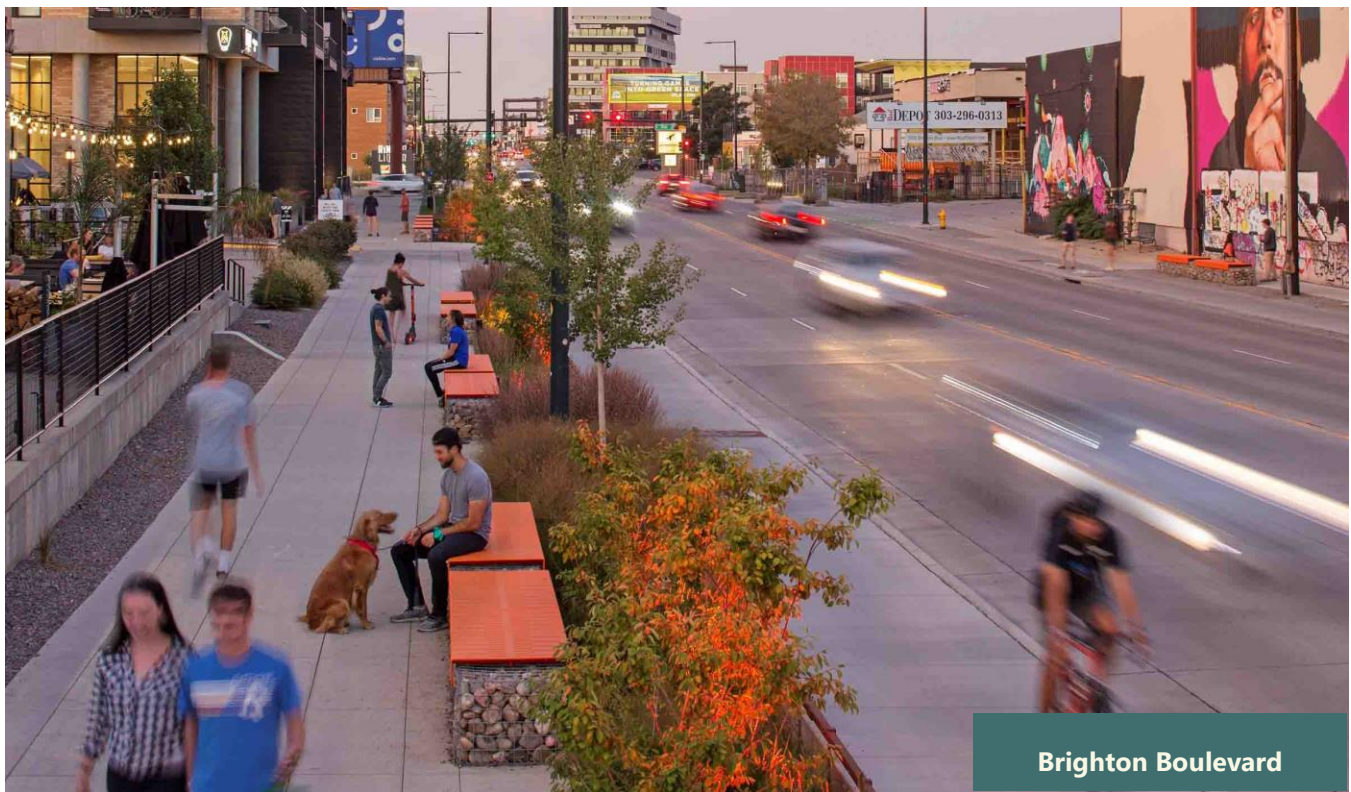
The RiNo Business Improvement District has steadily layered design standards and wayfinding into the public realm. Since 2015, the BID has developed and implemented the RiNo Art District Design Standards to guide public and private development in alignment with the district’s values, and has launched various beautification and public space enhancement projects that integrate art, creativity, and accessibility into the community. Brighton Boulevard’s reconstruction was explicitly designed under a streetscape master plan that prescribed pedestrian-scale lighting, banners, planters, benches, and arts district identity treatment as a fourth design priority alongside safety, bike/pedestrian separation, and sustainable streetscape. Additional streetscape master plans cover Chestnut Place, 36th Street, Delgany Street, and Wynkoop Street, ensuring that as private development arrives on those streets, it speaks the same language. [7, 24]

The RiNo Art District also runs a No Vacancy program that activates empty storefronts by providing artists with rent-free studios and exhibition space—an explicit brand-protection move that prevents visible street-level vacancies from reading as failure. Keep RiNo Wild, the district’s 501(c)(3) fundraising arm, launched as a parallel philanthropic vehicle that broadens the funding base beyond commercial assessments.

## 7. Public Infrastructure: From Infrastructure Desert to Complete Streets

For the first decade of its life as a self-described art district, RiNo was an identity in search of infrastructure. Between roughly 2014 and 2022, that condition was systematically reversed.

The most visible intervention is the reconstruction of **Brighton Boulevard**. Following a 20-month construction project that broke ground in October 2016 and finished in June 2018, the corridor was rebuilt as a complete street: a separated cycle track, continuous sidewalks (2.6 miles of new sidewalk), pedestrian-scale lighting, stormwater planters, street trees, crosswalks, and traffic calming. The \$30 million project was financed primarily by the City and County of Denver (approximately \$26 million from capital improvement funds) with an additional \$3 million contribution from the RiNo Denver GID for pedestrian-scale lighting, plantings, benches, and ongoing maintenance. [11]



Brighton Boulevard

The **38th & Blake Station** of the Regional Transportation District’s University of Colorado A-Line commuter rail opened on April 22, 2016, placing the heart of RiNo on a 23-mile rail line that runs from Union Station in roughly four minutes to Denver International Airport in approximately 33 minutes. The station added two pedestrian bridges (at 35th Street and 38th Street) over the freight rail tracks, restoring east-west connectivity severed by industrial infrastructure for more than a century. The *38th & Blake Station Area Plan*, originally adopted by Denver City Council in 2009 and amended in 2016, set the planning framework for transit-oriented development around the station; in 2018, City Council added the



38th & Blake Station Area Incentive Overlay (IO-1) and the River North Design Overlay (DO-7) on an 11-to-1 vote, allowing developers to construct up to 12 stories of base height (and up to 16 stories with affordable housing or fee contributions). [25]

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy formally studied the resulting mechanism. Its 2021 working paper, *The 38th and Blake Incentive Overlay*, frames the case study as a land value capture policy implemented by the City and County of Denver in 2017–2018 in the River North (RiNo) district; as of February 2021, the incentive overlay had produced 95 affordable homes in seven new multifamily projects. [18]

The **39th Avenue Greenway**, opened in November 2020 after years of construction, is a one-mile linear park, recreation corridor, and 100-year-storm flood-control channel running from Franklin Street to Steele Street through the Cole and Clayton neighborhoods on RiNo’s eastern flank. As the *Denverite* reported at the time, it cost almost \$90.8 million, paid in large part by annual stormwater fee collections. Built as part of the Platte to Park Hill stormwater plan, the project converted a discontinued rail spur into a multi-use trail with shared streets, plazas, swinging benches, mural walls, a treehouse, native plantings (500+ trees planted), and educational signage on the area’s architectural and cultural history. It received the 2022 ASLA Colorado Professional Award and the 2021 Congress for New Urbanism Best Overall Project award. [12, 13]

To the north of RiNo proper, the **National Western Center** redevelopment — a 250-acre, multi-decade transformation of the historic National Western Stock Show grounds, financed by voter-approved 2C tourism taxes passed in November 2015 — adds an additional anchor of regional visitation. The Master Plan contemplates a year-round campus including the CSU Spur three-building education and research campus, a planned 4,500-seat equestrian center, and a 160-room hotel. As the *Denverite* reported, the city will provide \$23.3 million annually over the next 35 years for the project, approved on a 9-4 vote on June 2, 2025, for \$812 million in funding. [29, 30, 31]

Finally, **The River Mile** — a 62-acre, 25-year master-planned mixed-use redevelopment on the South Platte at the current site of Elitch Gardens — anchors the southwestern end of the South Platte corridor that RiNo anchors on the north. Approved by the Denver City Council in December 2018, The River Mile is planned for up to 14 million square feet of development with roughly \$100–\$130 million in South Platte River restoration. [32]

**Transferable Observation**

*Where a redevelopment district contains or borders a primary highway, the highway interface is the agency's single most important multi-decade engineering challenge. Near-term improvements — curb extensions, leading pedestrian intervals, signal retiming, additional crosswalks, raised median islands — are implementable during state DOT resurfacing cycles without major redesign approval. Longer-term*



*improvements — lane reduction, two-way reversion, partial freeway removal — require sustained advocacy and may take a generation to achieve.*

## **8. The Denver Urban Renewal Authority and Catalytic TIF**

DURA's role in RiNo has been targeted: rather than designate the entire district as a single renewal area, DURA has used TIF surgically to underwrite specific catalytic adaptive-reuse and infill projects whose private financing alone could not pencil out due to environmental remediation, structural rehabilitation costs, or other site-specific challenges.

The clearest example is the **Ironworks Foundry / The Source Urban Renewal Area**, approved in 2012. The project had a total cost of approximately \$4.7 million; DURA approved up to \$1.115 million in TIF reimbursement to the developer (Zeppelin Development) from incremental property and sales tax revenues, with the agreement running through the earlier of full reimbursement or 2037. [16]

The most recent and largest RiNo TIF deal is the **Rock Drill Urban Renewal Area**, approved by the Denver City Council on September 15, 2025. The 8.4-acre Denver Rock Drill site — at 39th Avenue between Franklin and Williams Streets, immediately east of the 38th & Blake station — has been owned by the Weiss family since 1992. Denver-based OliverBuchananGroup approached DURA in early 2023, and DURA's blight study found the site eligible. The plan calls for 700 to 800 residential units (10 percent income-restricted), a 150- to 220-room hotel, up to 60,000 square feet of office, and 100,000 to 150,000 square feet of retail across the project, with the east half preserving and adaptively reusing the historic sawtooth-roofed foundry buildings and the west half supporting new construction up to 22 stories. Total project cost is approximately \$566 million; DURA's TIF reimbursement is up to \$39.1 million, or about 6.9 percent of project cost, over a 25-year term. DURA Executive Director Tracy Huggins characterized the rationale as an important but challenging site, a strong candidate for urban renewal efforts. [19, 20]

The structural lesson is worth highlighting. TIF was not used to subsidize wholesale demolition or master-planned new construction; it was used to make specific, irreplaceable adaptive reuse projects financially feasible — projects that had outsized identity value because they preserved the architectural language that defined RiNo's identity.

It is also worth distinguishing what TIF did not do. The 38th & Blake Station Area Incentive Overlay — the zoning mechanism allowing taller buildings near the rail station in exchange for affordable housing or fee contributions — is a Denver zoning tool, not a DURA TIF. The National Western Center is funded by voter-approved tourism taxes, not by TIF. Brighton Boulevard was funded principally by the City's capital improvement budget. The 39th Avenue Greenway was funded principally by stormwater fees. DURA's tax-increment dollars are one of several public-finance instruments that have shaped RiNo, and the layered combination is itself part of the placemaking story.



### Transferable Observation

*The catalytic effect of district-level investment is measurable in retrospect more reliably than in real time, and the property value lift produced by such investment accrues unevenly across parcels — strongly to parcels directly adjacent to anchor projects and weakly to parcels at the district's edges. Agencies should expect a ten-to-twenty-year lag between pioneer adaptive-reuse investment and institutional capital consolidation and should plan for active negotiation with institutional investors during the consolidation phase rather than passive observation. The TIF revenue generated during the consolidation phase typically funds the second-generation capital projects that complete the district's transformation. This means agencies should be planning second-generation work long before first-generation work is finished.*

## 9. The Layered Governance Ecology

By 2025, four legally distinct entities, working in parallel and in partnership with the City and DURA, governed different facets of the district.

**The RiNo Art District** itself is the original 2005 organization: a 501(c)(6) nonprofit business league, a Registered Neighborhood Organization, and a state-certified Creative District (designation received in 2014). Its work includes advocacy, artist support, community programming, events, and brand stewardship. It operates the RiNo ArtPark buildings under agreement with the City. [4]

**The RiNo Business Improvement District (BID)**, formed in 2015, is a special taxing entity that levies four mills on the assessed value of commercial property within roughly 450 acres bounded by I-70 to the north, the alley between Larimer and Lawrence to the east, Broadway to the south, and the rail tracks to the west. The BID generated approximately \$600,000 in its first year (2016) and grew to a \$3.5 million annual budget by 2025. It funds marketing, beautification, advocacy, infrastructure improvements (such as new stop signs, crosswalks, and the 38th Street pedestrian bridge), business support, and support for the signature event, including Denver Walls. In May 2025, the Denver City Council unanimously renewed the BID for a second 10-year term. [7, 24]

**The Denver RiNo General Improvement District (GID)**, formed in parallel in 2015, levies four mills on both commercial and residential property within a smaller, approximately 300-acre area on the western half of the district, and generated approximately \$300,000 in its first year. Property owners fronting Brighton Boulevard pay an additional special assessment of about \$200 per linear foot. The GID's mandate, per state statute, is restricted to physical infrastructure. [24]

**Keep RiNo Wild**, the district's 501(c)(3) nonprofit fundraising arm, was added in the early 2020s as a charitable vehicle to broaden the funding base for arts programming, the BIPOC Artist Fund, and other initiatives.



This four-entity structure is more complex than minimally necessary, but the cost of the complexity is small relative to the legal and operational benefits: the 501(c)(6) advocates and stewards the brand; the BID funds marketing, programming, and business-facing services through commercial assessments; the GID funds and maintains physical infrastructure through both commercial and residential assessments; and the 501(c)(3) opens philanthropic and grant pathways unavailable to the others. For most of the district’s life, the four entities shared staff and physical headquarters, which limited overhead. In January 2026, a restructuring formally separated staffing, giving each entity its own executive leadership.

Layered on top of this four-entity structure are the City and County of Denver (zoning, capital infrastructure, parks, planning), the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (blight designation, urban renewal areas, TIF agreements), Denver Arts & Venues (public art and cultural funding), and the Regional Transportation District (the 38th & Blake A-Line station). Productive partnership across this stack is not automatic; the district’s leadership has frequently described it as requiring patient, continuous diplomatic work. [8]

**Transferable Observation**

*Where a redevelopment district reaches a scale of approximately fifteen blocks or more, a formal Business Improvement District becomes an effective tool for sustained brand stewardship, retail recruitment, programming coordination, and district marketing — functions that are otherwise difficult to maintain after the founding practitioners exit. At smaller scales (under ten blocks), the cost of full BID formation may exceed the benefit, and a lighter governance structure — an agency-administered district-management contract, a property-owner consortium, or a formalized role within an existing downtown business organization — can perform the same functions with less administrative overhead. The decision about governance structure should be made deliberately and revisited at five-year intervals.*

## 10. Successes

RiNo has achieved durable national and international brand recognition. *AFAR* magazine named the district “the Street Art Capital of the U.S.” in 2019. *Forbes*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Thrillist*, *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *Condé Nast Traveler* have all run RiNo features. Visit Denver treats RiNo as a primary destination neighborhood on par with downtown LoDo. [1]

It has built measurable visitor volume. The district received more than 12.4 million visitors in 2025 and generated approximately \$10.6 million in sales tax revenue from foot traffic and visitation, a substantial transformation from 2015, when the area was described as just an old warehouse industrial area with no sidewalks, crowds of people in the streets, and very unsafe conditions. [8]

It has produced a critical mass of catalytic private investment. As the *Denverite* reported in October 2019, the art district estimated that these improvements helped attract \$850 million in private investment to



the area, including bars, hotels, and apartment complexes — a figure that has continued to grow with the development of Mission Ballroom, Catalyst HTI, the Rock Drill project, and ongoing infill. [4]

It has built a durable physical brand: more than 200 active murals, three wrought-iron gateway monuments, banner programs along Brighton and Larimer, and a public realm vocabulary that consistently reinforces the industrial-reclaimed-as-creative identity. It has been validated by design awards: the 2014 Denver Mayor’s Design Award (The Source); the 2015 ULI Colorado Impact Awards finalist (The Source); the 2022 ASLA Colorado Professional Award and 2021 Congress for New Urbanism Best Overall Project Award (39th Avenue Greenway); the 2022 Governor’s Award for Downtown Excellence from Downtown Colorado, Inc.

It has produced replicable institutional models. The Source’s adaptive-reuse food-hall model has been imitated across Denver and the Mountain West (Avanti F&B in LoHi, Edgewater Public Market, Stanley Marketplace in Aurora, Broadway Market). The BID/GID/501(c)(6)/501(c)(3) governance stack is regularly referenced as a model. The 38th & Blake Incentive Overlay has been formally studied by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy as a national case study in land-value capture policy.

And it has established an identity story that survives personnel changes, festival controversies, and developer cycles. When CRUSH Walls collapsed in 2020–2021, Denver Walls was able to slot into the same calendar slot. When founding executive director Tracy Weil rotated off the executive role, the organization continued. When Zeppelin Station ran into financial trouble in 2021–2024, the broader district’s identity was not damaged. The story is bigger than any one person, building, or festival, which is what a successful cultural-district brand looks like.

## 11. Lessons Learned

**Phasing mismatches between identity and infrastructure.** RiNo developed its identity before its infrastructure was ready to receive the visitation that identity generated. For nearly a decade, the district produced murals, festivals, breweries, and food halls along Brighton Boulevard, which had no sidewalks. This mismatch was a feature of the early period but eventually became a constraint, generating safety and accessibility complaints that the district could not address from its own resources and could only resolve when the City and the GID together funded the streetscape rebuild. The lesson: identity work and infrastructure work should be planned together from day one.

**Brand dilution as commercial development scaled.** As *Westword’s* Patricia Calhoun observed, with well-heeled developers laying claim to so much of the land that was once occupied by on-the-cheap entrepreneurs, and businesses blurring boundaries by using the RiNo name on places far from the original area, brand stewardship became difficult. Mickey Zeppelin himself has expressed disappointment that much of the architectural grittiness has not carried over into newer ground-up apartment buildings, describing much of the architecture as really generic and noting he never thought land in RiNo would be



zoned for 18-story buildings. An authentic creative brand has commercial value, and that value will attract free-riders unless the district aggressively protects the trademark, the geographic boundary, and the design standards. [3, 4]

**Tension between original artists and newer commercial development as stewards of identity.**

Helikon Gallery's Cayce Goldberg captured one version: it definitely changed business and killed business. Plinth Gallery's Jonathan Kaplan, a RiNo Art District board member, summarized that the most important thing an arts district does is advocate for the arts, and that they tried to stay ahead of the steamroller of development. The 2026 separation of the BID, GID, and Art District into distinct staffs is partly a response to a sense that the BID and GID had drifted from artist-led priorities toward business-owner and property-owner priorities. [4, 8]

**Festival fragility.** The CRUSH Walls experience demonstrated that anchoring district identity on a single festival, organized by a single founder, is structurally risky. The lesson is not to avoid festivals; the lesson is to ensure the underlying placemaking asset (the inventory of walls and institutional relationships with muralists) is held by the district itself rather than by the festival operator. RiNo was, in the event, able to transition from CRUSH to Denver Walls without losing the wall inventory because the RiNo Mural Program had been established as a year-round program separate from CRUSH. [6, 9]

**Single-tenant food-hall fragility.** Zeppelin Station's troubles illustrate the risk. Unlike The Source, Zeppelin Station saw its operator default on financing, the asset enter receivership, and the concept repeatedly reworked. A food hall without a clear thematic identity risks becoming a generic food court. [2, 23]

**Pace-of-change challenges.** The transformation happened, by urban-planning standards, very quickly — roughly fifteen years from the 2005 founding to the early 2020s maturation. That pace created sequencing problems: tenants arrived before parking solutions were in place, before stormwater drainage was rebuilt, before transit service caught up.

**Wayfinding gaps.** Even with three iconic gateway sculptures and an active banner program, RiNo's wayfinding has not always kept pace with its growth. Pedestrian-bridge investment over the freight rail tracks has been incremental. As Adam Larkey of the RiNo Art District noted in 2025, looking ahead, priorities include projects such as the 38th Street underpass and further improving connectivity within the neighborhood. [19]

**Continuing weak edges and gaps.** Despite remarkable infill, the district still has surface parking lots, vacant or underutilized parcels, and gaps in the streetscape. The Rock Drill site, vacant or underused for a decade and a half before its 2025 redevelopment approval, was the most visible. The planning horizon should be measured in decades rather than electoral cycles.



## 12. Opportunities and the Path Forward

**The Rock Drill RiNo redevelopment**, approved in September 2025 and slated to break ground in 2026, will preserve and adaptively reuse the historic sawtooth-roofed pneumatic-drill foundry complex while adding 700 to 800 residential units, a hotel, retail, office, and 71,000 square feet of designated outdoor public space. It is the largest single adaptive-reuse project ever undertaken in the district. [19, 20]

**The completion of the National Western Center**, with its 2025-approved \$812 million phase including the new equestrian center, 160-room hotel, and CSU Spur education campus, will add an immediate regional anchor to the north. [30, 31]

**The eventual River Mile build-out** at the south end of the Platte corridor will close the loop of riverfront redevelopment that RiNo opened at the north end. As that 62-acre project proceeds, it will add a southern bookend of housing, office, retail, and public realm along a restored mile of the South Platte. [32]

**Ongoing maturation of the RiNo ArtPark and the western waterfront.** Phase 1 of the ArtPark opened in 2021–2022; subsequent phases contemplate additional building reuse (including a black-box theater), expanded green space, and ongoing programming. The Denargo Market Park (opened 2025), with its riverwalk and climbable rhinoceros, signals the kind of place-specific public space the district can now produce.

**Brand evolution as the district matures beyond first-generation cultural-district status.** The 2026 restructuring of the BID, GID, and Art District into distinct organizational entities allows each entity to specialize. The “RiNo Made” pop-up program, the Keep RiNo Wild philanthropic vehicle, the BIPOC Artist Fund, the year-round Mural Program, and the ArtPark programming together represent a deepening of the artist-support infrastructure.

**Continuing private investment momentum.** World Trade Center Denver, McWhinney’s 16-story tower at 1420 E. 38th, Medici Consulting Group’s affordable apartments, and the Rock Drill project together represent the next billion dollars of private investment.

**Continuing public realm investment.** The 38th Street underpass, additional South Platte improvements, ongoing streetscape work on Chestnut Place, 36th Street, Delgany, and Wynkoop Street, and continued maintenance of Brighton Boulevard and the 39th Avenue Greenway will fill in the public realm at a pace the GID and the City can sustain together.

## 13. Lessons for an Area to Establish Identity

- 1. Identity must be authored from the inside, not the outside.** RiNo's identity was created by working artists who lived and worked in the corridor. The City and DURA partnered with that grassroots authorship rather than displacing it. An urban renewal agency starting a new district should identify and support the existing creators in the geography. Top-down branding without an authentic creator constituency produces a hollow identity that visitors will not believe.
- 2. Pick a name and a mark that can carry a place for thirty years.** RiNo, the rhinoceros, and "Where art is made" have held up because they are short, distinctive, animal-based, production-forward, and visually flexible. Spend disproportionate effort on the name and the mark. They will outlive every other decision the agency makes.
- 3. Build the identity asset inventory before the buildings.** Murals, festivals, studio tours, public art, banner programs, and consistent storytelling can be produced quickly and cheaply compared to building reconstruction. RiNo had murals and a studio tour years before it had sidewalks. Identity assets generate visitation, which generates demand for investment, which makes infrastructure financially possible.
- 4. Use adaptive reuse as the architectural language of identity.** Foundries, drill works, depots, warehouses, sawtooth roofs, exposed steel, brick — these are the most legible and most expensive parts of an industrial-area cultural district's identity. TIF or other public finance should be used to make adaptive reuse projects pencil out at scale. New ground-up construction should be required, through design standards and zoning overlays, to speak the same architectural language.
- 5. Layer the governance.** A single organizational form cannot do everything a cultural district needs. RiNo's four-entity stack — 501(c)(6) advocacy/programming, 501(c)(3) philanthropy, BID for commercial-property-funded services, GID for residential-and-commercial-property-funded infrastructure — works because each entity does what its legal form is designed to do.
- 6. Use TIF surgically, not blanketly.** RiNo's TIF has been used on specific catalytic projects rather than as a general subsidy. The criteria are consistent: irreplaceable buildings whose redevelopment economics cannot pencil without public participation, located at strategic points in the geography, in redevelopment programs that preserve identity.
- 7. Coordinate the capital stack.** RiNo's infrastructure has been built using TIF, BID assessments, GID assessments, City capital improvement funds, voter-approved tourism taxes, stormwater fees, philanthropic capital, and federal partner funds. The skill is in sequencing them so that each instrument funds the project type for which it is best suited. TIF is one column in a multi-column capital stack, not the headline.
- 8. Treat food and beverage as third-place placemaking, not retail.** The Source, the Ramble, Denver Central Market, and the dozens of breweries and restaurants in RiNo are placemaking instruments. They produce the foot traffic that makes the mural inventory visible, the events viable, and the public



realm activated. A new district should design its plan so that food-and-beverage clustering is sequenced early, with the right adaptive-reuse buildings, the right transit and parking, and the right curation discipline.

- 9. Anchor the calendar with year-round programming, not just one festival.** CRUSH Walls illustrated the risk of festival-as-identity. The RiNo Mural Program, First Fridays, Studio Tour, Brilliant RiNo, and ArtPark programming together constitute a year-round calendar that does not collapse if any one event has a bad year.
- 10. Invest in wayfinding as a multi-year program.** Gateway sculptures, banners, signage, pedestrian bridges, district-edge demarcation, mural-map publishing, and digital wayfinding are not a one-time deliverable. RiNo is still building out its wayfinding nearly two decades in.
- 11. Steward the brand actively.** Trademark the name. Define the geography. Publish design standards. Police the use of the district name in marketing by adjacent developers and commercial tenants.
- 12. Plan in decades, not electoral cycles.** RiNo has taken roughly twenty years to reach its current state and is still in active maturation. The political and financial structures the district uses — multi-decade TIF agreements, ten-year BID terms, multi-phase capital programs, 25- and 35-year planning horizons — are calibrated for this time frame.
- 13. Make public infrastructure investment unlock private placemaking, not replace it.** The Brighton Boulevard reconstruction, the 38th & Blake commuter rail station, the 39th Avenue Greenway, and the RiNo ArtPark together cost roughly \$200 million in public investment and have catalyzed close to \$1 billion in private investment. The relationship is unlocked, not substituted.
- 14. Keep producing.** The single deepest insight is the verb in the tagline: “Where art is *made*.” A cultural district that consumes culture rather than produces it is a tourist trap. The most important thing the RiNo Art District does, year after year, is to ensure that artists are working in the district every day — through affordable studios at RiNo ArtPark and RedLine, the No Vacancy pop-up program, the Mural Program, festival commissions, the BIPOC Artist Fund, and ongoing advocacy. As long as art is being made in the district, the district has something to say.

## Recommendations

These staged, concrete recommendations are written in general terms for any Urban Renewal Development Agency and its appointed citizen advisory board pursuing. They are calibrated against the RiNo sequence and against measurable thresholds that, if missed, should trigger a strategy reset.

**Stage 1 (Years 1–2): Author the identity from the inside.** Inventory the existing creators, makers, studios, galleries, and small fabricators already operating in the geography. Convene a founders’ group of six to ten of them and commit explicitly to artist-led brand authorship. Trademark the district name and a distinctive (ideally animal- or place-specific) mark; publish a one-line tagline that uses a production



verb. *Threshold:* if a working creator constituency does not already exist in the geography, the district should not be branded as a “creative” or “arts” district — choose a different identity frame.

**Stage 2 (Years 1–3): Launch the identity asset inventory before construction begins.** Commission an initial set of 10–20 permitted murals on private walls. Stand up a recurring monthly arts walk and an annual studio tour. Establish a year-round mural program separate from any festival, so that the program (and its institutional relationships) survives any festival’s failure. *Threshold:* by Year 3, if there are fewer than 25 active murals and no recurring monthly program, the identity layer is failing.

**Stage 3 (Years 2–5): Stand up the layered governance.** Form a 501(c)(6) arts district as the brand steward, a Business Improvement District for commercial assessments funding, marketing, and services, a General Improvement District for residential-plus-commercial assessments funding infrastructure, and a 501(c)(3) for philanthropy. Share staff initially to limit overhead. *Threshold:* if commercial property owners cannot petition successfully for a BID by Year 4, the underlying economic base is not yet ready to sustain district-scale services, and the program should be slowed.

**Stage 4 (Years 3–7): Use TIF surgically on identity-defining adaptive-reuse projects.** Identify the three to five most irreplaceable industrial or historic buildings in the geography. Conduct blight studies. Designate small, project-specific Urban Renewal Areas. Use TIF reimbursement at 5–10 percent of project cost to close pro forma gaps on these specific projects, with TIF terms of 20–25 years. *Threshold:* if blight findings cannot be substantiated for any candidate site, TIF is the wrong tool.

**Stage 5 (Years 4–8): Deliver the public realm.** Reconstruct Spine Street as a complete street with sidewalks, separated bike infrastructure, pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, stormwater management, and arts-district identity treatments. Layer in transit access (rail station, bus rapid transit, or expanded service) and a riverfront or open-space anchor. *Threshold:* if the public-realm delivery lags the visitation curve by more than 24 months, throttle district marketing until the infrastructure catches up to avoid safety, accessibility, and reputational risks.

**Stage 6 (Years 5–10): Curate the third-place ecology.** Recruit one or two anchor adaptive-reuse food halls or maker buildings. Encourage independent food-and-beverage operators (breweries, distilleries, restaurants, cafés) to cluster. Add at least one independent boutique hotel and one mid-sized music or events venue. Avoid food halls without a tight thematic identity. *Threshold:* if anchor adaptive-reuse food hall(s) are not in operation by Year 8, the third-place layer is underdeveloped.

**Stage 7 (Years 8–20): Mature the brand and protect it.** Publish formal design standards for new construction in the district; require zoning compliance with the district’s architectural language. Trademarks enforce against the use of the district name outside its geography. Add wayfinding incrementally. Diversify the calendar to four to six recurring programming streams. Establish a public-art commissioning capacity inside the 501(c)(6). *Threshold:* if private-sector investment has not reached at



least 3x cumulative public investment by Year 10, the unlock relationship is not functioning, and the capital strategy should be re-examined.

**Continuously throughout:** Keep artists working in the district every day, through affordable studio space, mural commissions, residencies, an artist fund, and No-Vacancy-style storefront-activation programs. Track artists-in-residence count, mural production count, and event count as leading indicators alongside the trailing indicators of sales tax revenue and private investment.



## Disclaimers

This case study is presented as an educational instrument, not as a turnkey playbook. Several caveats apply.

First, by scope, the paper has excluded discussion of displacement, gentrification, affordability, and equity, which are critically important to any honest reckoning with RiNo's history and which other publications and academic sources have addressed at length.

Second, several specific figures in the paper are drawn from secondary press accounts and should be treated as approximate rather than audited: the \$850 million private investment figure was a 2019 estimate by the RiNo Art District itself; the \$90.8 million 39th Avenue Greenway cost is from *Denverite* reporting; the \$40 million Mission Ballroom construction cost is the *Denver Post's* estimate; the 12.4 million visitors and \$10.6 million sales tax figures are 2025–2026 figures reported by *Denverite*. None of these should be treated as definitive without primary-source verification.

Third, RiNo's history includes contested narratives about the CRUSH Walls festival and its founder.

Fourth, several DURA and zoning details are evolving.

Fifth, the four-entity governance structure was reorganized in January 2026, with the BID, GID, and Art District separating their staff. The operational consequences of that separation are not yet fully visible.

Sixth, the principles in the closing section are framed in general terms; their application to any specific Core Area TIF district will require careful local interpretation, particularly on questions of governance structure (which is sensitive to state law), TIF mechanics (which is sensitive to state law and city practice), and the existence and character of an authentic creator constituency in the geography. The right answer for one place will not be the right answer for another.

Finally, RiNo's transformation has been the work of dozens of named and hundreds of unnamed people over more than two decades. The summary in this paper necessarily compresses, simplifies, and selects. A reader using this case as a reference should treat the founders' interviews, the press archive (*Westword*, *Denverite*, *Denver Post*, *5280*, *BusinessDen*, *Confluence-Denver*), DURA's project records, and the City of Denver planning documents as the primary sources, and this paper as one synthesis among several possible.



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### **Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities & Language Assistance Services**

You can obtain this information in alternate formats such as Braille, electronic format, etc. Free language assistance services are also available. Please email [accessibility@bendoregon.gov](mailto:accessibility@bendoregon.gov) or call 541-693-2198. Relay Users Dial 7-1-1. All requests are subject to vendor processing times and should be submitted 48-72 hours in advance of events.

### **Servicios de asistencia lingüística e información sobre alojamiento para personas con discapacidad**

Puede obtener esta información en formatos alternativos como Braille, formato electrónico, etc. También disponemos de servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Póngase en contacto en correo electrónico [accessibility@bendoregon.gov](mailto:accessibility@bendoregon.gov) o número de teléfono 541-693-2198. Los usuarios del servicio de retransmisión deben marcar el 7-1-1. Por favor, envíe sus solicitudes con 48-72 horas de antelación al evento; todas las solicitudes están sujetas a los tiempos de procesamiento del proveedor.