



LONGMONT
CREATIVE DISTRICT

| 2019

Longmont Creative District Sustainability Plan

To achieve both financial and administrative sustainability for the Longmont Creative District engaging important community partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seeking assistance in the development of a plan to ensure long-term organizational and financial sustainability for the Longmont Creative District (Creative District), the Longmont Downtown Development Authority (LDDA) – the Creative District’s current administrator – utilized professional advisory support from Colorado Creative Industries (CCI) over Spring/Summer 2014. Their selected facilitator for this exercise was Jamie Licko of Centro Inc., a Denver-based consulting firm specializing in organizational capacity building and sustainability, as well as special district funding sources. This document was updated in 2019 to reflect the current situation in Longmont.

Over the course of four months, multiple stakeholders and agencies working to support the Creative District met to talk about its future direction and how they could best support its continued growth while helping to overcome current administrative challenges, including:

- Currently the small LDDA staff and organization oversee administration of the Creative District. This role takes a significant amount of time on top of the organization’s other far-reaching duties in downtown.
- Funding for the Creative District program is currently coming primarily from the LDDA, as well as CCI, though support from the latter will decrease now that the Creative District has been in the program for a few years. The Creative District will require new sources of funding to support ongoing work.
- There are many organizations and agencies within Longmont who can help support the Creative District, but as of yet their roles and responsibilities have not been clearly identified, nor have they been tapped for programmatic or financial support.

This report aims to establish a framework for a transition plan that will allow the Creative District to be managed through a structure that is sustainable and has adequate funding and staffing in its own right. This framework proposes utilizing the support and resources of four (4) primary organizations:

- ***Downtown Longmont Community Ventures (Ventures):*** A nonprofit recently established by the LDDA as a means by which to receive charitable contributions and grants to put towards the work of supporting the growth of downtown and the Creative District. Ventures is currently operating as a donor-advised fund under the Longmont Community Foundation. ***As this organization was evolving, the Board received notice that Arts Longmont (previously Longmont Council for the Arts) announced that they were disbanding, the Ventures Group jumped in to make sure there was still a viable Arts Council in Longmont. This new group will work to engage all the Creatives in Longmont and encourage them to use the Longmont Creative District as a place to showcase their talents.***
- ***Longmont Downtown Development Authority (LDDA):*** The special district entity that oversees and funds much of the ongoing downtown development work in Longmont via funds raised through tax increment financing and a special assessment in the downtown area.
- ***Creative Ventures of Colorado (formerly Longmont Council for the Arts (LCA):*** This nonprofit organization provides leadership and advocacy to support, incubate, inspire and enhance the arts community in the St. Vrain Valley, and is primarily funded through grants and contributions.
- ***Visit Longmont:*** Longmont’s visitor’s bureau, responsible for marketing the assets of the community.
- ***Firehouse Art Center:*** Longmont’s leading contemporary art center featuring national and local artists with over a dozen exhibitions a year. A cornerstone of the Longmont Creative District, it offers educational programs, events and membership programs to support creativity for all. Its mission is to raise cultural awareness and understanding of the arts in the regional community.

The report also sets out how other organizations in Longmont can support the Creative District in various strategic ways.

The resulting recommendations ensure sustainability for the Creative District and are focused on better utilizing existing organizations and funding streams and creating strategic partnerships to deliver projects, programs and services to the Creative District.

The transition from the current management structure to the proposed approach is expected to take three and a half years from start to finish. The following report sets out a step-by-step transition plan and better explains everyone's role in ensuring the Creative District's success.

UPDATE: With the Ventures (CVC) committee moving to Arts Longmont, management of the Longmont Creative District transitioned into oversight by the **Longmont Creative District Advisory Committee**, led by the Creative District Coordinator and LDDA Executive Director.

Current Members include:

Jessica Carson, musician / Longmont Area Chamber of Commerce

Joyanna Gittings, artist / Old Town Marketplace

Sabrina Ehlert, artist / Old Town Marketplace

Tim Gulsrud, Soundpost Acoustics and Soundpost Sessions

Tomas Perez, Art Spot / Old Town Marketplace

Matthew Spencer, Inner Court Creatives

Sean Gaffner, The Roost, Jefes, Smokin' Bowls

Jessica Shaw, Baker, La Vita Bella

Cynthia Barnes, Inspiration Art Academy

Beryl Durazo, Firehouse Art Center

Mersadi McClure, Creative District Coordinator

Kimberlee McKee, Executive Director, LDDA

Colin Argys, Marketing & Events Coordinator, LDDA

Other working committees, assisting in management of the District include:

Retail Committee: This group works to get more businesses involved in 2nd Friday celebrations, including pop up art opportunities, joint promotions, etc.

Downtown Street Team: This experienced-based group focuses on blog and social media posts that highlight different aspects of the Creative District.

Mobile Block Party Team: This group provides curated tours to local neighborhood group associations during 2nd Fridays in the Creative District.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Longmont Creative District Sustainability Plan development process was overseen by Kimberlee McKee – Executive Director of the LDDA as well as the Creative District – with the support of the Arts Administration Committee. The Arts Administration Committee is an organized group of stakeholders charged with undertaking proactive planning for the Creative District. They served as a long-standing committee under the LCA originally, and their mission shifted as part of the Creative District's development. This group includes:

- Joanne Kirves - Longmont Council for the Arts (Arts Admin and Placemaking Chair)
- Kimberlee McKee - LDDA (Block Captain Chair / Ventures)
- Kay Lloyd - Longmont Symphony Orchestra (Program Chair)
- Nancy Rezac - Visit Longmont (Marketing Chair)
- Ann Holley - Longmont Museum
- Jared Thompson - Longmont Museum
- Charlotte LaSasso - Boulder County Arts Alliance
- Debbie Adams – Artist
- Jessica Kooiman - Firehouse Art Center
- Julie Clement – Artist
- Lauren Greenfield - Art in Public Places
- Peter Alexander - Longmont Concert Band

- Marcelo Fernandez - Artist & Gallery Owner
- Sharald Church - ArtWalk Longmont
- Judith Ernst - Longmont Theatre Company
- Scott Moore – Jesters Theater
- Del Rae Heiser – LDDA

Their tasks throughout the development of this plan included:

- To explore capacity within Longmont – via other entities, organizations and groups – to participate in managing, funding and staffing the Creative District in partnership with the LDDA.
- To explore how the creation of the 501c3 Ventures entity could be used to facilitate the management of the Creative District, and how it could contribute to the district’s financial sustainability.
- To identify necessary funding and staffing for the Creative District, and resources needed to implement Creative District work plans.
- To establish a transition plan to ensure sustainability for the Creative District for the long term.

Throughout the spring and summer, the Arts Administration Committee met three different times to provide guidance and support on the development of this plan. Additionally, meetings were held with LCA staff, LDDA board and staff, and the Ventures board. This plan reflects their agreed approach and priorities for the Creative District.

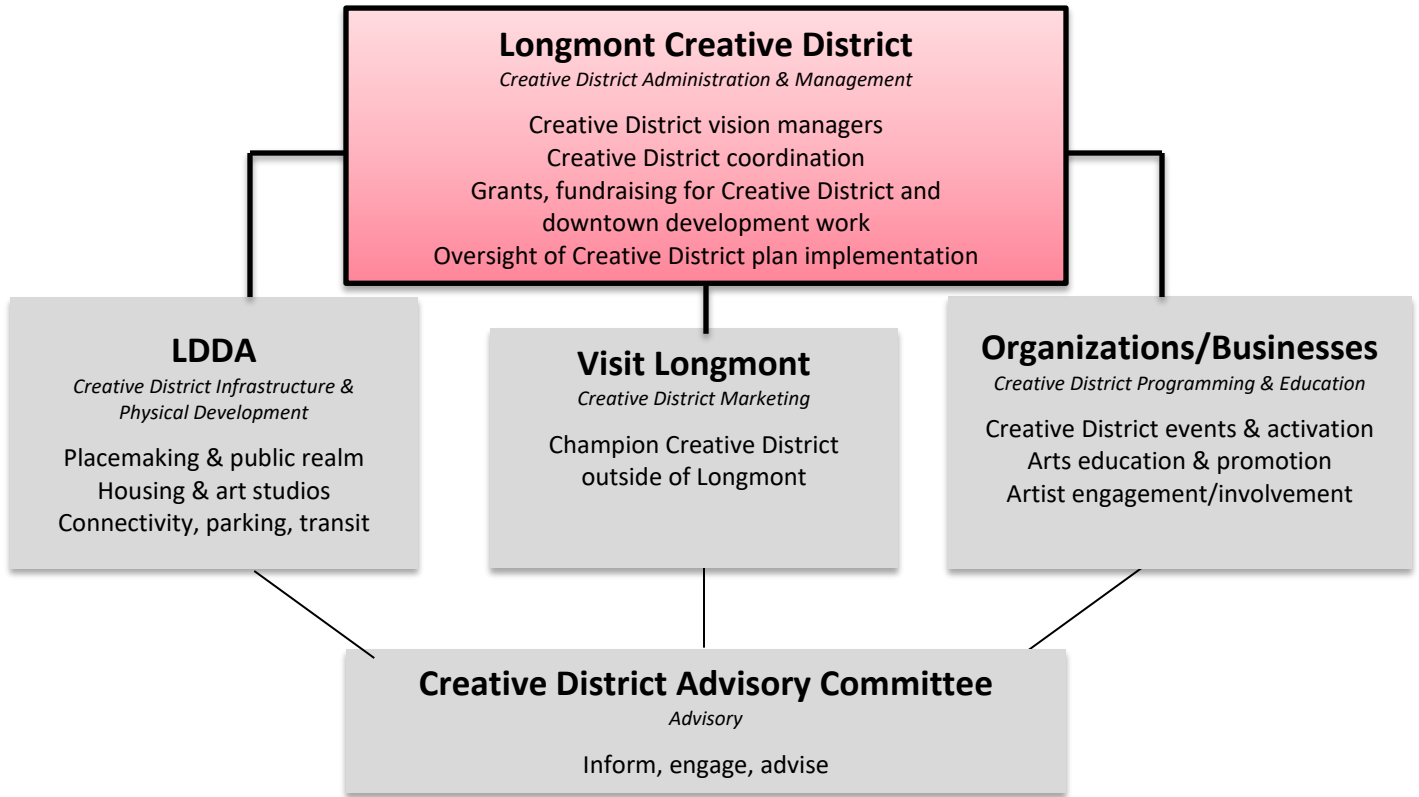
RECOMMENDED APPROACH

The recommended approach to managing the Creative District going forward is proposed as follows:

- Utilize the Ventures entity to house administration and management of the Creative District. Ventures will also continue to support other downtown-benefitting work.
- Retain the Arts Administration Committee as an advisory board to Partners, focused solely on Creative District initiatives. This group – originally organized by LCA and chaired by LCA’s director – will continue to focus on informing, engaging and advising on Creative District-specific issues.
- Create strategic partnerships between Ventures and the LDDA, LCA and Visit Longmont to provide clearly identified support and programming to the Creative District.
- Establish relationships with other community organizations and partners to provide financial and programmatic support where there is a mission fit.

A transition from how the Creative District is currently managed to this outlined approach is likely to take three to four years. Ultimately, this shift will allow for an integrated, sustainable management approach for the Creative District. The following diagram demonstrates this more clearly:

PROPOSED Creative District Management Approach



ABOUT THE PRIMARY PARTNERS

The following section sets out more information about each of the primary partners identified in the new management approach for the Creative District, including both their current and proposed roles.

Downtown Longmont Community Ventures (DBA – Longmont Creative District LCD)

The LDDA established Ventures as a separate nonprofit organization. It is a donor-advised fund in partnership with the Longmont Community Foundation. Ventures is set up as a Colorado nonprofit and is applying for the Form 1023-EZ 501c3 status (though this effort is in progress). The primary mission of LCD (formerly Ventures) is to assist in generating revenues to support and enhance the Creative District and downtown Longmont. Ventures is currently overseen by the Creative District Advisory Committee.

LCD currently receives primary funding as a donor-advised fund under the Longmont Community Foundation. The LCD Committee is currently exploring initial programmatic and project opportunities to fund.

Currently, LCD (Ventures) Articles of Incorporation set forth the following primary purposes and objectives for the entity:

- To promote effective and efficient community development and redevelopment and to hinder deterioration and distressed conditions in and around the area of downtown Longmont.
- To promote and engage in the planning, design and implementation of the Creative District for the public benefit and social welfare of the people and visitors of Longmont.
- To focus public attention to community planning and development issues and to provide an educational forum for the advancement and public dissemination of knowledge regarding community development urban revitalization and public/private partnerships.
- To induce a greater commitment of public and private resources to community planning and development, to stimulate business and private foundation investment in community developments projects that are in public interest, and to encourage a pattern of regular sustained support from the private sector for public purposes and charitable projects.
- To expand employment opportunities for the creative industries and generally to increase the economy viability of the Longmont community.
- To support and promote renovation of downtown Longmont and nearby neighborhoods and improvements in housing, services and amenities in downtown Longmont.
- To help make downtown Longmont a more vibrant and livable place for both daytime and permanent residents by promoting the development of parks and gathering spaces, diverse cultural and recreational resources and amenities and a comprehensive commercial and service core.

LCDs' proposed role in the future of the Creative District is supported by the existing bylaws. In addition to this, the new management approach would require that Ventures would:

- Champion and support overall implementation of the Creative District plan.
- Continue its VISTA program collaboration to fund a full-time staff person dedicated to the Creative District. The primary role of this staff person would be overall administration support for the Creative District as well as grant writing, fundraising and facilitating sponsorship. It is proposed that LCD will initially operate out of and share staff with the LDDA.
- Develop and implement a Creative District membership program that provides a way for creatives, community members and others to be a special part of the Creative District and support the Creative District work.
- Undertake creative-based economic development to support the growth of creative industries in Longmont.
- Guide the development of new funding sources and tools to support Creative District work – including possible implementation of the currently unfunded Business Improvement District (BID) in the future. Getting funding for the previously created BID – which is also proposed within the 2013 Downtown Longmont Technical Assistance Report as developed by Downtown Colorado Inc. – is seen as an important role for LCD to facilitate. Given the complexity of funding tools and sources already at play downtown, it is envisioned that the BID as led by LCD could be developed as a tool to support Creative District work and more, and that LCD could be the “face” of the BID development

process. **UPDATE:** Due to the increasing property tax within the District, a BID would not get the needed support for funding at this time.

It is envisioned that the existing LCD organization would need be restructured slightly to work within the new approach. The proposed restructure would include the following:

- Expansion of the LCD board to create an organization to “house” administration and management of the Creative District. The specific size and makeup of the board would need to be determined through a collaborative process, but should be reflective of the key stakeholders contributing to the Creative District work.
- Establish a mission that clearly integrates both LCD role in broader downtown development work, as well as its role in the implementation of the Creative District plan and administration of the Creative District’s programming and objectives.
- Require that LCD board members be active financial and programmatic participants in the Creative District’s success.

Longmont Downtown Development Authority (LDDA)

The LDDA currently oversees all the administration for the Creative District and provides the primary funding for Creative District work. Additionally, the LDDA also administers the Downtown Longmont General Improvement District as well as parking (including managing parking lots, permits and maintenance). The new approach for oversight of the Creative District effectively allows the LDDA to “move” primary Creative District administration to the LCD entity, while allowing the LDDA to continue to serve both downtown and the Creative District in a role that is more aligned to its overall mission of supporting development and the public realm. The LDDA would continue to be closely partnered with LCD and the Creative District particularly in its infancy, and would ensure that annual work plans and strategies were developed together so that each respective entity understood its role. The LDDA’s additional primary support to the Creative District would include:

- Funding infrastructure, place making and the public realm
- Developing housing and arts studios to support the Creative District
- Continuing to provide façade grants and other incentives to improve the images of the Creative District
- Continuing to support improvements to traffic calming, connectivity, parking and transit

The LDDA would continue to be responsible for implementing deliverables and recommendations from the Creative District Plan that fall into the above categories.

Longmont Council for the Arts / DBA Creative Ventures of Colorado (CVC)

This organization is under new leadership and is tasked with engaging and advocating for all creatives in Longmont.

Visit Longmont

Visit Longmont is the Longmont visitor’s bureau, responsible for marketing the assets of the community. In addition to the overarching marketing work they do for Longmont, the organization would also oversee marketing and public relations for the Creative District, and its programming and events. Visit Longmont would be responsible for disseminating press releases provided by the Creative District and its members, organizing monthly meetings around Creative District marketing and communications matters, facilitating annual creation of a Creative District marketing plan and holding partners accountable to goals, and providing Creative District marketing materials to members and media.

Arts Administration Committee

The Arts Administration Committee was originally established as a committee of the LCA, tasked with bringing together key creative industry stakeholders to remain informed about happenings in the area. As the Creative District came together in Longmont, the group’s remit changed and they were charged to serve as a steering committee for the Creative District. This change was an outcome of work the Creative District did with Marcie Erion utilizing CCI Professional Advisory Network hours.

UPDATE: Through time, this group has evolved to quarterly meetings that are managed through the Firehouse Art Center, working on collaborations to make the Arts strong in Longmont. It spun off Longmont Performing Arts Initiative

(LPAI), a group of performing arts organizations that have worked together to advocate for a performing arts center and do joint promotions and collaborations.

As noted earlier in this report, members of Arts Administration Committee include:

- Joanne Kirves - Longmont Council for the Arts (Arts Admin and Placemaking Chair)
- Kimberlee McKee - LDDA (Block Captain Chair / Downtown Longmont Community Ventures)
- Kay Lloyd - Longmont Symphony Orchestra (Program Chair)
- Erin Balling - Visit Longmont (Marketing Chair)
- Ann Holley - Longmont Museum
- Jared Thompson - Longmont Museum
- Charlotte LaSasso - Boulder County Arts Alliance
- Debbie Adams – Artist
- Jessica Kooiman - Firehouse Art Center
- Julie Clement – Artist
- Lauren Greenfield - Art in Public Places
- Peter Alexander - Longmont Concert Band
- Marcelo Fernandez - Artist & Gallery Owner
- Sharald Church - ArtWalk Longmont
- Judith Ernst - Longmont Theatre Company
- Scott Moore – Jesters Theater
- Del Rae Heiser – LDDA

As the shift to the new Creative District management model occurs, it is recommended that this group be retained to LCD and its partners as an advisory board. It is likely that some of the current members of this committee may become members of the LCD board as well, as it expands.

TRANSITION PLAN

It is envisioned that transition from the existing Creative District management structure to the proposed structured will take approximately three and a half years. The following outlines the timing and tasks that will need to be addressed in the transition:

2020
During 2020, LCD will formalize its committee into a working Board and continue to meet, transitioning to a new Creative District accountability structure. Tasks will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Undertake ongoing stakeholder engagement in regards to the transition▪ Identify LCD; board makeup, and establish board roles and expectations▪ Identify additional potential partners and their roles▪ Complete 1023 EZ 501c3 application▪ Secure project based funding for LCD initiatives▪ Complete fully integrated LCD web site with creative directory
2021
2021 will be significant in beginning to lay important foundations for a new management approach for the Creative District. Tasks will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establish budgets and monetary goals for LCD▪ Evaluate funding sources and funding models to ensure LCDs’ sustainability▪ Develop a Creative District membership program/structure▪ Create a strategic work plan for LCD start-up

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Additional local groups and organizations have been identified through this planning process that could be involved in helping to fund and administer the Creative District in a variety of ways. Seven primary groups that have been identified to provide support include:

- City of Longmont
- Longmont Economic Development Partnership
- Longmont Community Foundation
- Longmont Symphony
- Firehouse Arts Center
- Longmont Museum
- Boulder County Arts Alliance – To generate countywide assistance and support

Support from these groups could occur in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- Direct financial contributions, grants, etc.
- Responsibility to help implement specific initiatives as identified in the Creative District plan
- Provision of staff members or staff time to Creative District work

Other additional community partners to support the Creative District have been identified as well. These partners are just as important to the Creative District's success but with less clearly defined roles. At this point, they include:

- Longmont Chamber
- Small Business Development Center
- Art in Public Places
- Longmont Artist Guild
- Longmont Library
- Longmont Concert Band
- Longmont Chorale
- ArtWalk
- Bookstores
- Artists
- Theatre companies
- Historical Society
- Gallery owners
- Music store owners
- Schools – including St. Vrain Valley School District and Front Range Community College
- Other supporting businesses in the district
- Dance companies (Dance Dimensions)
- Entertainment
- Creatives/Creative Industries

Throughout the implementation of this plan, meetings with these organizations and entities will be a priority, to understand how they can best support Creative District work and where they see the most value in participating in these efforts.

FUNDING AND BUDGETS

Funding for the growing Creative District will need to come from a variety of sources to support staffing, administration and project delivery. It is anticipated that primary funding will be sought from:

- LDDA
- Membership dues, through a newly created membership component that engages many of the “supporting groups” identified above
- Sponsorships – for events, programming and activities
- Grants – for targeted programs and projects
- A Business Improvement District (BID), as identified in the 2013 Downtown Colorado Inc. Technical Assistance Program Report
- City of Longmont

In addition, other creative funding sources will be explored, including:

- Opportunities to raise money through programming and events
- Exploration into use of current and/or future art studio space in a way that brings in revenue to support the district

The proposed annual operational budget for the district would be in the range of \$100,000-\$150,000 including costs for staff and operations, programs and projects. Detailed yearly budgets will be developed throughout the transition planning process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following individuals and organizations participated in the development of this sustainability plan:

Arts Administration Committee

Joanne Kirves - LCA (Arts Admin and Placemaking Chair)
Kimberlee McKee - LDDA (Block Captain Chair / Downtown Longmont Community Ventures)
Kay Lloyd - Longmont Symphony Orchestra (Program Chair)
Erin Balling - Visit Longmont (Marketing Chair)
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Peter Alexander - Longmont Concert Band
Marcelo Fernandez - Artist & Gallery Owner
Sharald Church - ArtWalk Longmont
Judith Ernst - Longmont Theatre Company
Scott Moore – Jesters Theater
Del Rae Heiser – LDDA

Downtown Longmont Community Ventures Board of Directors

Sharon Smith Eisler, Vice Chair, Bay Window Catering
Doug Ward, Volunteer, Longmont Symphony Board Chair
Anne Smith, ERTL, Inc.
Joanne Kirves, LCA

Longmont Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors and Staff

Alex Sammory, Longmont Entrepreneurial Network
Larry Stauss, Vice Chair, Guaranty Bank
Sharon Smith Eisler, Bay Window Catering
Joseph Perrotto, Burden, Inc.
Gabe Santos, Longmont City Council
Burbidge Austin, Resident
Thaxter Williams, Small Business Specialist Accounting and Taxation Services
Kimberlee McKee, Executive Director
Del Rae Heiser, Downtown Specialist
Emelie Torres, Administrative Assistant

Longmont Council for the Arts Board of Directors and Staff

Donna Schult, Chase Bank
Peggy Bruns, Rocky Mountain Center for Musical Arts
Darren Klotz
Marcelo Fernández, Artist and Gallery owner
Debra Heiser, Heiser Design
Mary McCoy
Nicolle Pratt
Camille Rendall
Joanne Kirves, Executive Director
Cathy Balan, Administrative Assistant
Pris Walker, Program Assistant

Visit Longmont Board of Directors and Staff

Anne Schmid, President
Lynn Owens, Vice President/Dickens Tavern
Bill Weiberg, Treasurer/Marriott Hotels
Mary Blue, Secretary
Sarah Levison, Longmont City Council
Amy Masson, Focus Marketing, LLC
Wesley Jessup, Longmont Museum
Kimberlee McKee, LDDA
Alex Sammory, Longmont Entrepreneurial Network
Joanne Kirves, Longmont Council for the Arts
Vanessa Haas, Lefthand Brewing Company
Al Linton, Pratt Management Company
Nancy Rezac, Executive Director
Erin Balling, Marketing and Sales Coordinator

Longmont Community Foundation Staff

Eric Hozempa, Executive Director

Colorado Creative Industries

Margaret Hunt, Director
Deana Miller, Program Manager, Public Art and Creative Districts

CCI Professional Advisory Network

Jamie Licko, Centro Inc.