



RINO ART DISTRICT

FROM CANVAS TO COMMUNITY:

9 YEARS OF THE RINO

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

2015-2024

OUR MISSION

**Championing local artists,
creatives, and businesses to
support a vibrant, engaged,
and inclusive RiNo Art District**

Overview

The RiNo Business Improvement District (BID) was officially created in June 2015. The BID is a special tax district that assesses commercial property in nearly all of RiNo to generate funding for projects and programming in four key areas:

1. **Advocacy**
2. **Branding, Marketing, & Activation**
3. **Placemaking**
4. **Business Support for RiNo Creatives and Entrepreneurs**



THE RINO BID HAS A BOARD THAT CONSISTS OF INDIVIDUALS FROM THE RINO BID AREA AND MUST INCLUDE A MIX OF ARTISTS, CREATIVES, PROPERTY OWNERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS



LETTER FROM THE RINO BID BOARD



What a difference almost a decade makes. About 9 years ago, local property owners, small businesses, and creatives came together with the RiNo Art District to create a new Business Improvement District (BID). With all the growth in this area, the goal of our BID was to put more control into the community's hands, and to leverage our collective resources to ensure this community retains its unique character and remains affordable, and economically and socially vibrant.

Since our official inception in 2015, hand-in-hand with property owners, businesses, and creatives, the RiNo BID has played a pivotal role in providing a consistent funding source to support businesses, artists, and creatives through projects and programs. Together, we've helped foster the district's growth as a dynamic cultural and economic hub and strived to enhance the unique character of our built environment, promote sustainable development, and create a more vibrant and accessible community that centers art, creativity, and inclusivity.

The following report aims to capture the impact of those efforts. Within its pages, you'll find a snapshot of key accomplishments – from the cultivation and preservation of our arts scene and robust support for businesses of all backgrounds and sizes, to inclusive streetscape and public realm improvements.

These achievements underscore the profound value the RiNo BID brings to our community. As we look towards the future, we are eager to continue the BID's work, championing the vital role of the creative economy in our future, and continuing to make RiNo Art District a truly welcoming and equitable destination for all.



REVIEW OF THE BID SERVICES

The services that the BID funds were developed and prioritized by the property and business owners of RiNo in 2015, and include services and improvements for four key areas:

1 Advocacy

The unified voice of RiNo on all matters related to preserving and advancing the district's unique character through representation, promotion of planning and development, policy, and partnerships.

2 Branding, Marketing, & Activation

The BID shall facilitate the development of the RiNo brand, as well as creating and delivering an experience that encourages locals and visitors to explore RiNo through marketing, events, and programming.

3 Placemaking

The BID shall work to retain the unique urban and industrial character of RiNo, integrating culture and creativity into the environment, delivering appropriate enhancements to the public realm, adding pedestrian amenities, and activating the area.

4 Business Support for RiNo Creatives & Entrepreneurs

The BID shall take a leadership role in keeping RiNo affordable and promoting its local talent, creatives, and entrepreneurs through advocacy, programming, and direct support, amplifying the creative and cultural offer in the district and promoting economic vitality.



BID BY THE NUMBERS

Over the past 9 years, the BID has budgeted for and funded projects, programs, and initiatives that support and implement the BID's services. Below is a summary of the BID's investments towards its services since it was created:

\$1.1M IN ADVOCACY

\$1.2M IN BRANDING, MARKETING, & ACTIVATION

\$4.4M IN PLACEMAKING

\$3.3M IN BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR RINO CREATIVES & ENTREPRENEURS





Advocacy

- **Successfully advocated for multiple stop signs and crosswalks** at busy intersections including at 27th and Walnut and 25th and Larimer.
- **Lobbied for improvements to pedestrian infrastructure**, including the 35th Street pedestrian bridge and temporary pedestrian access on Walnut Street—in preparation for the conversion of Walnut and Blake Streets to two-way operations—enhancing safety and walkability in the District.
- **Formed the Unhoused Action Coalition** to unite various BIDs, GIDs and RNOs around advocacy and opportunities to support those without a permanent shelter.
- **Launched the RiNo River Series** exploring the South Platte River and Denver history with a focus on river conservation
- **Served as a liaison for the last decade between the District and the City and County of Denver**, including convening community meetings around topics ranging from public safety and public improvements to stormwater management.
- **Worked with the District 9 office to prioritize programs and policy updates** in line with community priorities.
- **Successfully lobbied to adaptively reuse three City-owned buildings and to create a new park, called ArtPark**, that uses those buildings as a hub for community and creativity.





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Branding, Marketing, Activation

- **Collaborated with businesses for First Fridays**, launching social media campaigns, and promoting the district through strategic media outreach.
- **RiNo social media accounts continue to generate millions of impressions annually** across platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter/X, helping strengthen overall awareness of the District and the local businesses and artists who call RiNo home.
- **Invested in public relations strategies to raise awareness for the District** among local, regional, national and global audiences with high-profile destination coverage in publications such as The New York Times.
- **Refreshed and relaunched the RiNo website**, including cataloging and linking to more than 100 murals (and counting!) across the District, highlighting community and art events, and providing information on key RiNo organizational priorities.
 - **Website visitors have increased by 92%** with the average number of monthly visitors doubling since the new site launched in 2017.
- **Brought CRUSH Walls to Denver as RiNo's signature annual event** for multiple years, drawing in hundreds of thousands of visitors.
- **Served as the title sponsor of the international street art festival DENVER WALLS' inaugural event in 2023 and will present the 2024 DENVER WALLS** in October. Secured rights to be the presenting sponsor for the next four years. Launched Side Stories to activate exterior walls across RiNo to draw in visitors and increase foot traffic during the quieter winter months.
- **Hosted various family-friendly art events** including Camp RiNo, ArtPark Al Fresco, and the Summer Art Markets to attract visitors of all ages to the District.
- **Hosted a three-day ArtPark celebration** featuring RiNo artists, community partners (DPL, RedLine, The Zine Library, CoCuA), a Twenty One Pilots takeover with music-inspired art and a mural battle, family-friendly activities, and free food trucks.
- **Facilitated important community discussions** through our monthly event series RiNo Talks.



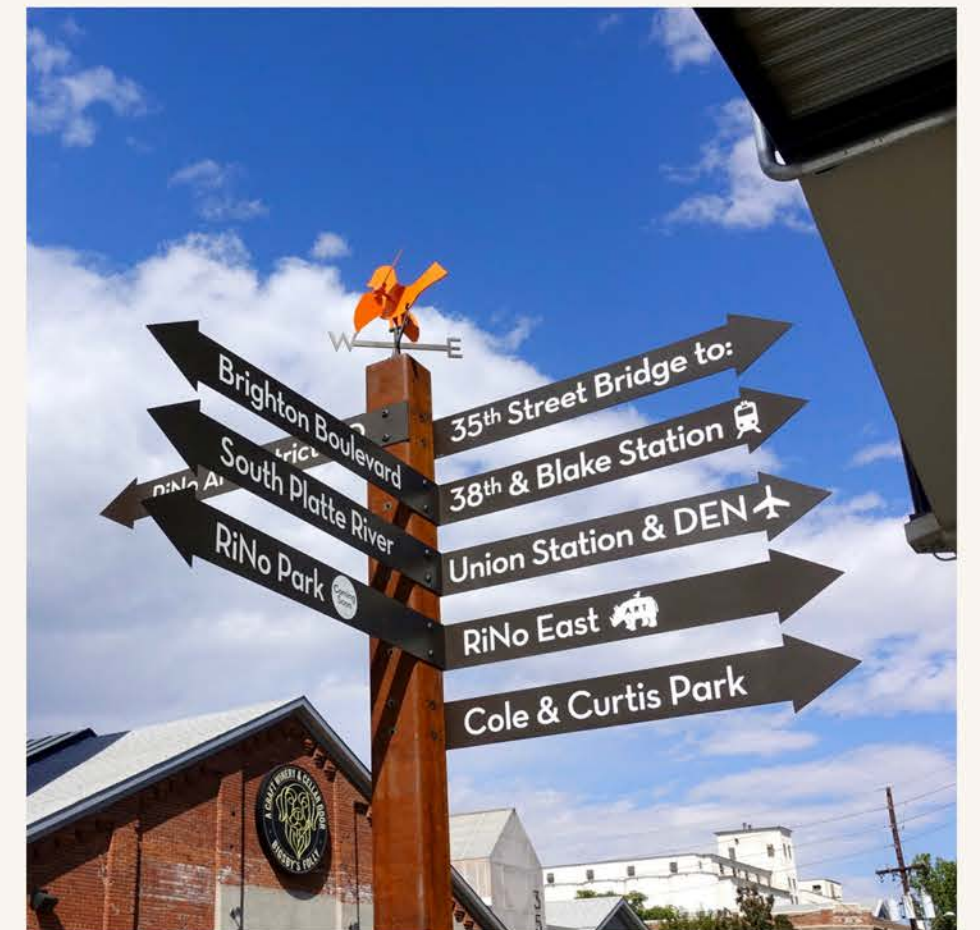
Placemaking

- **Established the RiNo Art District Design Standards** to help public and private development teams understand how they can contribute to the goals of the RiNo community through their work.
- **Worked with the city to create new zoning standards** that encourage development to commit to higher-quality design and affordable housing.
 - A design overlay was created to promote creative, high-quality design.
 - A height incentive overlay was created to allow for taller buildings if affordable units are provided above and beyond current city requirements near the 38th and Blake rail station.
- **Envisioned and operated the pop-up Boxyard Park** aimed at combating the lack of public space in RiNo, piloting programming alongside the Denver Parks & Recreation that would later inform ArtPark's design.
- **Worked closely with business and property owners** along the 2700 and 2900 blocks of Larimer Street to create a beautification plan to make them more pedestrian-friendly.



Placemaking (Continued)

- **Kicked-off the Urban Forest Initiative**, which includes a master plan and implementation strategies to increase the tree canopy in the District.
- **Partnered with the City to launch “RiNo MAPS”** (RiNo Mobility and Parking Study) to help establish a framework through which the District can strategically and creatively manage access and mobility challenges in and around the area.
- **Created and installed gateway signage** to welcome visitors and commuters to the district and neighborhoods, and provide directions to key destinations
- **Partnered with Denver Parks and Recreation to create ArtPark.** RiNo’s collaborative work included the fundraising, management and build-out of two existing buildings at Arkins Park, which became the homes for a new Denver Public Library branch, subsidized artist studios, the new Comal Heritage Food Incubator site, and the Truss House community performance venue. RiNo continues to manage these buildings and the tenants within them.
- **Launched a recycling and landfill program**, which included installing 92 custom-designed waste bins throughout the District and servicing them multiple times a week.
- **Supported beautification efforts across the District with Denver Day Works**, which provides jobs for people experiencing or at risk for homelessness.
- **Encouraged a bike-friendly culture** by providing artist-designed bike racks, working with the city to incorporate 4 miles of new bike lanes, and custom rhino bike lane markers.



Business Support for Creatives and Entrepreneurs

- Introduced free monthly workshops called "Tools for the Creative Life" to provide skills and resources for creatives.
- Coordinated with local businesses on three blocks in RiNo during the height of the pandemic to expand outdoor patio seating and safely activate the street.
- Empowered local artists through the RiNo Mural Program (supporting over two dozen local artists) and sponsorships for arts programs (totaling \$368,771).
- Awarded more than \$225,000 in unrestricted grants to support local organizations working directly with the BIPOC community through the Social Impact Grant Program.
- Awarded more than \$2.3m to creatives
- Successfully preserved 14 affordable artist studios at the Backyard on Blake, now known as the RiNo Art District Studios at the Backyard on Blake.



Business Support for Creatives and Entrepreneurs (Continued)

- **Launched NO VACANCY**, an artist residency program in partnership with area developers that has provided 70+ local artists with temporary artist space in otherwise vacant buildings in the District.
- **Provided \$147,500 in funding to host the Denver Fringe Festival** throughout the District.
- **Raised more than \$4 million dollars to support the development of RiNo ArtPark**, which features subsidized artist studios managed by RedLine, as well as Alto Gallery, the Bob Ragland Branch of Denver Public Library, Denver Zine Library and Comal Heritage Food Incubator.
- **Distributed \$10,000 in Guiry's gift cards to 100 artists** for art supplies in partnership with the Colorado Creative Industries.
- **Donated over \$200,000 in microgrants** to more than 170 local businesses, artists, and creatives.
- **Launched a new curation program** that put over \$286,000 into the pockets of artists through commissioned projects.



CELEBRATING THE BID'S WORK TO

**TRANSFORM, INNOVATE, AND CREATE
COMMUNITY IN
RINO ART DISTRICT**

