Letter to Members

Dear Member,

Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) Board of Directors and Staff thank you for another educational and inspirational year in Vibrant Colorado Downtowns!

We love to support your efforts at creating healthy and economically vital places. DCI is proud to be your advisor, partner, and guide.

Sincerely,

The DCI Team

New Program

DCI AmeriCorps VISTA Program

In 2016, DCI established a Downtown AmeriCorps VISTA program through partnership with the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS). DCI has placed full-time volunteers in six member community sites, including three Colorado Main Streets, where they work to build organizational capacity and provide human resources. All VISTAs are trained in organizational and downtown development. DCI will be expanding the VISTA program in 2017.

“The Town of Buena Vista’s downtown initiatives, our creative efforts, and our Main Street Program have grown in depth and effectiveness due to our DCI membership and DCI AmeriCorps VISTA. The DCI Advisory Services guided our actions to form a the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC ), join the Colorado Main Street program, establish a new brand and shop local initiatives. DCI is our community coach!” — Brandy Reitter, Town Manager, Buena Vista, CO.

City Builders Forum

RiNo Arts District

DCI’s City Builder Series explored the RiNo Arts and Business Improvement District (BID) with educational sessions, discussion, and the exploration of a neighborhood in transition. DCI’s 11 expert panelists led three sessions: “The RiNo Story”, “Creating and Maintaining Attainable Housing in the Face of Growth”, and “Artist as Entrepreneurs”.

The City Builder Series brings together developers, planners, artists, architects, and public staff and officials to discuss issues facing towns and cities. In 2017, City Builders will continue focusing on policy, partnerships, financing, and actions to broaden community housing options. DCI is also exploring links between housing and mobility, workforce, job creation, and economic development. Find more information on the DCI website events page.

Urban Renewal Education

In 2016, DCI expanded urban renewal education for newly formed urban renewals, new URA board members and more seasoned URA boards asking for strategic discussion to guide decision-making and communications. In 2017, DCI will continue the URA Board Training and roll out a webinar series for on-site education about URAs.

DCI is leading the way in partnerships amongst stakeholders and urban renewal boards. DCI collaborates with the Colorado Municipal League, Colorado Counties Inc., and the Special District Association to shape meaningful content for one-day workshops to ensure that board members and staff understand roles. In 2017 DCI is working to build a coalition to shape an in depth study of the impacts of URAs and how Colorado can best use this powerful tool.
2016 IMPACTS

**Pueblo Vibrant Downtown Conference**

What makes the Vibrant Downtowns Conference so successful?

“Great information and lots of wonderful networking. I think the array of events and content was very valuable and led to deeper connections across the board.”

The 2016 Vibrant Downtowns Conference in downtown Pueblo was the largest to date with over 350 participants. DCI was able to coordinate over $50K in grants for the host community and the conference integrated collaborative content with the Congress for the New Urbanism, National Research Center, Urban3 Economic Land Use Study, Orton Family Foundation Heart & Soul Training, Happy City Workshop and Site-Analysis and Small Business Majority. The week ended with the hugely successful Neon Alley Street Party.

“For Lake County Economic Development and Leadville Main Street, having a DCI AmeriCorps VISTA provided the additional people power needed to manage the downtown program. DCI's training, advisory services, and access to resources has made an enormous difference in our ability to perform in this program and build our economic development programming.” — Nicole Thompson, Director of Lake County Economic Development Corporation, Leadville, CO.

**Nederland: Building Consensus for Downtown Development**

Since 2015, DCI has worked with the Nederland Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board, town staff, community members and interested developers to build consensus around quality development and growth. Most recently, DCI brought parking and land-use economics experts to provide insight to this small community with big growth pressure. Reshaping dialogue around the long-term stewardship of land helped to further discussions and align interests.

**Pueblo & Pueblo County: Land Use & Happiness Studies**

DCI worked closely with Pueblo partners to secure funding and complete a county land use economic study and a happiness audit of a downtown neighborhood. Pueblo County, the City of Pueblo, Pueblo Urban Renewal, and the Pueblo Realtors Association partnered with DCI to access Urban3 to conduct the land use study, which generated a detailed 3D maps of revenue per acre and planning data sets. The Toronto-based Happy City Team worked with 35 participants, including planners, public officials, local business owners and citizens to focus on a two-block area of downtown Pueblo, conducting analysis and leading a charrette, creating an action plan for the site based on principles of well-being and happiness. These macro and micro approaches will help the city and county optimize investments for maximum happiness and economic growth.

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DCI hosted over 20 educational events for over 843 community leaders.

With 325 attendees, DCI's 2016 Vibrant Downtowns Conference was the largest Conference to date!

DCI's content included options for rural and urban communities with 8 webinars, 2 URA Board Trainings, 3 City Builder Events, 2 Downtown Institutes, 1 Annual Meeting, 1 Vibrant Downtown Conference and 2 Economic Land Use Studies.

DCI created 36 newsletters highlighting programming and sponsors to over 3500 subscribers with a 32.4% open rate.

Over 50 skilled volunteers contributed 355 hours through technical assistance, Downtown Institutes and DCI's Annual Conference.

Through DCI's AmeriCorps VISTA program, 4 AmeriCorps VISTAs developed 6 new economic development initiatives, and worked a total of 4200 hours.
What’s next in 2017?

In 2017, DCI will continue to build and strengthen our opportunities for engagement. We will be holding community assessments, facilitating regular meetings of our committees for Conference, Districts (BIDs and DDAs), Urban Renewal, and our Rural Council. Consider volunteering with DCI to share your expertise, gain valuable professional skills, or network with communities and consultants. Contact us today to submit workshop ideas or to volunteer for a team or committee.