



AEDA Community Engagement Work Plan 2022

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INTRODUCTION

AEDA Mission: *To attract new businesses, facilitate industrial and commercial development, and support existing businesses so they can grow and expand to create jobs, increase revenues, and make capital investments which enhance the community.*

For Arvada to remain a competitive and attractive business environment, it must actively work to remove barriers to investment. Byproducts of business vitality and expansion include capital investment, improvements to local infrastructure, and job growth, which creates meaningful wage and career opportunities for Arvada residents as well as increased retail spending and tax revenue to the City of Arvada. AEDA believes that thoughtful commercial development, aligned with the community's vision, will result in the advancement of its mission and Arvada City Council's Strategic Results around Economic Development. Implementation of a Community Engagement Work Plan supports this outcome and AEDA's entire Strategic Plan.

AEDA Strategic Plan Alignment

Specifically, this Community Engagement Work Plan will support the Arvada City Council Strategic Result of by the end of 2025, fully aligning the City's economic development efforts with the community's vision as expressed in the Economic Development Survey to Residents and Businesses. The 2021 AEDA Strategic Plan required the adoption of a Community Engagement Strategy by the end of 2021. That strategy is outlined below, conjoined with a Work Plan which includes goals and metrics for successful implementation. Tactical efforts and metrics to track implementation of the work plan should cascade up into an AEDA Performance Measure, which supports its annual Strategic Plan, which supports Arvada City Council Strategic Results around Economic Development and Community Engagement.



The Challenge

A growing threat to AEDA's mission is the increasing trend of negative perspective on private sector business activity and real estate development among vocal members of the public. Although community members can raise legitimate concerns, the negative impacts of business activity are often overexaggerated, disproportionate, and far outweighed by the benefits of a healthy and prosperous local economy and business community. One-sided misinformation and misperceptions about development projects can spread quickly into neighborhoods, causing consternation and, eventually, organized opposition to activity that would otherwise benefit the Arvada community and increase funding and capacity for quality-of-life assets.

A Need to Engage the Community in Economic Development

Driven by the AEDA Board's investigation of community sentiment toward growth and development, including prior focus groups and the Economic Development Survey to Arvada Residents, engaging the broader community in economic development conversations is necessary to the success of AEDA's mission. AEDA's Community Engagement Work Plan establishes desired outcomes and priorities to ensure meaningful feedback loops with Arvada residents and businesses, in alignment with Arvada City Council's Strategic Results.

Based on the Institute for Local Government's journal article entitled Engaging the Public in Economic Development, "Public engagement provides opportunities to improve each of these areas using the collective wisdom and insight of the residents who will be most directly affected by the success or failure of any economic development plan." Public engagement pertaining to economic development can occur in multiple areas, including incorporation of engagement tactics into existing economic development efforts, and collaboration with strategic partnerships.

AEDA's understanding of the Arvada community and Arvada's ongoing economic development efforts suggest the following areas will be prioritized:

Priority - Incorporate Community Engagement into existing Economic Development efforts

As Arvada's Community and Economic Development Work System has existing, documented plans encapsulating the community vision, it is important that AEDA align its efforts with these documents, and help bring that vision to fruition within the built environment. AEDA also believes that the community, including elected officials, are aware and supportive of the general concept of economic development, especially as it relates to attracting more amenities, employment opportunities and tax revenue for the City of Arvada. Major opportunities lie in two areas; one being education, which can help residents more accurately understand the relationship between development and positive

outcomes, including quality of life and overall community benefit, and the other being listening, including creating feedback loops to better understand the community's sentiments by way of the Economic Development survey to Residents and Businesses.

Priority - Collaborate and Partner

Leveraging strategic partners with aligned values and priorities will be instrumental in promoting and reinforcing key messages, as well as developing helpful tools for existing and future businesses to successfully engage with neighbors and the greater Arvada Community. Namely, AEDA has identified the City of Arvada and the Arvada Chamber as organizations in which community engagement is a shared priority and there is already a significant and successful partnership in place. Through these partnerships, tools and messaging efforts can be both amplified and mutually beneficial.

Desired Outcomes:

- **Education and Learning**
 - Increase awareness of relationship between development aligned with the City of Arvada's plans and positive outcomes for the community
 - Decrease combative environment between residents and developers as it relates to appropriate land use considerations and development applications, instead steer more community participation in development and updates of guiding documents which support the community's vision, such as the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, Sub Area plans and Master Plans.
 - Continue to promote benefits of economic development goals and business vitality to elected officials
 - Implement listening tools and feedback loops with the community, business owners and developers to best understand current community sentiments and concerns, and seek to understand perceptions of completed projects over time.
- **Business Attraction**
 - Promote and market the existing and future business environment, including community vision and local policy, that is attractive to investment.
- **Business Retention**
 - Increase awareness of existing Arvada businesses and amenities among residents and visitors, simultaneously improving workforce development efforts.
- **Measurable Results**
 - Identify and measure where AEDA has greatest levels of influence with the community, and where it can best use education to broaden the community's perspective.
 - Develop meaningful tools to measure success and the relationship between tactical efforts and desired outcomes.

GOALS

Based on the 2021 AEDA Strategic Plan, a 2022 Community Engagement Strategy and Work Plan has been created, focused on implementation of the following goals:

1. **Effective and Trusted Communications** – continue building a sizable audience of residents and visitors while simultaneously building trust, credibility, and brand recognition.
2. **Content Generation and Distribution** – create factual, objective stories which demonstrate the relationship between economic activity and desirable elements of the Arvada community.
3. **Support of Existing Businesses** – In partnership with AEDA’s strategic partners and programs, develop helpful tools for existing businesses to better engage directly with their own neighborhoods, communicate value directly to the community through their own channels, and reinforce investments that improve community relations.
4. **Measure Success** - identify critical metrics and adopt meaningful performance measures that reinforce investment into the communication and engagement strategies most likely to impact positive outcomes.

1. EFFECTIVE AND TRUSTED COMMUNICATIONS

AEDA traditionally communicates with business and commercial real estate audiences, but communication with the larger community requires optimization of potentially different channels and tactics. To effectively engage with residents and visitors, AEDA must identify and prioritize various channels in which it can distribute content and listen to the community's sentiments, including print, digital and in person channels. Furthermore, AEDA must focus on building trust and brand recognition within the residential community in order to give credibility to its messaging.

Digital Engagement

Effective engagement with Arvada residents will largely depend on AEDA's ability to leverage digital channels and social media. Within these channels, AEDA can disseminate content pertaining to commercial activity and real estate development, build brand awareness and credibility, and listen to residents' concerns and perceptions. AEDA will take inventory of various channels and strategies to reach large audiences of Arvada residents and visitors while measuring engagement effectiveness. In addition to social media, channels may include websites, email, and digital publications.

Print Marketing

AEDA will also continue its use of traditional print publications and advertising to reach a broader audience. The Arvada Report, for example, reaches over 50,000 households in Arvada and includes a dedicated section for AEDA news.

EFFECTIVE and TRUSTED COMMUNICATIONS, TACTICAL OBJECTIVE:
Leverage Media and Communications Channels to Optimize Resident Engagement

ACTION	METRIC
Understand available channels and their respective ability to generate impressions, engagement, and drive education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inventory all existing channels by June 2022 ● Assess effectiveness of investments into boosting reach and engagement by end of 2022
Increase AEDA brand awareness among Arvada residents, visitors, and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish indicators to track overall engagement by June of 2022 ● Develop an appropriate goal pertaining to increasing engagement by end of 2022
Publish content highlighting/promoting AEDA's programs, strategic partnerships, outcomes, and Arvada businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publish AEDA section in monthly Arvada Report, mailed to 50,000+ residents

2. CONTENT GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION

To broaden the community’s understanding of commercial activity, real estate development and the relationship between these activities, AEDA will generate and promote content to residents. Content may include stories and highlights of existing and new businesses, development opportunities, City of Arvada plans and respective processes around development, and relationships between commercial activity, economic health, and cherished community amenities.

TACTICAL OBJECTIVE:**Content Generation and Distribution**

ACTION	METRIC
Develop stories that help residents and businesses better understand economic development and the relationship between commercial activity and desirable community assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● In 2022, develop and promote at least two “Did You Know” stories● In 2022, develop and promote at least one story regarding the relationship between commercial real estate and services provided by the City of Arvada to residents
Align efforts with Retention Committee’s annual Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Highlight and promote newsworthy happenings and profiles of existing Arvada businesses in accordance with the 2022 Retention Committee work plan

3. SUPPORT OF EXISTING BUSINESSES

As residential and commercially zoned areas of Arvada continue to develop, the distance between homes and business decreases. This dynamic may create challenges as residents may become more sensitive to business activity near neighborhoods. By assisting existing businesses with proactive community outreach and engagement, they can develop meaningful relationships and lines of communication with neighbors, reducing friction while also helping promote the value of goods and services provided, as well as employment opportunities.

TACTICAL OBJECTIVE: Support of Existing Businesses

ACTION	METRIC
Support micro neighborhood engagement strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By end of 2022, develop a Community Engagement Toolkit for use by existing Arvada businesses ● By end of 2023, publish a Developer Playbook to assist developers in best practices of thorough and proactive community engagement for land use and development projects
Leverage AEDA communications to amplify positive stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As needed, share noteworthy Arvada business press releases and stories on AEDA digital channels ● Develop indicator to track number of press releases and stories shared with media partners

4. MEASURE SUCCESS

To ensure the effective deployment of AEDA’s Community Engagement Strategy, meaningful performance measures and indicators should be developed that demonstrate a direct relationship between tactical efforts and desired outcomes. AEDA will consider data provided via various sources, such as the Economic Development Survey to Residents, Economic Development Survey to Businesses and Information provided in Speak Up Arvada to consider and adopt future performance measures as part of an Annual Community Engagement Work Plan

TACTICAL OBJECTIVE: **Measure Success**

ACTION	METRIC
Explore relationship between tactical community engagement efforts and desired outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">By end of 2024, develop performance measures and/or indicators based on two cycles of Economic Development Survey and/or Community Survey results and other available data sources, such as per capita quality-of-life indexes
Support development community’s efforts to successfully deliver projects in alignment with the community’s vision as articulated in Arvada’s Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">By end of 2023, create a community engagement guidebook for Developers to assist in the facilitation of neighborhood and community engagement activities