



# AEDA Community Engagement and Communications Work Plan 2023

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Background

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 creation resulting in fruitful career opportunities for Arvada residents as well as increased retail spending and tax revenue to the City of Arvada. AEDA espouses 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 related to economic development. Implementation of a community engagement and communications work plan supports this outcome and AEDA's entire strategic plan.

## AEDA Strategic Plan Alignment

The community engagement and communications work plan will support the following Arvada City Council strategic result as outlined in the current City Council strategic plan:

**“Fully align the City’s economic development efforts with the community’s vision expressed in the community survey and business survey.”**

Thus, the 2021 AEDA strategic plan required the adoption of a community engagement and communications strategy by the end of 2021. This strategy is outlined below, which was used to guide the development of the work plan including actions and deliverables for successful implementation.

## The Challenge

A growing threat to AEDA's mission is the increasing trend of negative perceptions on private sector business activity and real estate development among vocal members of the public. Although community members raise legitimate concerns, the negative impacts of business activity are often over exaggerated, 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.

### **The Need to Engage and Communicate with Arvada Residents**

Driven by the AEDA Board’s investigation of community sentiment toward growth and development, including prior focus groups and the residential economic development survey, educating and engaging the community in economic development topics is paramount to the success of AEDA’s mission. The work plan establishes desired priorities and outcomes to ensure successful implementation of the plan.

Based on the Institute for Local Government’s journal article titled *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 affected by the success or failure of any economic development plan.”

## TARGET AUDIENCE

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The target audience for this community engagement and communications work plan is Arvada residents. Typically, AEDA has focused much of its efforts on communicating with and marketing to the business community, which is still its primary target audience. However, this plan is focused on educating and engaging the typical Arvada resident who may not necessarily be happy with the pace of growth within the community.

## PRIORITIES

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### **Priority #1: Incorporate Community Engagement and Communications into Existing Economic Development Efforts**

As Arvada's community and economic development work system has existing, documented plans illustrating the community's vision, it is important that AEDA align its efforts with these documents. AEDA 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 revenues. Major opportunities exist in two areas:

- **Education** on economic development bolstering residents' understanding of the relationship between development and positive outcomes including overall quality of life and community benefit.
- **Listening** to residents' feedback on development to better understand their concerns and sentiments toward growth.

### **Priority #2: Collaborate and Partner with Community and Professional Organizations on Engagement Efforts**

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 of Commerce as organizations in which community engagement is a shared priority. Through these already-solidified partnerships, tools and messaging efforts can be both amplified and mutually beneficial.

# DESIRED OUTCOMES

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## Education and Influence

- Increase awareness of the relationship between development aligned with the City of Arvada's plans for future growth and positive outcomes for the community
- Decrease combative environment between residents and developers as it relates to appropriate land use considerations and development applications
- Shepherd community participation in the creation and updates of guiding documents and plans including the City of Arvada's Comprehensive Plan (to be updated in the near future), Land Development Code (LDC), sub-area plans, and master plans
- Promote the benefits of economic development and business vitality to various audiences including Arvada residents and elected officials
- Actively engage with residents, business owners, and developers to better understand current community sentiments and concerns relative to development in Arvada

## Business Attraction

- Promote and market Arvada's genuinely business-friendly environment to attract commercial investment in the City
- Work to remove barriers for a streamlined development process that makes Arvada an easy location choice for new businesses

## Business Retention

- Promote existing Arvada businesses and amenities to residents and visitors to aid in their success through increased sales and a bolstered workforce

## LIST OF GOALS

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Based on the 2021 AEDA strategic plan, a community engagement and communications strategy and work plan has been created focusing on the following goals:

1. **Resident Engagement:** Implement public participation strategies and techniques to garner community sentiment around development and issues relating to development.
2. **Align Messaging about Development:** Develop key messaging with facts and figures to effectively communicate the positive impact of economic development on the community.
3. **Prioritize Storytelling:** Develop factual, objective stories demonstrating the relationship between economic activity and positive outcomes for the community at large.



# TABLES: GOALS, ACTIONS, AND DELIVERABLES

**GOAL #1**

**Resident Engagement: Implement engagement strategies and techniques to garner community sentiment around development and issues relating to development**

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES
<p><b>Conduct and analyze the results of the 2022 Arvada Residential Economic Development Survey and use analysis to inform development decision-making moving forward</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete residential survey by end of 2022</li> <li>• Present findings and analysis to Board by Q1 2023</li> <li>• Use findings to inform communications strategies throughout 2023</li> </ul>
<p><b>In coordination with the CED work system, plan and implement district meetings across the four Arvada districts with the objectives of:</b></p> <p><b>1) Educating the public on the positive aspects of economic development that directly affect Arvada residents</b></p> <p><b>2) Listening to the public’s current concerns regarding development and sharing insights with internal stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule meetings to take place throughout 2024 and promote opportunities to residents</li> <li>• Assess results of meetings and share with the team</li> </ul> <p><b>Success Metrics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Implement one meeting per district at community meeting rooms in each district (one meeting per quarter)</li> <li>❖ Gather 200+ residential email addresses from meetings for new AEDA resident e-newsletter to help keep residents informed and engaged</li> </ul>

**GOAL #2**

**Align Messaging about Development: Develop key messaging with facts and figures to effectively communicate the positive impact of economic development on the community**

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES
<p><b>Develop streamlined messaging listing key, easy-to-digest facts and figures that illustrate the positive impacts of economic development on the community that speaks directly to Arvada residents</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with AEDA team to develop streamlined messaging about AEDA including a new elevator speech</li> <li>• Gather key facts and figures from City data that proves the positive impacts of economic development</li> <li>• By the end of the year, organize the content effectively for various mediums</li> </ul> <p><b>Success Metrics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop 3-4 marketing pieces that feature new messaging by Q1 of 2024</li> </ul>

**GOAL #3**

**Prioritize Storytelling: Develop factual, objective stories demonstrating the relationship between economic activity and positive outcomes for the community at large**

ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES
<p><b>Develop features educating the public on various aspects of economic development for upcoming editions of the Arvada Report. Featured topics include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How residents can get involved in the planning development process</li> <li>• Educational article on sales tax and how it is the primary source of the City’s budget</li> <li>• How economic development is directly tied to increasing desirable employment opportunities with concrete examples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write 3-4 educational articles regarding economic development for the Arvada Report</li> <li>• Publish and promote AEDA’s Commercial Real Estate Impact Tool by the end of 2023</li> </ul> <p><b>Success Metrics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Complete 3+ economic development articles for the Arvada Report by Q4 2023</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identify new business success stories and work with PR partners to pitch to local media</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch 3+ stories focused on the economic impact of bringing new businesses to Arvada</li> </ul>