

Community Engagement & Communications Work Plan 2025



ARVADA
Economic Development
Association



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Introduction

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/tax revenue for the City of Arvada. AEDA espouses that thoughtful commercial development, aligned with the community's vision, will result in the advancement of its mission. Implementation of a community engagement and communications work plan supports this desired outcome as well as AEDA's overarching strategic plan.

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 2022 residential economic development survey, educating and engaging the community in economic development topics is critical to the success of AEDA's mission. The community engagement and communications work plan establishes priorities and desired 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

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 audience. However, this plan is focused on educating and engaging with Arvada residents, many of whom have varying degrees of support for growth within the community.



Priorities

Priority #1: Incorporate community engagement and communications into existing economic development efforts

As the City of 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.

- **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 community 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

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 2025), Land Development Code, 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 and growth in Arvada

Business Attraction

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

Business Retention

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



List of Goals

Based on the current AEDA strategic plan, a community engagement and communications strategy 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>Review and analyze the results of the 2024 City of Arvada Community Survey and use analysis to inform development decision-making moving forward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and analyze Community Survey by end of Q1 2025 • Present findings and analysis to AEDA Board by Q2 of 2025 • Use findings to inform engagement and communications strategies moving forward
<p>Plan and implement one community meeting with the objective of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educating the public on the positive community impacts of economic development in an approachable, accessible environment 2. Establish and nurture positive relationships with Arvada residents providing them with the platform for their economic development-related concerns to be heard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule the meeting to take place in Q2 or Q3 of 2025; Actively promote the opportunity to residents • Assess the results of the meeting and share with the AEDA Board • Garner 20+ attendees to community meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish first-ever email list of residents who are interested in economic development and send thank you for attending event
<p>Present overview of AEDA and what we do at a City of Arvada Neighborhood Leadership Meeting to establish connections with local neighborhood leaders and educate them on local economic development initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with City of Arvada Neighborhood Engagement Coordinator to present at a meeting that will take place in 2025



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
Promote the AEDA Business Directory, which is featured on the AEDA website, to residents generating more patronage and tax revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop integrated digital ad campaign targeting residents to access AEDA’s Business Directory to shop locally • Promote the AEDA Business Directory with callout in various Arvada Report articles and social media posts
Publish and promote AEDA’s commercial real estate impact tool by the end of 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement commercial real estate visualization tool to website

GOAL #3

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

Actions	Deliverables
Develop features educating the public on the various aspects of economic development for the 2025 editions of the Arvada Report. Feature topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued education regarding sales tax and how it is the primary source of the City’s budget • Features on local businesses that provide the community with unique offerings • Features on business industries that are expanding and growing in Arvada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write 6 articles regarding economic development for the Arvada Report by December 2025 • Work with businesses to develop testimonials for previous grant recipients (i.e. Exterior Improvement Grant, Advanced Manufacturing Initiative, and Economic Impact Fund) • Develop Economic Development promotional video
Work with PR consultant over the course of 2025 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch 4 packaged stories to the media focused on AEDA’s work within the region and services/programs the organization offers to the business community • Nominate AEDA leadership at least one local Economic Development-related or leadership-related award 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch 4 stories to local media/industry publications by December 2025 • Nominate AEDA leadership for one ED or leadership-related award by December 2025