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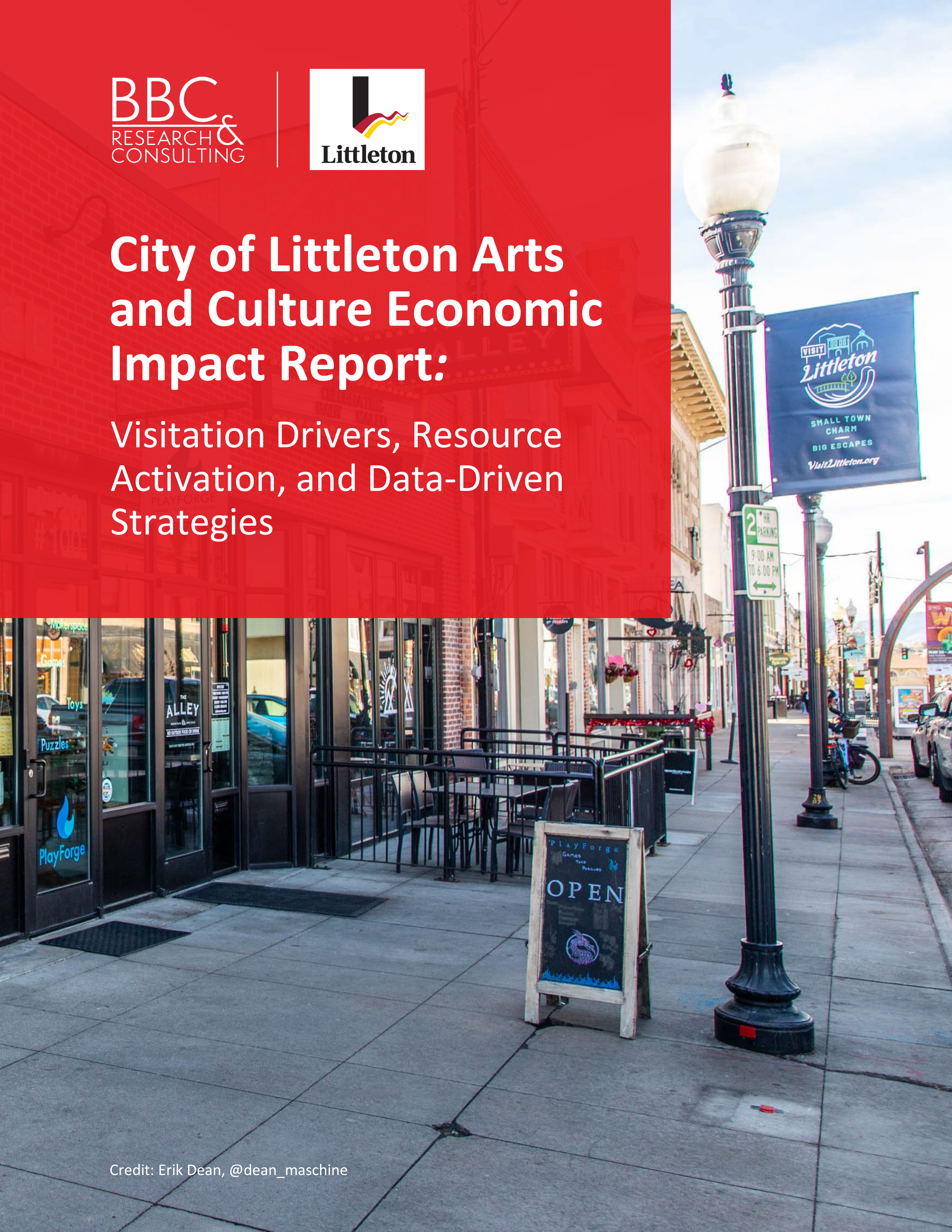
City of Littleton Arts and Culture Economic Impact Report:

Visitation Drivers, Resource Activation, and Data-Driven Strategies



Credit: Erik Dean, @dean_maschine

Final Report

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City of Littleton Arts and Culture Economic Impact Report:

Visitation Drivers, Resource Activation, and Data-Driven Strategies

Prepared for
City of Littleton
2255 W Berry Ave
Littleton, CO 80120

Prepared by
BBC Research & Consulting
1999 Broadway, Suite 1470
Denver, Colorado 80202-9750
303.321.2547 fax 303.399.0448
www.bbcresearch.com
bbc@bbcresearch.com

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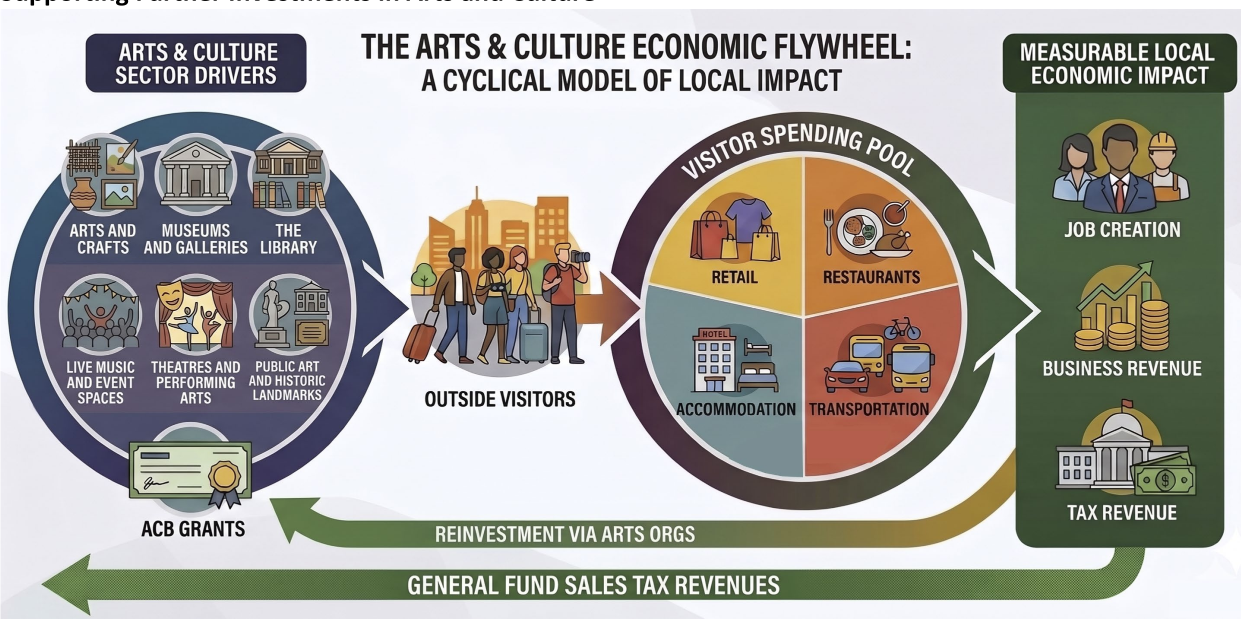
Executive Summary

The City of Littleton is home to a vibrant arts and culture sector that functions as a critical economic and social engine for the community. This study serves to estimate the economic impact that arts and culture have on the City as well as to quantify the return on investment for municipal funding to promote arts, culture, and tourism.

Littleton's arts and culture sector can best be thought of as an economic flywheel where municipal investment in the City's arts and culture assets supports a cycle of attracting visitor from outside the city, spending, and re-investment as shown in Figure ES-1.

Figure ES-1. Littleton Arts and Culture Economic Flywheel: Visitor Spending Generates Tax Revenue, Supporting Further Investments in Arts and Culture



Source: BBC Research & Consulting.

The cycle is set in motion by core economic drivers of Littleton's arts and culture economy, including businesses and venues (e.g. live music venues and theatres), organizations (e.g. libraries, colleges, and museums), and public events. The arts and culture economy is anchored by several foundational institutions (Arapahoe Community College, The Littleton Museum, Bemis Library, Hudson Gardens, and Town Hall Arts Center).

Together, these businesses, venues, organizations, and public events generate significant economic activity within the City, including:

- **Total Economic Impacts.** Littleton's arts and culture sector sustains **420 jobs**, generating **$21.5 million in income**, and **$48.2 million in economic output** within the city.

- **Operational Impacts.** The economic impacts include the daily business of local non-profits, businesses, and venues generates **$41.8 million** in output and supports **369 jobs**.[1]

- **Event-Driven Spending.** Public events support **45 jobs** and generate **$5.48 million** in output, acting as primary drivers of trip-chaining where visitors from outside the city shop and dine locally before or after a performance.

- **Fiscal Impacts.** The sector generates nearly **$1.8 million in combined tax revenue** for the City and overlapping special districts.

- **Key Venues.** Hudson Gardens alone accounts for **10 percent of total sector employment**, while the Town Hall Arts Center supports the equivalent of **14 full-time jobs** through a year-round cycle of production and performance.

A central objective of this analysis was to validate the use of the voter-approved five (5) percent lodging tax to support the arts and culture sector. The data reveals a highly positive return on investment where $1.50 to $2.00 of every $10.00 Lodgers Tax Grant comes back to the city in the form of lodging taxes. This fiscal efficiency demonstrates that arts and culture funding effectively pays for itself by stimulating the very tax base that funds it.

- **Lodging Capture.** Arts and culture visitors are responsible for approximately **5 to 10 percent** of Littleton's annual lodging tax revenues. This percentage provides a solid baseline to track future progress. Future investments aimed at keeping attendees in the city before and after events should look to push this baseline higher.

- **Lodgers Tax Grant ROI.** Between **15 and 20 percent** of every grant dollar distributed is recouped directly back to the City via lodging taxes. This represents a strong baseline for direct tax recapture. The City can use this metric to track how expanded cultural investments translate into increased overnight stays over time.

Strategic Recommendations. Based on comparative economic data and the need to balance city priorities, the following strategic actions are recommended to ensure Littleton's investments in arts and culture benefit the community as well as the economy:

- **Pursue a Formal Creative District Designation.** Economic data indicates that Littleton's arts and culture sector contributes approximately 0.92 percent to the City's GDP, significantly outperforming both state (0.35 percent) and national (0.50 percent) averages, as well as Boulder and Jefferson counties. To build on this economic strength, the City should seek official designation through the Colorado Creative District program to unlock state-level technical assistance, marketing resources, and out-of-state tourism draw.

[1] BBC used IMPLAN modeling software to estimate all economic benefits including jobs. In IMPLAN, jobs are calculated as Full-time equivalent employment: the number of full-time equivalent jobs, defined as total hours worked divided by average annual hours worked in full-time jobs.

- **Implement a Strategic Decision Framework.** The City must balance two distinct mandates: importing taxable spending from visitors (Economic Impact) and enhancing resident quality of life (Community Benefit). All future arts and culture policies, projects, and Lodgers Tax Grants should be evaluated through a 2x2 matrix that maps these dual objectives to ensure investments are data-driven.

- **Prioritize Win-Win Investments.** The most efficient path to economic growth lies in initiatives that score highly on both axes of the decision framework. The City should prioritize support, fee waivers, and priority funding for Win-Win actions, such as promoting existing venues and cohesive placemaking, that provide deep local value while acting as regional attractors.

- **Apply Secondary Scrutiny via a Weighted Scoring Model.** High-priority projects must be evaluated using a weighted scoring rubric to grade initiatives on:

    - **Financial Impact.** Prioritizing projects with high leverage ratios that match City funds with outside grants or philanthropy.

    - **Community Benefit.** Ensuring equitable experiences that activate underserved neighborhoods and turn passive spaces into recurring destinations for locals.

    - **Economic Impact.** Verifying the project attracts visitors and increases the time they stay in the city, helping to capture spending that supports local jobs, income, and sales and lodging tax.

    - **Strategic Alignment.** Confirming the project directly fulfills a specific goal from the *2025-2029 Arts and Culture Community Strategic Plan* to maintain alignment with broader goals and objectives for the sector.

- **Maintain a Balanced Investment Portfolio.** While Win-Win projects provide the greatest benefit to the community and the economy, the long-term health of Littleton's arts and culture economy requires balance. The City Council and ACB should establish a targeted budget allocation (e.g., 40 percent focused on economic impacts, 60 percent on foundational community enrichment) to ensure projects and policies are balancing economic impact with community needs.

Ultimately, adopting this strategic decision framework will help Littleton make investments in arts and culture that sustain the sector's 420 local jobs, support community labor income, and drive over $48.2 million in combined economic output. By actively utilizing and refining these data-driven tools, City Council and the Arts and Culture Board can ensure they not only enrich the daily lives of residents but also maintain the economic activity that makes the arts and culture sector a cornerstone of Littleton's economy.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1. City of Littleton's Arts and Culture Sector

The arts and culture economy in Littleton is a multifaceted subset of the local economy. At its core, Littleton's arts and culture economy is anchored by four foundational institutions: the Littleton Museum, Bemis Public Library, Hudson Gardens, and the Town Hall Arts Center. Alongside independent galleries, local artisans, colleges, live performance venues, historic architecture and public art, and city-sanctioned public events, these elements form the city's creative economy.

Beyond its value to community character, the arts and culture economy serves as a critical economic engine for the City of Littleton. As outlined in the City's *2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, cultural vitality is tightly linked to Littleton's economic resilience. A robust arts and culture sector functions as a primary mechanism to attract visitors, drive foot traffic to local retail and dining establishments, and offers residents opportunities to keep their economic activity inside the City of Littleton.

To support arts and culture, the Littleton City Council established a legislative and fiscal framework that delegates strategic oversight of the sector to the Arts & Culture Board (ACB). The ACB serves as the primary fiduciary and advisory body for the city's creative and tourism-related initiatives and is guided by the *2025–2029 Arts & Culture Community Strategic Plan*. In active coordination with the Culture and Arts Partners (CAP) group, the ACB is systematically executing a multi-pronged directive to expand the city's arts and culture footprint.

Key mandates of the Strategic Plan include:

- Activating existing resources,
- Cultivating arts programming across all Littleton neighborhoods rather than exclusively the Downtown corridor, and
- Rigorously measuring the art and culture sector's economic impacts.

While the ACB and local groups work continuously to advance these strategic objectives, the current study provides the necessary quantitative framework to accelerate these goals.

1.2. Study Objectives. The primary objective of this study is to establish a rigorous, data-driven estimate of the economic impact of the city's arts and culture economy. To achieve this, the analysis will quantify the baseline economic impacts generated by local arts and culture businesses, specific events, and historical Lodgers Tax Grant allocations in terms of jobs, income, economic output, and tax revenues.

This framework will provide the City Council and the ACB with an objective methodology to evaluate future funding requests, ensuring that capital is directed toward initiatives that demonstrably stimulate the local economy and strictly adhere to the City's High Impact/Low Effort fiscal prioritization directive.

1.2.1. Quantifying the tourism and lodging connection. Given that the city's primary funding mechanism for the arts and culture sector is a voter-approved five percent lodging tax, a critical objective of this analysis is to measure the relationship between the arts and culture economy and overnight visitation.

The study quantified the extent to which Littleton's arts and culture assets act as primary drivers for regional tourism, specifically evaluating the number of visitors estimated to stay overnight. Establishing a defensible metric for this conversion rate is essential to validate the continued distribution of lodging tax revenues and to ensure that ACB allocations are successfully fulfilling the mandate to promote tourism and visitor economic activity within the city.

1.2.2. Identifying gaps in the local arts and culture sector. Beyond measuring existing impacts, the study asked if there are any structural gaps and missing elements within Littleton's current art and culture economy based on comparisons with other communities.

1.3. Arts and Culture Assets and Amenities. Defining arts and culture requires a balance between universal structural elements like a library and the unique identity of a community. While no single template exists to define a city's arts and culture sector, most definitions lean on a shared set of core components, which include creativity, heritage, and social connection.

In a policy context, this definition typically includes fine arts like museums and theaters to living culture, which includes community festivals, public art, and education. While the specific mix of these elements varies from community to community, the underlying goal remains the same: to create and support local assets that provide a sense of place, improve the quality of life for residents, and attract visitors.

Littleton's arts and culture economy includes a diverse mix of businesses, organizations, venues, and public events (Figure 1). As outlined in the *2025–2029 Arts & Culture Community Strategic Plan*, many of these arts and culture assets and amenities are concentrated in the downtown corridor, while larger event spaces are distributed across the broader municipality. For the purposes of this economic impact analysis, these assets and amenities are categorized by their primary cultural function and their capacity to draw visitors from outside the city. Each component is discussed in more detail, below.

Figure 1. Existing Arts and Culture Amenities in the City of Littleton

Source: BBC Research & Consulting, Keen Independent Research.

1.3.1. Businesses, Organizations, and Venues. These entities represent the bulk to the arts and culture economy and include many of its foundational assets. These entities include:

- **Arts and Crafts.** The city's arts and crafts economy is heavily driven by independent makers, studios like Alley Arts Studio. These spaces draw large numbers of visitors.

- **Museums and Galleries.** This category includes formal exhibition and educational spaces such as the Littleton Museum and the Arapahoe Community College Art and Design Center.

- **Bemis Public Library.** The Bemis Public Library serves as a central hub for community programming and cultural engagement. Although it operates as a publicly funded municipal asset rather than a commercial enterprise, its centralized location and consistent daily visitation rates drive essential foot traffic to the downtown corridor.

- **Live Music Venues and Event Spaces.** Littleton has a robust live music and event scene, ranging from intimate downtown venues like The Alley, Franco's Bar and Live Music, Platte River Bar and Grill, and the Littleton Bass School, to large-scale commercial destinations like Breckenridge Brewery, Rocker Spirits, and the Hudson Gardens & Event Center.

- **Theatres and Performing Arts.** The Town Hall Arts Center anchors the downtown performing arts footprint. Similar to the live music sector, the performing arts rely on scheduled attendance that drives regional day-visitors into the city.

- **Public Art and Historic Landmarks.** The City of Littleton maintains a number of public art installations, including downtown murals and permanent installations, alongside several municipal historic landmarks.

1.3.2. Public Events. The City of Littleton hosts a variety of public events ranging from large-scale cultural festivals to recurring outdoor concert series. Arapahoe Community College and the Littleton Museum both host major arts and harvest-themed events. Music is a cornerstone of the summer experience, highlighted by the Little Jams sessions at Sterne Park and an extensive Music in the Burbs series at Aspen Grove that runs from mid-August through September.

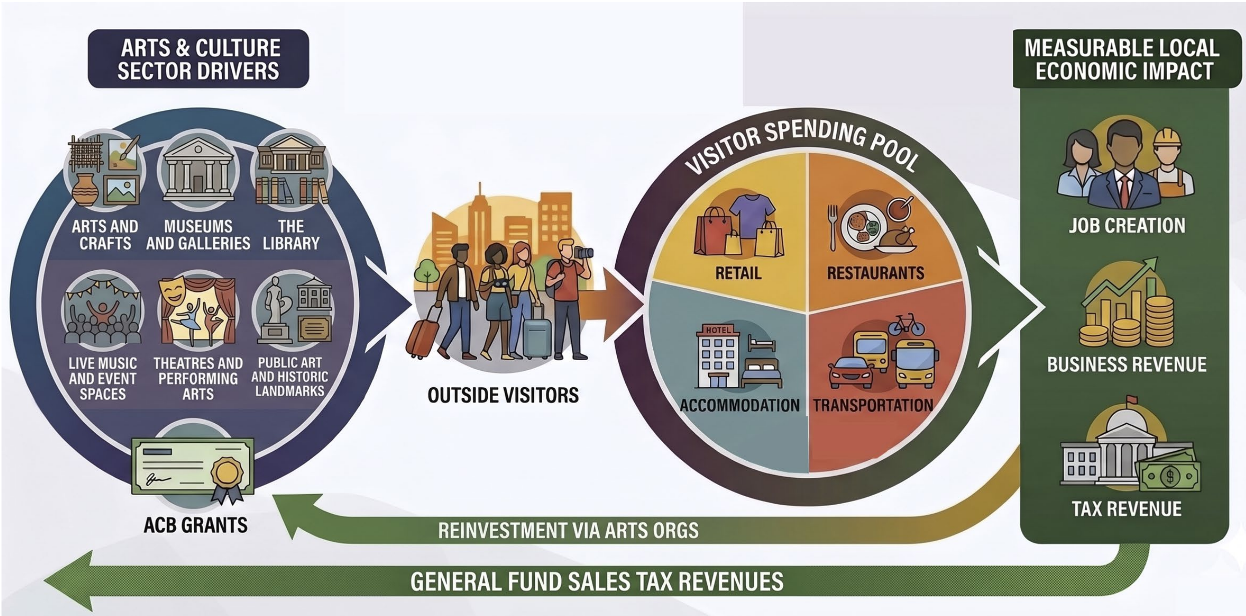
By drawing high numbers of visitors and overnight guests from outside Littleton, these businesses, organization, venues, and events bring visitors into the city. The resulting influx of visitors directly generates spending across the city's retail, dining, and lodging sectors, where it also spills over to other economic sectors within Littleton.

1.4. City of Littleton Funding for Arts and Culture.

Visitor spending generated by the arts and culture sector provides important contributions of sales tax and lodging tax to the city. The connection between arts and culture economic activity and sales and lodging taxes are particularly important since Littleton's General Fund is primarily funded through sales and use tax, which together account for approximately 88 percent of General Fund revenue. The Lodgers Tax Grants are funded with lodging tax revenues.

Based on the City's funding structure, Littleton's arts and culture economy can best be thought of as an economic flywheel where municipal investment supports a cycle of spending and re-investment as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Littleton Arts and Culture Economic Flywheel: Visitor Spending Generates Tax Revenue, Supporting Further Investments in Arts and Culture



Source: BBC Research & Consulting

The cycle begins when drivers, such as live music venues, performing arts theaters, and museums, attract visitors to the city. Once present, these visitors purchase meals, retail goods, and lodging. They often engage in trip-chaining where their activity benefits a wide range of local service industries before and after an event.

This collective spending creates economic activity that supports local jobs and generates tax revenue. Finally, these tax revenues are directed into city services, including back into arts organizations through the Lodgers Tax Grant funding, which helps restart the cycle.

1.4.1. City Tax Revenue Trends. Recently the city's sales and use tax revenues have grown at a slower pace than pre-pandemic levels while costs have continued to rise. To maintain existing service levels, the City is utilizing reserve funds while waiting for tax revenues to recover. To address these headwinds, the City's 2026 budget allocates funding toward economic development initiatives aimed at stabilizing local small businesses and mitigating commercial vacancies.

Given recent slower growth in consumption tax revenues, it is important for the City to use funds directed at the arts and culture sector to catalyze activities that support the flywheel effect and create new spending and tax revenues for the city.

1.4.2. Lodging Tax and the role of the ACB. The primary dedicated funding mechanism for the arts and culture sector is a five percent voter-approved lodging tax levied on hotels, motels, and short-term rentals.

The Arts & Culture Board maintains a fiduciary responsibility to recommend the distribution of these funds to the City Council, strictly ensuring compliance with the ballot language's statutory intent to support arts, culture, tourism, and visitor promotion.

To keep this alignment, the ACB utilizes a four-tier grant distribution formula to allocate the revenue. This tiered allocation strategy aligns funding proportionately with the established footprint and visitor impact of the city's arts culture assets. By directing the largest single portion of available capital (Tier 1) to the four primary arts and culture institutions, the framework anchors the lodgers tax distribution in what are known to be the most significant cultural and artistic draws in the municipality:

- **Tier 1:** Approximately 60 percent distributed to the big four cultural assets of Bemis Public Library, Hudson Gardens, Littleton Museum and the Town Hall Art Center.

- **Tier 2:** Approximately 15 percent of allocated annual revenue to a grant program for Littleton non-profit arts and culture organizations:

    - Three grants of up to $20,000 each to support major cultural initiatives, particularly those that advance goals contained in the Arts & Culture Community Strategic Plan

    - Four grants of up to $8,000 each to support capacity building and organizational development

    - Five grants of up to $2,000 each to support grassroots or emerging cultural efforts

- **Tier 3:** Approximately 15 percent of total annual revenue for tourism marketing and visitor promotion.

- **Tier 4:** Approximately 10 percent of allocated annual revenue for specific projects such as the mural program, Culture & Art Partners/State of the Arts, public art acquisition and programming, historic preservation, off-cycle grants, planning, and other needs that meet the intent of the lodgers tax ballot language.

The tiered approach ensures that the bulk of the funding supports the assets with the highest proven capacity to drive regional visitation and generate localized taxable transactions. While grant tiers 2 through 4 nurture smaller localized programming and organizational capacity, the addition of the City tourism marketing grant provides a specific vehicle for cross-promotion and destination marketing.

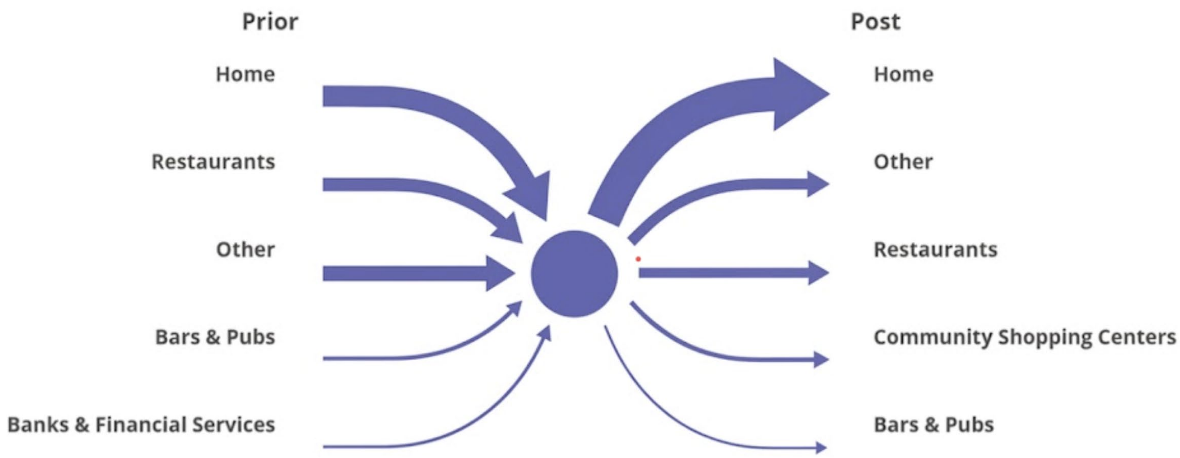
Still, given recent slower growth in consumption tax revenues, there may be a strategic benefit in having the City directly manage this tourism marketing grant. Because the City’s General Fund relies on sales and use taxes for approximately 88 percent of its revenue, destination marketing serves as a critical economic development tool to help catalyze new spending. Placing the tourism marketing grant under direct municipal administration could allow the City to more seamlessly align marketing campaigns with its broader 2026 economic development initiatives, which are currently funded to stabilize small businesses and mitigate commercial vacancies. This approach would allow marketing capital to be deployed with a primary focus on optimizing immediate commercial foot traffic, sales tax capture, and lodging tax growth, streamlining the pursuit of these fiscal goals alongside the ACB's ongoing management of the core grant tiers.

2. Arts and Culture Economic Impact Analysis

The true measure of an economic impact for arts or culture is not simply the direct revenue from ticket sales, museum admissions, or gift shop purchases. It is sum of the spending that occurs during a visitor's entire journey from their home, to an arts and culture business, organization, or event, and back. These journeys are often a complex chain of transactions that occur before, during, and after an event or visit.

There are three parts to an economic journey: the prior-to, during-, and after-event spending as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Where Arts and Culture Visitors Go Before (Prior), During, and After (Post) an Event (Town Hall Arts Center Example)



Source: City of Littleton, Placer.ai.

The central, solid purple sphere in the figure represents the arts or culture event that attracts visitors. To interpret the flow of movement, the thickness of each arrow directly corresponds to the volume of visitor activity: broader arrows signify primary paths, while thinner lines represent smaller, supporting segments.

Looking at the overall trends, a large share of visitors are channeled into the area beforehand, as shown by the prominent incoming streams on the left. In the case of the Town Hall Arts Center, well over a third of visitors engage in clear pre-event economic activity. The most substantial share of these visitors comes from Restaurants and Other categories, which feature the widest incoming arrows. These are supplemented by smaller shares flowing from Bars & Pubs and Banks & Financial Services. This collective influx visually demonstrates that events act as a powerful anchor, creating a significant amount of direct traffic for surrounding businesses before the curtains even rise.

Post-event behavior presents a starkly different pattern, where the overwhelming share of the crowd returns directly Home, indicated by the dominant arrow on the right. However, the remaining audience disperses into several minor streams. While these segments represent a much smaller share of the total crowd, they reveal a vital subset of attendees who drive a sustained post-event economy. These visitors continue to circulate through the community, spreading out across Restaurants, Other destinations, Community Shopping Centers, and Bars & Pubs, thereby extending the economic life of the event into the late evening and supporting a broader range of local service industries.

The relative volume of the visitors who return home after an event highlights an opportunity for local economic development. By partnering with downtown bars, restaurants, and local businesses ,through initiatives such as post-show promotions, themed menu items, or coordinated marketing campaigns, event organizers can work to capture an increased share of the audience and incentivize a higher volume of visitors to remain in the city following an event.

To capture the full economic weight of these complex trip-chaining behaviors, the IMPLAN modeling described in the next section accounts for spending across all three phases of the visitor's journey.

2.1 Economic Impact Methodology. As the previous section discussed, the economic impact of Littleton's Arts and Culture sector is fundamentally driven by the injection of new money into the local economy from visitors. This analysis utilizes visitation estimates derived from Placer.ai, a location analytics platform that leverages mobile device data to provide actionable insights into foot traffic, consumer behavior, and physical visitation trends.[2] By collecting this data for the City's arts and culture business, organization, venues, and events, the analysis effectively isolates the volume of visitors coming to Littleton specifically for arts and culture purposes.

Once these visitors and their associated off-site spending are established, the resulting economic ripple effect is quantified using the IMPLAN input-output modeling system. IMPLAN is an industry-standard econometric framework that measures how this imported spending circulates through the defined regional economy. The

Placer.ai Visitor Data

Placer.ai utilizes a representative panel of tens of millions of mobile devices to generate U.S. location analytics. The data is sourced from a diverse range of opted-in applications across all U.S. counties, ensuring a balanced mix of phone users. To ensure accuracy, the company employs machine-learning algorithms to debias the information and extrapolates panel activity to reflect broader population trends, validating these results against third-party benchmarks like financial reports and event attendance.

Privacy is maintained by stripping all personally identifiable information and aggregating data so that no fewer than 50 individuals are ever represented in a specific area. This approach complies with General Data Protection Regulations while utilizing end-to-end encryption. The final output provides a secure, statistically grounded view of consumer behavior and physical visitation patterns without compromising individual user identity.

[2] https://www.placer.ai/company/about-us

IMPLAN model isolates and calculates this activity across three distinct layers of economic impact:

- **Direct Effects:** The immediate economic activity generated by Littleton's arts and culture organizations, venues, and visitors through local jobs, facility operations, and event-related purchases.

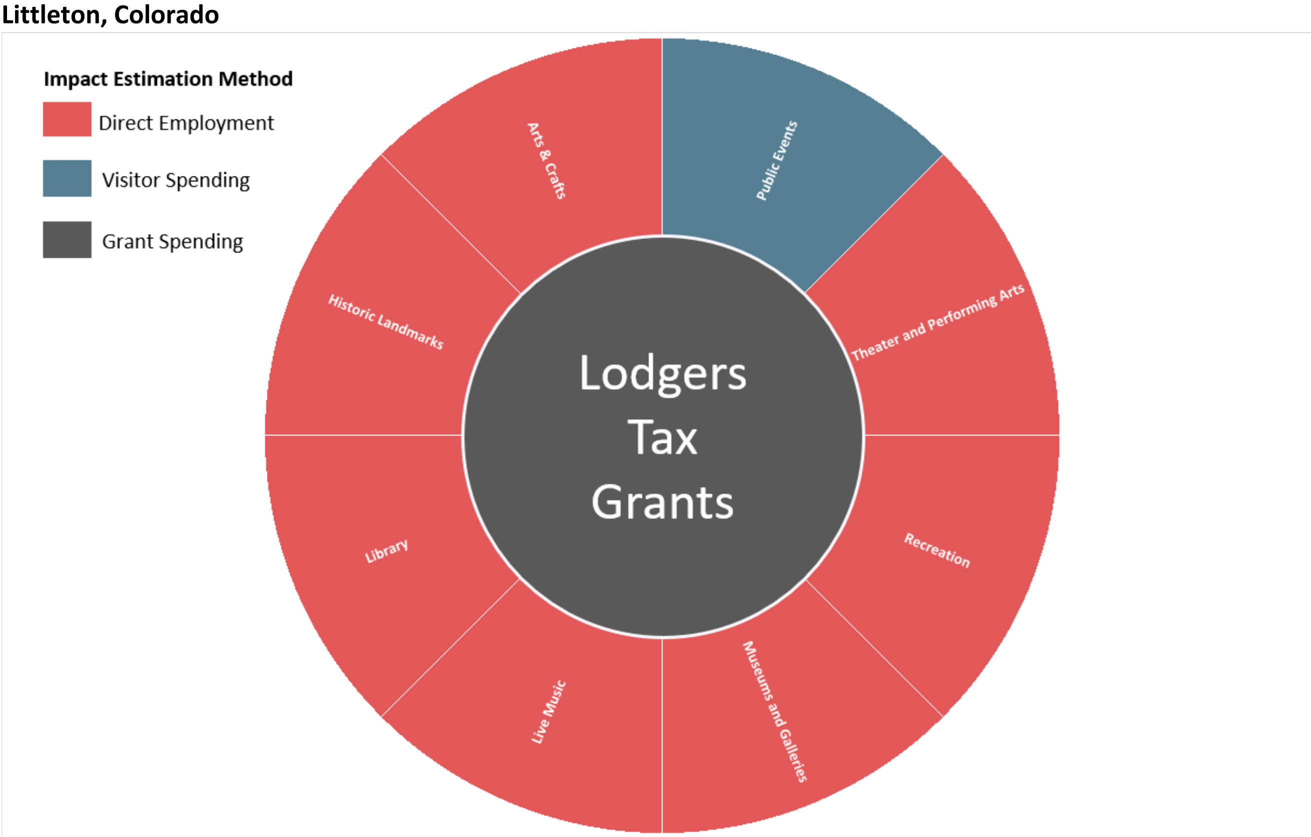
- **Indirect Effects:** The business-to-business supply chain impacts. Arts and culture organizations support a network of local suppliers—such as caterers, printers, contractors, and marketing firms—whose business activity grows alongside the creative sector.

- **Induced Effects:** The household spending impacts. This occurs when the wages paid by the direct organizations and their indirect suppliers are subsequently spent by employees on local goods and services to sustain their households.

By measuring all three layers of activity, the IMPLAN model provides a comprehensive and highly defensible estimate of the sector's true economic impact.

To accurately quantify the direct economic impacts – which are the primary input to the IMPLAN model that allows indirect and induced effects to be calculated - the economic impact modeling looked at three distinct sources of economic activity that approximate the total economic activity in the arts and culture sector as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Methods Used to Estimate Economic Impacts of Components of the Arts and Culture Economy in Littleton, Colorado



First, the direct employment associated with the businesses, organizations, and venues shown in Figure 4, above, was estimated for each entity and entered into the IMPLAN model. Second, event visitation was estimated for major events using a city-provided event list and data from Placer.ai. Lastly, the direct impact of the Lodgers Tax Grant program was estimated using the data on the grant amounts disbursed between 2024 and 2026.

Each approach is discussed below.

2.2. Direct Impacts of Arts and Culture Organizations, Businesses, and Venues

Employment. To calculate the economic impact of the city's permanent commercial venues, cultural organizations, and businesses, the model integrates square-footage-based employment estimates with Placer.ai mobile location data.

First, a comprehensive list of all arts and culture businesses, organizations, and venues was taken from the *2025-2029 Littleton Arts and Culture Community Strategic Plan* as shown above in Figure 1. Next, BBC used public records from the County Assessor as well as follow-up phone calls to estimate the square footage of each structure associated with the entity. We then used estimates of the employment per-square-foot from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) to estimate the total employment for each business, organization, and venue by multiplying the ITE estimates by the building size (Figure 2).

The resulting calculations totaled to an estimated 435 jobs across 42 entities operating in the City's arts and culture economy. This includes 172 jobs in Live Music and 85 jobs in Theater and Performing Arts as shown in Table 5, below. This represents the total number of jobs supported by both resident and visitor spending.

Figure 5: Employment in Littleton's Arts and Culture Businesses, Organizations, and Venues

Arts and Culture Business, Organization, and Venue	Count of Sites/Businesses	Total Sq. Ft. [A]	Est. Employees per 1,000 Sq. Ft. [B]	Est. Total Employment [A/1,000 x B]
Live Music	5	64,720	2.65	172
Live Music School	1	2,296	2.65	6
Theater and Performing Arts	3	64,061	1.33	85
Library	1	36,844	1.29	48
Arts and Crafts	4	18,619	2.12	40
Museums and Galleries	12	125,819	0.31	39
Historic Landmarks	13	74,194	0.31	23
Recreation[1]	1	42,885	1.06	23
Arts & Culture Sector TOTAL	**42**	**429,438**		**435**

Next, Placer.ai data were used to identify the percentage of foot traffic to a sample of these businesses, organizations, and venues originating from outside of Littleton. The data shows a high reliance on imported visitation, with commercial anchors drawing heavily from outside the city (e.g., Alamo Drafthouse at 91 percent, Breckenridge Brewery at 93 percent, and Franco's Bar and Live Music at 94 percent), while community-focused venues have a different mix (e.g., Town Hall Arts Center at 45 percent). Across all tracked venues, 980,182 of the 1,168,868 total visits were from visitors from outside the city, representing an aggregate visitor share of 84 percent as shown in Figure 6.[3]

Figure 6: Origin of Visitors for a Sample of Littleton's Arts and Culture Businesses, Organizations, and Venues

Business/Venue/Organization	Local Visitors	Non-Local	Non-Local as % of Total
Alamo Drafthouse Denver	24,948	277,195	91%
The Hudson Gardens & Event Center	108,850	213,432	49%
Breckenridge Brewery	13,059	186,560	93%
Platte River Bar and Grill	12,561	125,607	90%
ACC Art and Design Center	5,021	71,724	93%
Fraco's Bar and Live Music	1,568	26,126	94%
The Alley	5,408	23,512	77%
Town Hall Arts Center	12,210	22,200	45%
Carson Nature Center	2,512	17,946	86%
Rocker Spirits	1,772	8,440	79%
Alley Arts Studio	415	4,145	90%
Littleton Bass School	362	3,295	89%
Total	**188,686**	**980,182**	**84%**

To isolate the number of workers at each business supported by outside visitor spending, the visitation shares from Figure 6 were applied to the total employee counts in Figure 5, above. By applying these percentages, the model isolates the specific share of the 435 jobs that are directly sustained by visitor spending. These visitor-supported jobs were entered into the IMPLAN model as direct economic impacts.

2.3 Public Event Visitation and Spending. Because standalone community events do not maintain permanent payrolls, their economic impact is calculated using a visitor expenditure approach. For this track, the model utilizes event-specific Placer.ai data to count the number of visitors at each event.

It is important to note that the event list used in the analysis is illustrative rather than exhaustive. Several key cultural anchors, including Arapahoe Community College and the Bemis Public Library, host extensive year-round programming; however, localized visitor data for those specific events were

[3] The analysis was not intended to provide a comprehensive or exhaustive census of all activity across every business and organization within the city. Rather, the primary objective was to use a representative sample of diverse entities to glean meaningful insights into the proportion of outside visitation specifically within the arts and culture sector.

unavailable for inclusion in this analysis. Nevertheless, the available data highlights the critical role these public events play in driving outside visitation and supporting the broader arts and culture sector.

Based on the public event visitation data, there were a total of 115,966 visitors from outside the city across 15 tracked events (an aggregate visitor share of 84 percent) in 2025 as shown in Figure 7, below.

Figure 7: Origin of Visitors to Arts and Culture Public Events in Littleton, Colorado

Event Name	Local Visitors	Non-Local Visitors	Non-Local as % of Total
WWW Parade Route	3,822	16,139	81%
Candlelight Walk POI	2,281	13,341	85%
Block Party	3,261	12,529	79%
Craft Fair at Ketring Park	1,835	8,834	83%
Criterium Event Boundary	1,339	8,508	86%
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove (August 15)	1,141	7,546	87%
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove (September 5)	846	7,435	90%
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove (August 22)	967	6,225	87%
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove (September 12)	722	6,109	89%
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove (August 29)	731	5,448	88%
Little Jams at Sterne Park (August 8)	2,404	4,878	67%
Affordable Arts Fest at Arapahoe Community College Grounds	375	4,013	91%
Harvest Festival at Littleton Museum Grounds	547	3,098	85%
Pride Fest - Main St to Prince & Bega Park	405	1,483	79%
Outdoor Craft Fair at Arapahoe Community College Grounds	43	1,111	96%
Little Jams at Sterne Park (July 12)	818	1,018	55%
Holiday's Evening at Littleton Museum Grounds	223	705	76%
Total	**22,901**	**115,966**	**84%**

Source: City of Littleton, Placer.ai

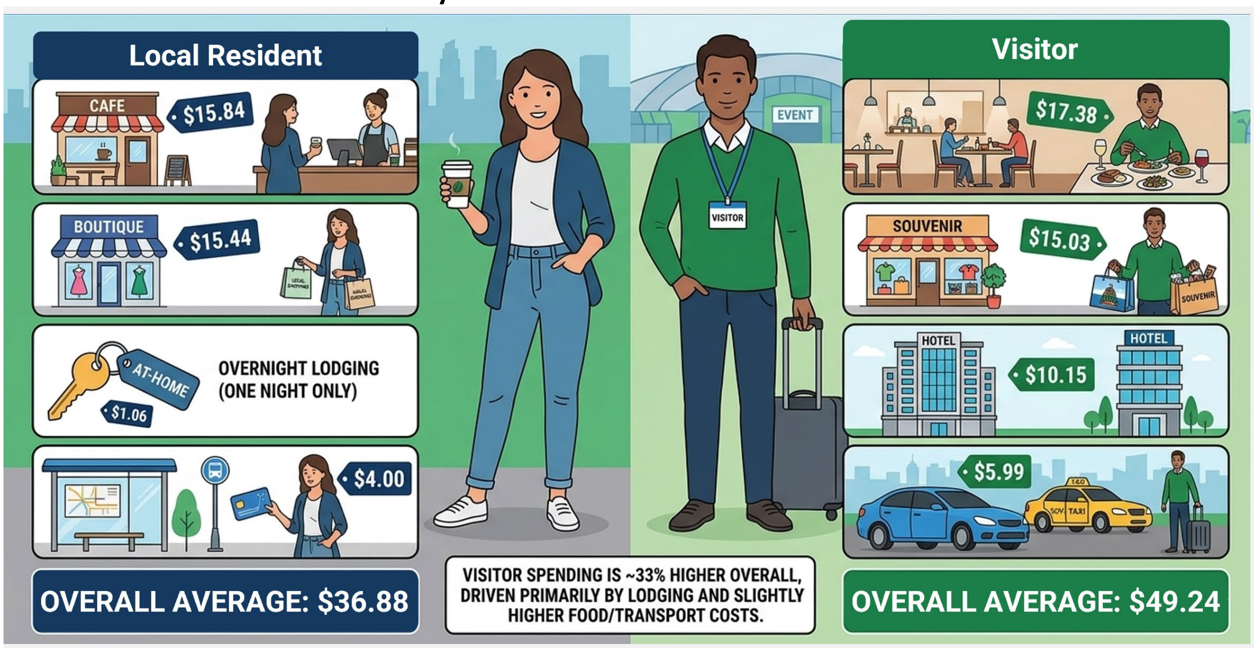
Instead of applying the data in Figure 7 to employment, the model takes these specific non-local visitor counts, such as the 16,139 out-of-town visitors for the Western Welcome Week (WWW) Parade Route or the 13,341 for the Candlelight Walk, and multiplies them by standard arts and culture visitor spending profiles. This calculation isolates the direct, off-site spending generated by these specific attendees at local retail, dining, and lodging establishments in the city.

2.3.1. Visitor spending profiles. The Americans for the Arts (AFTA) Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) visitor expenditure survey for Metro Denver serves as a reasonable benchmark for quantifying the spending of visitors. By collecting data on event-related spending such as meals at local restaurants, parking fees, and souvenir purchases in the Denver Metro Area, the AEP6 captures the economic activity generated by visitors beyond their spending on an event for things like tickets and entry fees.

The AEP6 results are particularly applicable to Littleton due to the high level of geographic and economic integration within the Denver Metropolitan Area. Because both cities share a common labor pool and a highly mobile consumer base, the spending patterns of a visitor attending a performance in Denver's urban core are fundamentally similar to those of a visitor frequenting Littleton's vibrant Main Street or the Town Hall Arts Center.

Figure 8 shows the visitor expenditure profile used for this study.

Figure 8: Spending Profile for Local Residents and Visitors Used in the Economic Impact Study of Littleton's Arts and Culture Economy



Source: The Americans for the Arts (AFTA) Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Survey for Denver Metropolitan Area

In total, the AEP6 survey indicates visitors from outside the city spend about $49.24 per event, with the largest share of money being spent on food and drinks. About 20 percent of the total expenditure is also spent on lodging (about $10.15 per visitor, on average) showing how visitors drive a portion of the City's lodging tax. Other expenditures include retail purchases, transportation, and childcare.[4]

Figure 9 applies the visitor spending profile to the number of public event visitors to estimate the total visitor spending associated with each event. In total, public events brought an estimated $5.0 million dollars in visitor spending to local businesses, including $2.0 million on food and drinks, $1.2 million in retail purchases and lodging, respectfully, and more than $694,000 on transportation.

[4] It is important to note that these figures represent weighted averages derived from a sample of visitors, rather than a fixed cost incurred by every individual. Consequently, these results should be interpreted as a collective mean that accounts for significant variance in personal spending habits.

Figure 9: Estimated Visitor Expenditures by Expenditure Category for Arts and Culture Public Events in Littleton, Colorado

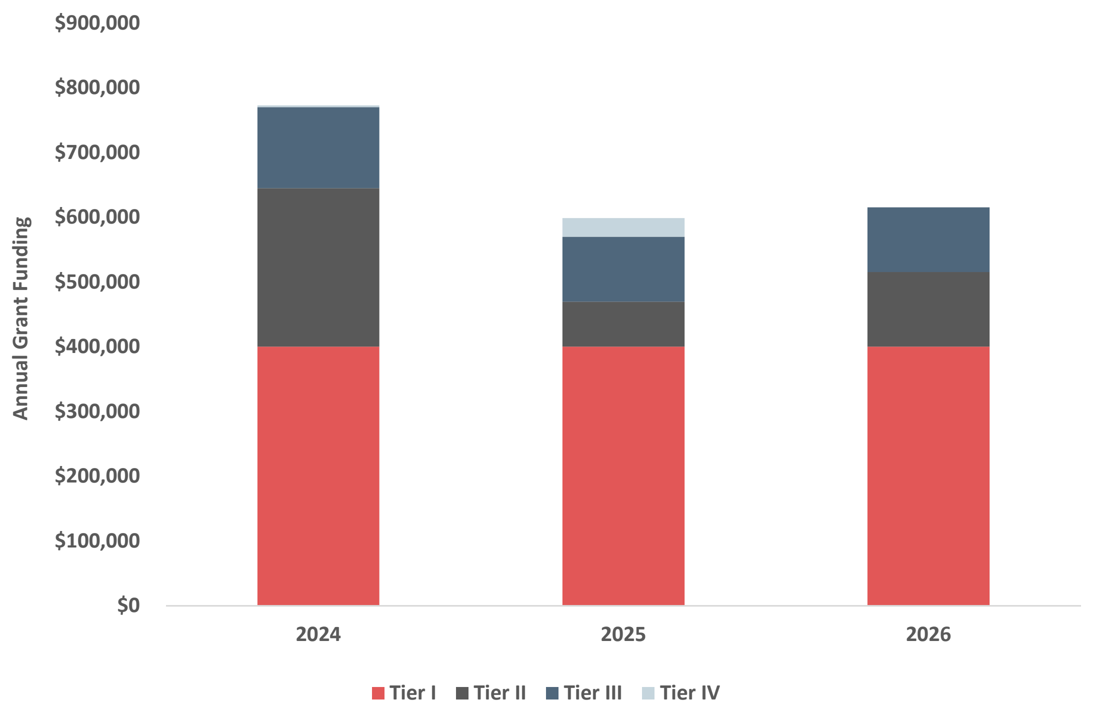
Event Name	Food and Drink	Retail	Lodging	Transportation	Total Spending
Affordable Arts Fest at Arapahoe Community College Grounds	$69,700	$60,400	$40,700	$24,000	$194,800
Block Party	$217,800	$80,300	$127,200	$75,000	$500,300
Candlelight Walk POI	$231,900	$82,200	$135,400	$79,900	$529,400
Craft Fair at Ketring Park	$153,500	$71,600	$89,700	$52,900	$367,700
Criterium Event Boundary	$147,900	$70,900	$86,400	$51,000	$356,200
Harvest Festival at Littleton Museum Grounds	$53,800	$58,200	$31,400	$18,600	$162,000
Holiday's Evening at Littleton Museum Grounds	$12,300	$52,600	$7,200	$4,200	$76,300
Little Jams at Sterne Park (7.12)	$17,700	$53,300	$10,300	$6,100	$87,400
Little Jams at Sterne Park (8.8)	$84,800	$62,400	$49,500	$29,200	$225,900
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove (8.15)	$131,100	$68,600	$76,600	$45,200	$321,500
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove 8.15	$131,100	$68,600	$76,600	$45,200	$321,500
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove 8.22	$108,200	$65,500	$63,200	$37,300	$274,200
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove 8.29	$94,700	$63,700	$55,300	$32,600	$246,300
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove 9.5	$129,200	$68,400	$75,500	$44,500	$317,600
Music in the Burbs Aspen Grove 9.12	$106,200	$65,300	$62,000	$36,600	$270,100
Outdoor Craft Fair at Arapahoe Community College Grounds	$19,300	$53,600	$11,300	$6,700	$90,900
Pride Fest - Main St to Prince & Bega Park	$25,800	$54,400	$15,100	$8,900	$104,200
WWW Parade Route	$280,500	$88,700	$163,800	$96,700	$629,700
Total	**$2,015,500**	**$1,188,700**	**$1,177,200**	**$694,600**	**$5,076,000**

These visitor-spending totals were entered into the IMPLAN model as direct economic impacts.

2.4. Lodgers Tax Grants. The direct economic impact of the Lodgers Tax Grants was calculated using the specific grant allocations from 2024 - 2026. The grant amounts were assigned to the IMPLAN industry sectors that best corresponded to the economic sector of the recipient organization.

The grants are anchored by Tier I, a permanent $400,000 annual commitment to Littleton's four primary cultural institutions. Tiers II and III represent a combined historical annual spending ranging from roughly $170,000 to $370,000. While Tier III (City tourism marketing) remains a relatively predictable $100,000. Finally, Tier IV represents the smallest fiscal footprint, peaking at $28,800 in 2025.

Figure 10: Total Grant Amounts Distributed by Littleton Arts and Culture Board (2024 – 2026)[1]



1. Changes in grant composition between 2024 and 2026 reflect a strategic shift from broad-based grant support to a highly competitive, structured funding model. In 2024, funding was more fluid as the city transitioned from the General Fund to the Lodgers Tax pool. By 2026, the city formalized a strict 12-grant limit for Tier II, categorizing awards into three specific buckets: three grants at $20,000, four at $8,000, and five at $2,000. This quality over quantity approach explains why many previous recipients moved from cash awards to a partnership status, which provides marketing support rather than direct funding.

While each grant represents an immediate infusion of spending into the local economy, their primary value lies in their role as a catalyst that supports organizational capacity and facilitates the cultural events that anchor the community. The broader economic stimulus is already fully captured within the visitation and expenditure data discussed previously. Consequently, the inclusion of grant totals serves to ground the model in direct local activity while avoiding the double-counting of the overarching economic impact driven by the visitors these organizations attract.

3. Results: Economic Impact of Littleton's Arts and Culture Economy

The results of the analysis show that the city's arts and culture economy is a significant economic driver, generating an estimated $48.2 million in annual economic output and supporting 420 jobs within the city limits. The vast majority of this economic activity is concentrated in the direct impact phase, which accounts for over 98 percent of the total output ($47.3 million) and 416 of the supported jobs. This large direct impact reflects not only the core employment and daily operations of local arts organizations, but also the crucial injection of outside dollars from grant funding and the impact of visitor spending at Littleton's restaurants, transportation, and hospitality establishments.

Figure 11: Total Economic Impacts of the Littleton's Arts and Culture Economy

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct	416	$21,329,126	$29,253,521	$47,263,681
Indirect	3	$176,429	$348,802	$644,137
Induced	0	$25,464	$225,162	$277,730
Total	**420**	**$21,531,019**	**$29,827,486**	**$48,185,548**

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

While the direct impacts are substantial, the secondary impacts are much smaller because bounding the analysis by Littleton ZIP codes limits how much economic activity can be claimed for the city. As spending and wages flow to neighboring municipalities, that secondary activity exits the study area. Consequently, these results offer a conservative baseline for economic impact within Littleton, rather than the sector's full regional footprint.

3.1. Arts and Culture Businesses, Organizations, and Venues. The daily operations of Littleton's arts and culture businesses, organizations, and venues form the core economic sectors economic impact. Day-to-day visitor spending across these local establishments supports 369 total jobs and generates nearly $41.8 million in annual economic output. This operational activity alone accounts for roughly 88 percent of the sector's entire economic impact. These impacts are driven by a diverse and robust local economy that spans from major commercial anchors and civic institutions—such as the Arapahoe Community College, Town Hall Arts Center, and the Littleton Museum—to a wide network of independent galleries, live music venues, and historic landmarks.

Figure 12: Economic Impacts of Arts and Culture Businesses, Organizations, and Venues

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct	366	$19,147,081	$25,689,605	$41,078,207
Indirect	2	$128,995	$268,080	$495,375
Induced	0	$17,186	$176,369	$215,141
Total	**369**	**$19,293,262**	**$26,134,054**	**$41,788,723**

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

Consistent with the sector-wide findings, the economic impacts of businesses, organizations, and venues create large direct impacts (366 jobs and $41.8 million in direct output) but much smaller secondary impacts for the reasons discussed above.

3.2. Arts and Culture Public Events. In addition to the daily operations of permanent cultural institutions, Littleton's arts and culture sector generates substantial economic activity through public events. These events support 45 total jobs and generate approximately $5.5 million in total economic output within the city (Figure 14). Consistent with the operational model, these figures are driven almost entirely by direct impacts (44 jobs and $5.4 million in output), reflecting the immediate influx of visitor dollars into the local economy and the strict geographic boundaries of the localized study area. The engine behind the impact of public events is an estimated $5 million in direct spending by event attendees. Crucially, this spending demonstrates how arts and culture events act as economic catalysts for the broader commercial economy, with expenditures flowing directly into the city's service sectors. Food and beverage establishments are the primary beneficiaries, capturing over $2 million of the total event-related spending, followed by retail ($1.2 million) and local lodging ($1.2 million). Large events drive the highest volumes of spending, with the Western Welcome Week Parade Route, the Candlelight Walk , and the Block Party serving as the top individual events injecting outside dollars into the Littleton economy.

Town Hall Arts Center

Serving as a cornerstone of downtown Littleton's cultural landscape, the Town Hall Arts Center (THAC) is a vital performing arts anchor. Visitor spending at the THAC generates an estimated $1.8 million in total economic output and supports 14 jobs within the city. As a centerpiece of Main Street, the Town Hall Arts Center acts as a primary catalyst for the ancillary restaurant and retail spending that is captured in the broader events and visitor impact analysis.

Figure 13: Economic Impact of Town Hall Arts Center Visitor Spending

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct	13	$748,387	$1,018,460	$1,654,101
Indirect	1	$45,444	$70,205	$130,550
Induced	0	$11,219	$37,679	$52,528
Totals	**14**	**$805,050**	**$1,126,343**	**$1,837,178**

It is important to contextualize how these employment figures translate to real-world operations. Because the venue employs dozens upon dozens of artists, musicians, and performers on a production-by-production basis throughout the year, these results should not be interpreted as a literal headcount of individual, permanent employees. Rather, when aggregating the numerous short-term engagements and contract work required to mount a theatrical season, the resulting economic activity is equivalent to creating 14 full-time jobs in the city.

Figure 14 Economic Impact for Public Events.

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct	44	$1,811,595	$3,121,731	$5,374,935
Indirect	0	$19,958	$37,659	$66,302
Induced	0	$3,021	$31,135	$37,973
Total	45	$1,834,575	$3,190,525	$5,479,210

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

3.3. Lodgers Tax Grants. The final component of the sector's economic impact is driven by the distribution of arts and culture grant funding. The spending of these funds into the local economy generates a total economic output of nearly $918,000 and supports six jobs within Littleton. As with the operational and event-based models, this activity is heavily concentrated at the direct level, accounting for over $810,000 in direct output and five jobs. Because grant dollars are typically deployed to support specific programmatic capacity, artist commissions, or targeted administrative roles, the direct employment supported by these funds reflects a relatively high average labor income (approximately $74,000 per direct job).

Figure 15: Economic Impact of Lodgers Tax Grants

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct	5	$370,449	$442,185	$810,540
Indirect	0	$27,476	$43,063	$82,460
Induced	0	$5,256	$17,659	$24,616
Total	6	$403,182	$502,907	$917,616

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

3.4. Fiscal Impact of Arts and Culture Sector. Beyond the generation of jobs and economic output, Littleton's arts and culture sector is a steady driver of tax revenues across all levels of government. In total, the sector generates an estimated $2.9 million in annual fiscal impacts across city, special, county, and state funds. Consistent with the economic impact findings, the vast majority of these tax revenues are generated as direct impacts. Because the IMPLAN model's strict zip-code boundaries, the indirect and induced tax revenues that would normally be generated by supply chain and household spending are largely occurring in neighboring jurisdictions rather than within the defined study area.

Hudson Gardens

As one of the city's premier cultural anchors and event spaces, Hudson Gardens warrants standalone analysis to understand its specific weight within Littleton's broader arts and culture economy. The venue is a significant individual economic driver, bringing thousands of visitors into the city each month. Their spending supports 41 total jobs and generates approximately $5.2 million in total economic output. To put this scale into perspective, Hudson Gardens alone accounts for roughly 10 percent of the entire sector's total employment and over 11 percent of its total economic output within the city limits.

Figure 16: Economic Impact of Hudson Gardens Visitor Spending

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct	39	$1,823,873	$2,896,600	$4,744,706
Indirect	2	$131,717	$197,370	$353,725
Induced	0	$29,568	$99,272	$138,408
Totals	**41**	**$1,985,159**	**$3,193,243**	**$5,236,838**

Consistent with the sector-wide trends, the majority of this activity is concentrated at the direct level, with 39 jobs supported by visitor spending and $4.7 million in direct output reflecting the venue's substantial daily operations, core staffing, and direct visitor revenues. The 2 indirect jobs supported by the venue indicate that Hudson Gardens operates with a slightly more localized supply chain than smaller venues. It successfully captures $0.5 million in secondary economic activity before those supply chain and household dollars exit the Littleton zip codes.

The scale of these economic impacts corresponds closely with recent funding distribution trends. Over the 2024 to 2026 period, total annual grant funding in the city has ranged from approximately $600,000 to $770,000. Notably, Tier I funding serves as a highly stable financial foundation for the sector, providing a consistent baseline of roughly $400,000 in each of the three years analyzed. While funding across Tiers II, III, and IV introduces some year-over-year variability depending on the specific mix of project-based allocations, the reliable Tier I base ensures a persistent, measurable economic injection that directly sustains jobs and expands the operational capacity of Littleton's cultural institutions.

Figure 17 shows that the arts and culture sector generates nearly $695,000 in direct and secondary tax revenues for the City of Littleton. This represents the localized, structural return on the sector's footprint, driven heavily by local sales and use taxes captured from venue operations, event ticketing, and the crucial ancillary spending by visitors at nearby restaurants and retail shops.

Figure 17: Fiscal Impact of the Arts and Culture Sector in Littleton

Impact	City	Special Districts	County	State	Total
Direct	$685,669	$1,070,658	$194,616	$918,664	$2,869,607
Indirect	$3,050	$4,940	$1,000	$6,704	$15,693
Induced	$5,818	$9,281	$1,808	$9,362	$26,269
Total	**$694,537**	**$1,084,879**	**$197,424**	**$934,730**	**$2,911,569**

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

Local special districts are the largest regional beneficiaries, capturing nearly $1.08 million in total tax revenues. This highlights that arts and culture activity plays a significant role in funding the broader mix of local services such as school districts and fire protection districts that rely on dedicated mill levies and localized sales taxes within the county.

Ultimately, this localized fiscal snapshot demonstrates that the arts and culture economy serves as a vital, nearly $1.8 million combined tax engine for the City of Littleton and its overlapping special districts.

3.4.1 Arts and Culture Visitors and Lodging Taxes. To further understand the sector's specific fiscal impact on the City of Littleton, BBC conducted a targeted analysis of local lodging tax revenues. This analysis utilizes baseline data from the Arts and Culture Community Strategic Plan regarding gross hotel and motel revenues within the city, which was then cross-referenced with the visitor spending estimates developed in the broader economic impact modeling.

Figure 18: Estimated Share of Lodging Spending from Arts and Culture Visitors

Hotel/Motel Chain	Annual Sales
Courtyard by Marriott	$5,214,162
Residence Inn	$4,556,101
Hampton Inn	$3,515,675
Staybridge	$3,401,794
WoodSpring	$2,192,880
Essex House	$1,165,080
Evergreen Motel	$1,053,938
Total	**$21,099,630**
Arts and Culture Visitor Lodging Spending (Est.)	**$2,029,455**
Share of Total Lodging Spending	**10%**
Estimated Lodging Tax from Arts and Culture Visitors	**$101,473**

Source: Hotel/Motel Annual Sales from *2025 – 2025 Arts and Culture Community Strategic Plan;* BBC Research & Consulting

By isolating the portion of visitor expenditures strictly dedicated to lodging, the analysis identifies two primary drivers of arts-related lodging demand:

- **Community Events.** Arts and culture events generate an estimated $1.18 million in local lodging spending. The data imply that one in ten outside visitors to these events chooses to stay overnight in the city.

- **Hudson Gardens.** As a premier regional destination, Hudson Gardens drives an additional $850,000 in local lodging spending, representing approximately 7,600 individual visitor stays per year.

Combined, spending on lodging indicates that arts and culture visitors account for roughly 10 percent of the lodging sector's total gross sales and lodging tax revenues. It is important to note that these figures are estimates with a degree of uncertainty. To account for this, BBC recommends adopting a conservative range that assumes the arts and culture sector accounts for between 5 percent and 10 percent of total local lodging sales and associated lodging tax revenues.

3.4.1.1 Lodging Tax Return on Investment. When evaluating the financial return on the Lodgers Tax Grant program, the economic and fiscal data demonstrate a positive return on investment (ROI) for the City of Littleton. This ROI can be understood through three distinct tiers of impact: the direct economic impact, the direct fiscal impact, and the broader catalytic impact.

- **Direct Economic Impact.** The direct spending of the grants themselves creates localized economic impacts that more than offset the City's initial expenditure. The economic impact results show the grant funds effectively pays for themselves in local economic activity before any secondary visitor spending is even considered.

- **Direct Fiscal Impact.** The arts and culture sector provides direct tax return via the lodging tax. When isolating the lodging tax revenues generated exclusively by arts and culture visitors, the data indicates that between 15 percent and 20 percent of every grant dollar distributed by the ACB is recouped directly back to the City in the form of lodging taxes alone.

- **Catalyzing Impact.** The direct operational and fiscal returns represent a fraction of the Lodgers Tax Grant program's economic impact. The grants act as vital catalyst for recipients, who utilize these funds to sustain an economic engine that vastly exceeds the initial grant amounts.

4. Arts and Culture Sector Gap Analysis

This section benchmarks the performance of Littleton's arts and culture sector against regional, state, and national standards. The following analysis utilizes data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and IMPLAN to provide essential context for policy makers of what elements may be missing.

4.1. Relative Measures of the role of the arts and culture sector in the economy.

Based on the analysis framework and methodology described in section 3, Littleton's arts and culture economy contributes approximately $50 million in output annually to the City's economy (this equates to about 0.9 percent of the total economic output of the City). It is helpful to understand the magnitude of this contribution in comparison the overall economy and how this contribution compares with other communities in Colorado, the state as a whole, and national data. While the granular detail of data used for Littleton are not available for other geographies, there are some tools that can provide context for policy makers.

4.1.1 Bureau of Economic Analysis data. The United States Bureau of Economic Analysis created a separate analysis for industries related to arts and culture in 1998 and provided updated information on the industry through 2023. The BEA's definition of arts and cultural industries included core industries and supporting industries.

Compared with the analysis of Littleton, the BEA's industries were much more inclusive. As an example, architectural services are included in the BEA analysis as a core industry for measuring arts and culture, but it was not considered in the analysis the City.

For core industries, BEA reports that those sectors contribute approximately 0.78 percent of the total output of the US economy. When narrowed to more appropriately mirror the City of Littleton's analysis (including performing arts companies, independent artists, museums, and retail industries), the total for the US is approximately 0.50 percent. (without retail it's 0.26 percent). For Colorado, the corresponding value is 0.35 percent (without retail it's 0.22 percent). Based on the analysis of Littleton's data, the organizations and businesses identified in the strategic plan accounted for 0.92 percent of GDP a larger share than both the state and nation.

4.1.2 IMPLAN analysis of the City of Littleton compared with Boulder and Jefferson Counties. BBC also compared the economic size of select arts and culture sectors for the City of Littleton with two local counties, Jefferson County and Boulder County. For this analysis, BBC selected three representative industries from the IMPLAN industry data:

- Performing arts companies;
- Independent artists, writers, and performers ; and
- Museums, historical sites, zoos, and parks.

For each of these three geographies, BBC estimated the proportion of the total economic output accounted for by these three industries. For the City of Littleton, these three industries comprise approximately 0.43 percent of the total economic output, this was higher than both comparable figures for Boulder County (0.33 percent) and Jefferson County (0.25 percent), indicating the these sectors make large contributions to Littleton's economy compared to the comparison communities.

4.1.3 Economic data overview. Based on measures from both the Bureau of Economic Analysis and information from IMPLAN, the relative role of the arts and culture sectors in the City of Littleton exceeds the role that the arts and culture sectors play in the nation, state, and other communities in the Denver metro area. It is important to note that these measures represent the economic output of the sector and do not account for the artistic, cultural, or community impact of the sector.

4.2 Potential Creative District Establishment.

While the economic data suggest that Littleton's arts and cultural sector performs well when compared with other jurisdictions, there may be an opportunity for the City to further solidify the reputation of its cultural offerings by establishing a creative district. The creative district program is an initiative of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International trade. The program identifies, supports, and showcases areas in the state that "contribute to our state's economy through creativity, culture, and the arts."[5] There are currently 37 districts identified throughout the state. Current districts identified in the Denver metro area include:

- 40 West Arts District (Lakewood);
- Aurora Cultural Arts District;
- Denver's Art District on Santa Fe;

[5] Colorado Creative Districts Program Summary. Office of Economic Development and International Trade.
https://oedit.colorado.gov/colorado-creative-districts
Accessed April 26, 2026

- Golden Triangle Creative District (Denver);
- NoBo Arts District (Boulder);
- RiNo Arts District (Denver); and
- Westwood Creative District (Denver).

These districts are eligible for state technical assistance grants, development of a marketing strategy in conjunction with the Colorado Tourism Office, and other state resources.

The city might benefit from a comprehensive arts-based marketing strategy to encourage more out-of-state and regional tourism and encourage current arts patrons to spend more time in Littleton. The criteria for becoming a district are as follows:

- Be a contiguous area, with a mix of uses in the boundaries, that is easy to walk and navigate.
- Be distinguished by physical, artistic, and cultural resources.
- Be a concentrated area of artistic and cultural activity, including. major arts or culture facilities, arts, entertainment businesses, arts and cultural activities, or artistic/cultural and creative sector production.
- Promote, preserve, and educate on aspects of arts and culture.
- Have broad community support and buy-in.
- Be a structured entity such as municipal or county government, a registered neighborhood organization, downtown or economic development authority, 501(c)(3), or 501(c)(6).
- Have an advisory or governing board.
- Have paid district staff (can be a dedicated percentage of time).
- Have a strategic plan (preferably covers three to five years).

While the city has many of these criteria covered with the work of the Economic Development Department and the Arts and Culture Board, city leaders would need to weigh in on key decisions like the exact geography of the district, the composition of the advisory or governing board, and staffing.

5. A Framework for Decision Making

The City of Littleton's Arts and Culture sector is a critical driver of both municipal revenue and resident quality of life. While many projects and policies in the sector may benefit both economic activity and quality of life, these benefits follow a continuum. At times, the Council and the Arts and Culture Board consider projects and policies that affect these benefits to different degrees.

Contemplating the trade-offs of each project and policy becomes an exercise in understanding and navigating tradeoffs between different ends and outcomes. To ensure that City Council and the Arts and Culture Board (ACB) can effectively prioritize policy and funding, this study utilizes a Strategic Decision Framework designed to identify "High Reward, Low Effort" actions.

Unlike a traditional business, a municipality must balance two distinct mandates:

- Economic Impact: Capturing taxable spending from non-resident visitors to offset the cost of public services and infrastructure.
- Community Benefit: Enhancing the daily lives of residents through social cohesion, local identity, and accessibility.

The Strategic Decision Framework serves as the bridge between these two mandates. By evaluating every proposed action through this dual lens, the city can move beyond subjective 'good ideas' and toward a data-driven investment strategy. This approach ensures that the arts are not viewed merely as a luxury expense, but as a functional municipal tool that simultaneously stabilizes the local tax base and strengthens the social fabric of the Littleton community.

5.1 Mechanics of the Decision Framework. The framework is visualized as a 2x2 matrix, mapping every strategic recommendation along two primary axes:

- **The Economic Impact Axis (Y-Axis):** This axis measures an action's ability to serve as an attractor. Based on the results of our economic impact analysis, we established a $50-per-visitor heuristic. For every $50 in public funding, an action should ideally attract at least one visitor from outside the city limits. This ensures the grant or policy pays for itself through the direct and indirect economic activity generated by new spending in the local economy.
- **The Community Benefit Axis (X-Axis):** This axis measures the internal value of an action. High-scoring items on this axis are those that employ local artists, provide free access to Littleton residents, or activate neighborhoods that currently lack cultural assets.

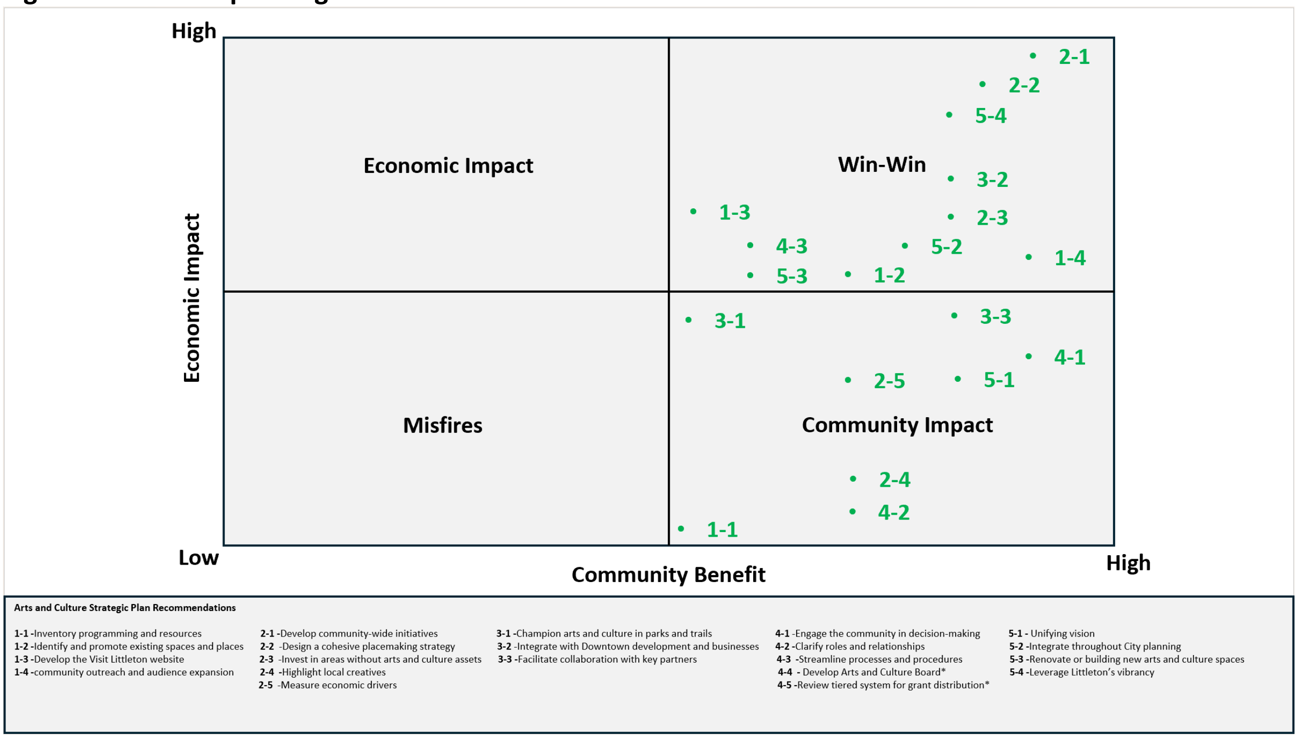
By plotting recommendations against these axes, four distinct strategic categories emerge:

- **Win-Win:** These are the high reward actions. They provide immense value to residents while simultaneously acting as regional attractors. These should be the city's primary investment priorities.
- **Economic Impact:** These are efficient revenue generators. While their direct benefit to the average resident's daily routine may be lower, they import the capital necessary to fund other city services.
- **Community Impact:** These are the municipal bonds of the arts sector. While they may not recoup their costs through visitor spending, they are vital for resident welfare and local culture.
- **Misfires:** These are actions that offer low returns on both axes. They typically represent high administrative effort for minimal civic or economic gain and should be deprioritized.

5.2. Application to the Strategic Plan

In this section, we applied the framework to the twenty-four (24) core recommendations of the City of Littleton Arts and Culture Community Strategic Plan. Each recommendation was assigned a coordinate based on the spending multipliers derived from our impact study and qualitative assessment of resident-facing benefits.

Figure 18: Visitor Spending Profile for Each Arts and Culture Event



The most efficient path to economic growth lies in the top-right quadrant (Win-Win). Recommendation 2-1 (Identify and promote existing spaces) is the quintessential High Reward/Low Effort action the city should prioritize. By marketing existing assets rather than building new ones, the city maximizes ROI.

Recommendation 5-4 (Leverage Littleton's vibrancy) underscores the study's finding that vibrancy itself is an attractor. Strategic placemaking (2-2) and cohesive branding (3-2) create the environment that keeps visitors in the city longer, increasing the per-capita spend.

Many of the plan's goals are positioned as community impact drivers. For example, Recommendation 1-1 (Inventory programming), while necessary for internal management, has low immediate economic draw. However, it is a foundational investment that allows for future efficiencies. Recommendation 4-2 (Clarify roles and relationships) reduces effort but does not directly attract visitors. It is categorized here to highlight that its value is purely organizational.

5.2.1 Secondary Scrutiny: Evaluating the Win-Wins. While the 2x2 matrix serves as a critical macro-filter, identifying a Win-Win project is only the first step. To ensure these high-priority actions are feasible and sustainable we introduce a Secondary Evaluation Process. Once a project is categorized as a Win-Win, it is subjected to a deeper drill-down across four key categories to move from a theoretical good idea to an actionable project or policy as shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Criteria for Evaluating Arts and Culture Investments

Category	Suggested Criteria	Potential Metric
Financial Impact	Estimated cost	City or grant cost for project
	Funding eligibility	Number of potential funding sources (e.g. grants, capital budgets, donations, bonds, philanthropy, etc.)
	Leverage potential (outside funds/partnerships)	Ratio of match with other funds
Community Benefit	Providing equitable experience	Increases access for underserved populations
	Resident visitation impact potential	Estimated increase in annual resident visits
	Programming capacity/activation potential	Additional programs/events can be supported
	Partner priority	High on partner/org priority list
Economic Impact	Attract visitors from outside Littleton	Number of visitors
	Increases dwell-tie of visitors	Estimated dwell time in city
	Economic multiplier potential (jobs, local spending)	Jobs, income, economic output
Strategic Alignment	Does project fulfill Strategic Plan goal(s)	Direct alignment with strategic objectives and outcomes

To apply the criteria to prioritize projects, the following points should be considered.

- Financial Impact. These criteria consider the cost of the policy or project, its eligibility for funding beyond city-provided resources, and the potential to leverage the city's funds with contributions from other sources.
    - This category moves beyond the raw estimated cost" to determine the project's sustainability.
    - Funding Eligibility & Leverage: We aren't just looking for the lowest cost; we are looking for the highest Leverage Ratio. A project that costs $100k but brings in $50k in matching grants or private philanthropy has a higher leverage potential than a $60k project funded entirely by the city.
    - Metric: Ratio of City Match to Outside Funds. A "High Reward" project should aim for a 1:1 match or better.
- Community Benefit. These criteria consider the benefits of the project to members of the Littleton community.

  - While the Economic Axis looks at "who comes from outside," this pillar looks at "who stays at home."
  - Equitable Experience: Does this project activate an underserved neighborhood (e.g., south of Littleton Blvd)? Does it lower the barrier to entry for lower-income residents?
  - Programming Capacity: We evaluate if the project is a "one-off" or if it builds "Activation Potential." Does this infrastructure allow for 10 new programs a year, or just one?
  - Metric: Estimated increase in Annual Resident Visits. We prioritize projects that turn a passive space into a recurring destination for locals.
- Economic Impact.
  - This is where we verify the $50-per-visitor heuristic mentioned in the primary framework.
  - Attraction & Dwell-Time: A "Win-Win" must act as a regional anchor. We analyze the Dwell-Time Multiplier. If a visitor comes for a gallery walk, do they stay for dinner? Projects that create "sticky" environments (where visitors spend 3+ hours) are prioritized because they maximize local sales tax capture.
  - Metric: Jobs, Income, and Economic Output per dollar of municipal investment.
- Strategic Alignment.
  - This prevents "Mission Creep." Even a profitable project can be a distraction if it doesn't align with the Strategic Plan.
  - Direct Alignment: Does this fulfill a specific goal (e.g., Goal 2-1: Promoting existing spaces)? If a project is a "Win-Win" economically but doesn't align with Littleton's cultural identity, it is deprioritized.
  - Metric: Binary "Pass/Fail" check against the 24 core recommendations of the Strategic Plan.

5.3 Actionable Guidance for the City Council and ACB. The primary objective of this framework is to identify and fast-track Win-Win projects. Because these initiatives simultaneously stimulate the local economy (at the $50-per-visitor threshold) and deepen resident engagement, they represent the highest return on municipal investment.

- Any project or policy that lands in the top-right quadrant of the Strategic Matrix should be considered for expedited administrative support, fee waivers, or priority grant status. These are the engines of the sector and should be funded first to create the revenue necessary to support other community-focused initiatives.

Still, the city should avoid over-indexing on any single quadrant. While Win-Wins are the priority, the long-term health of the arts and culture sector requires a balanced approach. The city should target a mixed budget allocation that gives weight to both economic impacts and community benefits. For example, a 40/60 approach would prioritize 40 percent of dollars to economic impact and 60 percent to community benefits. The exact balance should reflect stakeholder preferences.

5.3.1 Implementation of a Weighted Scoring Model. To remove subjectivity from the evaluation process, a Weighted Scoring Rubric should be used for the Secondary Scrutiny criteria. By assigning weights to the four evaluation categories, the City can ensure that the scoring reflects its current strategic priorities (e.g., if the city is facing a budget crunch, Financial Impact weights may increase; if it is focusing on social equity, Community Benefit weights take precedence (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Example Weighted Scoring Rubric

Category	Weight	Application Logic
Financial Impact	30%	Prioritizes sustainability and the leverage of outside funds.
Community Benefit	25%	Ensures high resident utilization and equitable access.
Economic Impact	25%	Validates the project's ability to attract outside spending.
Strategic Alignment	20%	Confirms the project directly fulfills the 24 Strategic Plan goals.

By scoring projects on a scale of 1–5 across these weighted categories, the city can produce rank each project and policy to allow for an apples-to-apples comparison between them, such as comparing a new public mural to a grant supporting a outdoor concert event.

5.3.4 From Tool to Ownership: The Living Framework. Finally, it must be noted that this Decision Framework is a dynamic tool whose value lies in its application. The City Council and ACB must take active ownership of these criteria by revising them and adjusting weights to reflect city priorities and objectives.

Using this matrix provides the city with a clear, data-driven narrative to share with the public. It transforms arts and culture into a functional municipal tool that supports the local tax base while making Littleton a more vibrant place to live. By adopting this structured approach, Littleton moves beyond subjective decision-making and toward a sophisticated, evidence-based investment strategy that maximizes both fiscal and social ROI.

6. Appendices

6.1. Study Area IMPLAN Data. The provided IMPLAN data establishes a robust economic foundation for the study area, which encompasses five Colorado zip codes: 80120, 80160, 80161, 80162, and 80163.

Figure 1 displays information about the study area economy, including it's total output, total income, and total employment. It shows that the study area produced a total output of $3.4 billion in the most recent year for which data are available. This output was associated with $2.9 billion personal income for more than 27,100 workers. The economy of the study area has 242 unique industries.

Figure 21: Study Area Economic Summary

Gross Domestic Product	Total Personal Income	Total Employment
$3,427,799,294.02	$2,943,400,088.08	27,121.03

Number of Industries	Land Area	Population	Total Households
242	13.81	33,273	15,341.54

Study Area Regions

	Area	Type
1	80120 (CO)	zipcode
2	80160 (CO)	zipcode
3	80161 (CO)	zipcode
4	80162 (CO)	zipcode
5	80163 (CO)	zipcode

Value Added

Indicator	Value
1 - Employee Compensation	$1,798,029,830.30
2 - Proprietor Income	$282,235,203.03
3 - Other Property Income	$1,164,768,349.35
4 - Taxes on Production an...	$182,765,911.34
Total Value Added	$3,427,799,294.02

Final Demand

	Indicator	Value
1	1 - Household Demand	$2,431,337,489.75
2	2 - State/Local Governm...	$342,513,713.25
3	3 - Federal Government ...	$126,881,398.70
4	4 - Capital	$868,734,508.69
5	5 - Exports	$4,472,867,614.15
6	6 - Imports	-$4,728,460,799.10
7	7 - Institutional Sales	-$86,074,631.42
8	Total Final Demand	$3,427,799,294.02

Figure 22 displays information about specific sectors of the study area's arts and culture economy. Many of the sectors are not wholly related to arts and culture, but the sector summaries still help provide context to understand their size relative to the study area's economy.

Figure 22: Study Area Arts and Culture Sector Details

Economic Sector	Employment	Output	Total Value Added	Labor Income
Breweries	98.92	$30,143,649	$10,303,221	$4,254,777
Retail - General merchandise stores	78.73	$7,958,150	$5,866,465	$3,405,202
Retail - Miscellaneous store retailers	551.76	$39,489,711	$24,607,166	$19,343,572
Transit and ground passenger transportation	137.6	$10,419,659	$4,255,055	$2,874,804
Advertising, public relations, and related services	44.65	$10,297,752	$6,886,931	$3,251,485
Photographic services	36.05	$12,290,112	$7,652,460	$1,644,461
Performing arts companies	26.05	$2,473,590	$1,184,968	$757,840
Independent artists, writers, and performers	57.44	$19,340,664	$13,977,882	$3,536,921
Promoters of performing arts and sports and agents for public figures	66.68	$10,015,540	$3,335,824	$1,515,561
Museums, historical sites, zoos, and parks	10.26	$1,555,055	$1,009,886	$896,873
Other amusement and recreation industries	11.45	$1,321,781	$944,105	$433,745
Fitness and recreational sports centers	44.15	$3,343,349	$2,060,708	$1,077,691
Hotels and motels, including casino hotels	2.97	$503,617	$341,211	$178,555
Full-service restaurants	1,153.41	$127,260,016	$77,397,003	$47,136,816
Limited-service restaurants	389.51	$47,570,698	$24,288,866	$13,151,111
All other food and drinking places	347.77	$30,660,270	$20,423,154	$13,928,002

Figure 23 displays the output multipliers for sectors related to Littleton's arts and culture economy. The multipliers reflect the additional economic output generated by $1M of direct output. In other words, if $1M is spent in the transportation sector, an additional $35,000 of economic activity will occur within the City's boundaries.

Figure 23: Output Multipliers by Sectors Related to Arts and Culture (Output per $1M)

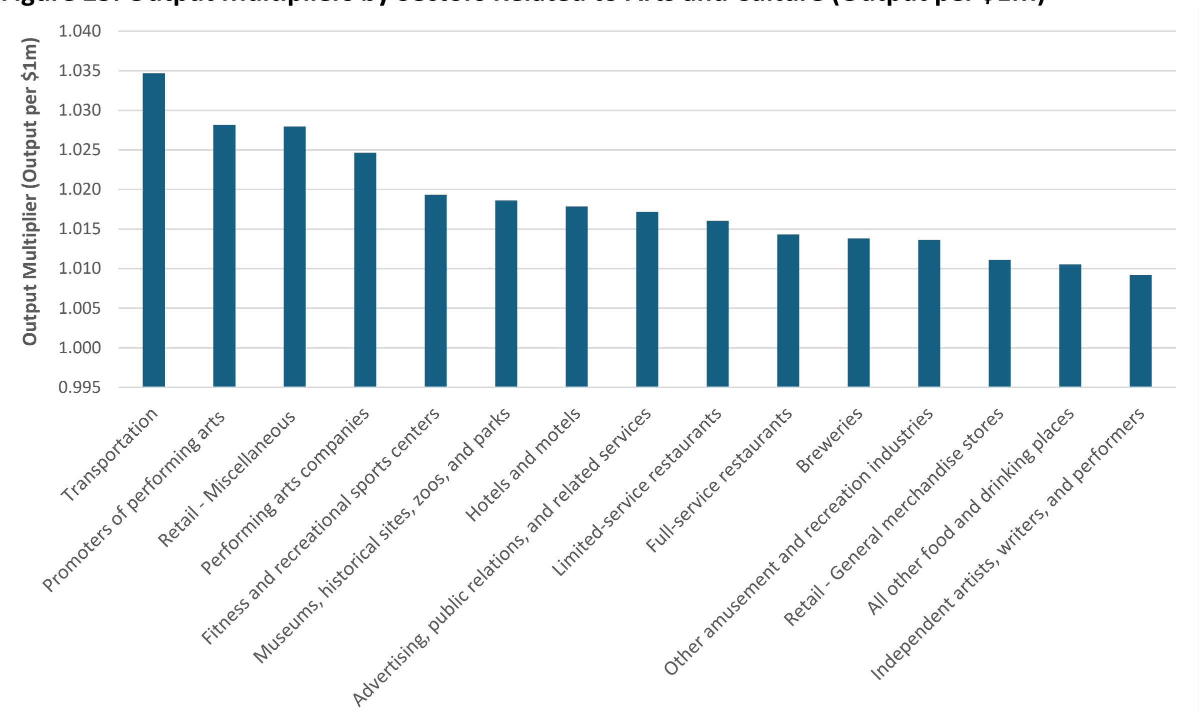
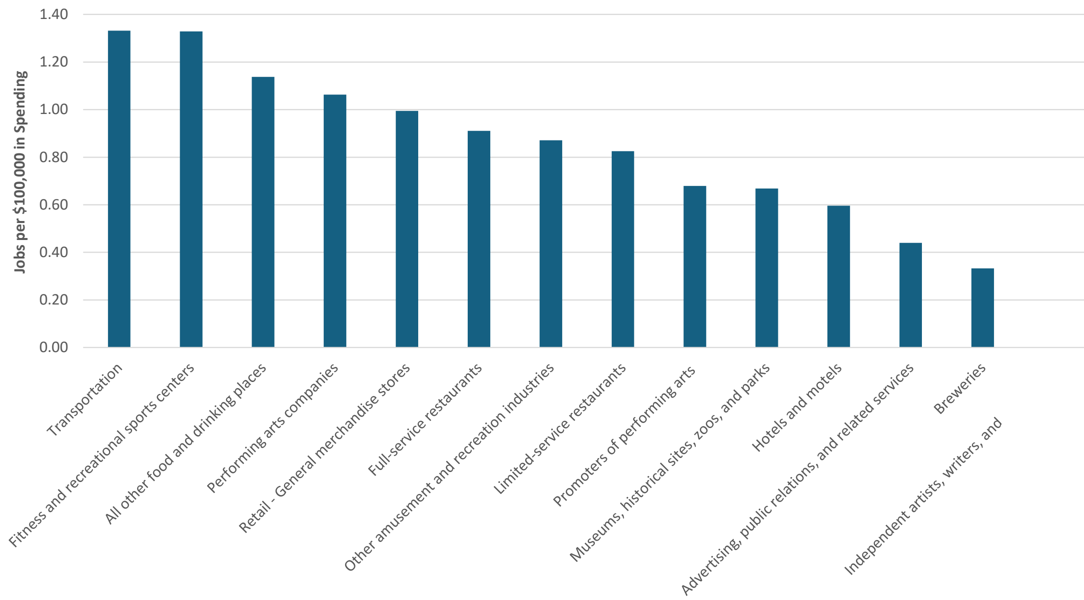


Figure 24 displays the employment multipliers for sectors related to Littleton's arts and culture economy. The multipliers reflect the additional employment generated by $100,000 of direct output. In other words, if $1M is spent in the transportation sector, a total of 1.3 jobs will be created within the City's boundaries.

Figure 24: Employment Multipliers by Sectors Related to Arts and Culture (Jobs per $100,000 in Output)



6.2. Denver Metro Area Arts, Entertainment, and Prosperity 6 Survey Results

Figure 25 shows the results from the Arts, Entertainment, and Prosperity 6 survey of economic impacts from arts and culture in the city and County of Denver. In total, it found 3,534 arts and culture organizations that support 5,414 jobs, $266 million in income, and $10 million in city and county tax revenue.

Figure 25: Economic Impact of Spending by Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences

Total Economic Impacts (includes direct, indirect, and induced impacts)	Organizations	Audiences	Total Impacts
Employment (Jobs)	3,534	1,880	**5,414**
Personal Income Paid to Residents	$174,289,356	$92,392,826	**$266,682,182**
Local Tax Revenue (city and county)	$3,495,025	$6,709,999	**$10,205,024**
State Tax Revenue	$2,918,529	$3,384,025	**$6,302,554**
Federal Tax Revenue	$29,945,743	$14,012,025	**$43,957,768**

Figure 27 shows the events-related spending from the Arts, Entertainment, and Prosperity 6 survey of economic impacts from arts and culture in the city and County of Denver. In total, it estimated that more than 4 million people attended an in-person event, spending a total of $181 million. The survey also found visitors spend about $117 million of that total (64 percent) compared to $63 million for locals.

Figure 26: Event-Related Spending by Arts and Culture Audiences

Attendance to Arts and Culture Events	Local[1] Attendees	Nonlocal[1] Attendees	All Attendees
Total Attendance to In-Person Events	1,727,263	2,385,269	**4,112,532**
Percentage of Total Attendance	42.0%	58.0%	100.0%
Average Per Person, Per Event Expenditure	$36.88	$49.24	$44.05
Total Event-Related Expenditures	**$63,701,460**	**$117,450,644**	**$181,152,104**

1. Non-locals are visitors from outside the city.

Figure 27 shows the spending profile from the Arts, Entertainment, and Prosperity 6 survey for local and non-local event attendees. While local attendees were observed to spend about $36.88 per event, non-locals were found to spend about $49.24 across multiple event-related categories.

Figure 27: Nonprofit Arts and Culture Audiences Spending Profile

Category of Event-Related Expenditure	Local[1] Attendees	Nonlocal[1] Attendees	All Attendees
Food and Drink	$15.84	$17.38	$16.74
Retail Shopping	$8.09	$8.23	$8.17
Overnight Lodging (one night only)	$1.06	$10.15	$6.33
Local Transportation	$4.00	$5.99	$5.15
Clothing and Accessories	$3.98	$3.18	$3.52
Groceries and Supplies	$2.75	$2.34	$2.51
Childcare	$0.54	$0.68	$0.62
Other/Miscellaneous	$0.62	$1.29	$1.01
Overall Average Per Person, Per Event	**$36.88**	**$49.24**	**$44.05**

2. Non-locals are visitors from outside the city.