



## SIGNAGE RESOURCE GUIDE

Created in partnership with CCI and The Creativity Lab of Colorado

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# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The idea for a Signage Resource Guide was conceived by the team at Colorado Creative Industries (CCI). The format and content for the document were created through a process that was facilitated by CCI as part of its ongoing quest to provide practical tools and tactics to support the state's creative districts. Through CCI's partnership with The Creativity Lab of Colorado, in collaboration with Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design, this Guide and the accompanying session became a reality and was presented at the 2017 Creative Industries Summit in Breckenridge, Colorado.

The Resource Guide is intended to serve as an idea book—a reference to spark dialogue and an outline to share insights from industry professionals. Likely the two most valuable components herein are the sample images and the sections entitled “Things to Think About.” While neither the images or the insights are an exhaustive listing, our goal was to glean practical advice from experts and package it in a way that is easily accessible.

We are grateful to the signage industry experts who invested their valuable time in helping us create this Guide. A special thank you to Dan Lundin of Banner Signs & Decals (Lakewood), Dustin Monroe of BSC Custom Signs (Broomfield), and Craig Rouse of R Design LLC (Lakewood). Also, we are very grateful to Miranda Samon, art director at 40 West Arts District and proprietor of Sojourn Design Company (Lakewood), for her expertise in designing the Guide and supporting the entire process of its creation.

*William Marino and Kevin Yoshida, Co-founders of The Creativity Lab of Colorado, a nonprofit corporation based in Lakewood, Colorado.*

# PART I

VISION & AUTHENTICITY



# PART I - VISION & AUTHENTICITY

**VISION . . . an aspirational view of the future.**

**AUTHENTICITY . . . the genuine essence embodied in history, culture, experiences and values.**

Why are we bringing up “vision” and “authenticity” in a resource guide about signage? The short answer: Because for signage, the two are conjoined and essential.

Vision is at the core of any forward-thinking company or organization. And Authenticity is a fundamental ingredient. Both are particularly critical—and for creative districts, they are indispensable.

An ever-growing list of blogs, books, and seminars on Organization Development, Management, and Leadership speaks to the necessity of “vision” . . . a vision that connects to a group’s guiding principles or core beliefs. The connection, pundits say, is most often through a set of common values and experiences as well as shared hopes and dreams. The importance of this authentic alignment embodied in a shared vision holds true for businesses as well as for communities.

In a community context, signage is a tangible display of this shared vision. As such, it becomes not only a practical tool, but a strategic reminder. With mindful collaboration and insightful design, effective signage portrays a visual language that aligns with the look and feel of a community’s authenticity and its vision for the future. Because signage is such a public display, its symbolism should not be underestimated.

Community signage reinforces common values and helps create momentum toward a community’s shared vision.

A shared vision binds people together and points to the future; authenticity embraces the past and connects to the present; collaborative leadership propels execution and creates momentum . . . and momentum makes the vision real and inspires a sense of inevitability for the envisioned future.

In a discussion about signage—particularly community signage—Vision and Authenticity are prerequisites to planning, design and implementation.

# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

## VISION

**“If you don’t know where you are going - you might end up someplace else.”**  
- Yogi Berra

- Recognize the critical importance of integrating Values, Vision, and Mission; Invest the time for community engagement to create a shared vision.
- Vision must connect / align with Values; It is “bold” and “aspirational.”
- Vision is how you will change the world (or your community); It’s what you want to achieve.
- Mission is the required action(s) to get you there. It’s what you do and how you do it.
- Vision is an “ideal” for the future; Mission is an objective or means to work toward the vision.
- Acknowledge the “current state” as you allow community values, interests, hopes, and dreams to shape a desired “future state.”
- Create that future state – in words and images – as a step toward manifestation.
- A community’s shared vision is motivational; it will promote a sense of purpose and guide behavior.
- Follow a collaborative Community Engagement Process to arrive at a shared vision.
- Engage with a broad cross section of stakeholders in your community.
- Celebrate incremental success.

# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

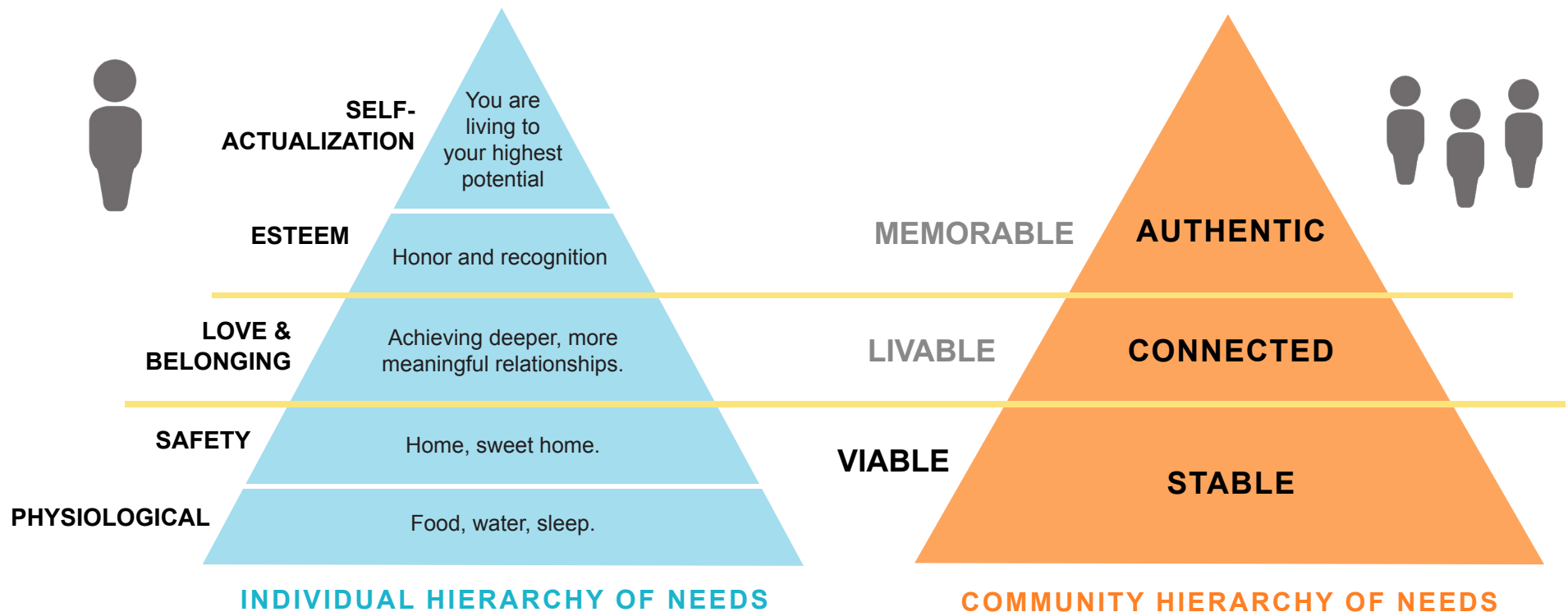
## AUTHENTICITY

**“Don’t worry  
about being  
good...  
aspire to be  
authentic.”  
- Yann Martel**

- Think cultural heritage: What makes your community unique from others?
- How is your community adding to your authentic cultural heritage?
- What are your formal and informal cultural assets or attributes?
- Who (or what) is the keeper of your cultural heritage?
- What are your visual icons?
- Have you captured oral histories from local elders?
- How does your authentic cultural heritage influence (or speak through) the values of your community?
- Can you “storyboard” your community in 6-7 panels from founding to present (or to shared vision)?
- How does your cultural identity tie into your community’s shared vision for the future?
- Let your community values lead your communications and engagement.
- How do you showcase your cultural assets? Where / how are elements of your history/ heritage displayed in your community?
- Lead and inspire through your authenticity—Be loyal to your community and its values. Lead by example.

# HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

## INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITIES



**“ If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.”**

**- Abraham Maslow**

Think back to Psych 101 class... do you remember Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?

In 1943, Abraham Maslow redefined psychology by outlining an ascending pyramid of needs that described his “theory of human motivation.” Basic survival

needs must be fulfilled in order to be able to participate in community, build relationships and have self-respect. The apex is self-actualization, achieving one's full potential.

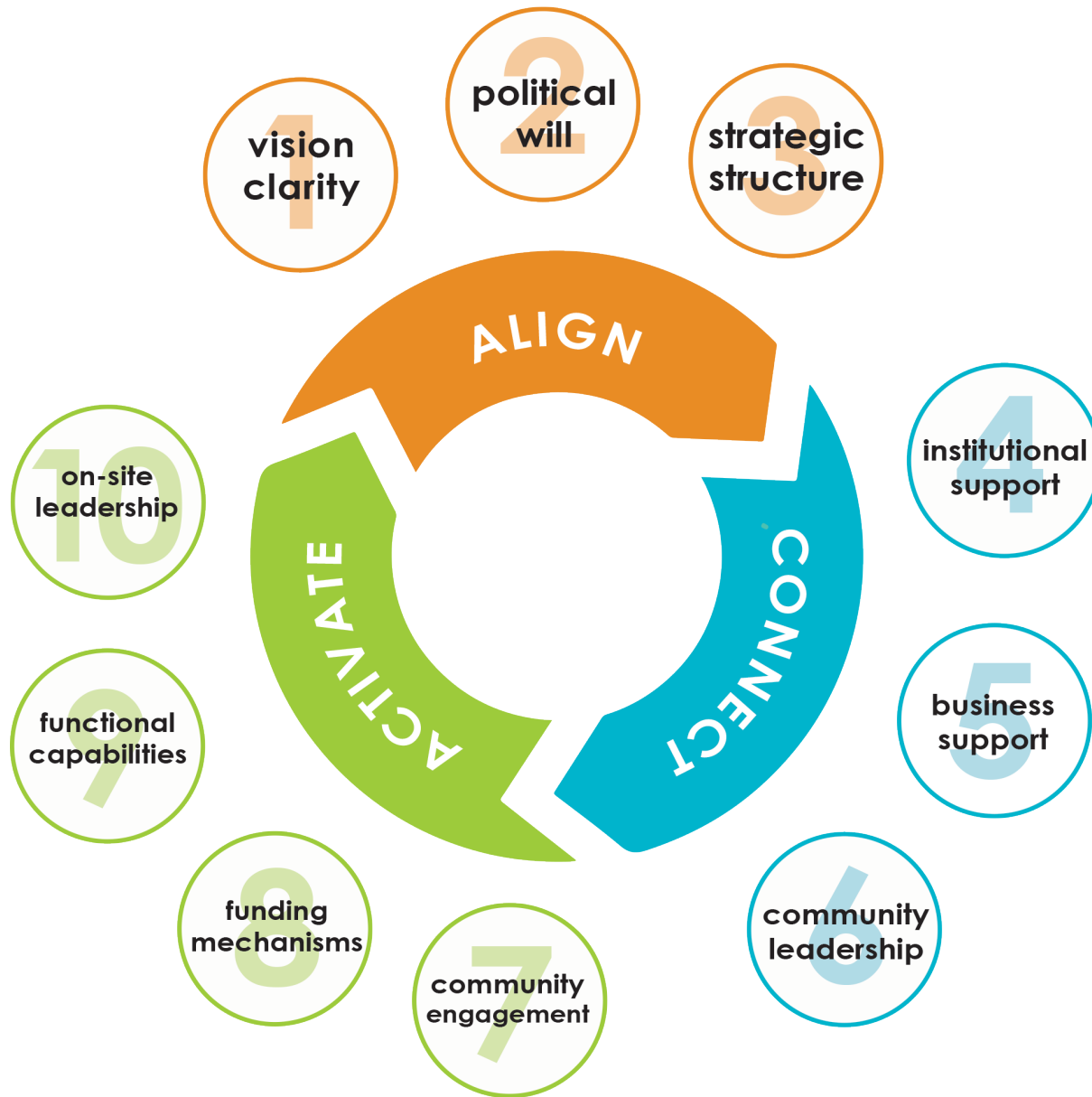
More simply, this journey is from viable to livable to memorable.

This journey is applicable to larger entities, group and communities. The analogous ascension for a creative district is stability, connectivity and authenticity. Authentic places have unique, original and unreplicable character, transcending pastiche and are beyond imitation.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## 10 COMMUNITY READINESS PRINCIPLES™



The initial incarnation of The Creativity Lab and its non-profit mission was born out of the practical application of the 10 Community Readiness Principles™. Vetted and distilled through hands-on field work, the Principles couple collaborative community development with creative organizational dynamics—along with a healthy portion of entrepreneurial vigor and mindful leadership. The 10 Community Readiness Principles™—and the corresponding workshops associated with the principles in the Align, Connect, and Activate categories—can serve as a framework for strategic planning, a discussion starter as part of a community engagement process, or a tool to benchmark or evaluate progress.

# PART II

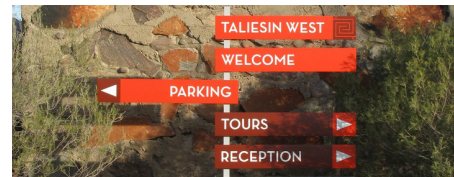
## SIGNAGE

## PART II - SIGNAGE

### Gateway



### Wayfinding



### Venue/Destination



### Temporary



### Other



### TYPES OF SIGNAGE

Signage types have an inherent hierarchy and should play a strategic role in place making and wayfinding. Entry monuments are large, urban-scaled and celebrate arrival to your creative district. Wayfinding signage is informational, directional and orients visitors to creative venues and cultural assets in your district. Venue/Destination is signage that identifies a business, studio, gallery, artwork, etc. as a destination within your district. Temporary signage activates events, celebrations and installations within your district. Other new technologies and materials can augment this basic framework, be authentic and celebrate your individuality as a creative district.

# GATEWAY SIGNAGE

## ENTRY MONUMENTS



### ENTRY MONUMENT

Used as main identification for communities and developments. Generally designed to introduce the feel of the environment.



### BACK-LIT

Back-lighting is a contemporary way of lighting signage from behind the lettering giving a unique glow.



### GATEWAY MONUMENT

Gateways are used to mark the entrance to a space, usually bridging over the road or walkway.



# WAYFINDING

## DIRECTIONAL / INFORMATIONAL



**INFO / MAP KIOSK**  
Directory of the area and adjoining landmarks / pathways.



**DIRECTIONAL SIGN (PEDESTRIAN)**  
Provide direction to district area for pedestrian audiences.



**IDENTITY / MAP SIGN**  
Incorporates architecture with wayfinding maps and district identity.



**DIRECTIONAL SIGN (VEHICULAR)**  
Larger scale signs directing traffic to and through the district.

# VENUE/DESTINATION

## WINDOW GRAPHICS



### FROSTED VINYL

Gives an etched look, but also provides privacy. This translucent vinyl allows light to pass through without sacrificing privacy.



### CLEAR VINYL

When other vinyls don't fit the need, clear vinyl allows a full color digital print, but with minimal obstruction of the view.



### PERFORATED VINYL

Allows for a full color digital print and is applied to the exterior of glass without obstructing the view looking out. Perforated vinyl treatment also maintains privacy.

Window Graphics can be designed and installed using a variety of specialty vinyl depending on what the actual need is.



### CUT VINYL

Cut to the shape of your logo or any object. Can be digitally printed to match any pantone. Specialty vinyl such as different types of metal foils can also be used to employ myriad textures, colors and effects.



# VENUE/DESTINATION

## IDENTITY SIGNAGE



### HANGING SIGN

Hanging signs can be fabricated using a variety of materials including wood, metal and plastic. The sign above combines a full color digital graphic printed directly to 1/4" aluminum.



### DIMENSIONAL SIGN

Dimension in signage is commonly created by routing or sandblasting wood or sign foam and finished by hand painting to culminate in a work of art unto itself.



### OPEN-FACE NEON

Neon lighting material is used to provide a nostalgic or retro look.



### POLE/PYLON WAYFINDING

Used in large or small scale to identify a specific landmark.



### MONUMENT

Mainly used as building identification for locations where the building is not visible to passing traffic.



### REVERSE LIT SIGNAGE

Can be used in most sign styles to provide a contemporary look by an illuminated glow around the letters.

# TEMPORARY SIGNAGE

## BANNERS



### BOULEVARD BANNERS

Full color digital print on 16-21oz Vinyl.



### GRAND FORMAT

Can be printed and installed similar to a billboard.

Banners are a cost effective, but efficient method of getting your message across. They are a temporary signage measure and can be considered a “bridge” to fill a signage gap until permanent signage is installed. However, Boulevard Banners are commonly used to help brand a location and advertise. Banner come in a variety of different materials, weights, and meshes depending on what solution is needed. Banners are generally fabricated from vinyl, but various fabric materials are often used as well.



### TYPICAL VINYL BANNER

Standard durable material that can be mounted in a variety of ways.



# OTHER SIGNAGE

## WRAPS



### UTILITY BOX WRAP

Turns a previously benign, or less than desirable structure, into a tasteful branding option.



### VEHICLE WRAP

Allows you to put your message on a rolling billboard.



### INTERIOR WALL WRAP

Digitally printed and installed graphic can be used to transform an average wall into a work of art.



### BUILDING WRAP

Newly developed vinyl, laminates and aluminum metal foils now provide the capability to enhance an entire building at a cost-effective price. New materials are applied directly to brick or concrete surfaces, including building surfaces, sidewalks, and street surfaces to literally change the landscape.

# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

## DESIGN

- Talk to sign professionals before you build a budget (materials, output, technologies, regulations) to understand your options for the smartest solution.
  - Talk to design professionals with sign experience before you design.
  - Determine a budget BEFORE design.
  - Consider your audience and purpose for the signage.
  - Design should consider who's viewing the sign and from what perspective (pedestrian, vehicle, etc.)
  - Consider frequency of content change/updates; adaptability needs.
  - Be flexible in design considerations to mitigate costs.
  - Consider the big picture, i.e. is there a master signage plan?
  - Keep key stakeholders up-to-date along the way (without designing by committee).
- “Design is thinking made visual.”**  
- Saul Bass

# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

## BUDGET

- Recognize that the budget must include Concept Design, Project Management, Development, Documentation/Fabrication, and Installation.
- Remember to consider your internal costs as well.
- The regulatory environments will impact overall time and effort, and could translate into increased costs.
- Signage characteristics:
  1. Flat versus multi-dimensional.
  2. Lifespan and durability.
  3. Adaptability (ability to change/update)
  4. Quantity of signs / Economies of scale (one vs. many).
  5. Size of sign (transport and logistics), Location / Degree of Difficulty to fabricate and/or install / Equipment required.
  6. Materials and Configuration/ Complexity.
  7. Power Needs / Illumination (How illuminated – ground-lit, internal, neon, LED, solar)

**“Creativity starts when you cut a zero from your budget.”**  
- Jamie Lerner

# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

## REGULATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Read your local and state (or federal) signage code and regulations.
- Read signage guidelines from landlord or district (or both).
- For some installations, jurisdictions will need engineering drawings.
- Meet someone in your local jurisdiction; seek a single point of contact for continuity, if possible.
- Consider location, public vs. private, when seeking permission / permits.
- Recommend that fabrication does not start until all approvals are in place.
- Order utilities check for buried utilities (typically free).
- Expect surprises: Whether regulatory, site issues, or bad weather . . . It will take twice as long as you think!
- If in or near right of way, you will need traffic control plan and/or permits to close lanes or sidewalks and bag parking meters, etc.

**“One of the first regulations might be to think.”**

**- Orlando Ward**



# PART III

## MASTER PLANNING

# PART III - MASTER PLANNING

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

**“Design objects and experiences that connect people to place.”**  
- Kevin Yoshida

### WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A master plan is a blueprint for a future state. It is a comprehensive and strategic document that guides incremental decisions that will synthesize into a cohesive and integrated long-range plan.

#### A. Organize

1. Identify stakeholders and form a task force/working group
2. Commit to a master plan/road map to guide energy and investments
3. Identify the process to build consensus around the strategic master plan
4. Engage a professional graphic designer/environmental graphics specialist to organize the process and outcomes.

#### B. Analyze

1. Define edges and boundaries (physical and perceived)
2. Identify transportation modes that visitors arrive and move in the district (public transit, auto, bicycle, pedestrian)

3. Map assets and distances (businesses, restaurants, galleries, public art, other venues)
4. Define prerequisites (existing district branding, visual identity, design themes)
5. Review codes and other regulations (city sign code, CDOT, design guidelines)
6. Establish Budget and Phasing

#### C. Design

Decide on who or what collaboration (designer, fabricator, artist) has the capabilities to create objects and experiences that will reinforce your district's authenticity and "sense of place."

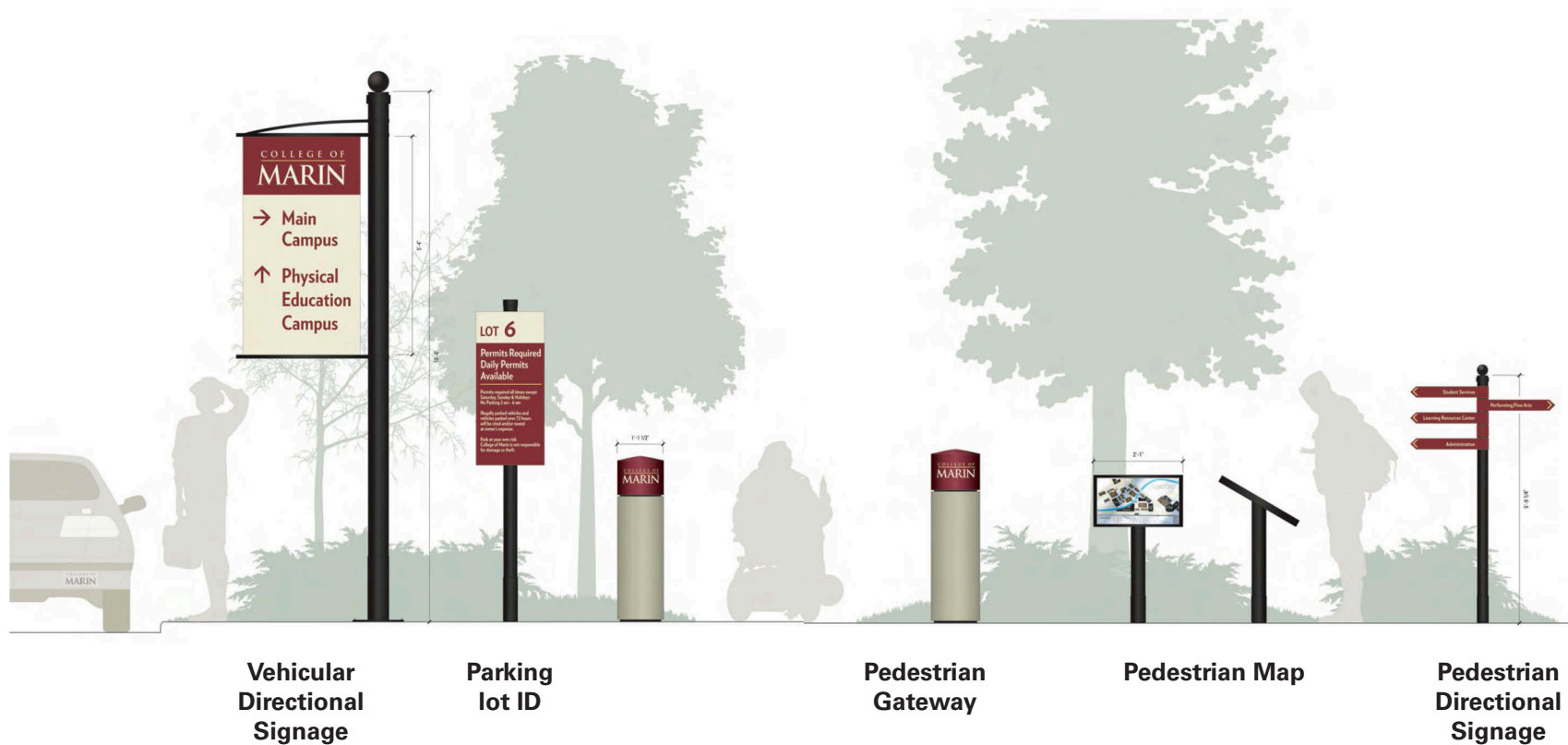
1. Implement
2. Fund
3. Prototype
4. Fabricate
5. Install
6. Celebrate

#### D. Future

1. Maintenance
2. Expansion
3. Flexibility

# MASTER PLANNING

## MARIN UNIVERSITY EXAMPLE



Identify cultural assets, creative venues and the natural circulation paths between them. Develop a hierarchy of signage that addresses how visitors will engage them (arrival, directional, informational).

# MASTER PLANNING

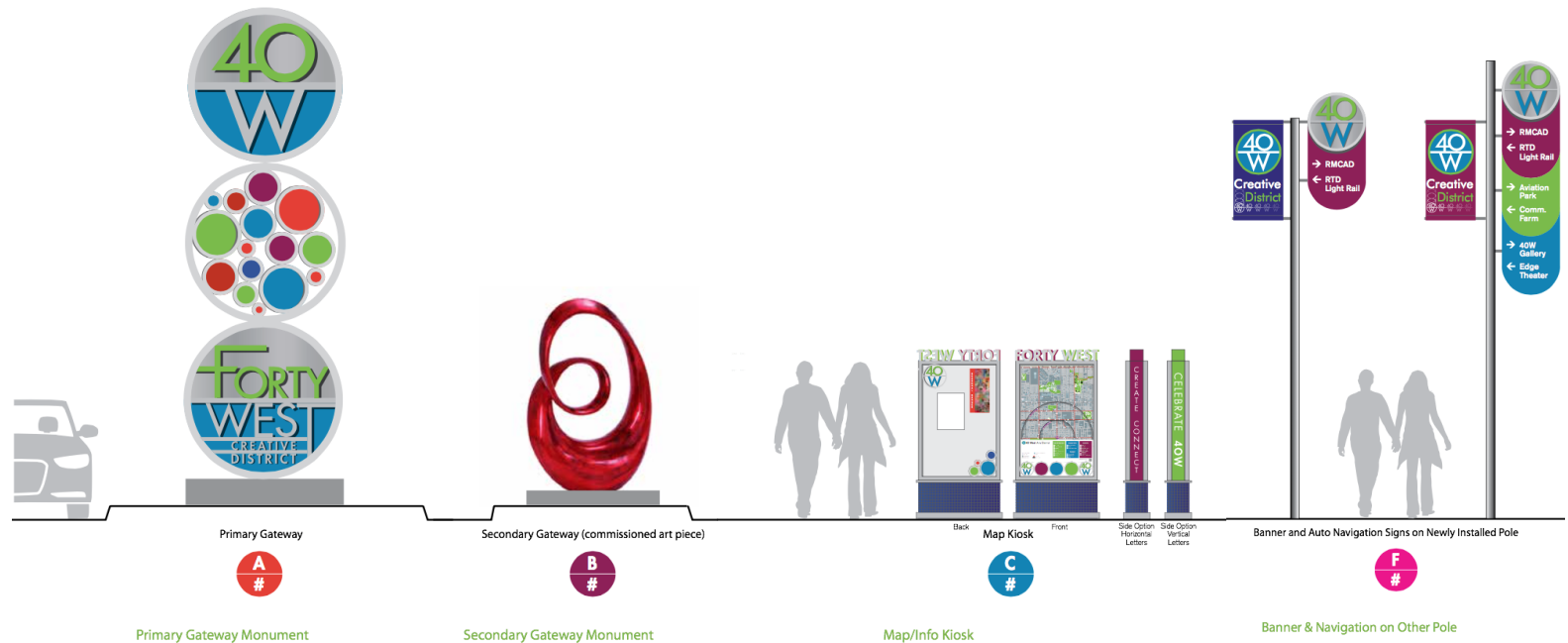
## 40 WEST ARTS EARLY EXAMPLE

### Overall Sign Types

- A #** Primary Gateway Monument
- B #** Secondary Gateway Monument
- C #** Map/Info Kiosk

- D #** Ped Information Sign
- E #** Banner & Auto Navigation Signs on Traffic Signal Pole
- F #** Banner & Navigation on Other Pole

Align signage and wayfinding with existing and evolving creative district branding and marketing initiatives.





# MASTER PLANNING

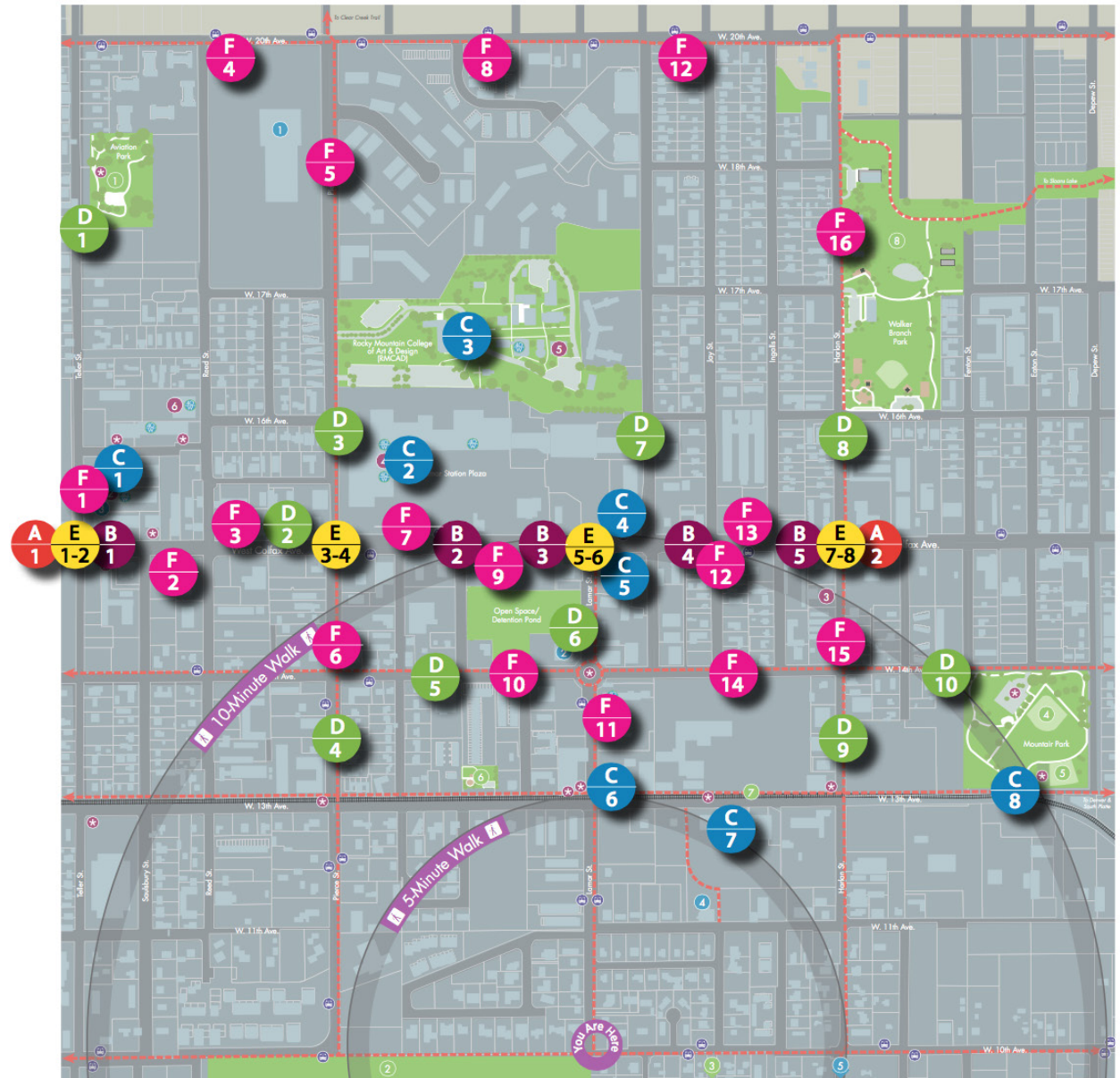
## 40 WEST ARTS MAP SAMPLE

### SIGN LOCATIONS & QUANTITIES

#### Overall Sign Types & Quantities

- A**  
2 Primary Gateway Monument
- B**  
5 Secondary Gateway Monument
- C**  
8 Map/Info Kiosk
- D**  
10 Ped Information Sign
- E**  
8 Banner & Auto Navigation Signs  
on Traffic Signal Pole
- F**  
16 Banner & Navigation on Other  
Pole

Establish the boundaries and edges (both physical and perceived) of your creative district.



# MASTER PLANNING

## AURARIA MAP SAMPLE

- A.1 Vehicular Gateway
- A.2 Vehicular Gateway (Digital)
- B Vehicular Directional
- C Primary Pedestrian Gateway
- D Pedestrian Directional/Gateway
- E Pedestrian Kiosk
- F Banners



Assess arrival and movement within your creative district; address all transportation modalities (public transportation, auto, bicycle, mobility, impaired, pedestrian, strollers, etc.)

# PART IV

NEXT STEPS

# PUTTING THIS IN MOTION

## A PROJECT APPROACH FOR MASTER PLANNING

**“Typically,  
there’s no  
shortage  
of ideas or  
opinions, but  
momentum  
is created  
through the  
ability to  
execute.”**  
- William Marino

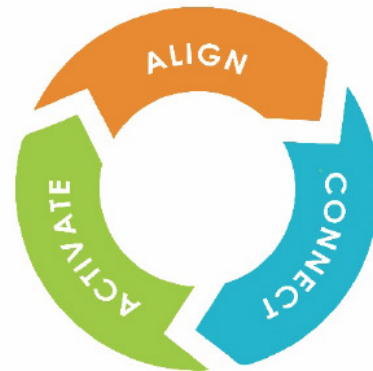
Community signage deserves a deeply collaborative community process, but also needs guidance from experts to avoid the “too many chefs” syndrome. Ideas are always valuable, but the ability to execute is critical. Design and implementation should reinforce common values as well as the community’s shared vision. A shared vision binds people together and points to the future; authenticity embraces the past and connects to the present; collaborative leadership propels execution and creates momentum . . . and momentum makes the vision real and inspires a sense of inevitability for the envisioned future.

- 1.** Review Community Readiness (See Rubric on page 28).
- 2.** Form a core “working” team of 5-10 people, a “Champion’s Group” or Task Force / Committee to lead and manage the overall process.
- 3.** Identify a broad list of community stakeholders (20-30 people) to involve in updates along the way.
- 4.** Publish/Promote Process . . . Hold multiple community meetings to share vision for signage and receive community input.
  - Provide process overview
  - Showcase purpose/rational
  - Identify viable locations
  - Review design considerations (alignment with community values & vision)
- 5.** Issue an RFP / hire a master planning design professional to lead a public process to generate an implementation plan.



# PART IV - NEXT STEPS

## RUBRIC FOR THE 10 COMMUNITY READINESS PRINCIPLES™



### SELF ASSESSMENT:

Developed through direct experience and field testing by The Creativity Lab of Colorado, this self-assessment instrument can be used at the beginning of a community engagement process as a discussion starter (or benchmark) and as an ongoing tool to evaluate progress.

### DIRECTIONS:

Rate your community on each of the 10 Community Readiness Principles using a scale of 1 to 10. Your rating should be based on your opinion and experience. A rating of "1" is the lowest, meaning little or no progress in this area, and a rating of "10" is the highest, meaning you believe your community has achieved the highest level in this category.

		LOWEST					HIGHEST				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ALIGN	Vision Clarity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Political Will	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Strategic Structure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CONNECT	Institutional Support	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Business Support	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Community Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ACTIVATE	Community Engagement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Funding Mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Functional Capabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	On-site Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

# PART V

## APPENDIX

## PART V - APPENDIX

### CONTRIBUTORS



#### **WILLIAM MARINO**

William Marino, entrepreneur, writer, and public servant, is co-founder of The Creativity Lab. He also leads the Lakewood-West Colfax BID and is a champion for 40 West Arts District. Earlier, Marino built and sold several companies in the publishing and technology sectors, served two-terms as planning commissioner, and chaired numerous task forces on land use. As a lifelong student of Creativity and Quantum Physics, he seeks unifying solutions through a process that creates purposeful friction, which despite inevitable uncertainty, unleashes the potential for productive outcomes. Marino, author and speaker on entrepreneurship and community engagement, serves on a number of boards for nonprofits and start-up companies.

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#### **KEVIN YOSHIDA**

Kevin Kazuhiro Yoshida is an entrepreneur, architect, designer and co-founder of The Creativity Lab. Yoshida, a Denver native who received his architectural degree from the University of Southern California, returned to practice architecture in Colorado and is currently CEO of Ideate Design. He has earned a reputation as an insightful designer who upholds both ethics and aesthetics. He is focused on developing relationships with people and organizations that share the core values of questioning and disrupting the status quo. As an active advocate for his community, Yoshida serves as the Board President of the Lakewood-West Colfax Business Improvement District and is a on the Board of Directors for 40 West Arts.

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#### **DAN LUNDIN**

Dan Lundin has been co-owner of Banner Signs since 2007. A family owned business, Banner Signs has developed a nation-wide clientele and specializes in a wide array of custom signage solutions including indoor and outdoor signs; large format printing; wall and window graphics; custom decals; routed signage; design; and consultation. Dan and his staff pride themselves on providing some of the best customer service in the industry. Dan believes that “good” business and community involvement are inextricably linked. He is a founding member of the 40 West Arts District and Board Chairman of the West Colfax Community Association.

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## PART V - APPENDIX

### CONTRIBUTORS



#### DUSTIN MONROE

Dustin Monroe is a co-owner at BSC Signs and Custom. BSC has been manufacturing since 1999, and specializes in large custom projects including: Signage, architectural elements, and lighting. BSC has a team of expert craftsmen, creative designers, and business professionals that provide some of the most unique and identifiable signage in the industry. BSC works with everyone from local startups to large national companies to provide the best value in signage, both in service and in end product.

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#### CRAIG ROUSE

R Design LLC is a multidisciplinary design consultancy, involved in all areas of visual communications, including environmental graphics and wayfinding sign programs, graphic identity, and promotional print. R Design solves design problems for clients from architects, corporations, and real estate developers to cultural, educational, and non-profit organizations. Tackling challenging projects, varied in nature, size, and scope, is our primary strength. Our reputation is built on our ability to listen intently, responsibly, and decisively to our client's needs. Regardless of client size or project scope, our involvement remains the same – ensuring effective, appropriate, and timeless design solutions.

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#### MIRANDA SAMON

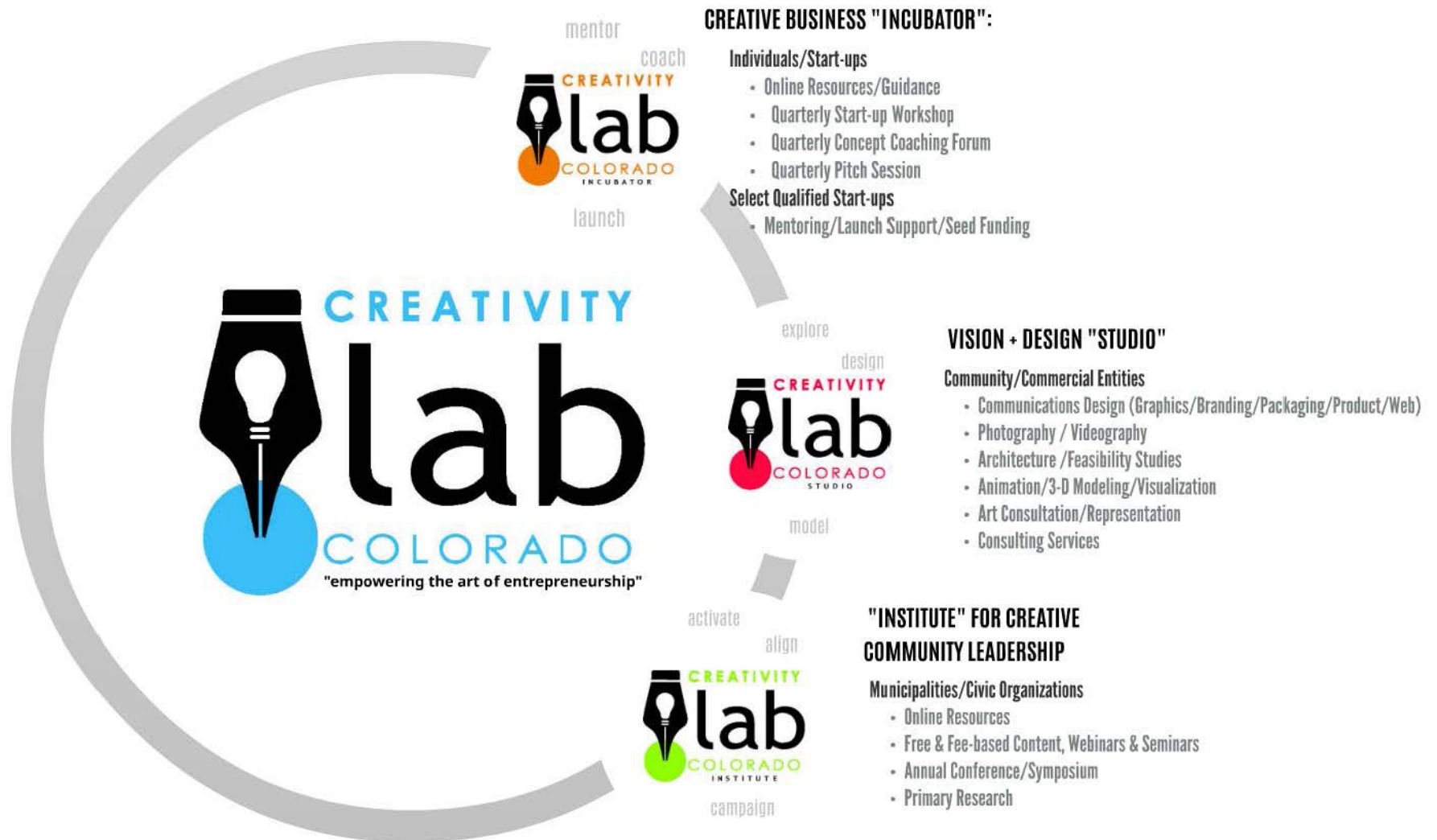
Graphic Designer and Hand Letterer Miranda Samon was formally trained in Communication Design and serves as one of the youngest art directors in Denver. She works for the 40 West Arts District while maintaining her personal design and lettering business. She brings a fresh perspective as an up and coming design entrepreneur and has been deeply involved in the early years and branding of 40 West Arts District. A native Denverite, Miranda has lived and traveled to many countries around the world, which feeds her a diverse perspective to suit a wide range of needs. She cares deeply about the impact of good design on culture and this value both inspires and shines through in her work.

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# PART V - APPENDIX

## ABOUT THE CREATIVITY LAB OF COLORADO



## PART V - APPENDIX

### ABOUT THE CREATIVITY LAB OF COLORADO

**The Lab, a public-private nonprofit partnership in 40 West Arts Creative District, is a collection of collaborative capabilities, centered around creativity, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit.**

**The Creativity Lab of Colorado (the Lab)** is a collection of collaborative capabilities, centered around creativity, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit. A public-private nonprofit partnership, formed in 40 West Arts District and supported by Colorado Creative Industries, Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design and other community partners, the Lab serves students and start-ups, emerging entrepreneurs and existing businesses, creatives and community leaders through three focus areas—each in its own way aimed at empowering the art of entrepreneurship. The Lab's three distinct focus areas are:

- The creative business INCUBATOR provides guidance for individuals, new and early-stage start-up companies through a structured process that includes group coaching, mentorship programs, regularly scheduled “pitch” sessions, and, in selected cases, launch support and, through its partners, seed funding.
- The vision & design STUDIO provides a tangible next step for those seeking to bring abstract concepts to life through visioning, designing and modeling processes. This may involve logo design and branding, product designing packaging, or visioning and modeling for real estate development/re-development or space planning projects.
- The INSTITUTE for creative community leadership involves a process called Envizioneering™ — “Imagineering for communities,” which couples collaborative community development with creative organizational dynamics—and adds in a healthy portion of entrepreneurial vigor; it is mindful leadership, infused with creativity and anchored in service.

