

DENVER CREATES

Digging into the Data

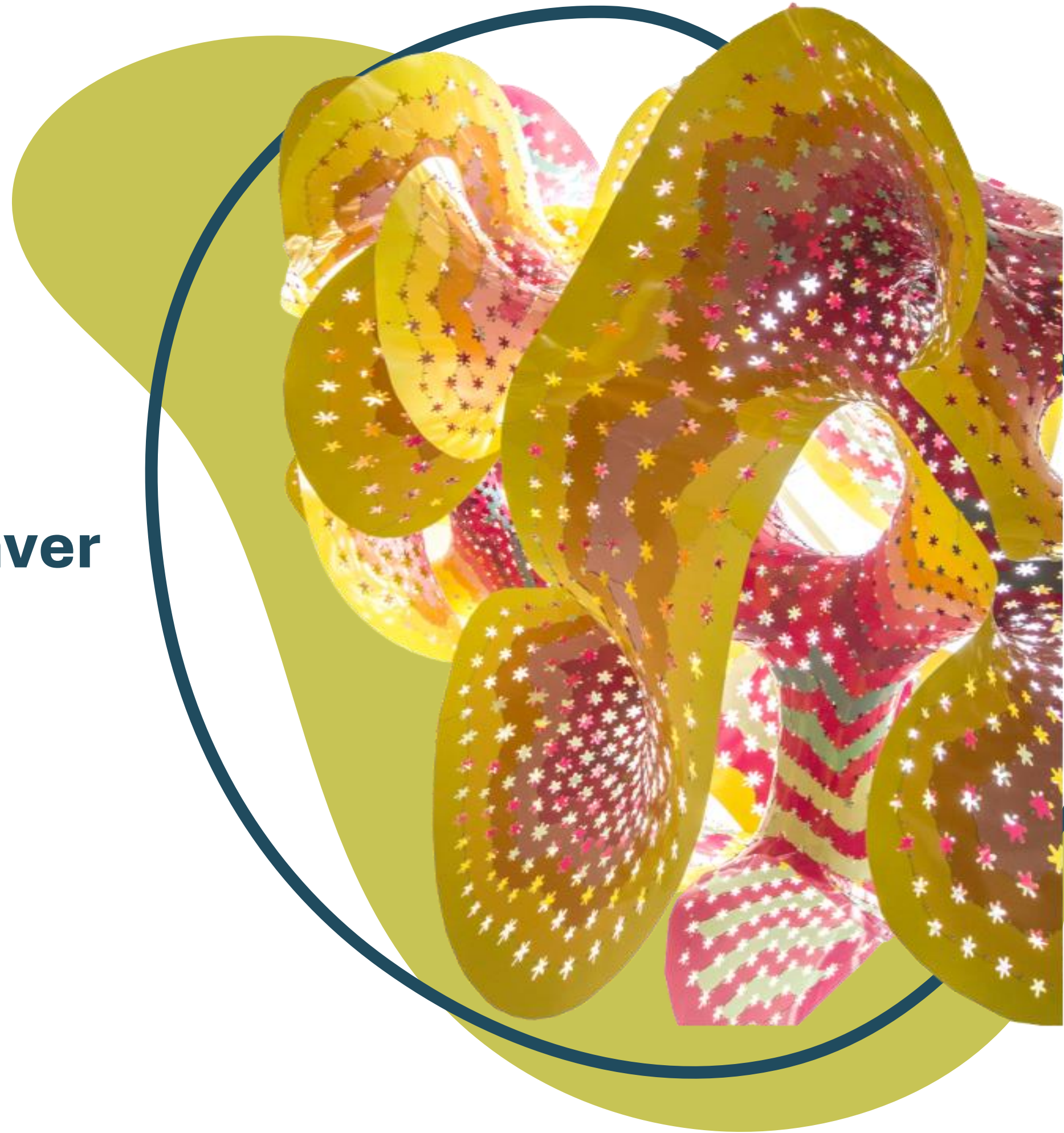


Welcome! Please take a few minutes to fill out our pre-event survey.



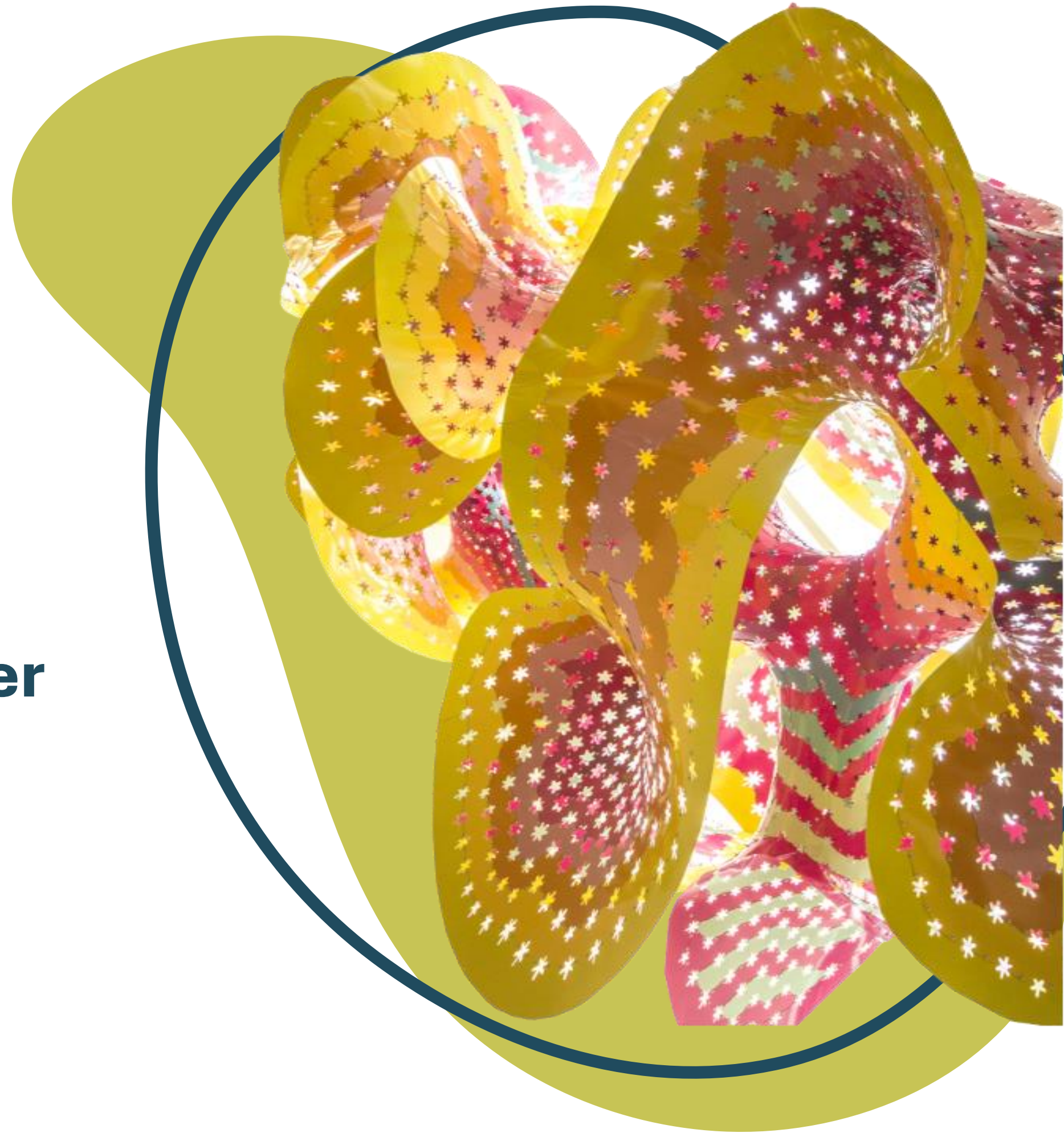
NIKKI SWARN

**Creative and Commissioner, Denver
Commission on Cultural Affairs**



TARIANA NAVAS- NIEVES

**Deputy Executive Director, Denver
Arts & Venues**



Today's Program

- Welcome
- DENVER CREATES: An Overview
- The Data: An Early Start
- The Data: How it Informed DENVER CREATES
- A Local Creative Story: DENVER CREATES Data as a Tool
- Q&A



Framing The Session

Today Is...

- An **extension** of the original **DENVER CREATES** presentation
- A **review of the data sources** used throughout the cultural planning process
- To provide **clarity and transparency** on where the data came from and how it informed our three commitments

Why This Matters

- Ensures everyone has a **shared understanding** of the inputs that shaped the work so far
- Establishes a **clear foundation** for upcoming conversations and engagement



DENVER CREATES

A Collective Commitment to the Arts



CULTURAL PLANNING IN DENVER

A Cultural Plan plays a key role in shaping a city's creative future and serves as a framework and practical guide to strengthen and grow the arts and culture ecosystem.



EVOLUTION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A **Cultural Plan** plays a key role in shaping a city’s creative future and serves as a framework and practical guide to strengthen and grow the arts and culture ecosystem.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

DENVER CREATES was built on community voices.

Research included:

- **Community Engagement:** Over 2,500 voices were heard.
- **Arts and Culture Sector-Specific Research:** More than 100 in-depth interviews were conducted.
- **Supplemental Data Analysis:** Trends in participation and funding were examined.
- **Collaborative Planning:** Community advisors, focus groups and targeted outreach ensured representation.



THE GUIDING VISION OF DENVER CREATES

To grow and strengthen Denver's
arts and culture ecosystem for
everyone to enjoy.



THREE COLLECTIVE COMMITMENTS

- 1. Broaden Access to Arts and Culture**
- 2. Cultivate the Cultural Community**
- 3. Support the Economic Vitality of Denver's Cultural Sector**



SHARED COMMITMENT #1

BROADEN ACCESS TO ARTS & CULTURE

Expands access to arts and culture by:

- Advancing equity in funding
- Reducing barriers to participation and strengthening neighborhood-based cultural initiatives
- Ensuring inclusivity and engagement for all Denver residents



SHARED COMMITMENT #2

CULTIVATE THE CULTURAL COMMUNITY

Strengthens Denver's Arts and Cultural Sector by:

- Promoting Denver's arts scene
- Cross-sector partnerships
- Artists directly involved in civic and community decision making
- Training for youth and early-career artists



SHARED COMMITMENT #3

SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC VITALITY OF DENVER'S CULTURAL SECTOR

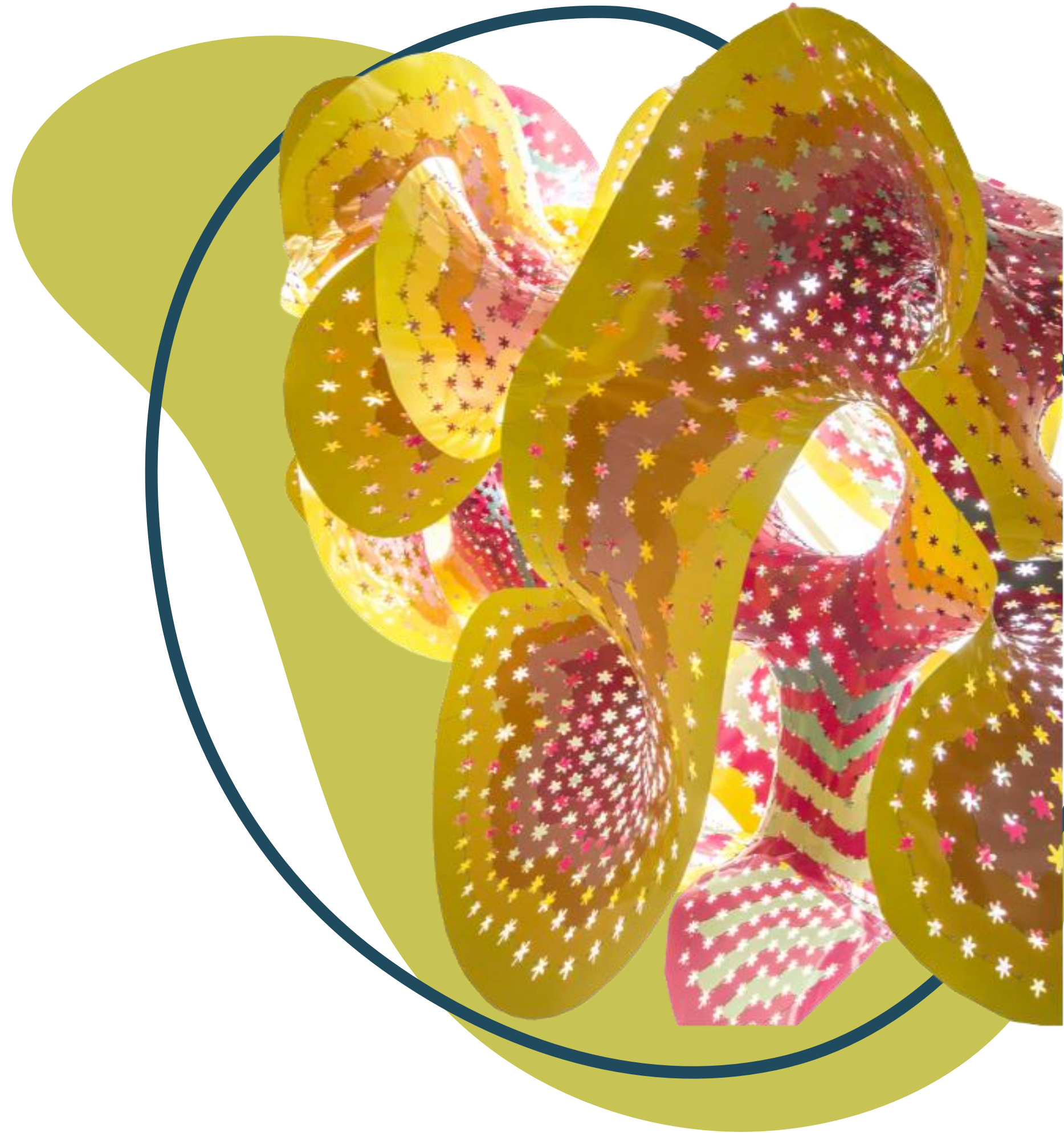
Increases Resources for Arts & Culture to drive a strong economy through:

- Increasing access to affordable spaces – rehearsal, performance and studio
- Cultivating arts and culture philanthropic funding
- Ensuring artists see a future career in Denver



Lynn Osgood, Ph.D.

**Executive Director/CEO
Civic Arts**



AN EARLY START

1. Cultural Planning in a Pandemic
2. Starting with Values
3. Working with Qualitative Data



INTERESTING TIMES

*What set this
planning
process apart?*



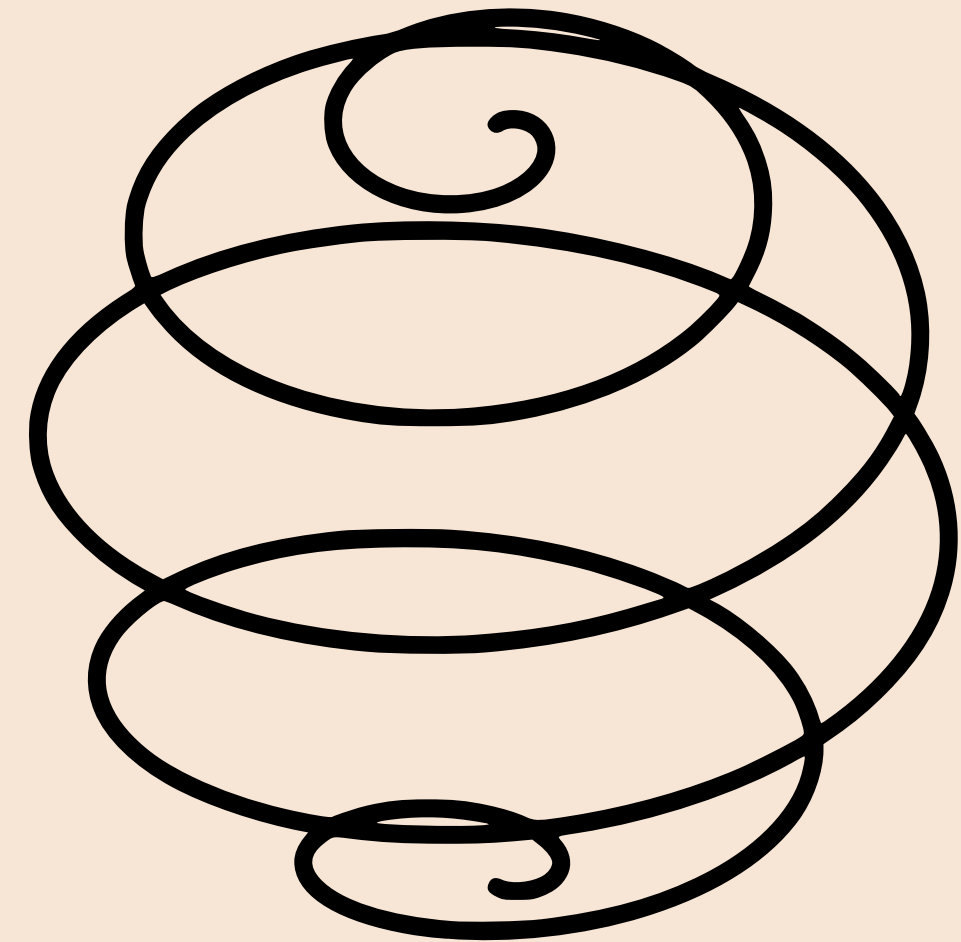
SIDE BY SIDE

Qualitative vs Quantitative Data

	Qualitative	Quantitative
<i>Focus</i>	Meaning, experience, perception, and context behind cultural life in a community	Patterns, trends, and scale of cultural behaviors, resources, and impacts
<i>What it looks like</i>	Non-numerical—stories, words, observations, images	Numerical—counts, percentages, and rates
<i>How it’s collected</i>	Interviews, focus groups, ethnography, walking tours, participatory mapping, cultural asset storytelling	Surveys, census data analysis, GIS mapping, economic impact studies, participation statistics
<i>Its strengths</i>	Captures nuance, local knowledge, community history, informal/underground cultural practices; builds trust	Demonstrates scale, frequency, disparities, and resource distribution; supports funding and policy arguments
<i>Its limitations</i>	Harder to generalize; labor-intensive; can be seen as subjective	Can miss nuance; may overlook marginalized or informal cultural expressions that aren’t easily counted.
<i>Its role in planning</i>	Helps planners understand cultural values, tensions, and stories shaping a place	Provides the data backbone for decisions about investment, equity, and resource allocation

GROUNDNED THEORY

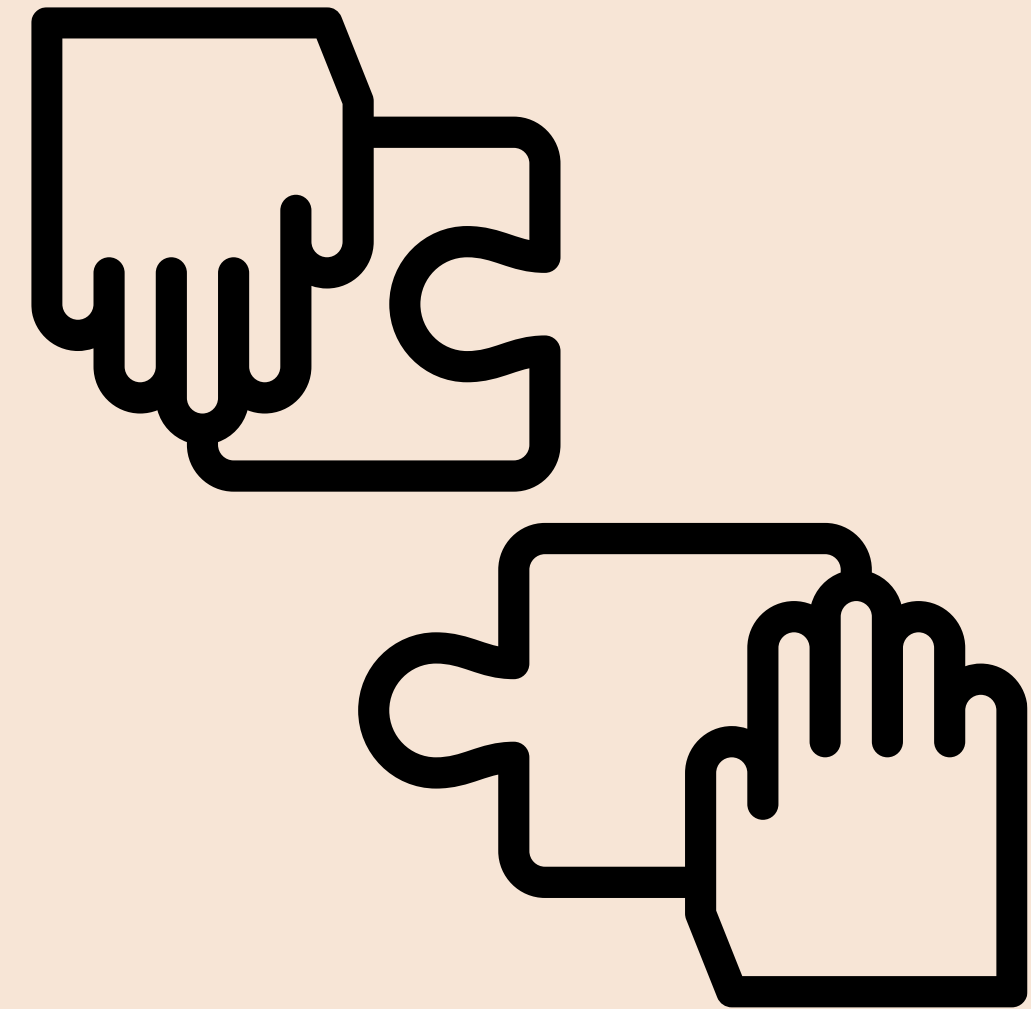
- Little is known about a phenomenon
- You want to understand **processes** and **experiences** in depth
- You want to avoid imposing your assumptions on participants



Created by Lucas Rathgeb
from Noun Project

IMPACTS & IMPLICATIONS

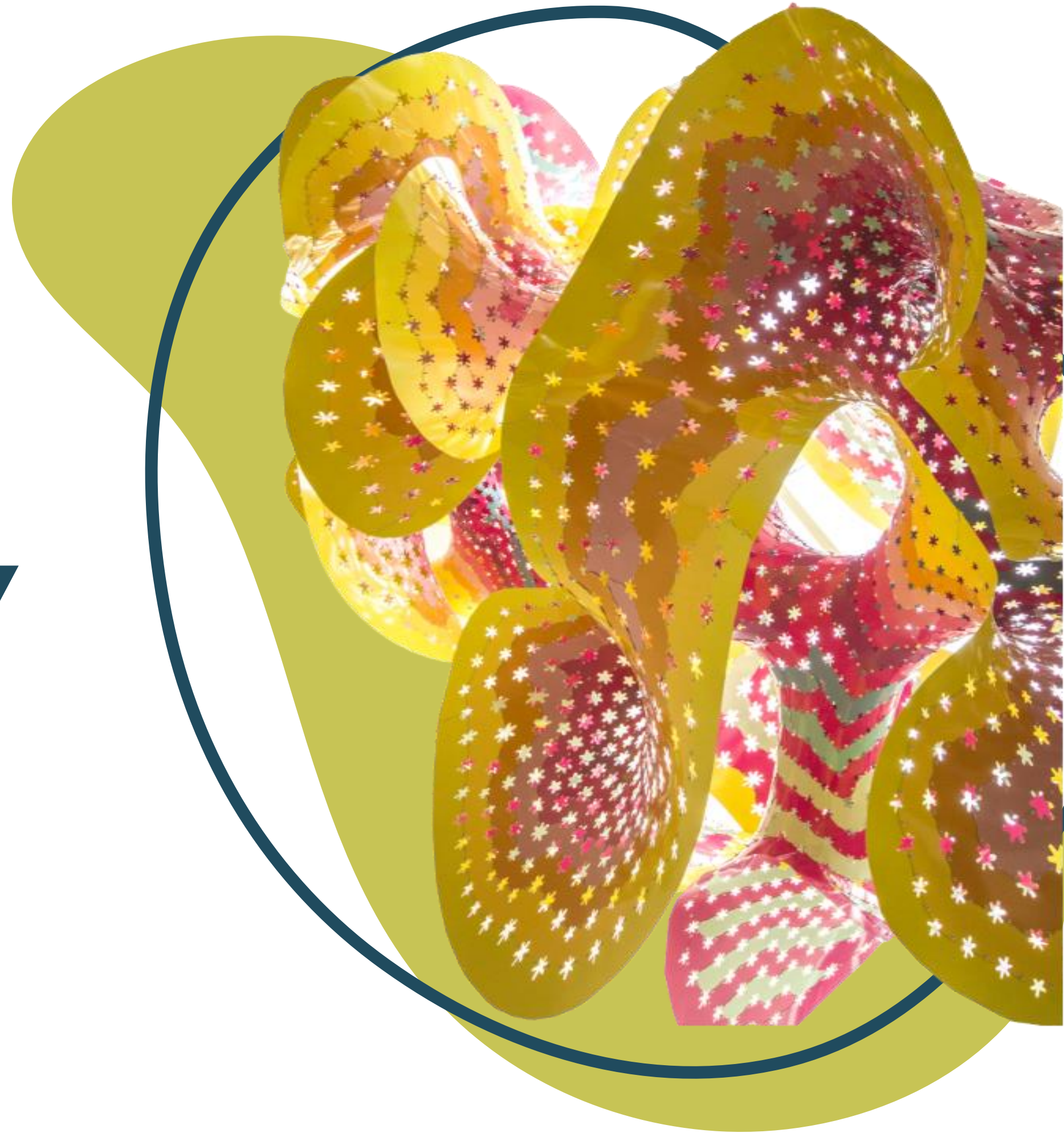
We were happy to learn that there is a resonance between our initial findings and the post-pandemic perspectives.



Created by Berkah Icon

KATE DARWENT & CATHERINE ROCKEY

Corona Insights

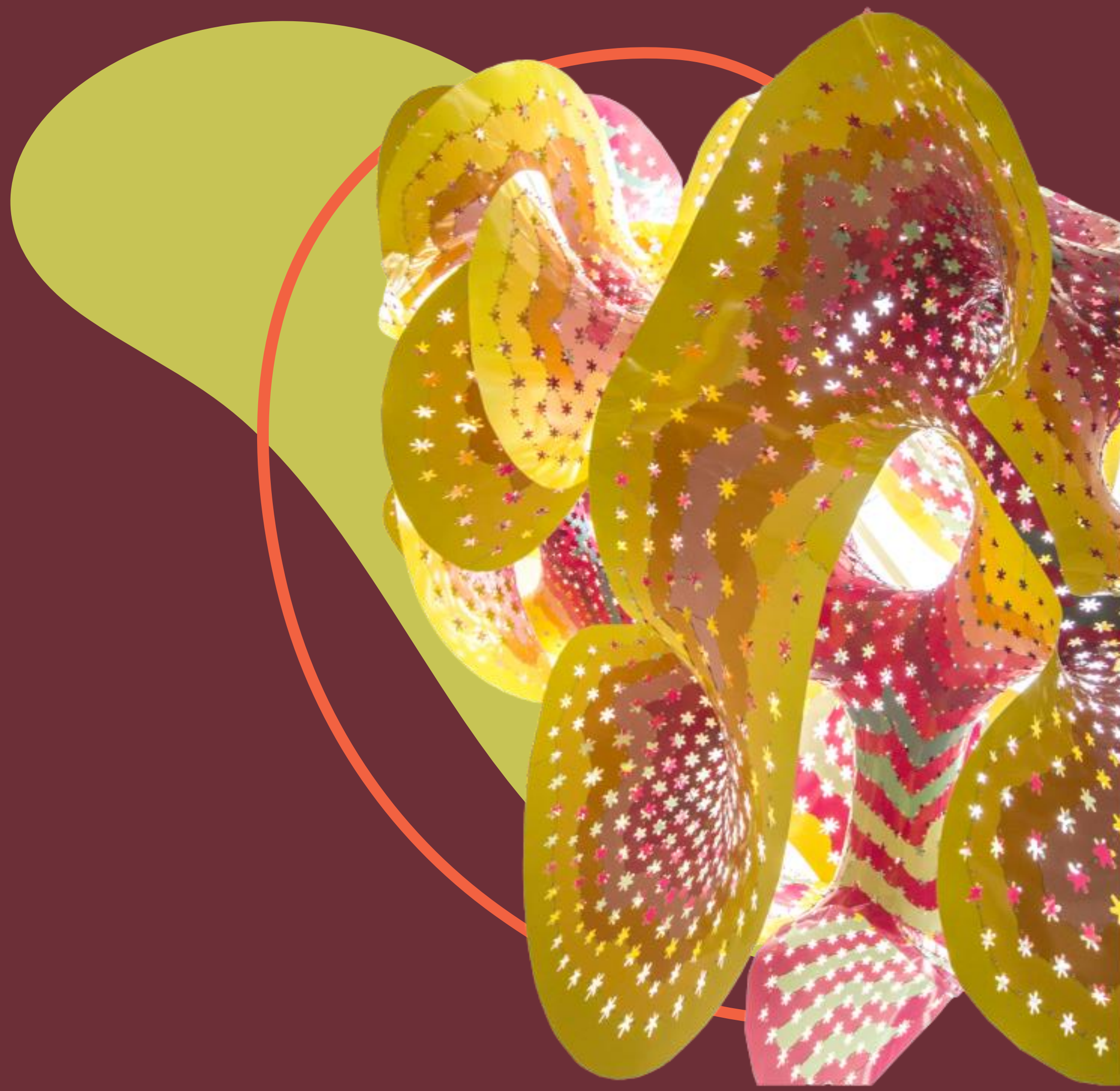


DENVER CREATES:

2024 RESEARCH REVIEW



OVERVIEW



Methodology

Survey



Who: Denver residents (including target samples of Black and Latino residents)



What: Survey completed online or on paper, in English and Spanish



When: Between February and April 2024 (previously conducted in 2013, 2017, and 2020)



How many: 730 usable surveys were collected (including 88 completed survey from Black residents and 176 from Latino residents)

Interview:



Who: Denver artists, cultural workers and organizations recruited by Denver Arts & Venues seeking a mix of disciplines, roles, and identities.



What: In-depth interviews about the sector's evolving needs, strengths and barriers. Conducted virtually via video by Bobby LeFebre and Tariana Navas-Nieves.



When: Initial interviews conducted in 2021 and repeated in 2024



How many: Over 100

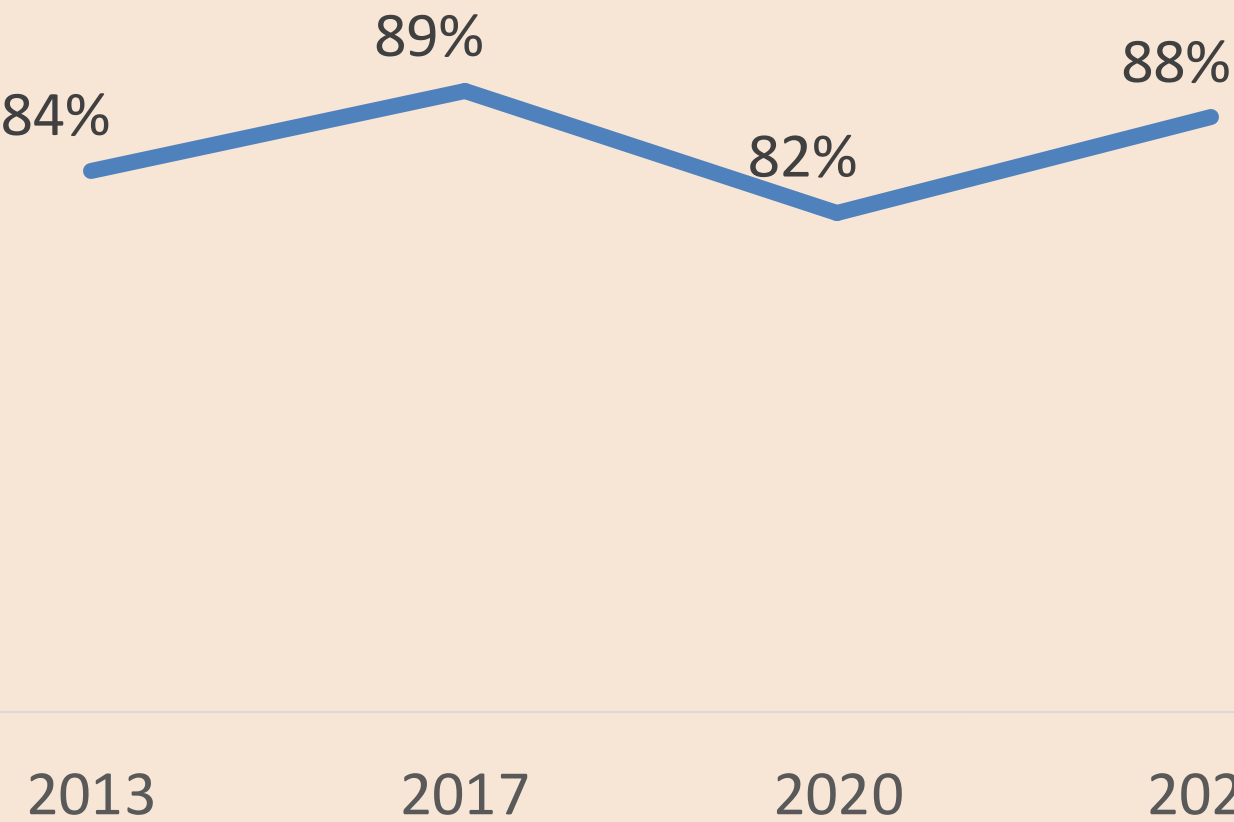
SURVEY RESULTS



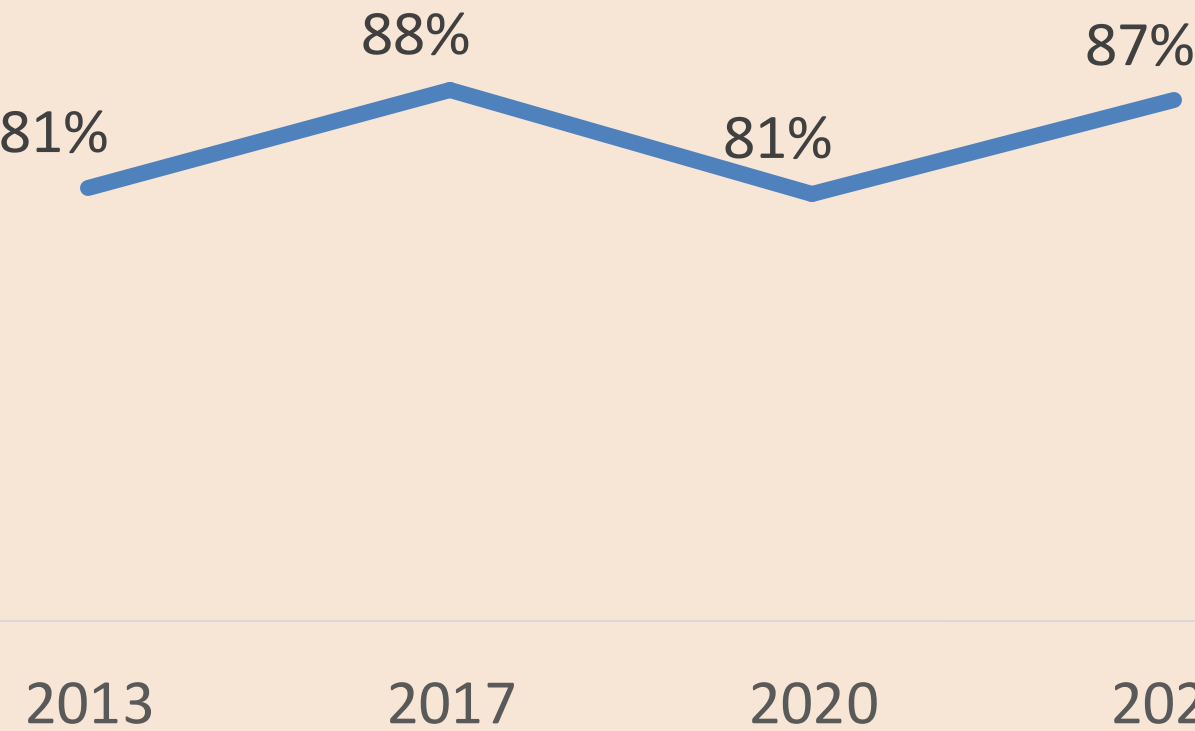
Perceptions of Arts, Culture & Creativity in Denver

Arts, Culture and Creativity in Denver...

Brings communities together



Support and create active and unique neighborhoods



Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #1, Strategy #3

Q5: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what arts, culture and creativity do for the city of Denver?

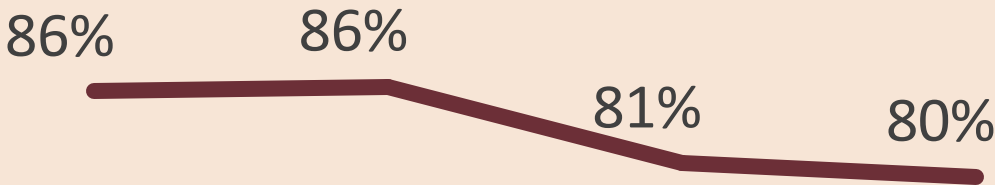
Perceptions of Arts, Culture & Creativity in Denver

Arts, Culture and Creativity in Denver...

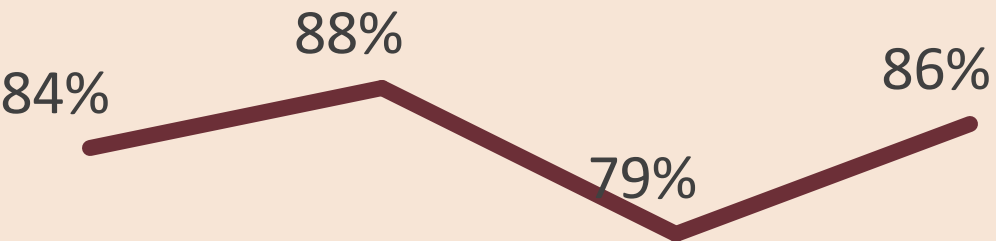
Contribute to Denver's economy



Improve Denver's national reputation



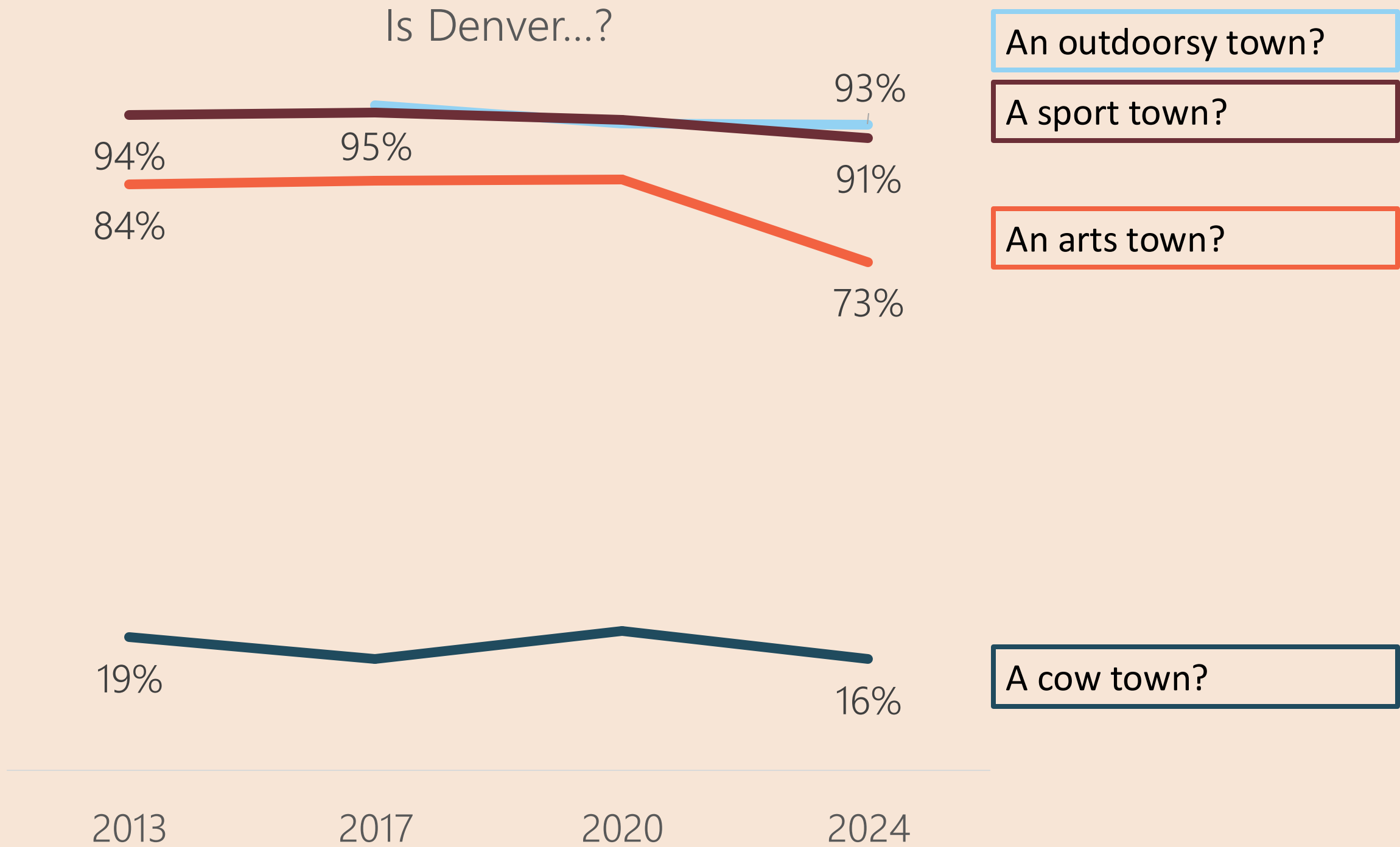
Attract tourism



Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #2, Strategy #1

Q5: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what arts, culture and creativity do for the city of Denver?

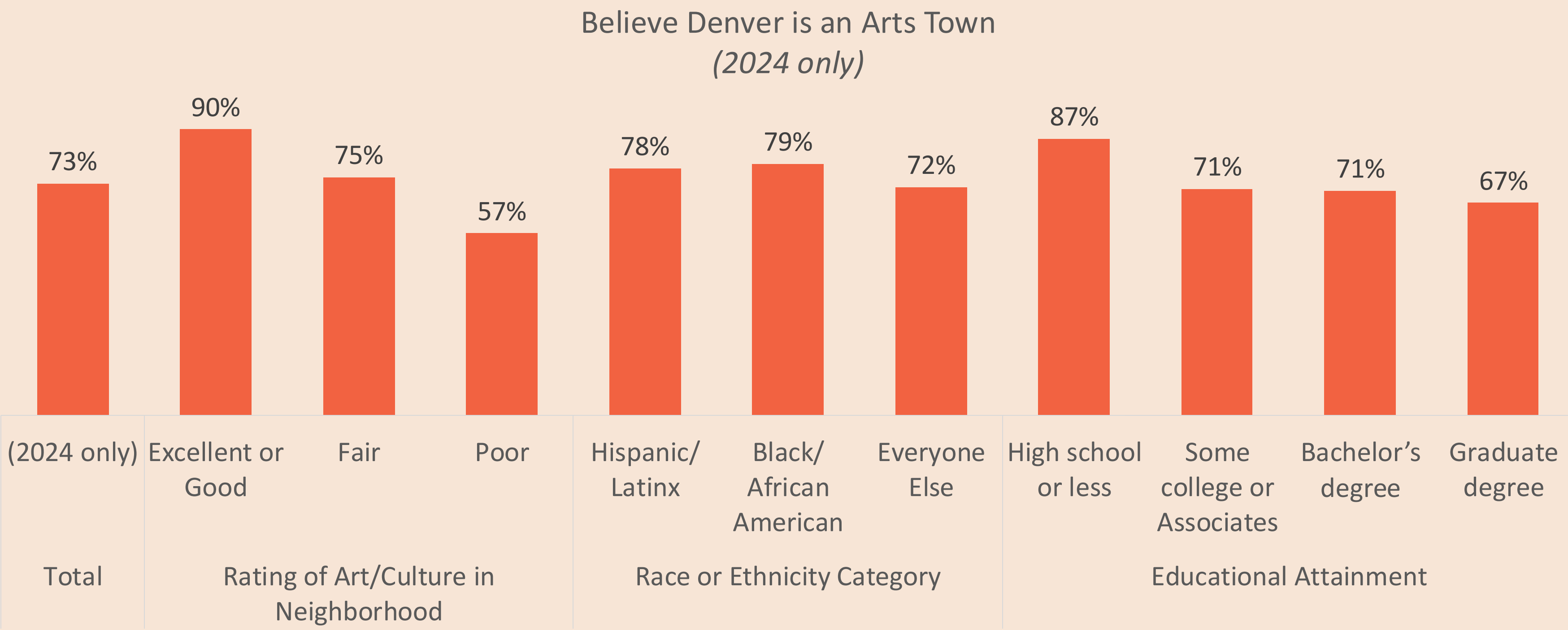
Perceptions of Arts, Culture & Creativity in Denver



Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #2, Strategy #1

Q1: Is Denver a(n)...

Perceptions of Arts, Culture & Creativity in Denver



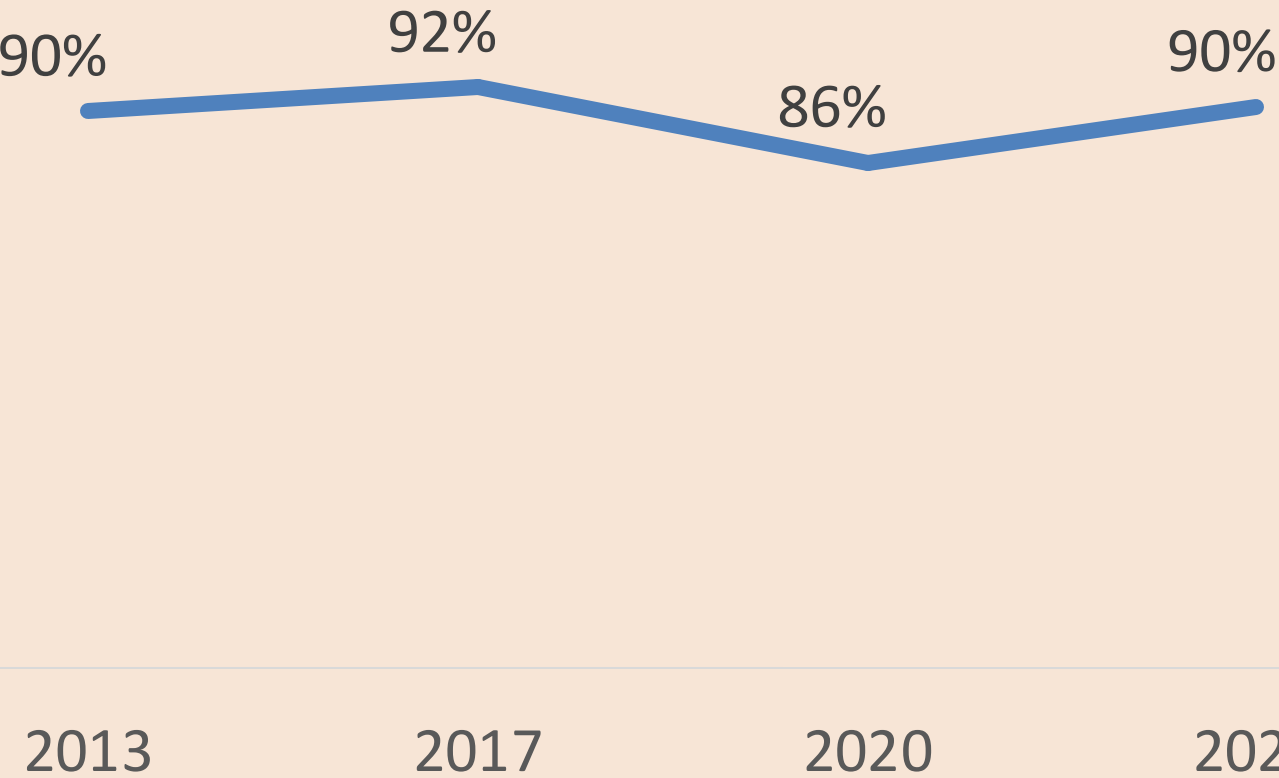
Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #2, Strategy #1

Q1: Is Denver a(n)...

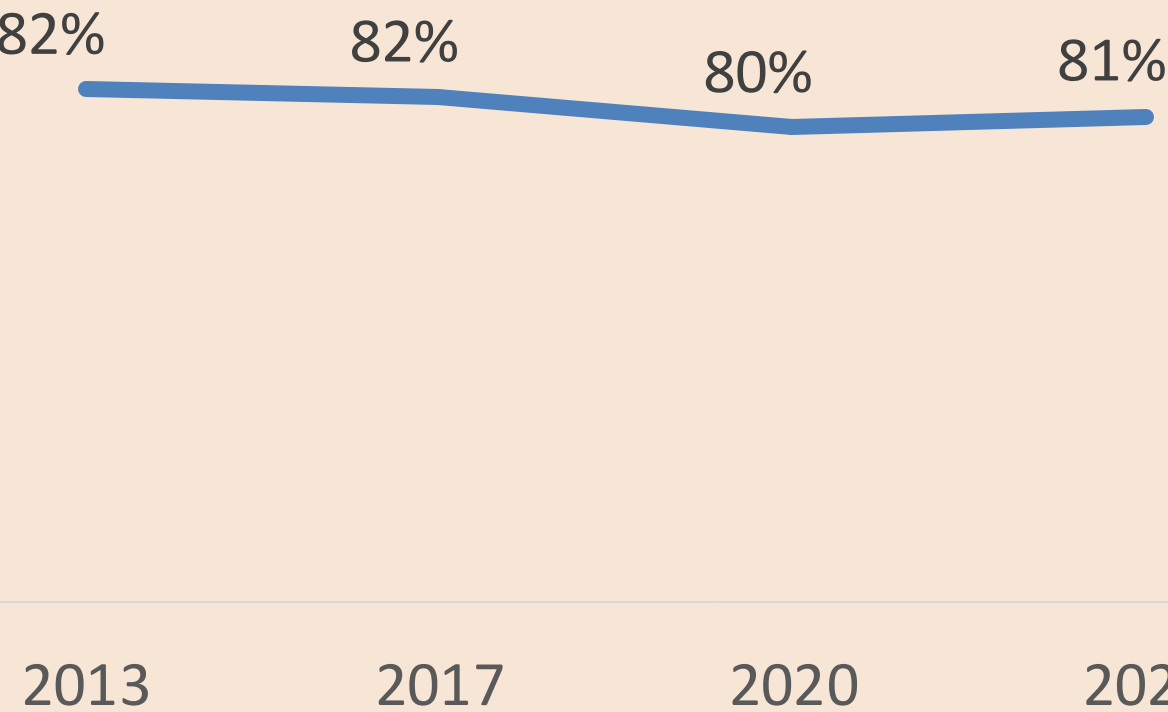
Perceptions of Arts, Culture & Creativity in Denver

Arts, Culture and Creativity in Denver...

Provide opportunities for people of all ages to learn



Represent our diverse communities



Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #2, Strategy #4

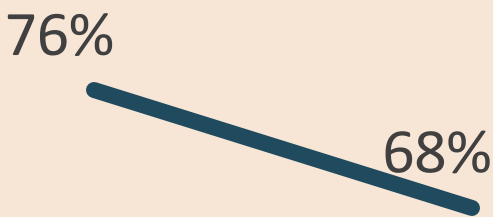
Q5: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what arts, culture and creativity do for the city of Denver?

Perceptions of Arts, Culture & Creativity in Denver

Arts, Culture and Creativity in Denver...

Help our communities heal during a crisis

Help address issues of racial injustice



2013

2017

2020

2024

2013

2017

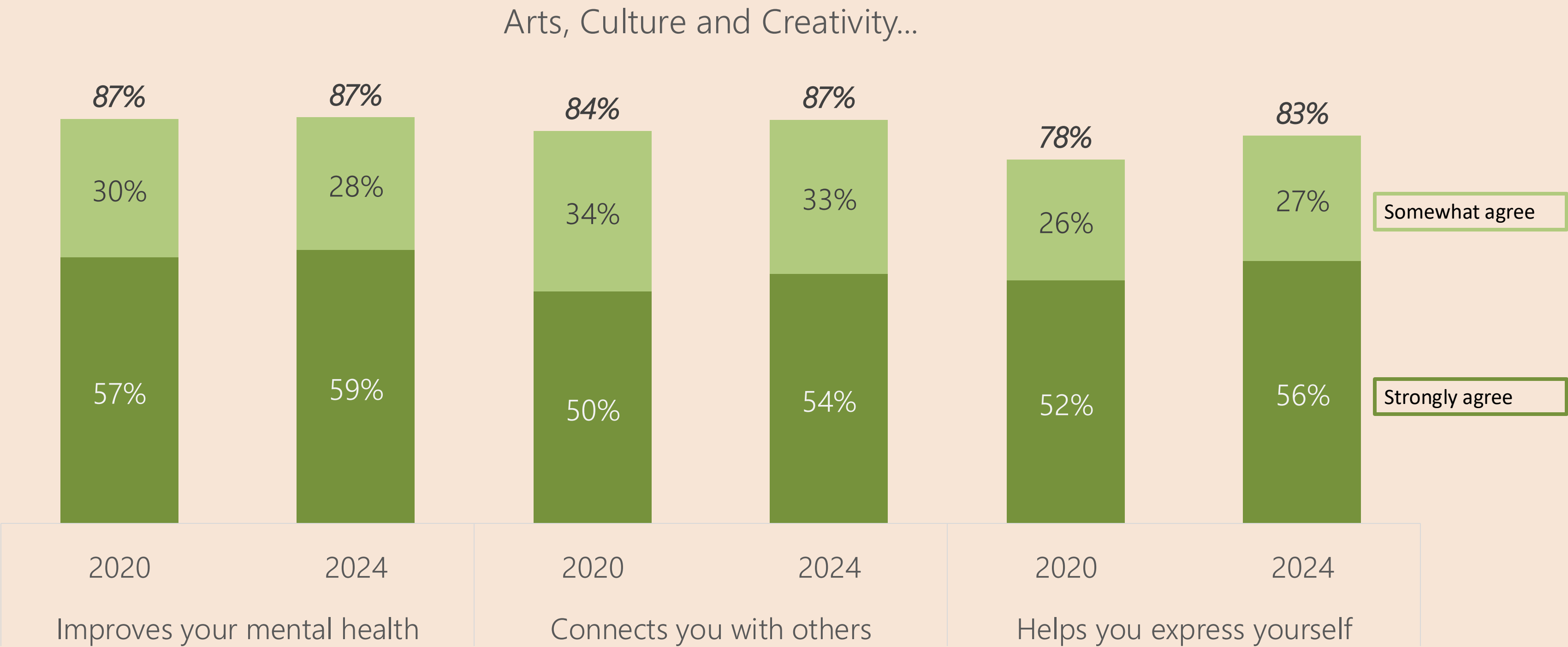
2020

2024

Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #2, Strategy #2

Q5: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what arts, culture and creativity do for the city of Denver?

Perceptions of Arts, Culture & Creativity in Denver



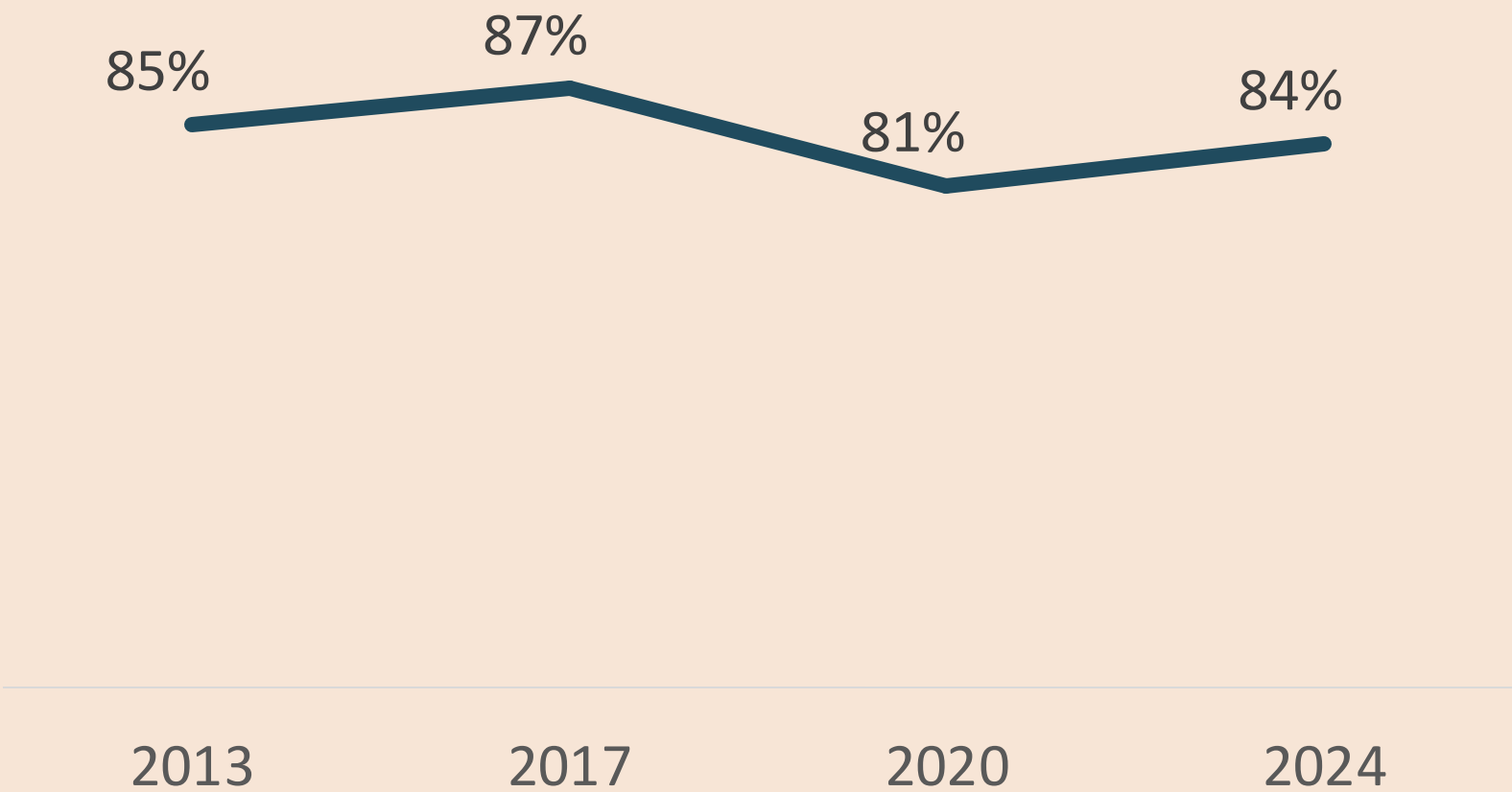
Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #2, Strategy #2

Q6: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what arts, culture and creativity do for you personally? Arts, culture and creativity...

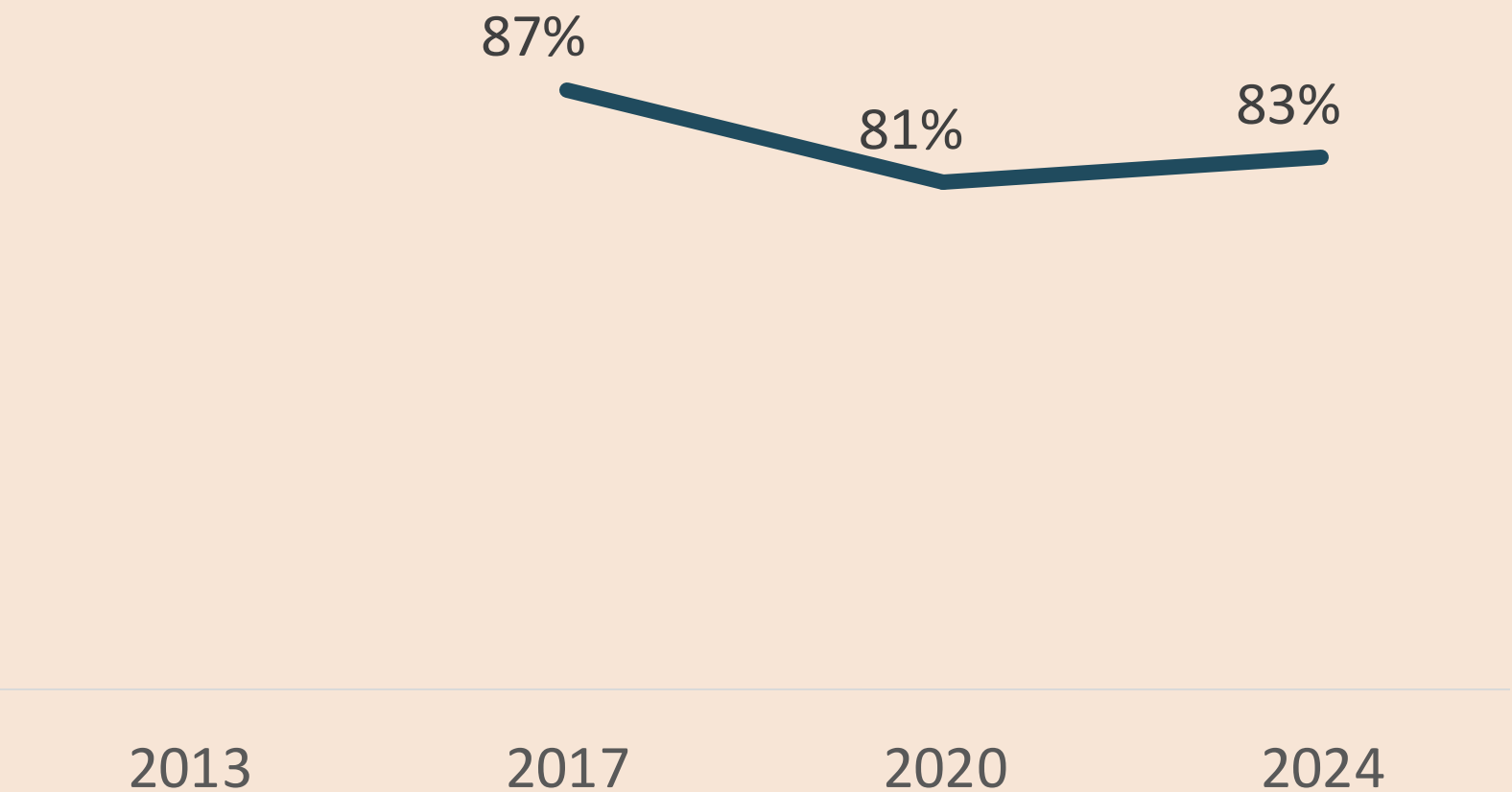
Perceptions of Arts, Culture & Creativity in Denver

Arts, Culture and Creativity in Denver...

Increase quality of life and livability



Cause positive changes in our society

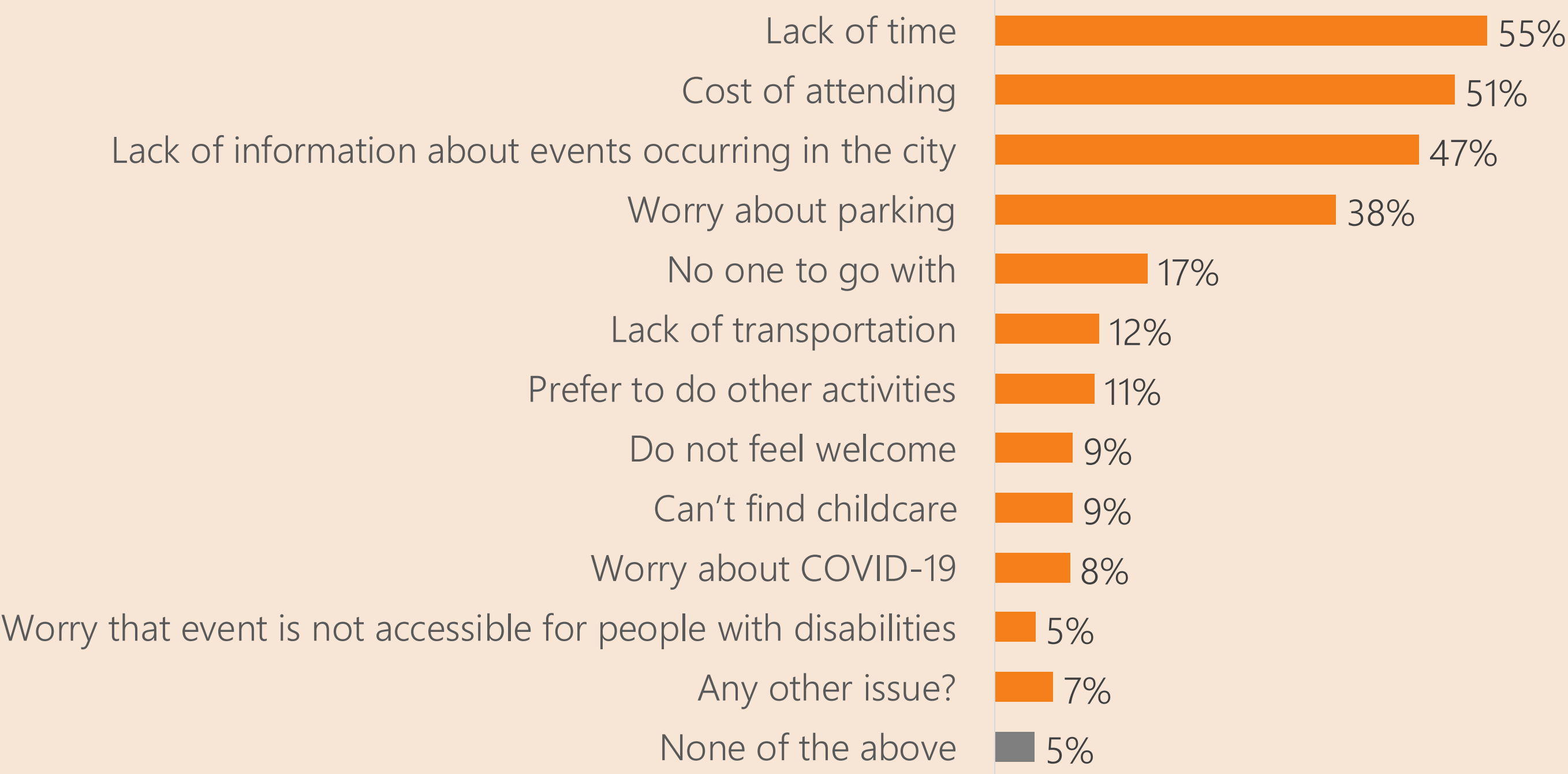


Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #2, Strategy #2

Q5: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what arts, culture and creativity do for the city of Denver?

Barriers

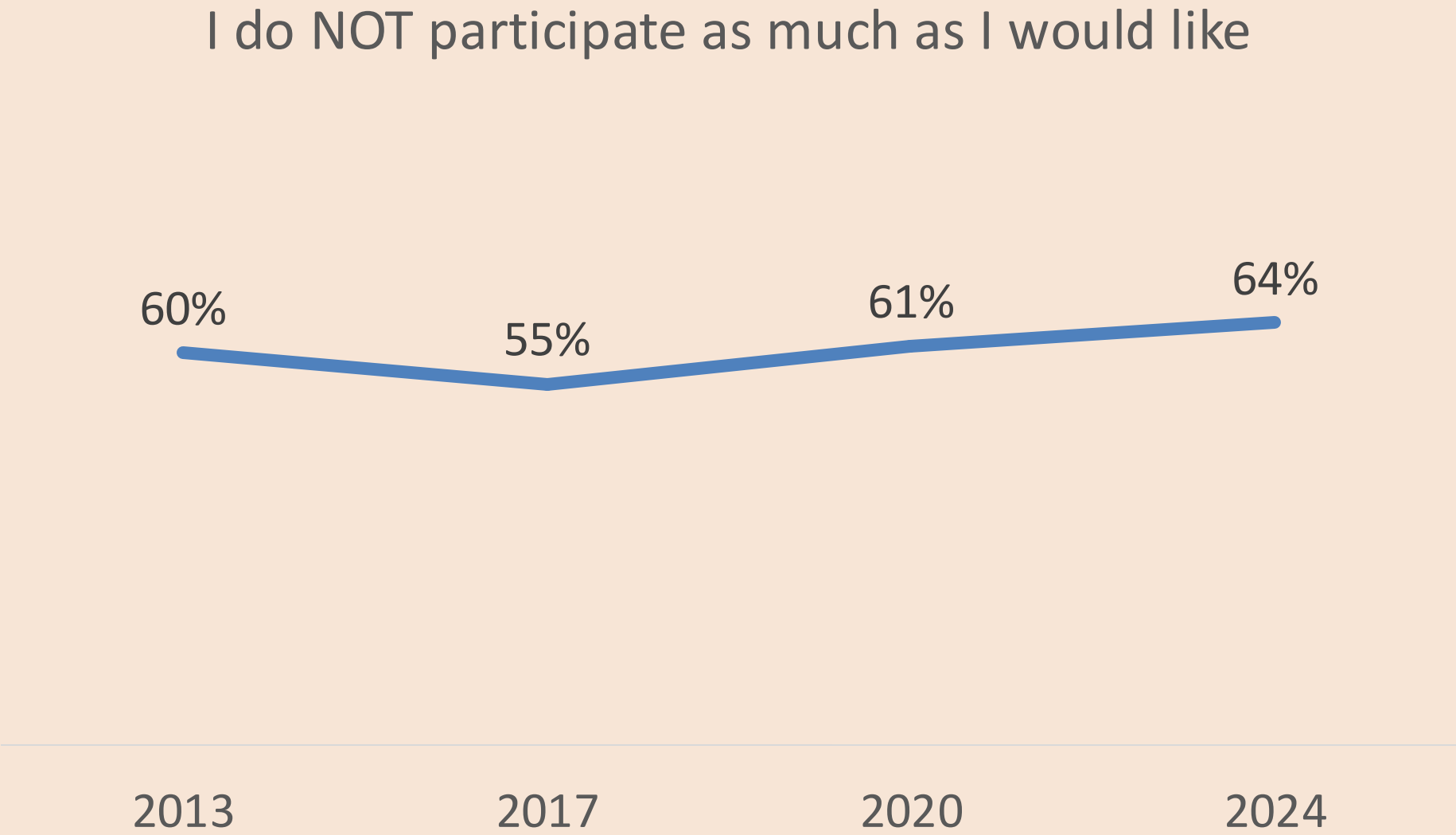
Barriers to attending Arts, Cultural and Creative Events



Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #1, Strategy #2

Q10. Do any of the following issues prevent you from attending arts, cultural, and creative events more frequently? Check all that apply.

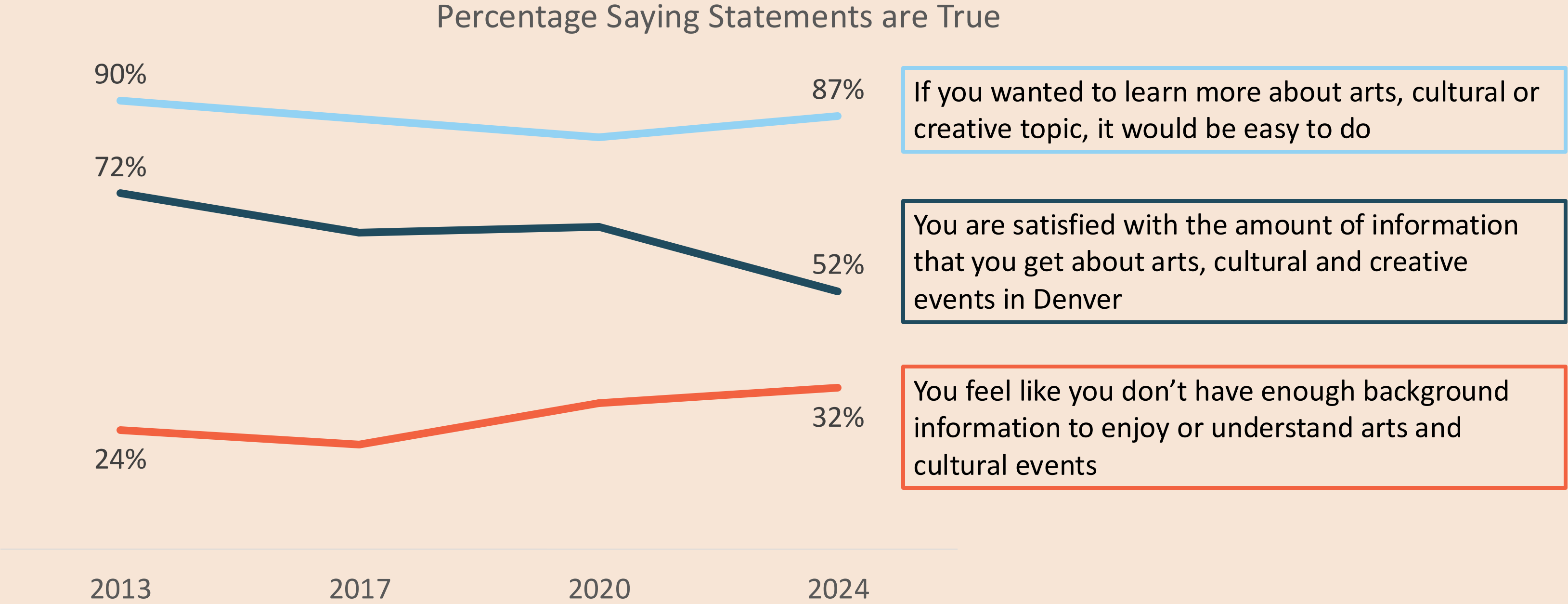
Barriers



Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #1, Strategy #2

Q9. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about your participation with the arts, culture and creative community in Denver? Mark only one.

Barriers

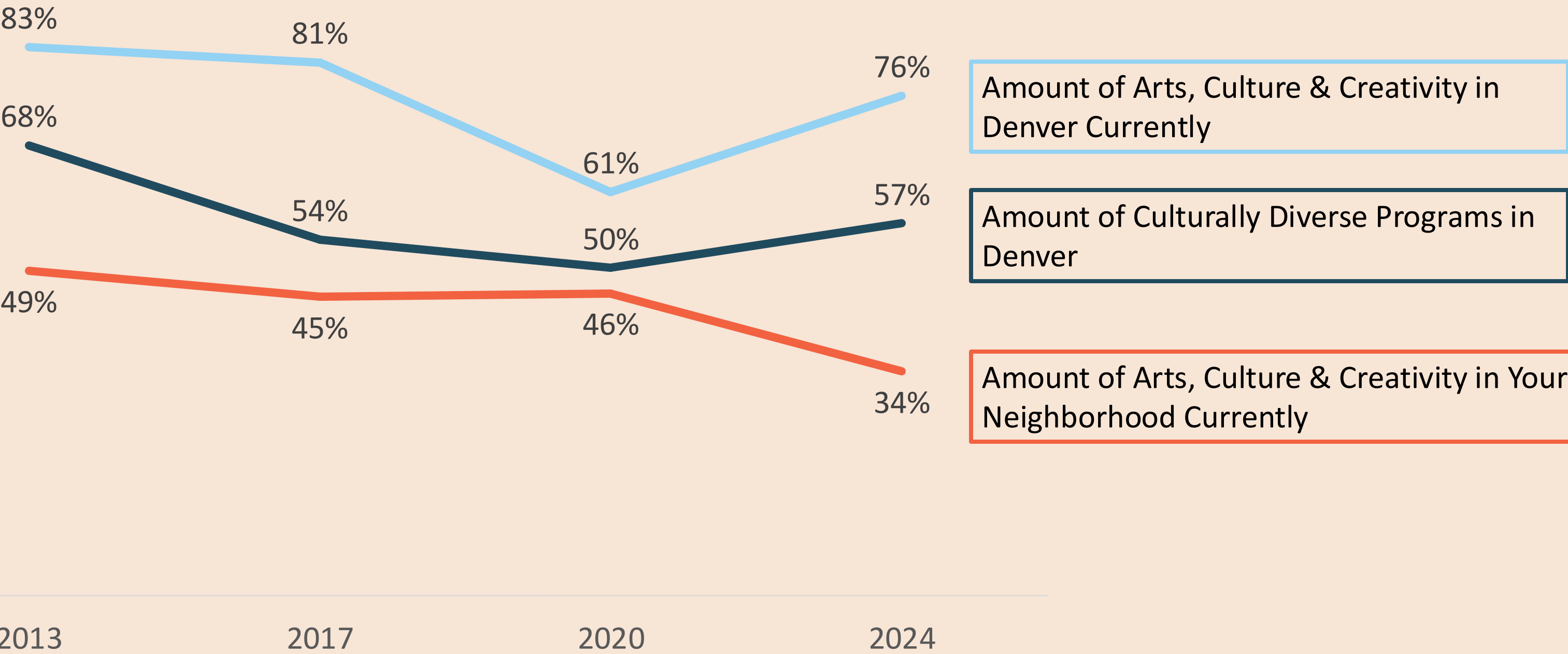


Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #1, Strategy #2
Commitment #2, Strategy #4

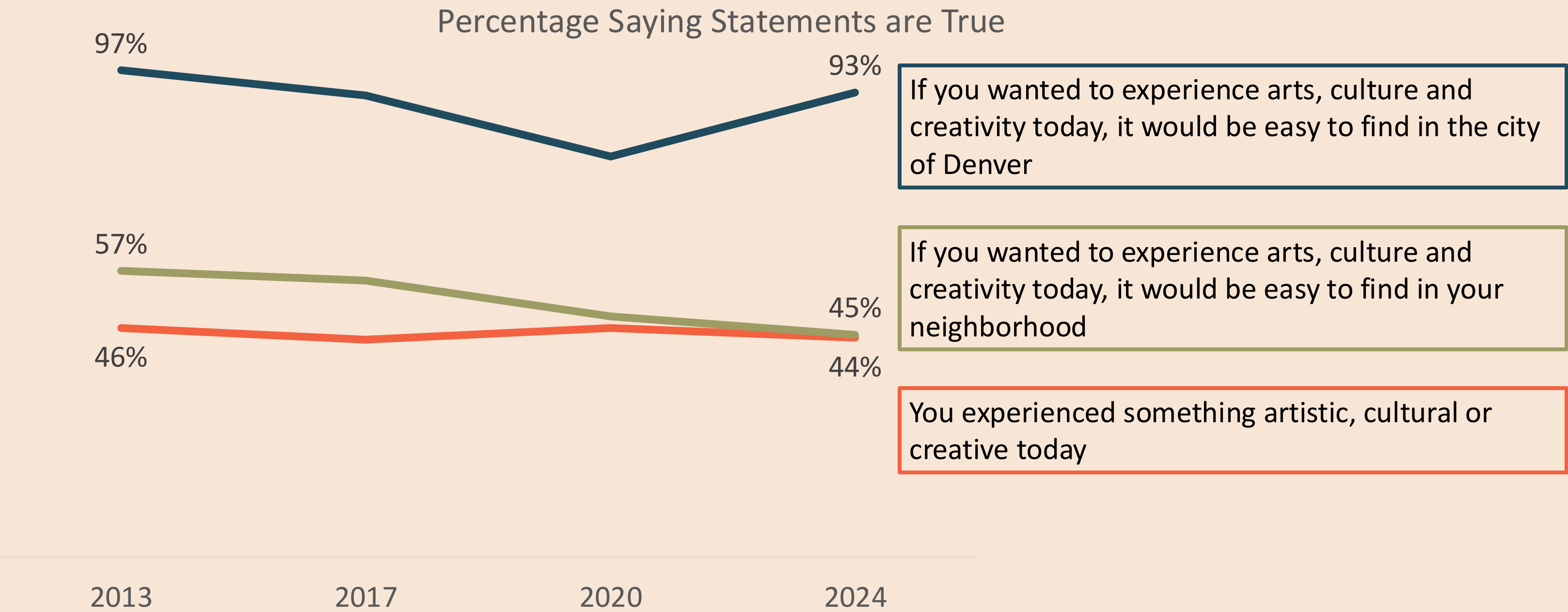
Q8. Are the following statements true or false?

Access

Percentage of Residents Rating Good or Excellent

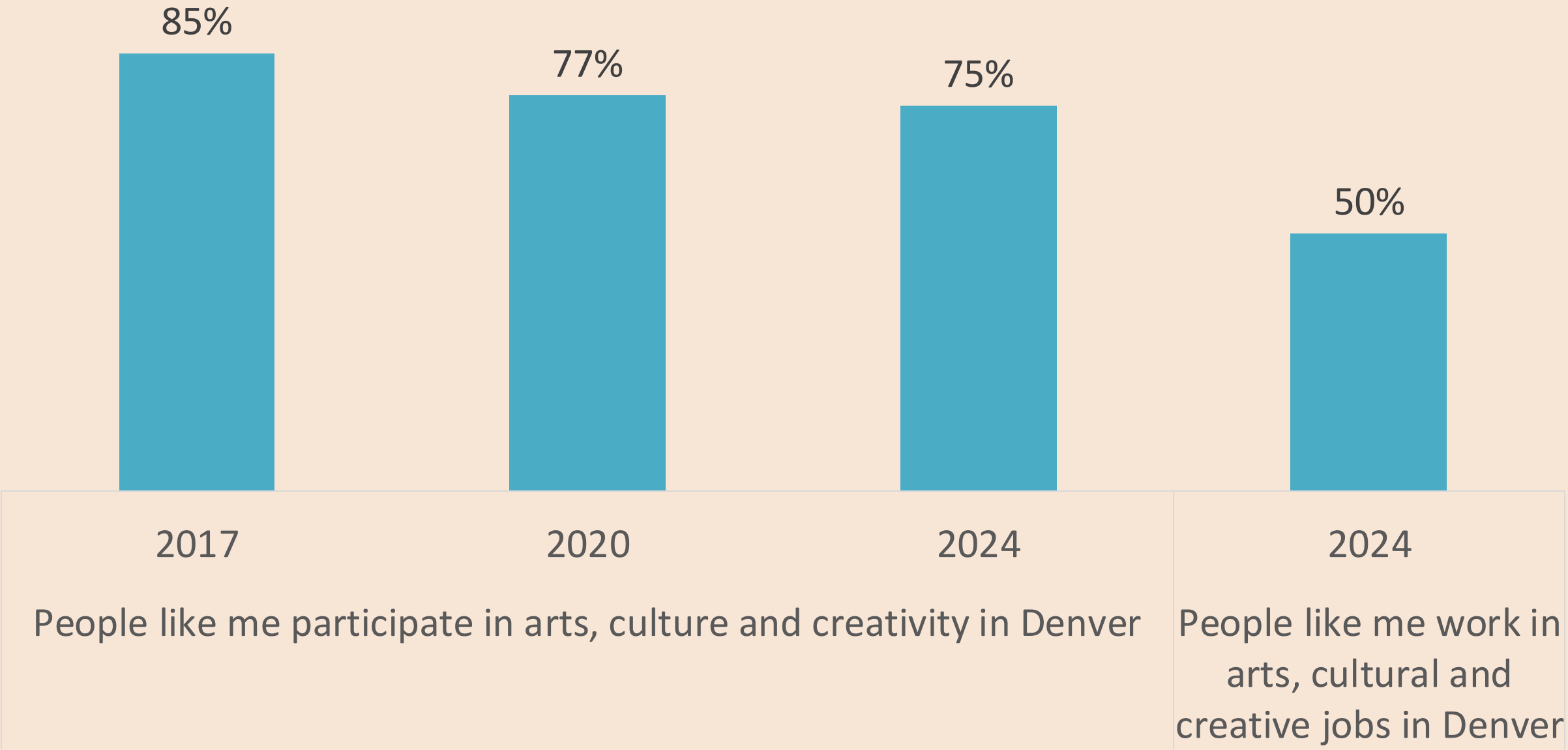


Access



Access

Perception of Representativeness of Arts, Culture and Creativity
in Denver



Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #1, Strategy #3

Q7. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

INTERVIEW RESULTS



Economic Impact of Arts and Culture

- Sector believes arts and culture are essential for a thriving, economically vibrant city
- Denver residents agree arts, culture and creativity attract tourism and support and create active and unique neighborhoods
- Increasing economic impact of cultural tourism (CBCA 2023 and 2025 reports)

Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #1, Strategy #1
Commitment #3, Strategy #2

It comes down to prioritizing arts development alongside other priorities such as healthcare, education, or just being mindful of that, being integrated into all these sorts of larger issues or things that might be considered essential for a happy, fulfilled life or a thriving community. Making sure that the arts is always an integral part of that and always a key collaborator and, in fact, a resource that people turn to, to really get to the level of being a thriving community and not just a surviving community.

**LEAH HORN –
WESTERN STATES ARTS FEDERATION**

Need for Equitable Arts and Culture Funding

- Colorado ranks relatively low when it comes to spending on and funding for arts and culture
- Barriers to affordability, equitable access and sustainable funding
- Limited awareness of available funding opportunities + Desires for clearer processes for securing funding

To me, a thriving community really looks like an opportunity to earn a living as an artist unapologetically.

CHLOE DUPLESSIS
– ARTIST AND HISTORIAN

Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #1, Strategy #1
Commitment #3, Strategy #2

Affordability for Denver Artists

- Significant affordability concerns
- Loss of access to local artist funding
- Concerns about gentrification and displacement → loss of arts spaces

My concern is about the many brilliant artists we are hemorrhaging. I have this deep concern about the grassroots levels of artists who aren't going to be here by the time they become professional. How do we identify them and support them?

STEPHEN BRACKETT – FLOBOTS, ONE DENVER

With the gentrification piece, there's less space to do your thing, it's a lot harder to book a venue, to book a space.

ADRIAN MOLINA – ARTIST

Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #3, Strategy #1
Commitment #3, Strategy #3

Access to Arts Spaces

- Importance of shared arts spaces for community and artists
- Innovative ideas for increasing artists' access to spaces

I am concerned about our ability to keep artists in our creative community.... Whether you're a visual artist, performing artist, or any of those things, affordable space period is a challenge that I think we need for a thriving community. If a small local arts group has no place to rehearse, they're not going to make it.

**CHRISTIN CRAMPTON-DAY –
COLORADO BUSINESS COMMITTEE FOR THE ARTS**

I would love to see how vacant venues or spaces around the city are better utilized to support the creative community. Could we imagine a strategy to better allocate these assets to organizations or individual artists?

**LOUISE MARTORANO –
REDLINE CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER**

Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #3, Strategy #1
Commitment #3, Strategy #3

Importance of Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Interdependence and collaboration → meaningful change and more equitable solutions
- In the 2024 survey, residents agreed that arts, culture and creativity help:
 - Raise awareness and attention to social issues
 - Community heal during a crisis
 - Address issues of racial injustice

Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #2, Strategy #2

When we thought about our plan for public safety or economic revival in downtown, every one of those involves art. In every one of those conversations, we want people to instinctively say, what is the role of art in this solution? How do you maximize joy in this space as opposed to how do you reduce negativity? We'd much prefer a focus on the former than on the latter.

MAYOR MIKE JOHNSTON – MAYOR OF DENVER

If we don't have everybody at the table, then how do we really provide an equitable environment? And so collaborating and planning for those future collaborations is super pertinent and really important to be able to figure out how do you spend the time that you have here? How do you make the biggest impact in the world as you can at the moment?

JAVIER FLORES – FRONT RANGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Challenges of Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Artists treated as full partners in cross-sector conversations
- Greater access and mentorship for younger, newer artists
- Reality of widespread burnout = alternative pathways to participation in collaborative activities

Cultural Plan Connection:
Commitment #2, Strategy #2

Arts must be at the table when civic conversations are happening. This is essential for demonstrating that The Arts are one of the many tools we have at our disposal for addressing and solving citywide problems.

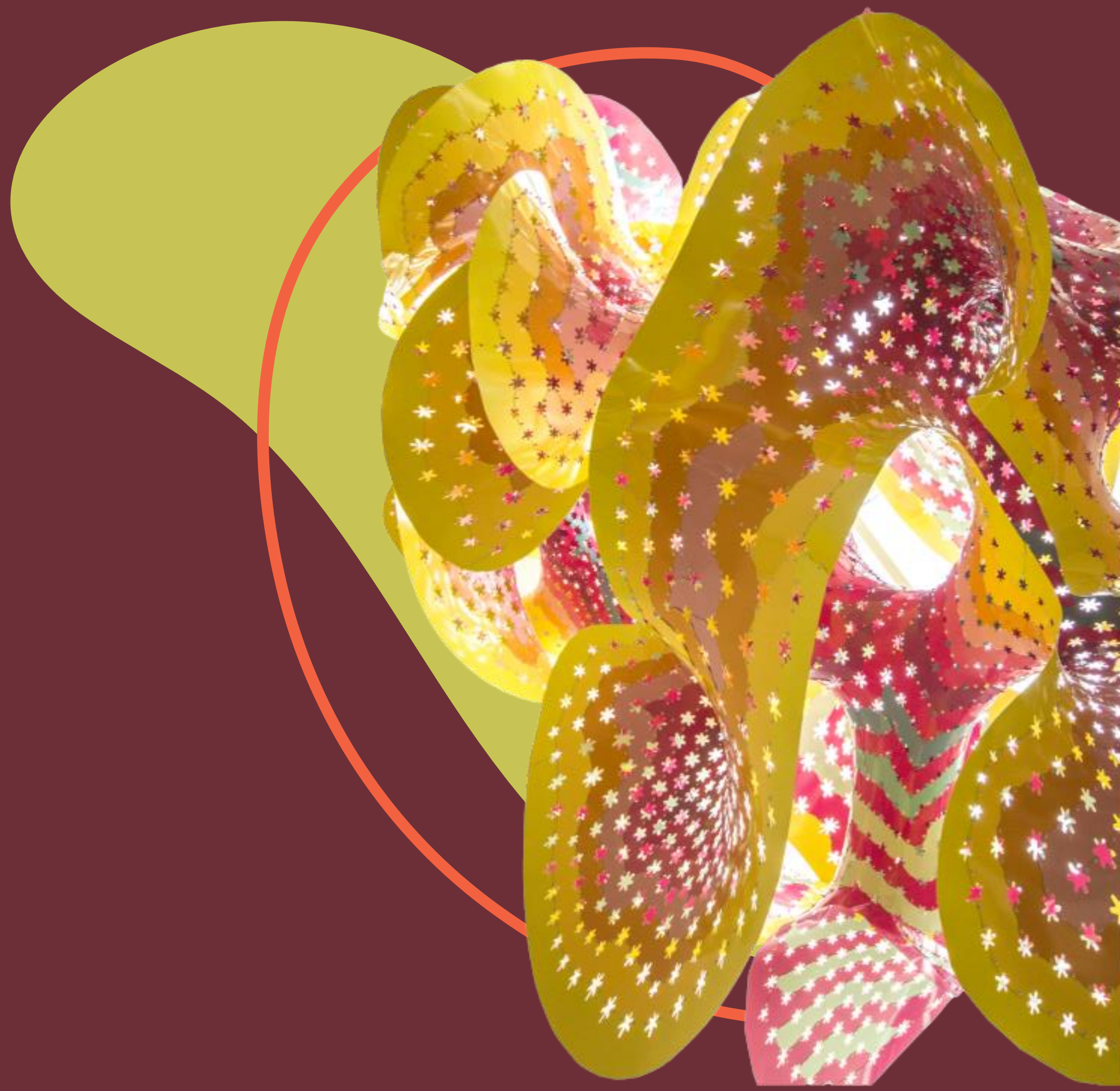
GARY STEUER – BONFILS-STANTON FOUNDATION

For me, it's about building the pipeline of leadership, starting really young and not losing sight of that. We need to be looking and thinking and talking to younger people and really letting their voice be heard and having them as equal partners.

DEBORAH JORDY

– SCIENTIFIC & CULTURAL FACILITIES DISTRICT

SUMMARY



The Big Picture



Access remains a big issue, both for residents trying to experience arts, culture and creativity and for local artists and creatives trying to access funding, space, etc.



Denver residents strongly believe that arts, culture and creativity have a positive impact on Denver. And the cultural sector is eager for more support that encourages collaboration, with the City and with each other.

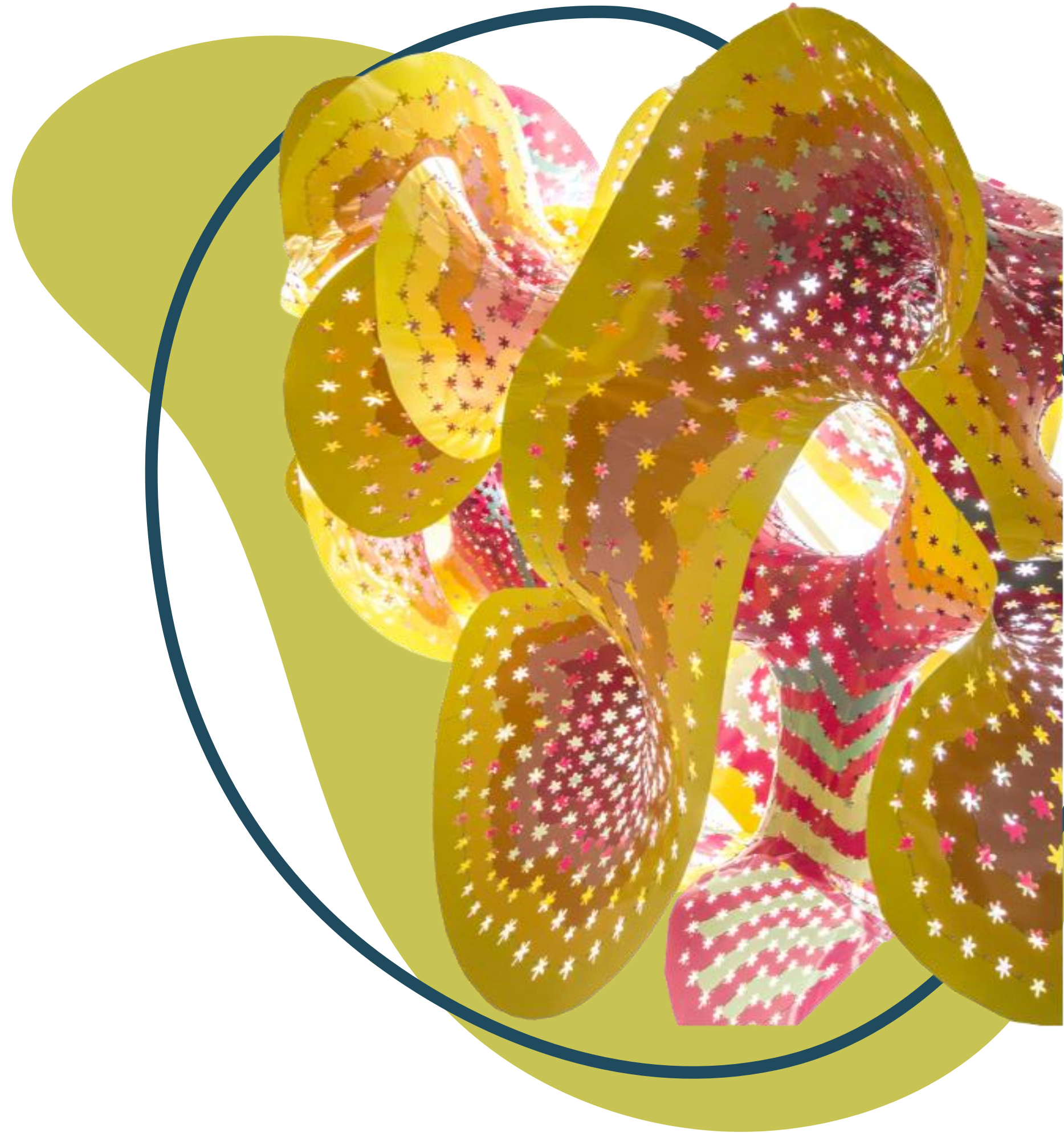


The cultural sector is a critical part of Denver's economy. The past few years have accelerated issues of affordability, which will need to be addressed to maintain the sector's economic vitality.

Community Spotlight

ALEJANDRA CALVO

Platte Forum













THANK YOU!



Please take a moment to complete the
post-event survey.