

2023 City of Boulder - Ballot Measure 2A

Passed with 75% Voter Support!



Mural by Detour [@detour](#)

Long-term, Dedicated Funding for Arts, Culture & Heritage

CREATE Boulder

- 501 (c) 3, launched in 2020 -> Relief funding + advocacy
- Volunteer powered (4 board members)
- Three-year goals (2022)
 - **Strengthen** the network of artists, arts advocates and others championing arts and culture
 - **Address** gaps in critical arts infrastructure and affordability challenges
 - **Secure long-term, dedicated, transformational funding for the arts from the City of Boulder by 2024**

Ballot Measure 2A: 0.15% Sales Tax Extension

- 20-year extension of an existing 0.15% sales tax
 - Citizen-led ballot petition (initially for 100% of tax)
- Effective January 2025
- \$7.2 M estimated: 50/50 Split (\$3.6M each)
 - General Fund: critical city services, human services +
 - Arts, Culture & Heritage:



Direct and Grant Funding for Arts and Culture Nonprofits, Professional Artists, Arts Education, Venues and Workspaces, Public Art, and Multi-Cultural Programs

Precursors to 2A's Success

Power of the Arts to Deliver Votes

- 2014 – NEW 3-year 0.3% sales tax for capital projects
 - 30% to the arts – 70% to the City
 - Arts groups led the campaign
 - Twice renewed – most recently for 15 years (10% to all nonprofits – 90% to the City)
- 2015 NEW 9-year Cultural Master Plan
- City Council Candidates Arts Forums ('21 and '23) →
 - Education + cultivation of 'arts friendly' council members
- Pandemic + multiple organized arts advocacy successes
 - arts leaders learned to speak with one voice



Context for Ballot Measure 2A

A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity

- Expiring 20-year Sales Tax -> No New Taxes!
- New, 2022 voter-approved Library District
 - Transfers \$10 - \$12M of expenses OUT of City
 - ~ 3x the \$3.6M of dedicated arts funding
- Current cultural master plan sunsets in 2024
 - Many successes but underfunded
 - New cultural master plan: 2025+
- Current cultural affairs budget (\$1.8M) = 60% less than comparable cities



2A Campaign Tactics

- Early and on-going input from arts and community leaders
 - 'Kitchen Cabinet' of advisors
 - Boots on the ground + financial support (\$100-\$3,000)
- Communications -> Consistent talking points + story-telling (benefits to the community)
 - City Council: speakers at meetings + letters
 - Letters to editors + guest opinions
 - Newsletters/social media of arts nonprofits and artists



Motus Theater

Boulder Arts Week

2A Campaign Tactics (cont'd)

- Benchmarking and economic impact data
- Endorsements and testimonials
 - Arts and other nonprofits (NAACP, Latino groups...)
 - Business and civic groups
 - Newspapers
 - City Council members
 - Other political and community leaders
- Website, yard signs, banners and quick pitches at most arts and culture events



Boulder Arts Week

Lessons Learned

- The power of citizen-led ballot initiatives to focus the attention of elected leaders
- Most residents value the arts/artists
- Cohesion and development of advocacy skills within the arts community - well in advance - proved crucial
- **Build coalitions early: we were late in reaching out to human services!!**



Nonprofit Endorsements – Campaign Supporters

