



## Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

AdAmAn Alley is a placemaking initiative transforming the interior of a city block and honoring the unique role of the AdAmAn Club in the region's history. For 100 years, members of the AdAmAn Club ascended nearby Pikes Peak (14,115 feet) in the dead of winter to light fireworks atop the mountain at midnight on New Year's Eve. The annual spectacle delights young and old for miles around and is a beloved local tradition. The transformation made the alley safe and welcoming for pedestrians and more functional for businesses. Over 20 dumpsters under multiple contracts were consolidated into two compactors (one trash, one recycling) and one contract for oil recycling. The pavement was improved from crumbling asphalt to ADA compliant concrete and incorporated interesting elements (depiction of the trail hiked annually by AdAmAn with bronze location markers). Vehicular traffic is greatly reduced in the east-west corridor with the placement of bollards. There are two light art elements (dual-sided LED wall with fireworks animation and projection mapping over a mural) that run after sunset in addition to string lighting throughout the alley that creates a sense of comfort regardless of the time of day. Several small sculptures of local flora are incorporated into a new seating area which had previously been a rock pit, and a placename arch welcomes visitors at the entrance. Seven murals (painted and vinyl) adorn building surfaces throughout the alley and attract viewers, encouraging them to enter and explore with access to online historical content through QR codes.

### INNOVATION

The alley was a previously underutilized public space due to concerns of safety, accessibility, aesthetics and even foul odors. Creating an environment where people feel safe and welcome, and a surface that is traversable by all, has allowed the expansion and increasing use of secondary business entrances. Allowing the alley to be used as a pedestrian thoroughfare also has facilitated the mobility of visitors in the downtown core, providing opportunities to practice a park-once policy and reducing vehicle miles traveled when coming to the city center. With this increased pedestrian use it has provided new venues for public art and murals, and informal gathering areas to take a break from the office. AdAmAn Alley has also served as a formal event space for a six-course seated dinner featuring chefs from several of the block's local restaurants and offers the opportunity for future expanded outdoor dining areas for the adjacent businesses. Furthermore, the consolidation of the waste management means there is only one provider using fewer vehicles and less frequent trips, as opposed to several providers bringing a multitude of large vehicles often multiple times a day. The creation of a master agreement also allowed the opportunity for some businesses to begin or expand their recycling.

### OUTCOME

AdAmAn Alley now serves as an attraction drawing visitors into the city center to view installations and patronize businesses in the block. Investment in the space has stimulated property owners to activate previously vacant spaces, mostly adjacent to the alley, and with intentions of utilizing the alley as their main entrance since the prior concerns about safety and attractiveness have been addressed. Downtown Ventures, a charitable nonprofit arm of Downtown Partnership, has utilized the space for a formal fundraising event in celebration of the Downtown Creative District and 25th anniversary of their public art program. The use as a formal event space is being incorporated into the city's special event application process due to increasing interest from other parties, one of which will be a St. Patrick's Day celebration led by an Irish pub and restaurant in the block. There are also plans to utilize the space for seasonal dance parties in alignment with other public art programming which will further positively impact the adjacent businesses. Maintenance of the elements is being funded partially from private fundraising, but with a commitment from the Downtown Development Authority for at least a decade. The Downtown Business Improvement District also provides daily walk-throughs and trash clean-up of the public right-of-way as a part of their regular scope of work. There is some funding from the oil recycling contract of businesses in the block that can be utilized in perpetuity.

## **EXECUTION**

Alley activations were identified as a desired goal in the creation of the 2016 Experience Downtown Master Plan. Initial discussions for this alley started in mid-2020 among Club members, Partnership staff and some property owners from the block. Shortly thereafter, a small project team began meeting monthly, along with ad hoc sub-committees as needed. By Q4 of 2020 a site analysis has been completed and in Q1 2021 a design concept was agreed to with a draft budget which gave legs to the fundraising campaign. The concept and budget were further refined as requests for information and proposals were gathered and the fundraising campaign was completed in Q3 2022. Partnership staff alone contributed over 1,000 hours as project managers. Construction began in June 2022 with complete closure of the alley until November 2022 with the final elements completed in Q1 of 2023. A project far grander than initially imagined (or would have possibly been produced by a singular entity trying on their own), went from initial conception to completion through the collaboration of all the partners and organizations in two and a half years.

## **REPRESENTATION**

The Downtown Partnership served as project manager for a team that included AdAmAn Club members, a local architecture firm and construction company, Downtown businesses (i.e., restaurant, office, service and retail represented), and representation from City Public Works, utilities and the City history museum. All property owners and tenants in the project area were included in discussions and communication. The proposals from local and international artists were evaluated on elements including placemaking impact, adherence to the message and representation of diverse viewpoints. The message was to reflect the special significance of Pikes Peak to many diverse groups (known sometimes as America's Mountain, the Ute name for the mountain is Tava Kahv or Sun Mountain). In a time when the region is undergoing rapid growth, the installations have made a powerful statement about the identity and values of the community. The Club exemplifies this region's spirit of adventure and its perseverance in overcoming adversity, while making the Club's mission ever more inclusive, carrying forward the tradition of light and hope in the dead of winter. Especially as so many of the city's residents and visitors are drawn by our outdoor culture, the artistic elements serve as an evocative depiction of our community's best attributes.

## **REPLICATION**

AdAmAn Alley served as a proof of concept to replicate both process and concepts to the five additional alleyways in the historic core that are identified for activation in the Experience Downtown Master Plan on differing scales. Most important is the coordination among Public Works and utility organizations for the surface and subgrade infrastructure in advance of ground-mounted lighting or traffic regulating equipment; however, incremental processes such as the waste consolidation and delivery coordination, and often some art or lighting installations, can occur in advance or on a smaller scale. Furthermore, some of the concepts are being utilized in review of new development plans reviewed by the city, such as multifamily or mixed-use buildings with large footprints, occurring in all areas of Downtown (i.e., incorporation of lighting, art and waste consolidation). More expansive plans for vacation of public right-of-way and creation of entire plazas have been spurred in some of the new developments in direct relation to inspiration from AdAmAn Alley.

## **COMPLEXITY/SIMPLICITY**

The project required a variety of legal documentation (i.e., easements, leases) for nine property owners and over 20 tenants and coordination throughout different phases of the project, including six months of construction when the entire alley was closed to public access. With some of the oldest utilities in the city and little to no accurate records, Springs Utilities had to perform exploratory work to locate and identify all existing infrastructure prior to excavating and new construction, often running into unforeseen circumstances. Supply chain challenges for certain tech equipment and materials for physical support structures further complicated the scheduling of other work throughout the alley (i.e., private telecommunication providers placing infrastructure, artists painting and contractors for other placemaking enhancements). Colorado's fluctuating weather provided another layer of complexity for the coordination and the ability to resurface with concrete. Constant and accurate communication between the project team and out to the affected businesses, as well as a solid vision with well-established buy-in from months of said efforts, allowed the project to succeed in the face of all the challenges.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Project website - <https://downtowncs.com/adaman-alley/>

Revel Arts Party Event - [https://youtu.be/hIB4\\_otna\\_s](https://youtu.be/hIB4_otna_s)