



History, Arts, Culture & Science

Our Parker community will maintain a connection to our past while growing our identity as a vibrant, cultural, scientific and artistic community which embraces collaboration, innovation and new ideas to sustain and increase cultural vitality and enable active community engagement that is accessible to all.

INTRODUCTION

History, arts, culture and science are significant contributors to our community’s hometown feel. They bring together people of all walks of life and backgrounds, and reinforces the uniqueness of Parker. These aspects of the community reflect our human element. Our Town’s history provides a foundation for our community growth and establishes Parker’s unique cultural heritage. Our culture helps to define who we are today as a Town and a community, while our local artists and community organizations provide an avenue to interpret our rich history and culture. These aspects of our community are recognized by our residents as being quintessential to our past, present and future.



PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The tremendous growth experienced by Parker has led to a strong community desire to preserve our historic past. The Parker Area Historical Society, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, was established in 1986. The Town continues to support of efforts to safeguard the Town's historic and cultural heritage and to foster civic pride through education and creating awareness of the Town's unique legacy.

The Town celebrates our history through recognizing structures and places of historical significance through a landmarking process. Each of the landmarked structures and places provide insight into Parker's rich heritage. The Town continues to work with property owners towards landmarking the other important places as a part of the community's recorded history.

To keep our history alive, a walking tour brochure mapping historic structures and sites in the downtown area and providing a brief history of these landmarks was developed and can be used by citizens for a self-guided walking tour. Historic interpretive signs can also be found at numerous points throughout Town and along the historic walking tour.





Preservation Park and Trailhead was established in 2007 in response to the growth and development the community was experiencing. The park was created as a place where residents and visitors can learn about Parker's history, and where threatened historic structures can be relocated. The park currently has two historic structures; the 1911 Hood House and a 1909 railcar. The park and trailhead are located adjacent to Parker Road at the northern gateway into Parker and Douglas County.

ARTS, CULTURE AND SCIENCE

It is important to the Town to grow our identity as a vibrant, cultural, scientific and artistic community which embraces collaboration, innovation and new ideas. We strive to sustain and increase cultural vitality and enable active community engagement that is accessible to all. Culture is also an important building block in the Town's economic development strategies.



In 1991, with less than 10,000 residents, a visionary Mayor and Town Council hired Parker's first full-time cultural director and created the Parker Cultural Commission. Now, nearly 21 years later, the foresight and vision of those early leaders has come to fruition as Parker builds on its successful community arts programs with the opening of the Parker Arts, Culture and Events (PACE) Center. The PACE Center has received high acclaim from Parker residents, civic leaders and patrons from throughout the Denver metro area.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Spring

Historic Walking Tour
Arbor Day
Parker Family Fun Fest

Summer

Parker Days
Let Freedom Sing
Movies in the Park
Bike to Work Day
Farmers Market
Art in the Park
So Long to Summer 5K
Kids TRY-Athalon

Fall

Barker Days
Smokin' Brew BBQ
Fieldhouse Fright Night
Trick or Treat on Mainstreet
Business Expo/Taste of Parker
Turkey Day 5K

Winter

Mayor's Holiday Lighting
Holiday Carriage Rides
Christmas Carriage Parade
Love 'em or Leave 'em 5K

The PACE Center is a state-of-the-art facility presenting local, regional, national and international artistic performances, visual arts and community events. Located in historic downtown Parker, the PACE Center is home to a 536-seat theater, media lab, visual arts gallery, culinary teaching kitchen, 250 capacity amphitheater, 3,000 sq. ft. event room, dance studio, an interactive musical outdoor playground called Harmony Park and several studio classrooms. The PACE Center is able to combine the best of world-class touring performances with our commitment to develop and nurture artists of all levels in our community.

As a regional facility, the scope and vision of the PACE Center will allow the Town to reach an even broader population with its programs and services. Our service area extends across the entire Southeast Metro area including Arapahoe, Douglas and Elbert Counties.

PACE has been hailed by local leaders and arts organizations as a new model for arts centers, combining state-of-the-art facilities for performance with multiple rooms designed for maximum flexibility to encompass educational, community and business needs. We are committed to being a resource not just for the arts community, but for our creative economy and business sector as well.



Community Activities

The Parker community offers a wealth of activities for residents of all ages to enjoy. In addition to our year round programs at the PACE Center and through our Parks and Recreation department, community events are held throughout the year that celebrate our history, our youth and bring our community together. In 2011 alone, hundreds of events, classes and activities were held. Each year, new events are added as new residents move to our community and new interests are expressed.



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

1. Preserve Parker's rich historic heritage as a way to strengthen our hometown feel.

1.A. Work cooperatively with historical organizations such as the Parker Area Historical Society, Douglas County Historic Preservation Board and Historic Douglas County, Inc.

1.B. Promote opportunities for residents to learn about our history through support of historic community events, such as the historic walking tour, and through historic interpretive signage.

1.C. Support the preservation, landmarking and maintenance of key historic buildings and places within the community.

1.D. Foster economic vitality through preservation and/or adaptive rehabilitation of historic properties.

1.E. Maintain Preservation Park as a place where residents can learn about our history and where threatened historic structures that cannot be preserved in place or used through adaptive reuse can be relocated.

2. Encourage the use of art, culture and science in Parker's built and natural environments to foster civic pride and identity.

2.A. Encourage public and private art that reflects Parker's unique heritage, culture and environment.

2.B. Include art as an integral part of public infrastructure design, including but not limited to civic buildings, streetscapes and parks.

2.C. Encourage the creative, adaptive use and re-use of existing built and natural spaces to support artistic and cultural activities.

2.D. Promote Parker's natural environment through cultural and scientific experiences.

3. Continue to support cultural amenities, scientific programming and community events as an important contributor to our hometown feel.

3.A. Maintain and continue to look for additional opportunities to provide activities that bring the community together.

3.B. Ensure local arts, science and cultural activities are targeted and accessible to all.

3.C. Actively foster and promote science, art and culture through increased collaboration and broadened community involvement.

3.D. Support the PACE Center and development of its programs and audience as a cornerstone of Parker's cultural and economic infrastructure.

4. Promote and develop cultural facilities and programs to stimulate economic vibrancy and increase cultural tourism.

4.A. Leverage the Town's unique heritage, culture and environment to effectively support economic development.

4.B. Establish the PACE Center as a regional facility serving the Southeast Metro area attracting audiences, performers and participants from diverse geographic locations.

4.C. Partner with local and regional cultural organizations to promote Parker and Douglas County as a premier arts and cultural destination.

4.D. Encourage and support existing and new creative industries in the Town.

4.E. Build creative collaborations and cross-promote initiatives among local and regional cultural groups, nonprofit organizations and the business sector.

