



DENVER *Tourism* ROADMAP

# VISIT DENVER

Visioning Workshop

August 22, 2024

# Opening Remarks

## Today's **Agenda**

1. Project Update
2. Key Findings & Takeaways
3. Destination Vision
4. Strategic Goals & Initiatives
5. Next Steps & Wrap-up

# Project Update

Project  
**Objective**

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**To update 10-year  
Denver Tourism Roadmap**

## PHASE 1

### Project Planning & Management

- a. 1.5-day project kickoff trip
- b. Project planning, management and monitoring
- c. Prepare a stakeholder consultation plan

## PHASE 2

### Destination Assessment

- a. Collect and analyze destination metrics
- b. Review existing strategic plans & reports
- c. Identify relevant local, national, global trends
- d. Conduct DestinationNEXT assessment

## PHASE 3

### Stakeholder Engagement

- a. Prepare discussion guides
- b. Conduct 20 one-on-one virtual interviews
- c. Conduct 10 focus groups
- d. Present stakeholder findings

## PHASE 4

### Visioning Workshop

- a. Prepare session materials
- b. Prepare draft goals and recommendations
- c. Facilitate workshop at Board retreat August 22

## PHASE 5

### Tourism Roadmap Update

- a. Prepare draft Updated Tourism Roadmap
- b. Layout and design the final plan
- c. Work with Visit Denver to review/edit plan
- d. Conduct validation sessions w/key stakeholders
- e. Present the final plan to the Board

## PHASE 6

### Visit Denver Strategic Plan

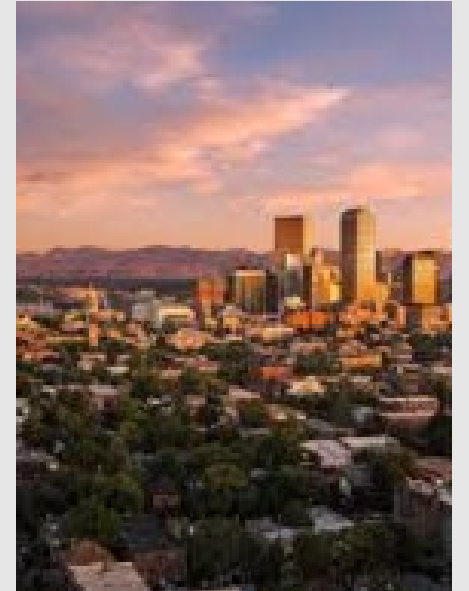
- a. Prepare a detailed agenda and presentation materials
- b. Facilitate Board strategic planning session
- c. Facilitate management team session
- d. Prepare draft Strategic Plan
- e. Prepare final PPT deck and document
- f. Present to Visit Denver Board

# Interviews

**21 deep-dive interviews  
with stakeholders and  
elected officials**

## Topics of Discussion

- Opportunities for growing the visitor economy
- Issues to be addressed
- Big ideas to consider



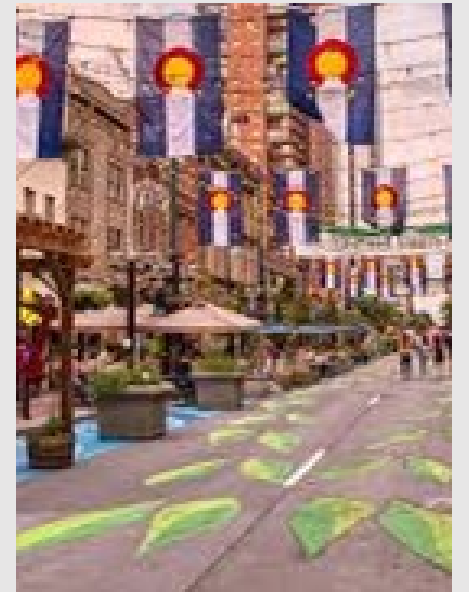


# Focus Groups

**12 sector-specific Focus Groups with 119 participants**

## Topics of Discussion

- Ranking of areas of focus & discussion
- Big ideas
- Sector-specific feedback





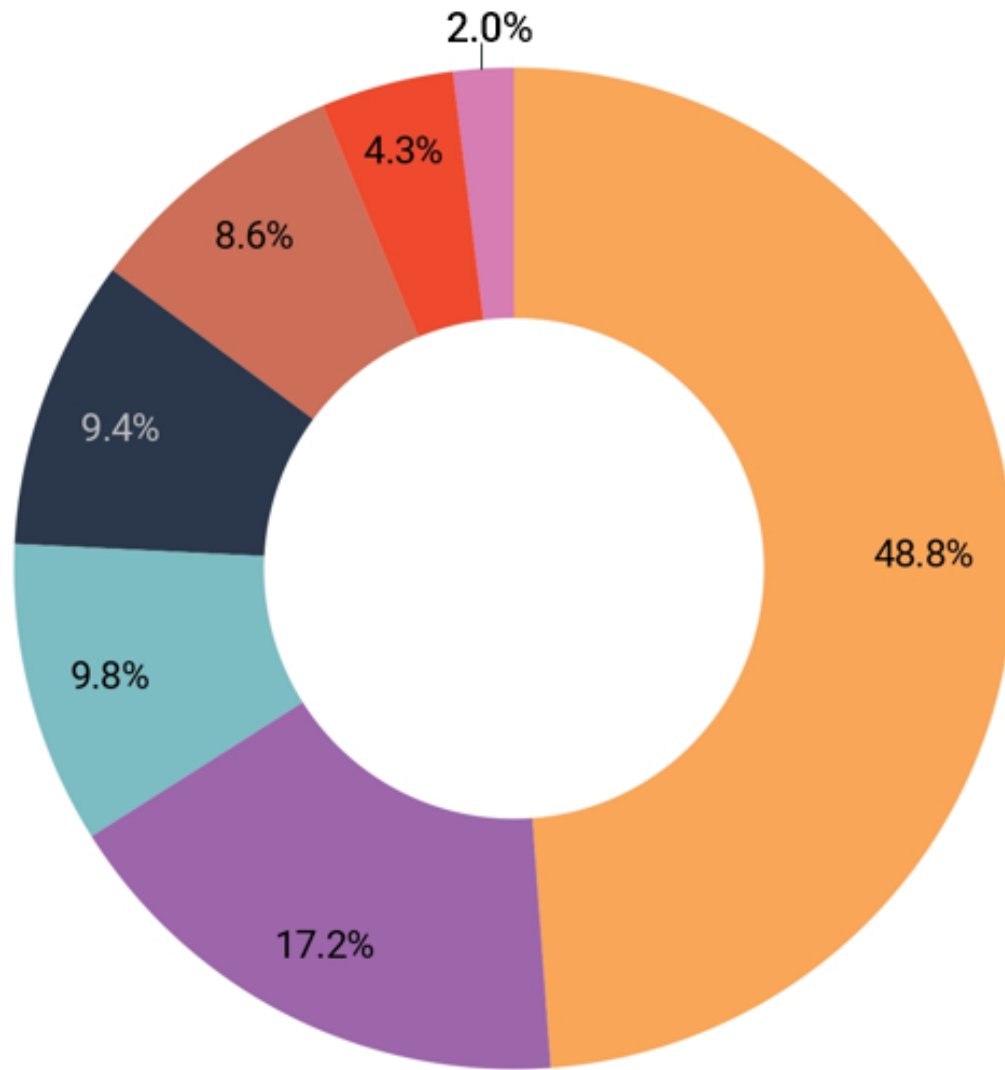
# Key Findings & Takeaways

# DestinationNEXT



# Stakeholder Groups

Total Respondents  
**256**



- Denver Tourism Partners
- VISIT DENVER Team
- Customers
- Community Leaders
- VISIT DENVER Board of Directors
- Government Leaders
- Denver Sports Commission Advisory Committee



# Overall Assessment

Voyagers

Trailblazers



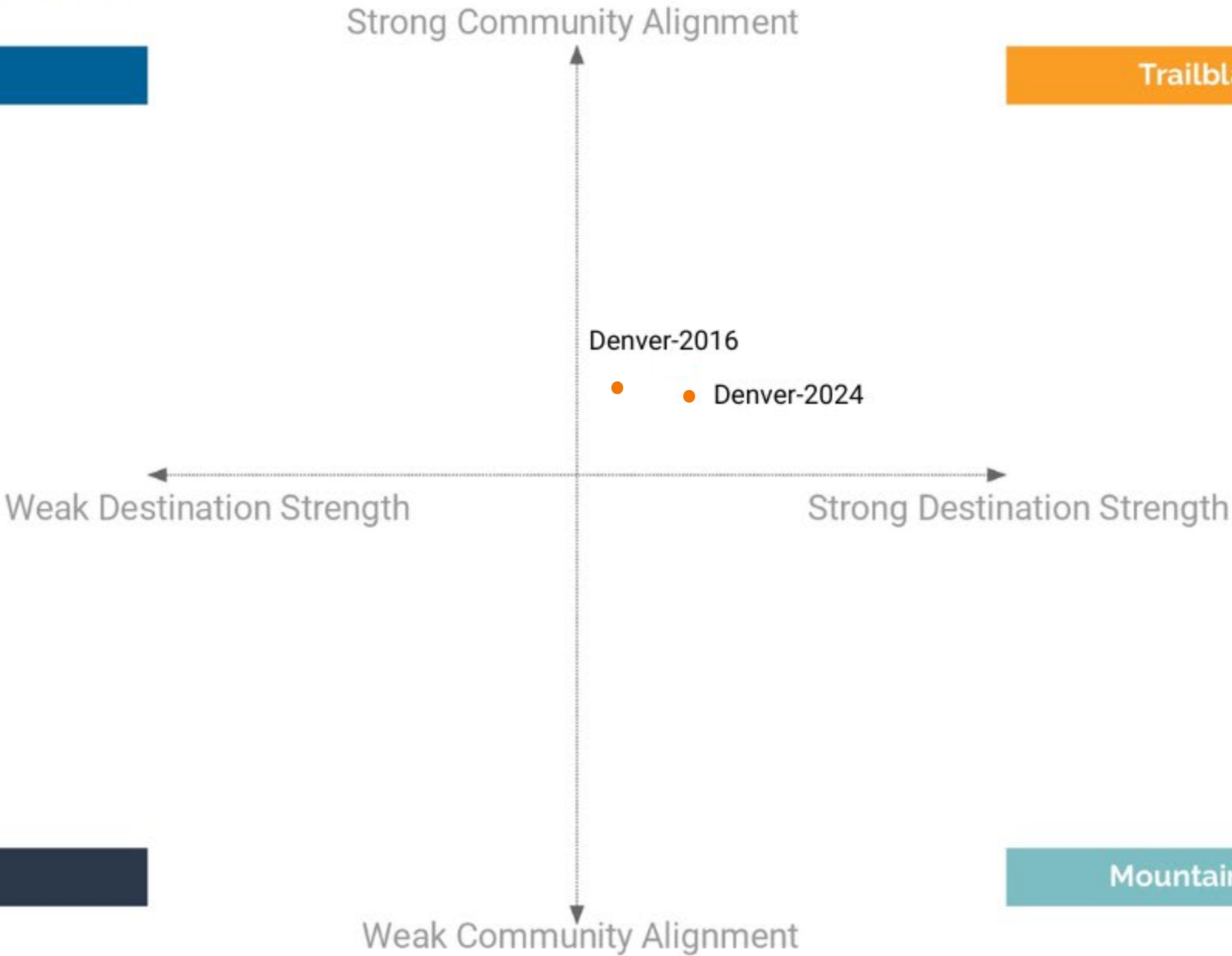
Explorers

Mountaineers

# Overall Assessment

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Explorers

Mountaineers

# Destination Strength

Variable	Relative Importance (0-100%)		Perceived Performance (1 - 5 scale)	
	All DNEXT Communities	Denver	All DNEXT Communities	Denver
Attractions & Experiences	9.00%	9.04%	3.71	4.28
Outdoor Recreation	8.62%	8.76%	3.76	4.65
Dining, Shopping & Entertainment	8.74%	8.58%	3.48	4.03
Health & Safety	8.17%	8.44%	3.32	2.78
Destination Access	8.07%	8.44%	3.25	4.16
Conventions & Meetings	7.90%	8.43%	3.37	4.21
Sporting Events	8.01%	8.38%	3.44	4.21
Arts, Culture & Heritage	8.33%	8.33%	3.65	4.26
Accommodation	8.74%	8.16%	3.61	3.73
Events & Festivals	8.29%	8.14%	3.66	3.88
Local Mobility & Access	8.25%	8.04%	3.01	3.28
Communication Infrastructure	8.28%	7.23%	3.24	3.80

Green indicates destination performance +5% above industry average; red indicates -5% below.

Destination Strength

Industry Average  
3.46

Destination  
3.93

Scenario: Trailblazers

# Community Alignment

Variable	Relative Importance (0-100%)		Perceived Performance (1 - 5 scale)	
	All DNEXT Communities	Denver	All DNEXT Communities	Denver
Economic Development	8.33%	8.80%	3.92	4.32
Organization Governance	8.01%	8.76%	3.77	4.25
Business Support	8.50%	8.66%	3.83	4.25
Funding Support & Certainty	8.38%	8.64%	3.30	3.83
Government Support	8.47%	8.47%	3.68	4.07
Regional Cooperation	8.29%	8.42%	3.73	4.18
Hospitality Culture	8.50%	8.42%	3.63	4.03
Sustainability & Resilience	8.35%	8.29%	3.59	3.96
Workforce Development	8.55%	8.16%	2.88	2.93
Community Group & Resident S...	8.28%	8.06%	3.54	3.86
Emergency Preparedness	8.27%	7.67%	3.47	3.61
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion	8.03%	7.66%	3.61	3.96

Green indicates destination performance +5% above industry average; red indicates -5% below.

Community Alignment	Industry Average	Destination
	3.54	3.87

Scenario: Trailblazers



# Stakeholder Feedback



## TOP Opportunities

Downtown  
vibrancy / 16th  
Street Mall  
reopening

New public  
funding

Outdoor  
recreation

Brand &  
identity

DIA growth & air  
service  
connectivity

Signature  
events

## TOP Challenges

Downtown perceptions  
(safety, vibrancy,  
accessibility)

Major event and  
experience  
attraction

Mobility throughout  
region

Affordability  
(cost of living and  
business)



# Key Takeaways



1

## Key Takeaways

Denver has made significant progress  
and is starting with a strong base of assets.

## 2

## Key Takeaways

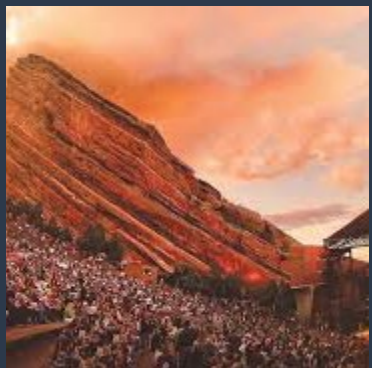
Denver cannot become complacent  
to remain competitive and realize opportunities ahead.

# 3

## Key Takeaways

AI, sustainability and DEI must be critical elements of Destination Master Plan and Visit Denver Strategic Plan.





# Big Ideas

1. Develop the CCC and surrounding area to create a true convention center district with elevated, fun & interactive attendee experiences
2. Develop more iconic events to elevate Denver brand
3. Reimagine 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall into a world-class attraction & experience
4. Establish Office of Nighttime Economy (like Dallas, NYC and other big cities) to create foot traffic and support businesses “after-hours” to enhance safety and vibrancy
5. Build a dynamic, new, & unified city brand for visitors and local stakeholders

# Questions & Comments

# Destination Vision

## Destination Vision

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- It's a desired future state for the destination overall
- It should be aspirational and inspirational
- It's not a marketing tagline for consumers; it provides direction for industry and community leadership

# Existing Destination Vision

**Denver is America's leading outdoor city,  
known to visitors for its urban, active,  
and cultural experiences.**

# Re-imagining the Destination Vision

**3 destination signatures have emerged....**



**1.**

**Denver is, and always has been, an outdoor destination.**



A photograph of the Denver Art Museum building, featuring a large, angular, white, quilted facade. The building is set against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, a paved plaza with some people and a person with a suitcase is visible. The text "DENVER ART MUSEUM" is visible on the building's facade, along with a quote "Luminous beings are we..." and the word "TODAY".

**2.**

**Denver was built on the vision and energy of its people, resulting in a dynamic destination.**



3.

**Denver is hyper-connected to the world.**

# Proposed New Vision

**“Denver is the world’s most  
dynamic & cultural outdoor city.”**

# **Feedback & Discussion**



**Break**

# Goals & Initiatives

# 7 Strategic Goals

DENVER *Tourism* ROADMAP





# 1 Expand Meetings & Convention Business & Infrastructure

- a) Develop the CCC and surrounding areas to create a true convention center district, or “campus.”
- b) Explore feasibility for a new downtown HQ hotel; align with the CCC Master Plan and SAG Study.
- c) Develop creative and unique offsite venues/experiences near the CCC for large attendee gatherings.
- d) Maintain the CCC’s best-in-class technology infrastructure and digital experience.
- e) Develop elevated, fun and interactive attendee experiences within the CCC to showcase local excellence in sports/outdoor recreation, arts/culture and food /beverage.
- f) Complete development of the National Western Center (NWC) as a multi-purpose facility to attract a greater variety of events.
- g) Enhance the Convention Ambassador Program with local leaders in advanced industries to help capture national convention business.
- h) Improve attendee services within the CCC, including daycare, mothers pods, quiet/sensory spaces, etc.

## 2 Attract Visitor-Driven Events

- a) Develop an event strategy committee in collaboration with the City of Denver's Office of Special Events to identify, recruit, implement and grow all types of events.
- b) Create, incubate, sponsor and promote visitor-facing events across the city, including on/off the Mall, Skyline Park, Glenarm, Civic Center Park/Greek Theater/Bannock, Sculpture Park, Fillmore Plaza, RiNo Art Park, NWC, World Trade Center, etc.
- c) Focus on creating and promoting signature annual events and festivals, especially with a focus on:
  - Culinary, beer, spirits and wine (e.g. Denver Food & Wine, Taste of Mexico, Green Chili Battle)
  - Arts, culture, history, music and film (Biennial, Buskerfest, Latino Music Festival, large July 4 fireworks, Thanksgiving Parade)
  - Sports (e.g., all-star games, international soccer and rugby, trending sports)
  - Non-holiday winter events (e.g., ice climbing championships to complement mountain trips)
- d) Develop and expand events focusing on advanced and creative industries in collaboration with the City of Denver (e.g., esports, cosplay, AI, tech trail with AR, etc.)

- a) Support stadium redevelopment: Future stadium with a roof (retractable or permanent) could open up a different set of Tier 1 events, as well as open up all 12 months of the year.
- b) Develop a centralized music district (e.g., 6th St., Austin; Beale St., Memphis; Broadway St., Nashville).
- c) Collaborate with diverse neighborhoods and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to be "visitor ready."
- d) Activate Platte River, Confluence Park, and support Civic Center Conservancy efforts to make Civic Center Park a year-round attraction.
- e) Consult on the development of new venues, event parks and sporting arenas to accommodate large sporting and non-sporting events.
- f) Explore development of an urban gondola to connect neighborhoods, in homage to ski/mountains.
- g) Develop and expand multicultural markets that represent traditions and celebrations from Denver's diverse communities.
- h) Create and enhance international multilingual visitor information, wayfinding, menus and foreign currency exchange.
- i) Develop branded tours and trails (e.g., culture, beer and history/heritage).

## Enhance Connectivity and Mobility

- a) Improve public transportation related to: ease of use, optics of security, pricing models, accessibility, amenities, image, reliability.
- b) Create a mobility loop around downtown that links 16th Street Mall to nearby neighborhoods, sports stadiums and cultural attractions.
- c) Enhance citywide transportation infrastructure and mobility options to better connect downtown and neighborhoods, City Park, Civic Center/Cultural Campus, and Red Rocks. Develop and/or improve neighborhood guides and maps.
- d) Develop high-speed passenger rail along the Front Range.
- e) Improve I-70 east/west traffic flow; explore alternative ideas to reduce mountain congestion.
- f) Continue to develop last-mile connectivity, including MallRide, Free MetroRide, scooters, e-bikes, pedicabs, etc.
- g) Enhance pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, safety and connectivity.
- h) Increase ride-share and taxi availability, accessibility and pricing compliance.

# 5 Improve Downtown Visitor Experience

- a) Implement 16th Street Mall developments into a clean, safe world-class attraction that connects locals and visitors of all backgrounds.
  - Create an iconic downtown cultural monument (e.g., Chicago's "Bean," Las Vegas Sphere, etc.).
  - Add tourism information center on 16th Street Mall and enhance Denver Union Station TIC.
- b) Implement proposed Civic Center Next 100 and Skyline Park developments.
- c) Use Downtown Denver Authority public funding to spur private investment to create a vibrant downtown.
- d) Establish and expand initiatives to increase downtown vibrancy:
  - Establish a dedicated downtown security workforce with police, ambassadors, social services, etc.
  - Champion redevelopment/repurposing efforts of low occupancy and unused buildings/locations.
  - Develop downtown retail strategy and improve retail offerings to support a variety of retail types, including local businesses, minority-owned businesses, national retailers, pop-ups, experiential, etc.
  - Recruit new businesses (e.g., startups and small businesses) that want to lease unused space and increase foot traffic; consider incentives.

- e) Explore BID funding and efforts to create an overall downtown advocacy and beautification program.
  - Improve public perception of the safety and attractiveness of downtown, especially among metro-area residents, e.g., via promotional campaigns and public relations.
  - Expand investments in public art projects, including local art/artists, art walks, etc.
- f) Establish Office of Nighttime Economy, like Dallas, NYC and other big cities to create foot traffic and support restaurants/bars/other businesses outside of M-F, 8-5 hours, supporting safety and vibrancy.
- g) Ensure downtown has adequate and affordable parking options.
- h) Improve signage and wayfinding downtown, including along 16th Street Mall and convention corridor.
- i) Create a balance between vehicle/non-vehicle infrastructure and accessibility for local and visitors.



## 6 Strengthen Destination Branding

- a) Use new city brand for consumer and stakeholder needs. Create brand alignment with government, business and industry stakeholders and share educational messaging on the value of tourism. Included:
- Position Denver as an Outdoor City and our "best of both worlds" relationship with the Rocky Mountains. Continue to promote Red Rocks as a world-class venue and daytime attraction.
  - Promote accessible adventure (aka, light adventure but also activities that can be enjoyed by everyone including those with disabilities); include activities in city and nearby mountains.
  - Continue to promote Denver's high-quality, diverse dining scene using the new Colorado Michelin Guide; James Beard Foundation award winners/nominees; the city's outdoor options, craft beer, wine and spirits. Increase collaboration with Denver's food festivals/programs (e.g. Denver Food & Wine, Denver Restaurant Week, Mile High Asian Food Week, Denver Black Restaurant Week).
  - Continue to promote Denver's brand as a diverse arts and culture center. (e.g. visual arts, performing arts campus, art districts). Position Tier 1 cultural organizations as leaders individually in their fields and as a group; also play up that our cultural scene is made better by SCFD funding.
  - Promote collegiate/amateur sports as enhancements to professional and Tier 1 options.
  - Enhance Denver's reputation as a family friendly destination, including upcoming additions to the 16th St. Mall, future plans for Elitch Gardens, accessible adventure, etc.

## 6 Strengthen Destination Branding (cont.)

- b) Promote the interconnected downtown campus that includes our many downtown museums, theaters, attractions and three walkable sports stadiums. Find ways to increase exposure of public art and encourage people to share it, e.g., posting on social media.
- c) Expand the promotion of Denver's domestic and global connectivity via continued partnership with Denver International Airport. Continue to grow international visitation by promoting Denver's year-round amenities and accessibility to primary and secondary global markets.
- d) Enhance promotion of Denver's vibrant, diverse neighborhoods in a way that accentuates their proximity to downtown as well as their stand-alone appeal.

# 7 Enhance Industry Advocacy & Community Engagement

- a) Increase collaboration with local and regional, public and private organizations to foster greater community development.
- b) Increase advocacy efforts to promote the value of tourism and its positive impacts on residents' quality of life.
  - Continue resident sentiment surveying to understand resident perspectives and needs to have alignment and support for tourism.
- c) Support industry workforce development efforts and initiatives.
- d) Establish innovative approaches to support affordable housing and daycare options.
- e) Prioritize initiatives and programs that advance environmental sustainability/destination stewardship.
- f) Prioritize and incorporate efforts related to diversity, equity and inclusion, including hiring, partners, promotion, etc.
- g) Develop and host an updated Tourism Summit for industry, workforce, and community partners.
- h) Enhance and expand the "Go the Extra Mile" hospitality training program for frontline employees.

# Table Discussions



## Discussion

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- 12 minutes per strategic goal
  - What resonates with you?
  - What doesn't fit?
  - What needs further thought or clarification?
  - Are there specific examples to add?
  - What's missing?
- 3-minute report out per goal

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# 3

## Create World Class Attractions and Services

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- g) Develop and host an updated Tourism Summit for industry, workforce, and community partners.
- h) Enhance and expand the "Go the Extra Mile" hospitality training program for frontline employees.



# **Next Steps & Wrap Up**

- Incorporate feedback from Visioning Workshop
- Develop Updated Denver Tourism Roadmap
- Roadmap brought back to Board for ratification in Q4

## **Next Steps**

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# Thank You!

**Paul Ouimet**

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