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April 2021



Hello VISIT DENVER Partners,

Welcome to VISIT DENVER's quarterly *Policy Perspectives* newsletter highlighting local, state and federal issues impacting the tourism and hospitality industry. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Carrie Atiyeh, Director of Government & Community Affairs, at catiyeh@visitdenver.com or (303) 571-9466.

LOCAL NEWS



- VISIT DENVER continues to closely monitor and stay engaged on local, state and federal pandemic guidance and policies impacting our industry. The [Clean & Safe Resource Guide](#) is kept up to date with useful information for our partners, visitors, planners, and residents.
- Denver City Council approved a \$274 million bond issuance to support the [expansion of the Colorado Convention Center \(CCC\)](#) and National Western Center (NWC). The bonds were overwhelmingly approved by Denver voters in 2015 through the 2C ballot measure. However, due to lower revenue generation as a result of the pandemic, the City announced that [Phases 3-8 of the NWC redevelopment are postponed](#).
- Denver City Council approved the construction contract for the [redevelopment of the 16th Street Mall](#). PCL has been hired for the project, which will cost \$150 million and begin later this year.
- Denver City Council approved a 4-month extension, through June, of the pilot program to [cap 3rd party food delivery fees](#) to 15%.
- The City and County of Denver is [waiving 2021 restaurant license fees](#) to assist bars and restaurants through the pandemic.
- The [Outdoor Downtown](#) master plan is beginning design and redevelopment of two important projects: Skyline Park and Civic Center Park plus Bannock Street.
- Despite a [51% drop in passenger traffic](#) in 2020 compared to 2019, Denver International Airport will rank as the third busiest airport in the U.S. and likely in the top 10 internationally.
- United has announced a partnership with bus operator [Landline](#) that will provide connections between Denver International Airport and Breckenridge and Ft. Collins. Buses will run once

daily to Breckenridge beginning March 11, and four-times daily to Ft. Collins beginning April 1.

- [RTD received more than \\$200 million](#) in federal funds passed by Congress at the end of 2021, allowing the agency to halt layoffs, and reverse furloughs and salary cuts.
- The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) is considering exclusive licensing agreements with [Lime and Lyft to operate shared scooters and bikes](#).
- More than [800 hotel rooms](#) are being utilized by the City to shelter and temporarily house people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.
- A new, permanent [public restroom](#) is being installed downtown near the 16th Street Mall and Champa Street.
- According to Department of [Excise & Licenses data](#), food licenses are down 25%, pedicab licenses are down 83%, and short-term rental licenses are down 26% compared to pre-pandemic levels a year ago.

STATE NEWS



- State Legislative leadership, with Governor Polis, recently unveiled the [Colorado Recovery Plan](#) to utilize state funds to stimulate the economy. Included in the proposal is a meetings and events incentive program of \$10 million, which VISIT DENVER and statewide tourism stakeholders are working to develop.
- In addition to the state stimulus plan mentioned above, the State is also seeking input on its [Build Back Stronger](#) plan regarding the use of federal funds through the American Rescue Plan passed by Congress in March.
- A bipartisan bill introduced in the Colorado Legislature would make permanent [to-go alcohol](#), a temporary measure that was initially instituted by the Governor to assist restaurants during the pandemic.
- The Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) received a [\\$2.4 million Economic Development Administration \(EDA\) grant](#) to assist the state's tourism industry recovery efforts. According to the CTO, travelers to Colorado spent [\\$9.7 billion between March 2020 and January 2021](#), about half of what was spent during the same timeframe in 2019.
- The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) is awarding \$500,000 to a new [whiskey distillery and tourist attraction in Black Hawk](#).
- The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is proposing a [new shuttle service along the I-70 mountain corridor](#) connecting Denver to Summit and Eagle counties.

FEDERAL NEWS



- Congress passed the [\\$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan](#), which includes many recovery programs for the tourism industry including \$750 million in Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants to support communities with losses in the tourism industry, aid for airlines and airports, the \$28 billion Restaurant Revitalization Fund, and more.
- VISIT DENVER, with tourism industry partners from around Colorado, participated in the U.S. Travel Association's (USTA) virtual [Destination Capitol Hill](#). In meetings with all nine of Colorado's federal delegation members, the group focused on national policy priorities including PPP extension, tax credits for business and leisure travel, and a timeline to re-open international travel.
- The American Hotel and Lodging Association released its [State of the Hotel Industry 2021 report](#) highlighting that while hotels are projected to add 200,000 direct jobs, the sector will still remain 500,000 jobs below 2019 levels.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation has unveiled a [Travel and Tourism Infrastructure Plan](#) to be used as a framework to guide policies and investment and support all modes of transportation.
- The COVID pandemic caused a [loss of \\$500 billion in nationwide travel spending](#), loss of more than 5.5 million direct and indirect jobs, decline of \$57 billion in local, state and federal taxes, and other severe impacts.
- According to the National Park Service, [237 million Americans visited national parks in 2020](#), an overall decline of 28% compared to 2019 though some parks realized record crowds.

PARTNER PERSPECTIVES



Visit CHLA's [COVID-19 Resources & Information](#) page for statewide updates. Should you have questions or need further information on anything that [CHLA](#) is working on, please don't hesitate to contact Amie Mayhew, President & CEO, at amayhew@chla.com.



Visit CRA's [Coronavirus Info & Resources page](#) for local, state and federal information.

Should you have questions or need further information on anything that [CRA](#) is working on, please contact Sonia Riggs, President & CEO, or Nick Hoover, Manager of Government Affairs at nhoover@corerestaurant.org.

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