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.

Visits Denver continues to closely monitor and stay engaged on local, state and federal 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**

- 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.
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.

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@corestaurant.org.