

ANNUAL REPORT

COLL  
FAX  
AVE

2021





COLFAXAVE.COM



Photo by Evan Semón

# COL FAX AVE

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## FRIENDS OF COLFAX,

We often refer to Colfax Avenue as the heartbeat of Denver, a dynamic and diverse corridor that cuts through the middle of the city. When you walk on our stretch of Colfax, you'll see a little bit of everything: businesses who have served the community for over 50 years, new businesses opening their doors, and vacant spaces ready for new life. You'll also meet all kinds of people, including families with young children, older residents with mobility challenges, our unhoused neighbors, and legislators heading to the Capitol.

It's this mix that keeps Colfax authentic with perspectives from every slice of the community. We at the Colfax Ave Business Improvement District, or BID, work to maintain Colfax's unique character while attending to the evolving needs of the commercial district. We do this in many ways, including keeping the street clean, showcasing our local businesses through marketing, events, and promotional programs, and working with our community partners to make Colfax a safe, accessible, and welcoming place for everyone.

The need for collaboration is more important than ever, and the BID strengthened many key partnerships in 2021, spanning everything from homelessness and mental health to economic development and mobility. We look forward to continuing to work with our many community partners in 2022 on these important city-wide issues.

We're proud of all that the BID accomplished in 2021, from assisting in the creation of the Unhoused Action Coalition to the return of our holiday party at the iconic Fillmore Auditorium. I won't spoil everything that our team accomplished - that's what the rest of the report is for.

As COVID cases continue to decline, signs of normalcy are returning along the corridor. People lining up for shows at our music venues, friends meeting up for dinner or drinks, strangers striking up conversation on the street. We think the 1UP Arcade Bar summed it up best on their sign (check out the photo on the next page) that Colfax Ave is "Less Fancy, More Fun" - we're looking forward to lots of unfancy fun in 2022.

As we look towards the future, there are a number of exciting projects coming to Colfax. These developments will bring over 580 apartment units to our district, in a time when we desperately need more housing to make Denver more affordable for all. Many of the projects also include retail space for more businesses to thrive. Business and residential growth will also benefit from the Colfax Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. Read more about what's Coming to Colfax on page 21.

It's an exciting time to be part of the Colfax community. As we enter our 33rd year of service, we promise to meet each of the unique challenges ahead of us with compassion, innovation, and a little bit of that classic Colfax grit.

**ANDY BALDYGA**  
Colfax Ave BID Board Chair

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Andy Baldyga, Chair**  
The Mulhern Group

**Len Austin, Vice Chair**  
Front Range Services /  
Consolidated Services Group

**Kathy Bettis, Treasurer**  
Kentro Group

**Jamie Rosenberry, Secretary**  
Open Door Ministries

**Jennifer Neuhalfen**  
1915 E Colfax LLC

**David Bentley**  
Argonaut Wine and Liquor

**Nikki Hazamy**  
The Corner Beet / Rooted Heart  
Yoga & Wellness

**Christopher Bishop**  
UMB Bank

## COLFAX AVE STAFF

**Frank Locantore**  
Executive Director

**Michelle Valeri**  
Communications &  
Programs Director

**Mitch Freund**  
Operations Manager



## ABOUT COLFAX AVE

The Colfax Ave Business Improvement District (BID) works to build a dynamic and inclusive community along the Colfax corridor. Through increased marketing and visibility, cleaner and safer streets, streetscape improvements, and partnerships with various City agencies and community groups, the BID maintains Colfax's unique character while attending to the evolving needs of the commercial district.









# MAINTENANCE

One of the main responsibilities of a Business Improvement District is to keep the area clean and welcoming for all. Led by our Operations Manager, Mitch Freund, our clean team is out on the street every day - emptying our public trash receptacles, keeping the right-of-way clean, removing graffiti, assisting with special projects, and maintaining things like our street benches, pedestrian light poles, bike racks, and art-wrapped power boxes.

## TRASH RECEPTACLES

In 2021, we **installed 10 new and 4 refurbished trash receptacles**, bringing our total to 64 public receptacles. We're on our way to having a receptacle on every corner of our stretch of Colfax.

We also installed branded Colfax Ave decals on all of our trash receptacles. Small steps like this show the community who is taking responsibility for these trash receptacles, while also creating a sense of place, and adding some color to a typically drab piece of street furniture.



## COMING IN 2022

In 2022, we'll continue to take care of our existing assets - including giving many of our pedestrian light poles a much-needed fresh coat of paint and converting remaining light fixtures to LED.

Street trees are a very important component of what makes an urban environment feel welcoming and enjoyable. While trees planted in the right-of-way are the responsibility of adjacent property owners, we are making an investment in 2022 to provide an equitable and sustainable tree pruning program. The program will ease the burden on property owners and help care for existing trees, making sure the trees continue to provide valuable shade and prosperity in the area for many more years.



## PEDESTRIAN LIGHT POLES

We have 201 pedestrian light poles throughout the District. These lights hold our street banners and illuminate the sidewalk for those walking at night. In 2021, we repaired numerous outages and now consistently have 99.5% of our lights in working order!

## POWER WASHING

In order to deep-clean the embedded grime in our sidewalks, we pressure-washed multiple times throughout the year.

## NEW HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Our holiday lights got a serious upgrade this year. These new light strands are LED, making them much more environmentally-friendly, and commercial-grade, so they are rugged enough to stand up to the Colfax elements.

## MAINTENANCE BY THE NUMBERS



**2,632**  
pieces of graffiti removed



**252,468**  
gallons of trash removed





# COLFAX WORKS

In 2021, we launched a hybrid model of our successful Colfax Works program. The program provides employment and supportive services for those experiencing or emerging from homelessness or incarceration. Crews provide enhanced clean team services to area businesses and are responsible for trash, surface litter, graffiti, and sticker removal within the district.

## A DAY ON THE JOB



LITTER  
CLEANUP



GRAFFITI  
REMOVAL



TRASH  
MANAGEMENT



STICKER  
REMOVAL

# 06

**WORKERS  
GRADUATED INTO  
FULL-TIME WORK  
AND INDEPENDENT  
LIVING IN 2021**

**22 GRADUATES SINCE 2020**

This hybrid model combined the workforce development expertise of our nonprofit partners at Ready to Work Aurora with the skill of a professional maintenance company, Consolidated Services Group (CSG). This model allowed crew members to expand their skillset, making them more competitive in today's job market, while also providing a higher standard of service to BID stakeholders.

This program would not be possible without the support of the community and funding from Denver's Department of Housing Stability (HOST).

**COLFAXWORKS.COM**





# EVENTS + PROGRAMS



## WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR STREET

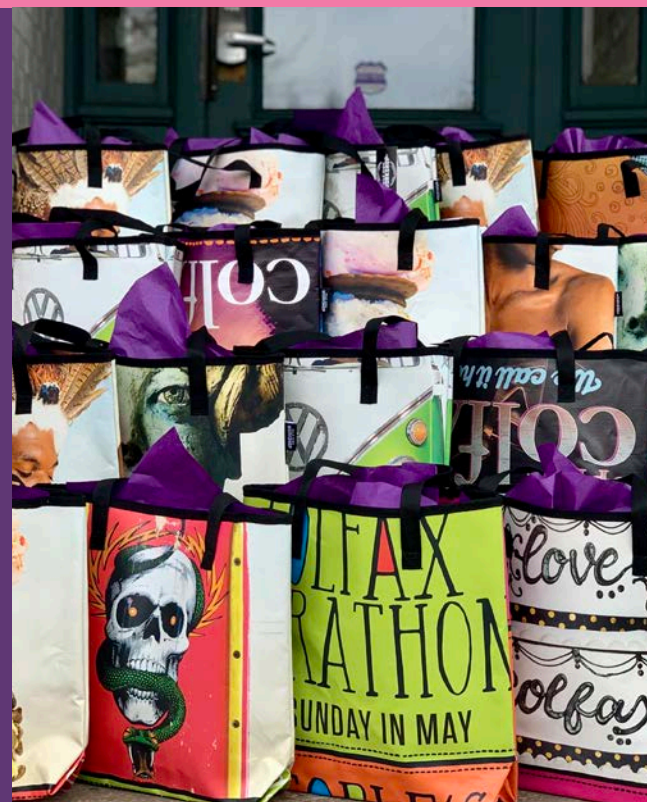
What's more romantic than declaring your love on the longest, wickedest street in America? Residents, businesses, and community members reserved a Colfax heart with their own custom message. These giant hearts hung from our pedestrian light poles for the community to enjoy throughout the entire month of February. And they sold out in less than four days. Now that's what we call #ColfaxLove.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/WEAR-YOUR-HEART-ON-YOUR-STREET](https://colfaxave.com/WEAR-YOUR-HEART-ON-YOUR-STREET)

## BAG OF COLFAX

Our successful Bag of Colfax program returned in 2021 to help remind people to shop local for the holidays. These gift bags, filled with 5-7 products from local businesses (and a couple of exclusive items from us) were a hit again, bringing in over \$11,000 for participating businesses. We introduced the popular new VIP Bag, which meant your goodies were packed in a durable tote bag made from upcycled material from our old street banners.

[BAGOFCOLFAX.COM](https://bagofcolfax.com)



## INDEPENDENTS DAY

*Independents Day* - nope, that's not a typo - was all about celebrating the local and *independent* businesses who make Colfax so special. Back for its second year, this weekend-long celebration allowed people to support our local businesses, explore new art along Colfax, and maybe even discover a new favorite neighborhood spot.

29 participating businesses offered a special of their choosing. A scavenger hunt led participants on a tour of the latest art installations in the district, and they doubled their points by supporting local businesses along the way. A few lucky winners received \$500 in gift cards to their favorite Colfax businesses.

New in 2021, we introduced several on-site activations - including everything from pop-ups featuring local artists to Drag Queen Story Time - that brought Colfax to life and provided fun for visitors of all ages.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/INDEPENDENTS-DAY](https://colfaxave.com/INDEPENDENTS-DAY)





# COLFAX AVE HOLIDAY PARTY

## COLFAX AVE HOLIDAY PARTY

After taking a pandemic hiatus in 2020, we were thrilled to be able to host our annual Holiday Party at the iconic Fillmore Auditorium on Dec. 9th, 2021. This event is all about showcasing the incredible local businesses, community partners, and artists who make Colfax so special.

Attendees enjoyed food and drinks from our local businesses, got some holiday shopping done courtesy of our local artists and vendors, and found new ways to get involved with the community partners doing great things in Denver.



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We awarded three Characters of Colfax awards to some special community members.



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**Pete's Kitchen** was awarded the Thick & Thin award for decades of warm hospitality and Colfax comfort food any time of day or night.



**SAME Cafe** was awarded the Revolutionary Love award for providing healthy food access, a safe space, and dignity for all.



Local artist **Detour** was awarded the Storyteller award for cultivating community resilience and sparking positive change through art.





# ART ON THE AVE



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Amanda Christine**  
@amanda.christine.dreams

**Audrey Freeman**  
@audreygfree

**Celina Jara Tovar**  
@celina\_jaratovar\_arte

**Cynthia Joye**  
@cjoyejoy

**Emily Burrowes**  
@bigassmaps

**Jeff Sloan**  
@jeffreysloan

**Jeremy Storter**  
@whatthebub

**Jocelyn R. (Access Gallery)**  
@accessgalleryco

**Josh Palmeri**  
@palmyjmary

**Katie Karakourtis**  
@thewildgooseco

**Marissa Napoletano**  
@reveryart

**Michelle Montano**  
@twenty\_onee\_k

**Tess Swickard**  
@raritystudio\_

**That 5280 Lady**  
@that5280lady

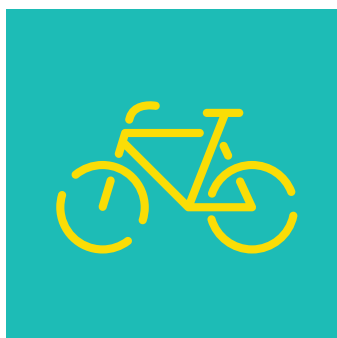
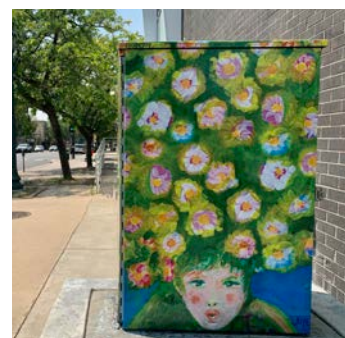
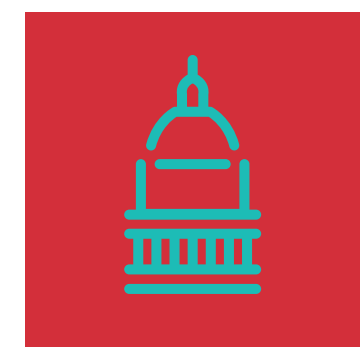
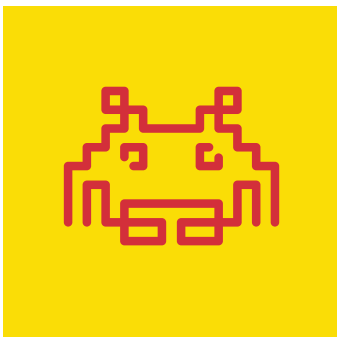
**Tom Ward**  
@tomwardart

**Zach Kotel**  
@zkotelart

## POWER BOX ART - COLFAX COMEBACK

Each year, we work with local artists, students, non-profits, and businesses to turn our power boxes into vessels for art and storytelling. 2021's installation, Colfax Comeback, showcased art from 15 local artists and captured the feelings that come with being able to gather together in person again.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/ART](http://COLFAXAVE.COM/ART)







# COLLABORATION

**The work we do on Colfax is made possible by the many community partners who are working tirelessly to improve our city. Here are just a few of the collaborative efforts we are proud to be a part of.**

## UNHOUSED ACTION COALITION

In 2021, we helped create what is now a growing coalition of diverse community groups collectively known as the Unhoused Action Coalition, or UAC. Decades of policy decisions have eliminated support for people suffering from poverty, mental health illnesses, and addiction. These challenges cannot be solved overnight, but efforts to address them must be accelerated to provide immediate, near-term, and sustaining support. The UAC crafted a 10-point action plan to urge city leaders to implement a comprehensive approach that spans the full continuum of homelessness.



DENVER COALITION ADDRESSES HOUSING DILEMMA; ISSUES 10-POINT ACTION PLAN.

**COLFAXAVE.COM/  
COLLABORATIONS**

## COLFAX COLLABORATIVE

We continue to work with our fellow Colfax BIDs (West Colfax, Bluebird District, and Colfax Mayfair BID) as the Colfax Collaborative to tackle shared issues and ensure that the 2017 Elevate Denver Bond funds, which included funding for pedestrian improvements along Colfax, are equitably distributed along the corridor.

## ECONOMIC RELIEF & RECOVERY COUNCIL

The Economic Relief & Recovery Council or ERRC was formed as a response to the pandemic. Our Executive Director, Frank Locantore, serves as co-chair of the BID Subcommittee, which brings BID leaders together to get long- and short-term relief to businesses and share successful strategies that can be replicated across the numerous districts in Denver.

## ★ STAR PROGRAM

The Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program sends health care professionals, rather than police officers, to engage individuals experiencing crises related to mental health issues, poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse. We support the citywide expansion of the STAR program and our Operations Manager, Mitch Freund, attends all meetings, monitors progress, and provides a helpful perspective.

## CARING FOR DENVER

The Caring For Denver Foundation was created in 2018 to address Denver's mental health and substance misuse needs by growing community-informed solutions, dismantling stigma, and turning the community's desire to help into action. Our Executive Director, Frank Locantore, serves on the Caring For Denver Foundation's board of directors.

## CIVIC CENTER NEXT 100

Located at the heart of the city and surrounded by many of our key civic and cultural institutions, Civic Center has served as Denver's most significant gathering spot for cultural events, festivals, and First Amendment rallies for over 100 years. Our Operations Manager, Mitch Freund, served on the Civic Center Next 100 Stakeholder Advisory Committee to help reimagine the park's future and ensure a dynamic outdoor space for residents and visitors of Colfax.

**+ Civic Center Park & Bannock Street / Final Concept Plan / Winter2022**





# SAFETY

**We want everyone to feel safe, welcome, and comfortable on Colfax. The criminal activity, alcohol/drug abuse, and mental illness that converge on Colfax require a compassionate and multifaceted approach. The Colfax Ave BID's Safety Program works to untangle these distinct challenges.**

## PEDESTRIAN LIGHTS

Last year, we installed eight new pedestrian light poles in the 1400 block of Pearl Street, one of the more challenging blocks in the district when it comes to crime.



## NO TRESPASS AGREEMENTS

We offer free, legally-worded No Trespassing signs for business and property owners. These signs, in conjunction with a No Trespassing agreement with Denver Police District 6, allow police to enforce No Trespassing laws even if the business owner is not physically present. The BID handed out 98 signs to business and property owners in 2021.

## SAFETY DESIGNS

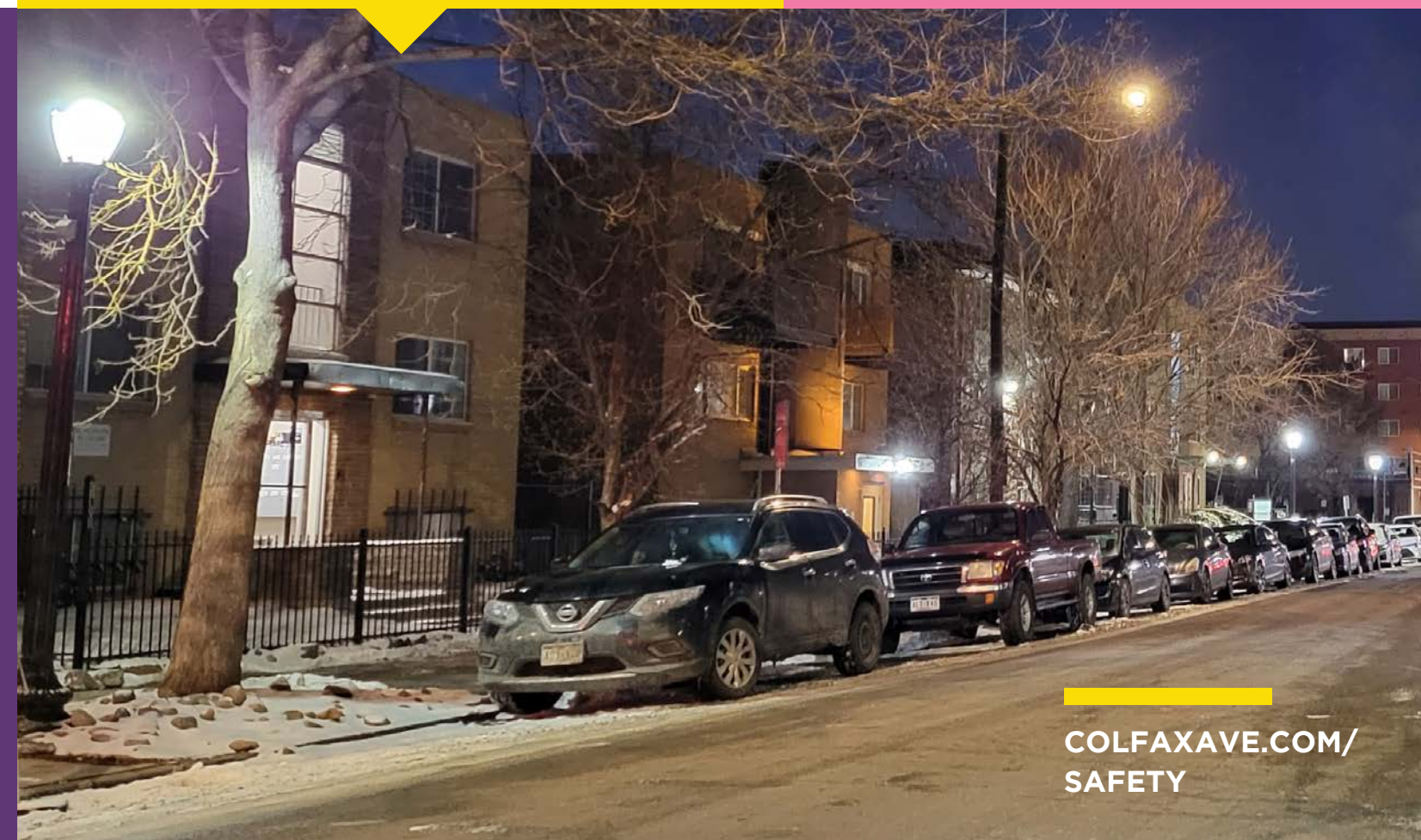
In 2021, the BID awarded funds to district businesses via our Safety Design program. The goal is to reduce crime by designing a physical environment that positively influences human behavior. Businesses or property owners - like Denver Drug and Liquor, pictured here - received matching funds to improve the safety and security of their outside environment.



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## SAFER ALLEYS

In 2021, we worked with adjacent property owners at Lion's Lair to clean up their alley space. This included power washing, trash and graffiti removal, and plans to install lighting in the alley to deter criminal activity and provide outdoor space for Lion's Lair patrons.



[COLFAXAVE.COM/  
SAFETY](https://colfaxave.com/safety)

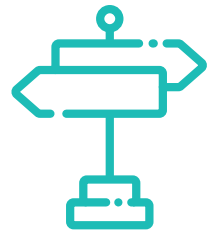
# 2022



In 2022, our safety committee will create positive activations on the street to displace negative activity we see in the district. Our collaboration will be with youth-focused organizations to highlight better paths young folks could take instead of getting into crime.

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# STREETSCAPE

**The Colfax Ave Streetscape Plan provides a vision for the future of Colfax, including safety improvements, wayfinding, and building guidelines. We know that Colfax holds a special place in the hearts of many and we spent hundreds of hours working with our stakeholders, business and property owners, residents and friends to create a plan that provides enhanced safety guides, respects the historic nature of the street and improves the pedestrian experience, all while keeping our independent and original street thriving.**

## 16TH AVENUE SHARED STREET

The 16th Avenue Shared Street was established during the pandemic and designed to deter non-local vehicle trips and reduce speeds to create a safer environment for all ages and abilities to use the street for recreation and mobility. We teamed up with the Denver Streets Partnership to host community events that demonstrated the need for safe and accessible travel along 16th Avenue, which serves as a “gateway” to our many local businesses along Colfax for those who bike, walk, or roll to their destinations.



## PORCH FEST

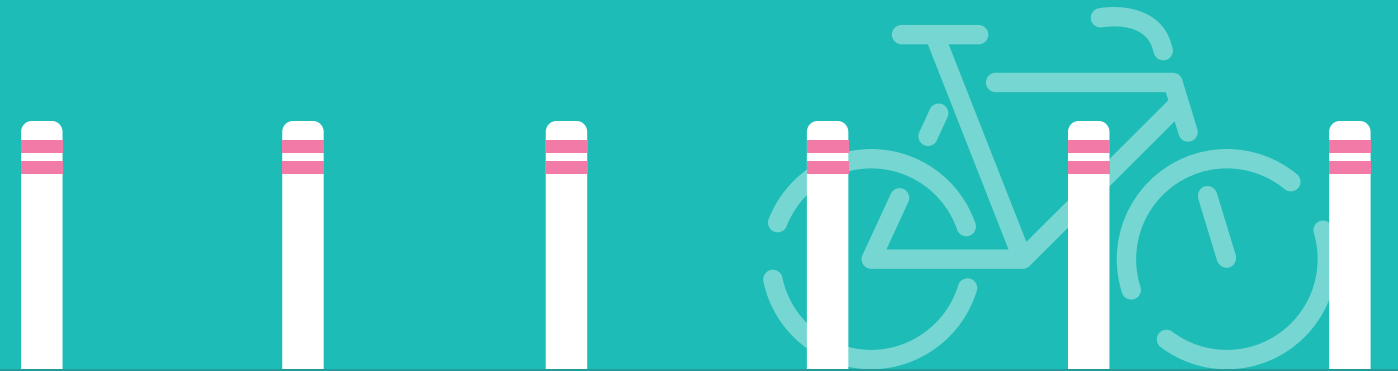
On October 23rd, the 16th Ave Porch Music Fest celebrated the benefits of safe, accessible, shared spaces for people. Neighbors from Gaylord Street to Humboldt Street opened their porches to host musical acts and community members, and called on Denver to permanently maintain 16th Avenue as a people-first shared street.

## BIKE FROM WORK DAY

On September 22nd, we hosted a Bike From Work Day party at the Economist Apartments with live music, free beer, and tasty food samples from our local businesses.

## COMING IN 2022

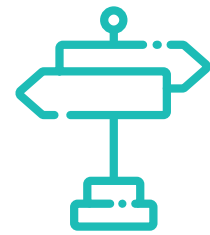
In 2022, we'll continue our focus on 16th Avenue as a safe street for everyone and a connector to our local businesses on Colfax through safe and aesthetically pleasing street installations. These efforts will complement the protected bike lane the City has planned for 16th Avenue west of Park Avenue and on the City Park Esplanade.



## DESIGN GUIDE

In 2022 we'll release the Colfax Ave Design Guide, which provides design guidance for anticipated redevelopment and improvements within our district, including everything from adaptive reuse to outdoor activation.

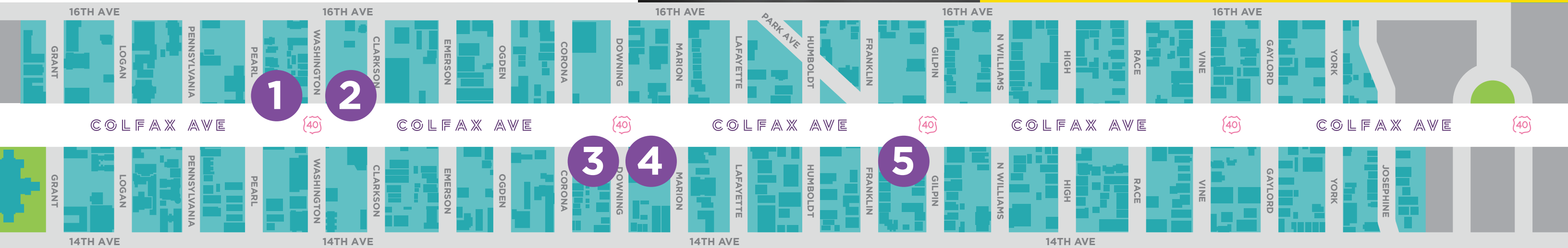




# COMING TO COLFAX



**BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)** Colfax is a key east-west transportation route and ridership for the 15/15L bus is higher than all other RTD bus routes. Center-running bus rapid transit (BRT) is planned with a dedicated transit lane in each direction. BRT will increase the number of people coming to Colfax by nearly 50%, provide more affordable and reliable access to over 250,000 jobs and community services, reduce transit travel time by up to 15 minutes, improve pedestrian safety, and create exciting streetscape, placemaking and economic development opportunities. [Learn more at colfaxbrt.org](https://colfaxbrt.org)



## 2 1566 N WASHINGTON ST.

As part of the 2017 General Obligation (GO) Bond, Denver is investing \$25 million into a new Denver Police District 6 facility. The city recommended a new location for the station, so the future of the current police station building site is unknown. This site is a great opportunity for a community-centered plan for development of this City-owned parcel.

## 4 1150 E COLFAX

Kairoi Residential plans to build a seven-story 334-unit apartment building at 1150 E Colfax (the former Ramada Inn), with 6,000 square feet of ground floor retail space. Construction is currently underway with an anticipated move-in date of summer 2024.



## 1 601 E COLFAX

Formerly the beloved Tom's Diner, construction is underway on a reimagined concept for the 1967 Googie-style building. Tom's Starlight will host a cocktail bar in the original structure. The parking lot out back will be transformed into outdoor space with a garden and outdoor bar. Construction is underway and doors will open summer of 2022.

## 3 1080 E COLFAX

Consolidated Investment Group (CIG) purchased the former Smiley's Laundromat building at 1080 E Colfax in 2017. The project, called *Route 40*, will be a seven-story building with 210 apartments and 5,000 square feet of retail space.



## 5 COLFAX & FRANKLIN

A mixed-use project from Pando Holdings is underway located at the intersection of Colfax Ave and Franklin St. The project consists of an adaptive reuse of the existing 1890's mansion and a new seven-story building with 67 residential units. Construction will begin in July 2022 with a completion date of spring 2024.





# COMMUNICATIONS

## HIGHLIGHTS

21%

increase in social media followers in 2021

37%

average open rate for Colfax Ave email communications  
(Industry average is 21%)

11

blogs published showcasing Colfax

## FOLLOW US



@ColfaxAveDen



@ColfaxAveDen



@ColfaxAve

WEB

colfaxave.com  
charactersofcolfax.com

## BLOG

**CHARACTERS OF COLFAX:** We started our Characters of Colfax blog in 2017 to share the stories of the people, places, and things that make Colfax, well, Colfax. In 2021 we hired a new writer and photographer, Michelle Ancell! Michelle is a fourth-generation Colorado native with an affinity for talking to strangers. When she's not looking for people to talk to on East Colfax, she commutes from her home in Denver to teach journalism at Colorado State University. Know a Character of Colfax she should feature? Drop her a line at [characters@colfaxave.com](mailto:characters@colfaxave.com)

## JOIN US

### GET OUR NEWSLETTER

Our newsletters go out twice per month with the latest Colfax news and events: [colfaxave.com/newsletter](http://colfaxave.com/newsletter)

### VOLUNTEER

Email us at [info@colfaxave.com](mailto:info@colfaxave.com) to sign up to volunteer at future art installations and events!

### JOIN A COMMITTEE

Committees generally meet monthly or quarterly. Email us at [info@colfaxave.com](mailto:info@colfaxave.com) for more info.



# 2021 FINANCIALS

46%

MAINTENANCE

18.1%

MARKETING / EVENTS /  
BIZ SUPPORT

12.5%

ADMINISTRATIVE

11.9%

STREETSCAPE

11.4%

SAFETY



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