



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

COLFAX AVE

ORIGINAL BY NATURE. INDEPENDENT BY CHOICE.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we wrap up the Colfax Ave BID's 30th year, we have a lot to celebrate. Since 1989, the BID has worked to make Colfax a thriving, welcoming main street while preserving the Colfax character that makes it such a unique place.

My predecessors made huge strides in the early years of the BID, including helping to create the then-new Denver Police Department District 6, assisting in the creation of the Colfax Marathon, and successfully advocating for Main Street Zoning along the corridor, just to name a few accomplishments. We're thankful for the groundwork they laid out for us.

2019 was an important year of growth for the BID. **Our innovative Colfax Works program became a permanent, year-round initiative** providing employment, housing, and supportive services to those experiencing homelessness - all while enhancing the maintenance services our district receives. We're proud to say that four of our crew members obtained full-time employment and independent housing.

We continued the implementation of our Streetscape Plan with the installation of a

high-impact, vibrant Colfax Ave sculpture outside of the Fillmore Auditorium - selfies encouraged. We continue to coordinate our streetscape efforts with the City's intersection and transportation improvements in order to minimize the construction disturbances and make our budget stretch further.

Also new in 2019, the BID launched a **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) grant program**, which provides matching funds for business and property owners who want to make safety improvements at their buildings.

Read on to learn about our other key accomplishments in 2019 along with our vision for the year ahead. If you'd like to get involved with the BID, consider joining one of our committees (Maintenance, Safety, Streetscape, Business Support).

With a solid foundation of the past and visionary plans for the future, the evolution of Colfax will continue. Thank you for being a part of the Colfax community.

- **Andy Baldyga, President**



ABOUT THE COLFAX AVE BID

The Colfax Ave Business Improvement District (BID) promotes economic vitality, implements a clean and safe street program, and advocates on behalf of area businesses among public and private partners. We are funded by a tax on commercial property located within the BID's boundaries (approximately Grant to Josephine, between 14th and 16th). Founded in 1989, the organization is governed by a volunteer board of directors representing a diverse mix of area businesses and property owners and who are appointed by the Mayor.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andy Baldyga, President
The Mulhern Group

Kathy Bettis
Kentro Group

Jimmy Callahan, Vice President
Prohibition Pub

Yvette Freeman
Progressive Urban Management Associates

Vicky Hales, Treasurer
UMB Bank

Jamie Rosenberry
Open Door Ministries

Ron Vaughn, Secretary
Argonaut Wine & Liquor

BID STAFF

Frank Locantore
Executive Director

Michelle Valeri
Communications & Programs Director

Mitch Freund (as of January 2020)
Operations Manager

COLFAX WORKS

One of the main responsibilities of a Business Improvement District is to keep the area clean. In 2017 we asked ourselves, “How can we keep the district clean while also helping those experiencing homelessness?”

Our answer is the Colfax Works program.

Colfax Works provides employment, supportive services, and housing for those experiencing homelessness. Crews provide enhanced clean team services to area businesses and are responsible for trash, surface litter, graffiti, and sticker removal within the district.

YEAR IN REVIEW

The program began with a pilot project during the summer of 2018. With tremendous support from the community and additional funding from Denver Human Services, the pilot continued through the end of the year.

2019 was an exciting year for the program. Thanks to funding provided by The Denver Foundation, Denver Human Services, and the

Colfax Ave BID, we were able to scale Colfax Works to become a year-round program. Service increased to five days per week and six hours per day, with a team of four crew members plus a supervisor.



We also began a new partnership with Ready to Work (RTW). RTW, a program of the non-profit Bridge House, has operated since 2012 in Boulder and opened Ready to Work Aurora in December of 2018. The program’s holistic approach has a 75% success rate, which means that 75% of trainees obtain a full-time job and independent housing at the end of the program.

In addition to part-time employment with the Colfax Ave BID, trainees receive case management support and transitional housing at the Ready to Work House.

After one year in the Ready to Work program, trainees graduate to mainstream jobs and permanent housing. The BID plays an instrumental role in connecting upcoming graduates with potential full-time employment at local businesses within the district. Not only did four crew members obtain full-time employment and independent housing in 2019, one of those placements was within our district. We continue to make valuable connections with potential employers along Colfax for future placements.

This program would not be possible without the support of the Colfax community and our partners at Ready to Work. Most importantly, we’d like to thank our crew, who shows up and works hard every day, no matter the weather.

A LOOK AHEAD

In 2020, we will continue our partnership with Ready to Work and expand service to seven days per week. This will allow us to provide opportunities to more individuals in need. Other districts have shown great interest in the program; it’s our hope that this model will be replicated across the city.

Learn more at colfaxworks.com

Meet Mitch!



In January of 2020, the BID hired a full-time Operations Manager, Mitch Freund, to provide enhanced attention to the public realm. Mitch is responsible for maintaining all of the BID’s current street assets along with the installation of future improvements along the corridor.

Having started his Business Improvement District career in 2001, Mitch brings years of experience managing maintenance and environmental enhancement programs.

From developing a keen eye for streetscape issues as a Downtown Ambassador in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; to beautifying Madison, Wisconsin’s central corridor with lavish landscaping; to the intricate operations of an annual ice rink in Fresno, California; Mitch brings a passion for urban revitalization focused on preserving a community’s unique assets and culture.

SAFETY



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

YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2019, the BID established a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) grant program. CPTED's goal is to prevent crime by designing a physical environment that positively

influences human behavior. The program provides up to \$5,000 in matching funds for a business or property owner to improve the security of their outside environment.

Also new in 2019, the BID created branded No Trespassing signs for district businesses to allow Denver Police to address trespassing issues outside of normal operating hours. We worked closely with Denver Police District 6 to complete targeted outreach to obtain No Trespassing agreements from area businesses.



*District 6 Community Resource Officers
Austen Munson and Teresa Gillian*

Our Executive Director, Frank Locantore, was appointed to the Caring for Denver Foundation board of directors in 2019. Founded and funded in 2018, the Caring for Denver Foundation was established with 70% voter approval to support the mental health and substance misuse challenges facing the City and County of Denver.

A LOOK AHEAD - 2020



The BID will focus on **mental health** by facilitating the submission of a collaborative grant application to Caring for Denver for more street outreach workers on Colfax.

We will strengthen our relationship with **Denver Police District 6** through updates at monthly board meetings, developing a Neighborhood/Business Watch Program, and securing additional No Trespassing agreements from property owners.



The **CPTED grant program** will continue with additional funding for safety improvements at area businesses.

We will also focus on **crime hotspots** at Pennsylvania and Pearl with No Trespassing signs/agreements, increased police attention, and increased lighting on the street.



Learn more at colfaxave.com/safety

Good Activity Displaces Bad Activity



Another important but often overlooked safety tactic is to cultivate **24-hour blocks**.

By working with property owners to curate a mix of business types within a single block that have varying hours of operation, we create more reasons for people to visit the block.

By aspiring to zero storefront vacancies and 24-hours of cumulative business operations within the block, it increases the proverbial "eyes on the street" and makes those with bad intent go elsewhere.



STREETSCAPE

The Colfax Ave Streetscape Plan provides a vision for Colfax improvements, including safety implementations, branding, and building guidelines.

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.

YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2019, we installed a seven-foot, larger-than-life sculpture of our logo outside of the Fillmore Auditorium at Colfax and Clarkson. The sculpture, designed by ArtHouse Design and fabricated by ADCON Signs, is a charismatic addition to the corridor. The sculpture has been featured in media stories, countless Instagram posts, and delights the community daily.

We also began the process for installing eight wayfinding kiosks and 50 custom bike racks throughout the district. These projects will be completed in 2020.

We also continued to keep our finger on the pulse of important city projects such as the future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the East Central Area Plan (ECAP) to ensure that the needs and wants of our businesses will be addressed in these plans.

The BID continues to be thoughtful about the timing and location of streetscape installations in order to best take advantage of the City-funded improvements to Colfax intersections and public transportation. By timing some of our larger and more expensive improvements with the City's construction schedule, we'll be able to do more with our budget and fund more improvements.

A LOOK AHEAD



In 2020, The BID will complete the installation of new streetscape elements, including the aforementioned wayfinding kiosks and bike racks.

We will continue to remain involved with outside processes such as BRT/Elevate Denver/ECAP in order to keep ratepayers informed and ensure the BID's streetscape vision is included.

Learn more at colfaxave.com/streetscape

ART ON THE AVE



We're fortunate to have some incredible artistic talent in the Colfax community. We've partnered with local artists, businesses, non-profits, and students over the years to bring more art to the corridor.

YEAR IN REVIEW

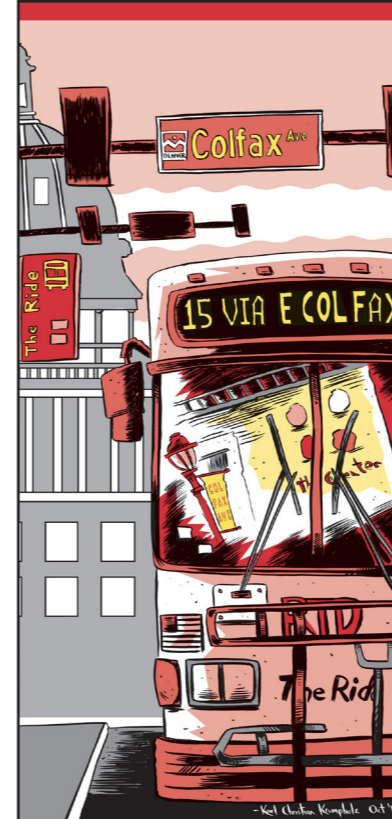
In March, we unveiled a new set of banners designed by 12 artists from our three local tattoo shops - Bound by Design, End of Days Tattoo, and Lifetime Tattoo. Our tattoo shops are one of the cornerstones of the community and some of the longest-standing fixtures of the street. The designs were as eclectic as they come, with

everything from the abstract to the colorful and bizarre. Each artist brought their own style and Colfax experience to the table.

In May, we teamed up with The Center on Colfax, local artist Adrienne Norris, and the National Arts Honor Society at East High School to install new art along Colfax that commemorated 50 years since the Stonewall raids and subsequent riots that served as a catalyst for the gay rights movement around the world. On the fourteen power boxes throughout the district, students designed large format collages on vinyl stickers that tell the story of the LGBTQ+ movement. The Center on Colfax along with fourteen local businesses and Colfax friends sponsored the artwork.

In October, we installed the vibrant Colfax Ave sculpture mentioned in the Streetscape section of this report. The sculpture currently sits outside of the Fillmore Auditorium at Colfax and Clarkson.

In November, our latest set of banners hit the street in celebration of the BID's 30th Anniversary. Designed by local cartoonist Karl Christian Krumpholz, the banners feature eight colorful renditions of iconic Colfax institutions, past and present. The banners have been a hit with the community and are available to purchase as prints and postcards.



View all projects at colfaxave.com/art

30 YEARS OF COLFAX

On Wednesday, November 20th, the Colfax community came together at the Fillmore Auditorium to celebrate 30 Years of Colfax.

The event commemorated three decades of the BID, which was one of the first Business Improvement Districts founded in Denver in 1989.

We wanted to bring Colfax to life inside the Fillmore. That feeling was made possible by the inclusion of many of the local businesses and community partners who make Colfax such an eclectic street.

Food was served by The Goods, Bumble Tea, Yahya's Mediterranean, SliceWorks, Mulberries Cake Shop, and Voodoo Doughnut. Attendees also got a sneak sip of Bruz Beers before the opening of their new location at Colfax and York.

Our community partners work tirelessly to improve the neighborhood and the city, and we were so lucky to have some of them in attendance, including - Ready to Work, Community Planning & Development, Denver Police District 6, Denver Public Works, and the Denver Streets Partnership.

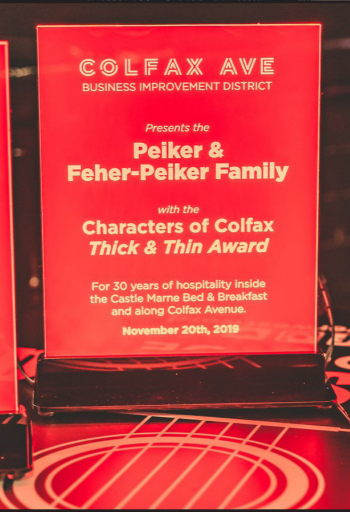
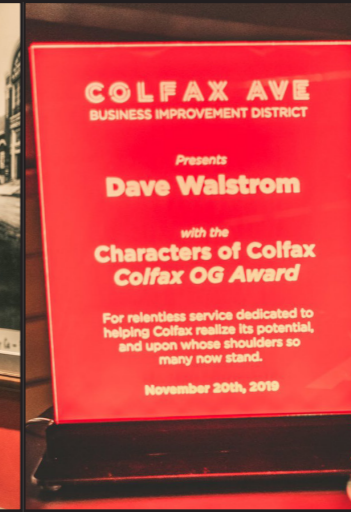
Attendees were also invited to take a "Walk Down Memory Lane", which highlighted the BID's accomplishments over the last three decades, shared current BID priorities, and communicated a vision for the future of the corridor.

The BID honored three special community members with the 2019 Characters of Colfax Awards - Eliza Filene, Dave Walstrom, and the Pieker and Feher-Pieker families.

We again collected gifts to donate to Warren Village's Holiday Shop - this year attendees brought 60 donations with a total value of over \$800. These generous gifts went to resident families in need in the neighborhood just in time for the holidays.

Finally, it wouldn't be a Colfax celebration without the local artists who keep our street unique and intriguing, including - local cartoonist Karl Christian Krumpolz, The Poetry Crow, Photographer C.J. Strehlow, and Jonny Barber of the Colfax Museum.

Special thanks to our volunteers, who made the event possible. We'd also like to thank Sean O'Connell and the Fillmore Auditorium for being our gracious hosts for the evening. And thank you to Liz Viscardi of LV Events and PR, who effortlessly helped coordinate the event.



COMMUNICATIONS

The BID works to enhance Colfax's image through storytelling and public art that captures the character and authenticity that our local businesses bring to the corridor. We do this through our sister site, Characters of Colfax, our social media outlets, and special events.

We also utilize our social media outlets, e-newsletter, and website to promote our district businesses and keep our stakeholders informed of important issues in the neighborhood.

2019 HIGHLIGHTS



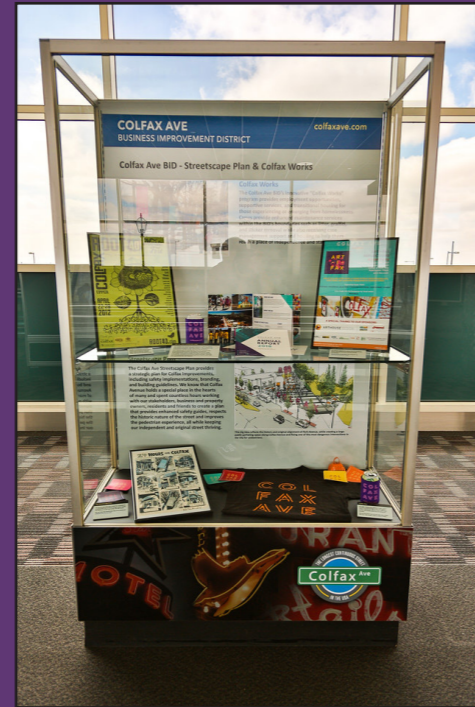
We grew our social media presence across all channels to over **4,300 followers** on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

We sent out e-newsletters twice per month with an average open rate of **31%** (industry average is 20%).



We published **15 blogs** and were featured in **8 media stories** throughout the year.

THE LONGEST, WICKEDEST AIRPORT EXHIBIT



We participated in Denver International Airport's *Colfax Avenue: The Longest Continuous Street in the USA* exhibit along with 13 other local organizations.

The exhibit highlighted Colfax's history and its long-standing grit and reputation as one of the most notorious roadways in America.

CHARACTERS OF COLFAX



Our *Characters of Colfax* blog shines a light on the people, places, and things that make Colfax, well, Colfax.

In 2019, we revamped the blog with a new logo, website, and dedicated social media outlets.

Most importantly, we found our new writer and photographer, Eliza Filene. Eliza wrote four long-format features throughout the year, covering everything from criminal recidivism and harm reduction to entrepreneurship and the importance of community.

CHARACTERSOFCOLFAX.COM

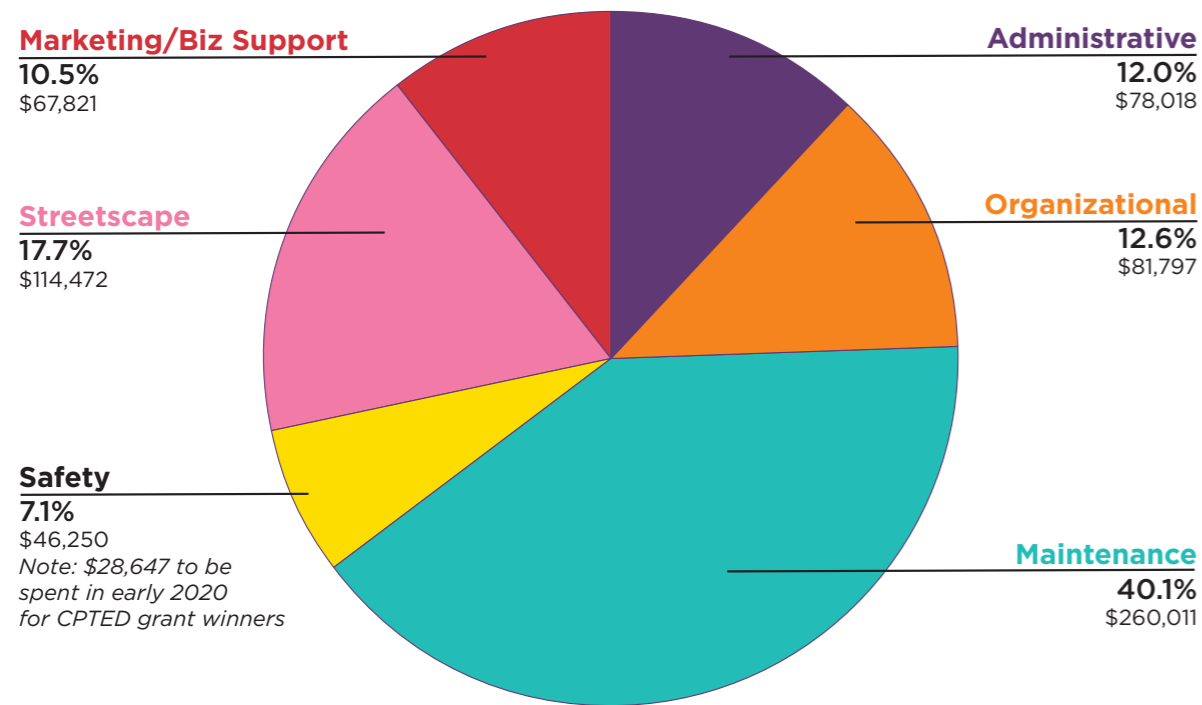
- @charactersofcolfax
- @charactersofcolfax
- @chrctrscolfax



Local cartoonist Karl Christian Krumholz is also a regular contributor to the blog, telling the tales of the corridor in comic form.

2019 EXPENDITURES

The budget snapshot below shows how the volunteer board of directors for the Colfax Ave BID allocated 2019 financial resources.
TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$648,369



GET INVOLVED

Interested in getting more involved with the BID?

Here's how:



Sign up for our e-newsletter. These go out twice per month with the latest Colfax news and events.
colfaxave.com/newsletter

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@colfaxave @colfaxaveden @colfaxaveden



VOLUNTEER at BID art installations, community clean ups, and other special events! Email us at info@colfaxave.com to sign up.

JOIN A COMMITTEE

Streetscape | Safety | Maintenance | Biz Support
These committees generally meet monthly or quarterly. Email us at info@colfaxave.com to sign up.



Photo by Max Bohana

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