

C O L  
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ANNUAL 20  
REPORT 20





# COL FAX AVE

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





## FRIENDS OF COLFAX,

It's safe to say that 2020 was a year unlike any other. What started out as a year filled with exciting and ambitious goals for the Colfax Ave BID turned into a fight to help our businesses survive the COVID-19 pandemic. In true Colfax form, they demonstrated incredible resiliency, creativity, and collaboration throughout the year.

Our small but mighty team quickly pivoted to make sure our businesses were receiving the most timely and accurate information from the City, State, and Federal governments. Along with providing easily digestible information on restriction updates and financial resources, we utilized our social media outlets, website, and newsletter to make sure the public knew exactly how they could support our Colfax Ave businesses.

**We advocated for BID representation on the Mayor's Economic Relief and Recovery Council,** delivered PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) kits to our businesses, and helped businesses navigate the permitting process for outdoor expansions. We also worked with non-profits and neighborhood groups to support the temporary Safe Outdoor Spaces (SOS) in our district, which provide shelter, warmth, amenities, and supportive services for those experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.

**We also introduced two new events/promotions in 2020.** Independents Day celebrated our local and independent businesses and allowed people to safely visit the street, explore our public art, and support local. Bag of Colfax, a mystery gift bag filled with products from local businesses, **raised over \$11,000 for the business community** during the holiday season.

**The BID elevated its maintenance efforts by hiring full-time Operations Manager, Mitch Freund.** Despite starting just before the pandemic hit, Mitch hit the ground running during his first year, utilizing many years of experience managing maintenance and environmental enhancement programs. He brings great attention-to-detail to the street and has implemented systems and processes that will help make Colfax cleaner and more welcoming for all.

Finally, our Colfax Works program, which provides part-time employment and supportive services for those experiencing homelessness, expanded to 7-days-per-week, and **16 of our crew members transitioned to full-time employment and independent housing.**

Read on for more of the BID's accomplishments during a very unique and challenging year. Throughout it all, it's the people - the business owners, residents, visitors, and workers - who contribute to the success of the greater Colfax community. Yes, this was a strange and weird year - but it's not the first time strange and weird were used to describe Colfax, is it?

**ANDY BALDYGA**  
BID Board Chair



## 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.



## 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

**Jimmy Callahan**  
Prohibition

**Yvette Freeman**  
Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.)

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

## COLFAX AVE STAFF

**Frank Locantore**  
Executive Director

**Michelle Valeri**  
Communications & Programs Director

**Mitch Freund**  
Operations Manager

NOW ON TO THE  
**REPORT**





# COLFAX AVE

## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## BOUNDARIES

The Colfax Ave BID boundaries span from the alley west of Grant Street to the alley east of Josephine Street with 14th and 16th Avenues as the southern and northern borders, respectively.





# COVID-19

**In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic rocked the world and pushed our small, local businesses to the brink. We added to our existing work plans a focus on making sure our Colfax Ave businesses were equipped to weather this devastating and unique storm. In true Colfax fashion, they showed incredible strength, resiliency, and creativity. Boarded up windows turned into art, unlikely collaborations formed, and a few new businesses bravely opened their doors.**

During the initial shutdown and throughout the pandemic, we focused on making sure our business and property owners had accurate and timely information - this included frequent updates regarding available financial assistance and restrictions at the city and state levels.

We also advocated for BID representation on the Mayor's Economic Relief and Recovery Council and currently serve on three committees: the BID Subcommittee, Strategic Partners Committee, and liaison to the Large Employer and Anchor Institutions Committee.

We also made sure that the greater Colfax community knew exactly how they could support our local businesses - even if that meant supporting them from the safety of their homes. Our newsletter, website, social media content contained everything from lists of delivery/takeout options and openings/closures to stories of our businesses who, amidst their own struggle, donated meals to frontline workers.



## #FRESHAIRFRIDAY

Throughout the summer, we put a spotlight on the many outdoor dining options along the corridor each week through our #FreshAirFriday campaign.



## PPE ASSISTANCE

The BID also worked with the City to deliver much-needed PPE to our businesses, including 2,500 masks and 10 PPE kits, each of which included 100 masks, 100 gloves, a face shield, and one-gallon hand sanitizer each.



## COLFAX COMEBACK

To let the public know our businesses were ready to welcome them back to the street safely, we launched our Colfax Comeback campaign with a dedicated webpage highlighting open businesses, new art in the district, and ways to support local. We also installed sidewalk clings along the street to encourage people to support local and remember to mask up when visiting Colfax.



## FUNDRAISERS

The BID organized two fundraisers to support our local businesses. The first sold t-shirts featuring designs donated by local artists that showcased the resiliency and strength of Colfax. The second fundraiser supported our local tattoo shops, who were among the hardest hit by the pandemic. We sold prints of our popular banner designs that were created by 12 local tattoo artists - proceeds went directly to the artists or shop.



# 08

**NEW BUSINESSES OPENED IN THE DISTRICT DURING THE PANDEMIC**

05

06





# MAINTENANCE

One of the most important responsibilities of a Business Improvement District is to keep the area clean and welcoming for all to enjoy. With the hiring of a full-time Operations Manager in early 2020, we were able to elevate our maintenance efforts and create a cohesive plan for maintaining our existing assets and caring for new installments on the street.



## PEDESTRIAN LIGHT POLES

Our pedestrian light poles provide much needed light and visibility for those walking along Colfax at night. In 2020, we repaired two meter boxes and multiple outages, ultimately **reactivating more than 50 pedestrian light poles**. In 2021, we will continue the process of converting the remaining 38 lights to LED, making them more efficient and environmentally friendly.



## MITCH FREUND

Mitch Freund joined our team in January 2020 and hit the ground running, utilizing his many years of experience managing maintenance and environmental enhancement programs for BIDs in Milwaukee, Madison, and Fresno.

## TRASH RECEPTACLES

In 2020, we placed **11 new trash receptacles** within the district, **repaired 27 with new hardware**, and **anchored 33 to the sidewalk**. Trash receptacles will continue to be replaced and repaired as part of a comprehensive multi-year maintenance plan. In 2021, all receptacles will be branded, creating a sense of place for visitors who come to the corridor.

11

NEW TRASH RECEPTACLES

27

REPAIRED TRASH RECEPTACLES

33

RECEPTACLES ANCHORED





# COLFAX WORKS

Our Colfax Works program began during the summer of 2018 as a small pilot project. 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.

## MAINTENANCE BY THE NUMBERS



249,600 pounds of trash removed from the district.



354 pieces of graffiti removed from the public right-of-way.

# 16

## WORKERS GRADUATED INTO FULL-TIME WORK AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

After one year in the Ready to Work program, trainees graduate to mainstream jobs and permanent housing. **In 2020, 16 crew members graduated from the program into full-time employment and independent living.**

In 2021, the Colfax Works program will introduce the addition of a professional maintenance company to supplement and oversee the efforts of Ready to Work. This hybrid model will allow crew members to expand their skillset and provide a higher level of experience, making them more competitive in today's job market, while providing a higher standard of service to BID stakeholders.

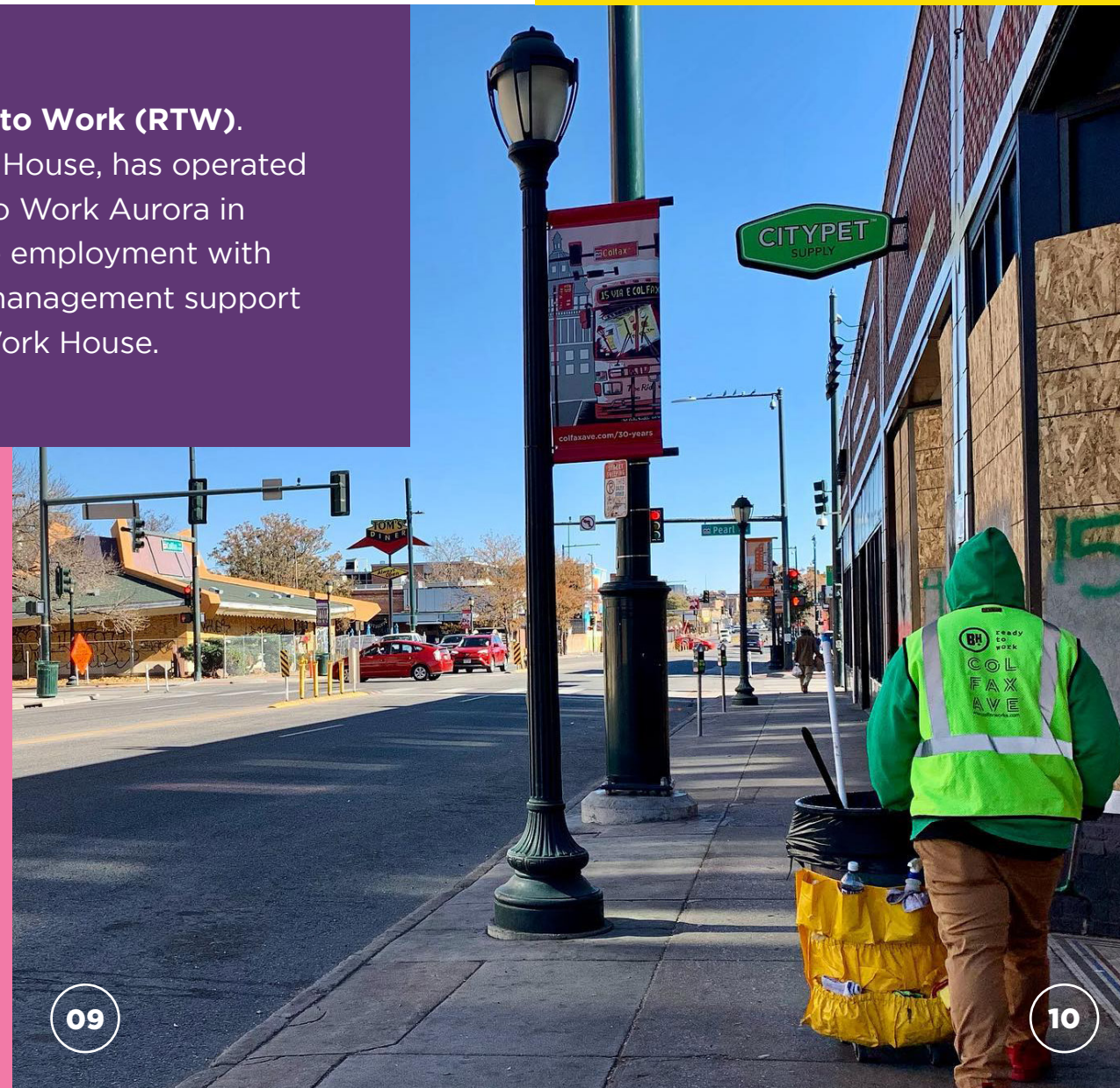
[COLFAXWORKS.COM](http://COLFAXWORKS.COM)

RTW

We continued our partnership with **Ready to Work (RTW)**. RTW, a program of local non-profit Bridge House, has operated since 2012 in Boulder and opened Ready to Work Aurora in December of 2018. 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.

5 days-per-week  
7 days-per-week

Thanks to funding provided by The Denver Foundation, Denver's Department of Housing Stability, and the BID, we were able to expand the Colfax Works program from 5 days-per-week to 7 days-per-week of service in 2020.







# EVENTS + PROGRAMS

**When you think of 2020, you certainly don't think of events - besides the fact that they weren't happening. While we were unable to host our annual holiday party at The Fillmore, the pandemic forced us to get creative, rethink what a traditional event looks like, and provide safe ways for people to support our local businesses when they needed it most. In 2020, we reintroduced our Wear Your Heart on Your Street program (pre-pandemic) and created two new events/promotional programs - Independents Day and Bag of Colfax.**



## INDEPENDENTS DAY

Independents Day - nope, that's not a typo - was all about celebrating the local and independent businesses who make Colfax so special. This was an event that we originally planned to hold around the 4th of July. Obviously, COVID-19 had other plans, so we put a pandemic spin on it and held it in September.

Independents Day allowed people to support our local businesses, explore new art along Colfax, and maybe even discover a new favorite neighborhood spot.

Instead of just one day, we extended the celebration over the entire weekend of Sept. 18-20 so that everyone could celebrate safely. Dozens of 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.

We look forward to bringing it back in 2021, with hopefully a little more normalcy.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/INDEPENDENTS-DAY](http://COLFAXAVE.COM/INDEPENDENTS-DAY)

## BAG OF COLFAX

Bag of Colfax was a gift bag filled with a little mystery and a lot of love from our local businesses. Each bag contained 5-7 items from various businesses, plus a couple of bonus items, including a branded Colfax Ave face mask and a set of postcards of our popular banner designs illustrated by local cartoonist Karl Christian Krumpholz.

The campaign exceeded our expectations and generated over \$11,000 in revenue for participating businesses in just over a month. Bag of Colfax will return in 2021 with special editions and an extended campaign for the holiday season.

[BAGOFCOLFAX.COM](http://BAGOFCOLFAX.COM)

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



*"This was a super fun event. I live on Cap Hill and now have a host of new favorites on Colfax for dinner and drinks."* - MATT

*"My sister and I had so much fun checking out new businesses and experiencing the beautiful artwork! Thanks for the fun day!"* - LIZ



## WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR STREET

Why buy chocolate and flowers for Valentine's Day when you can declare you love on the longest, wickedest street in America? Residents, businesses, and community members reserved a heart with their own custom message. Messages were painted on giant 20" hearts and hung from our pedestrian light poles that line the street for the community to enjoy throughout the entire month of February. Now that's what we call #ColfaxLove.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/WEAR-YOUR-HEART-ON-YOUR-STREET](http://COLFAXAVE.COM/WEAR-YOUR-HEART-ON-YOUR-STREET)





# ART ON THE AVE

Art has the ability to bring the community together and provide us with the opportunity to imagine what the future might look like. In 2020, pandemic-inspired art took over the street in the form of murals painted on boarded up windows, powerful new pieces addressed the issues of race and equity in our society, and our power boxes transformed into art that showcased the resiliency of the Colfax community.

## COLFAX STRONG (POWER BOX ART)

Each year, the BID partners with local artists, students, and community organizations to transform our 15 power boxes along the street into vessels for art and storytelling. 2020's theme was Colfax Strong and celebrated the strength and resiliency of the street while amplifying the creative voices of local artists of all backgrounds and abilities.

**15** POWER BOXES PAINTED 



## MURALS

In 2020, a few extremely powerful murals found their home on Colfax. *Healthcare Hero* (by Austin Zucchini-Fowler @austinzart, located at 1717 E Colfax), *George Floyd* (by Detour @detour303 & Hiero @hieroveiga, located at 1915 E Colfax), *Freedom + Equality* (by Adam Raiola @adamraiola, located at 633 E Colfax), and *Colfax, Soul of Denver* (by Zach Kotel @zkotelart, located at 1495 York St.).

**4** STREET MURALS PAINTED 



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







# SAFETY

**We want everyone to feel safe 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.**



## INCREASED LIGHTING (COLFAX & PEARL)

We installed eight new pedestrian light poles on the south side of Colfax in the 1400 block of Pearl St. This block has legacy crime issues. These new lights help illuminate the block at night, deterring criminal activity. We also continue to work on street and storefront activation for the area while collaborating with Denver Police District 6, Street Outreach Workers, and other service providers.



## SAFETY DESIGNS (GRANT PROGRAM)

In 2020, the BID awarded \$23,500 to district businesses via our Safety Design program. The goal is to prevent crime by designing a physical environment that positively influences human behavior. Businesses or property owners received funds to improve the safety and security of their outside environment.

## SOS SITES

In December, two Safe Outdoor Spaces (SOS) opened in our district, utilizing church parking lots to provide a warm, safe, and fully-staffed place for people experiencing homelessness to connect with resources and amenities during the pandemic. Many residents of the new SOS sites came from unsanctioned encampments in the surrounding blocks, grateful for an environment where they can feel safe and have a private, stable environment to call home. We continue to work closely with the non-profits running the sites, nearby RNOs (Registered Neighborhood Organizations), and residents to ensure the continued success of the sites and encourage the City to implement more SOS sites in all council districts.

**2** NEW SOS SITES OPENED



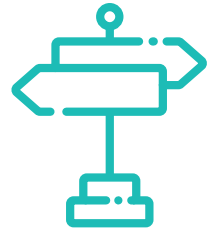
## MENTAL HEALTH

The BID works closely with outreach workers from non-profits such as St. Francis Center and programs like Denver's recently-launched STAR (Support Team Assisted Response) program to connect those in need with mental health resources.

The STAR program sends health care professionals, rather than police officers, to respond to calls related to nonviolent, low-level incidents like trespassing and mental health episodes. In its first six months, no one was arrested. The BID supports the expansion of the STAR program in order to provide more service to more neighborhoods throughout Denver, including Colfax, so those who need the services can get them and the police time is reserved for dangerous criminal activity.

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





# 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 Colfax 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.**

## KIOSKS

Design and permitting are underway for eight wayfinding kiosks, which will highlight our district businesses and create a sense of place on our stretch of Colfax. These have an anticipated installation date of mid-2021.



## BIKE RACKS

In 2020, we worked with ArtHouse Design to design and obtain permits for 50 new custom bike racks that were installed throughout the district. These racks provide much-needed infrastructure for those who bike to our various businesses. Many cyclists who utilize the neighboring 16th Avenue bike lane and Shared Street - or those who bike from other neighborhoods - now have more places to safely secure their bike while patronizing our local businesses.

## COLLABORATION

We also continued to keep our finger on the pulse of important city projects such as the future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), outcomes of the East Central Area Plan (ECAP), and the Elevate Denver Bond to ensure that the needs and wants of our businesses are addressed in these programs.

The BRT is going through an environmental process called NEPA that will help it secure additional funding, and the ECAP planning process concluded with overwhelming support and City Council approval in a 12-1 vote. This plan brings better equity, clarity, and consistency to plans within the BID area -- especially in support of small, local businesses.

We continue to work with our fellow Colfax BIDs (West Colfax, Bluebird District, and Colfax Mayfair BID) as the Colfax Collaborative to ensure that the 2017 Elevate Denver Bond funds, which included funding for pedestrian improvements along Colfax, are equitably distributed along the corridor. The BID maintains regular communications with City agencies such as the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, Department of Economic Development and Opportunity, and Community Planning and Development and is also part of the Site Development Plan (SDP) review team for projects within our district boundaries.

We also serve on the City's Community Transportation Network (CTN) Task Force, whose goal is to understand and prioritize multimodal concerns and implement a system of bikeways throughout Denver.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/  
STREETSCAPE](https://colfaxave.com/streetscape)





# COMMUNICATIONS

Colfax usually doesn't need much of an introduction. The BID works to enhance our image through storytelling and public art that captures the character and grit that our local businesses bring to the corridor. We do this through our social media outlets, special events, and our sister site, Characters of Colfax. In addition, we 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.

## HIGHLIGHTS

# 34%

increase in social media followers in 2020

# 37.5%

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

# 9

media stories featuring Colfax Ave

## FOLLOW US



@ColfaxAveDen



@ColfaxAveDen



@ColfaxAve

## WEB

colfaxave.com  
charactersofcolfax.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.



# 2020 FINANCIALS

## 42.4%

MAINTENANCE

## 23.0%

STREETSCAPE

## 6.6%

SAFETY

## 15.5%

ADMINISTRATIVE

## 12.5%

MARKETING / BIZ SUPPORT



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