



COL
FAX
AVE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Letter from the Board President

03

Colfax Ave BID Boundaries

05

Maintenance

07

Events + Happenings

09

Colfax Indie Bash

11

Programs

13

Art on the Ave

15

Safety

17

Streetscape

19

Colfax Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

21

Communications

22

2023 Financial Report

FRIENDS OF COLFAX,

As we reflect on 2023, the Colfax community has a lot to celebrate and much to look forward to in the coming year. This is a glimpse into the efforts of the Colfax Ave Business Improvement District (BID) to create a vibrant and inclusive environment on Colfax for everyone to enjoy.

One of our top priorities continues to be keeping the district clean. In addition to our clean team, who are out on the street daily removing litter and graffiti, we also have a duty to maintain our other assets out on the street. In 2023, we continued to give our light poles a facelift with fresh paint. These lights not only improve the aesthetics of the corridor, they also enhance safety.

The BID continued to build on the success of our annual events - like the Colfax Crawl, Independents Day and Bag of Colfax - but also introduced the Indie Bash as a substitute to our typical holiday party. Indie Bash kicked off the fourth annual Independents Day. We revamped the Colfax Crawl to include more bars by implementing self-guided routes rather than an all-in-one route to ensure that patrons could hit up their favorites (and do so responsibly).

We also helped establish the Lavender Hill Cultural District - Denver's first Queer Cultural District - alongside The Center on Colfax and Black Pride Colorado. Lavender Hill was the brainchild of Zach Kotel as a way to weave Queer stories into new spaces through business engagement. We look forward to this continued partnership and support for Denver's Queer community.

Our volunteer Board of Directors works closely with staff to plan for the future. The Bus Rapid Transit project will be a huge benefit to the District once complete. We spent a lot of time providing input on the street design to make the area safer and give us more space to spread our wings. Many thanks to all of you who provided feedback, and to all the board and staff as we work together for the Colfax community.



A stylized, handwritten signature in yellow ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

LEONARD AUSTIN
Colfax Ave BID Board President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Leonard Austin, President
Front Range Services /
Consolidated Services Group

Andy Baldyga, Vice President
The Mulhern Group

Christopher Bishop, Treasurer
UMB Bank

Jennifer Neuhalfen, Secretary
1915 E Colfax LLC

David Bentley, Director
Argonaut Wine and Liquor

Alex Barakos, Director
Pete's Satire Lounge +
Pete's Kitchen

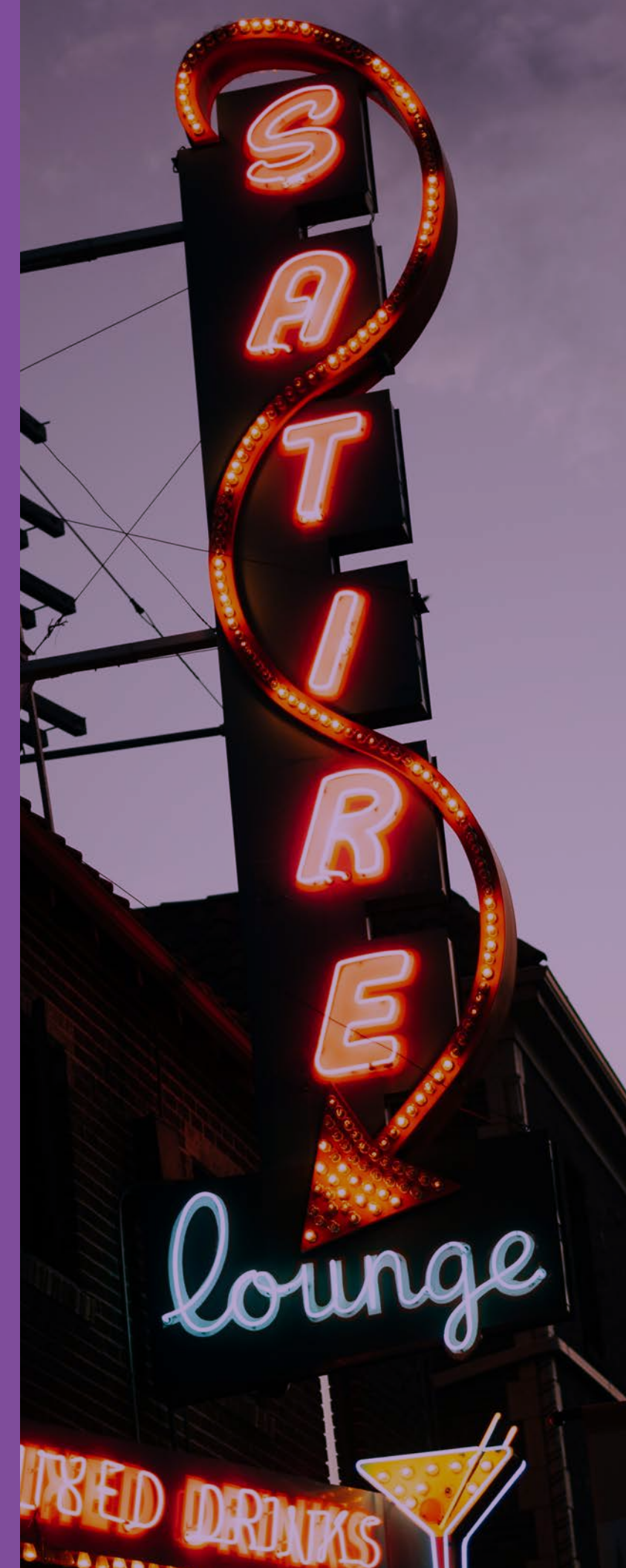
Denon Moore, Director
Urban Cookie

COLFAX AVE STAFF

Frank Locantore
Executive Director

Mitch Freund
Operations Director

Michelle Valeri
Communications & Programs
Director



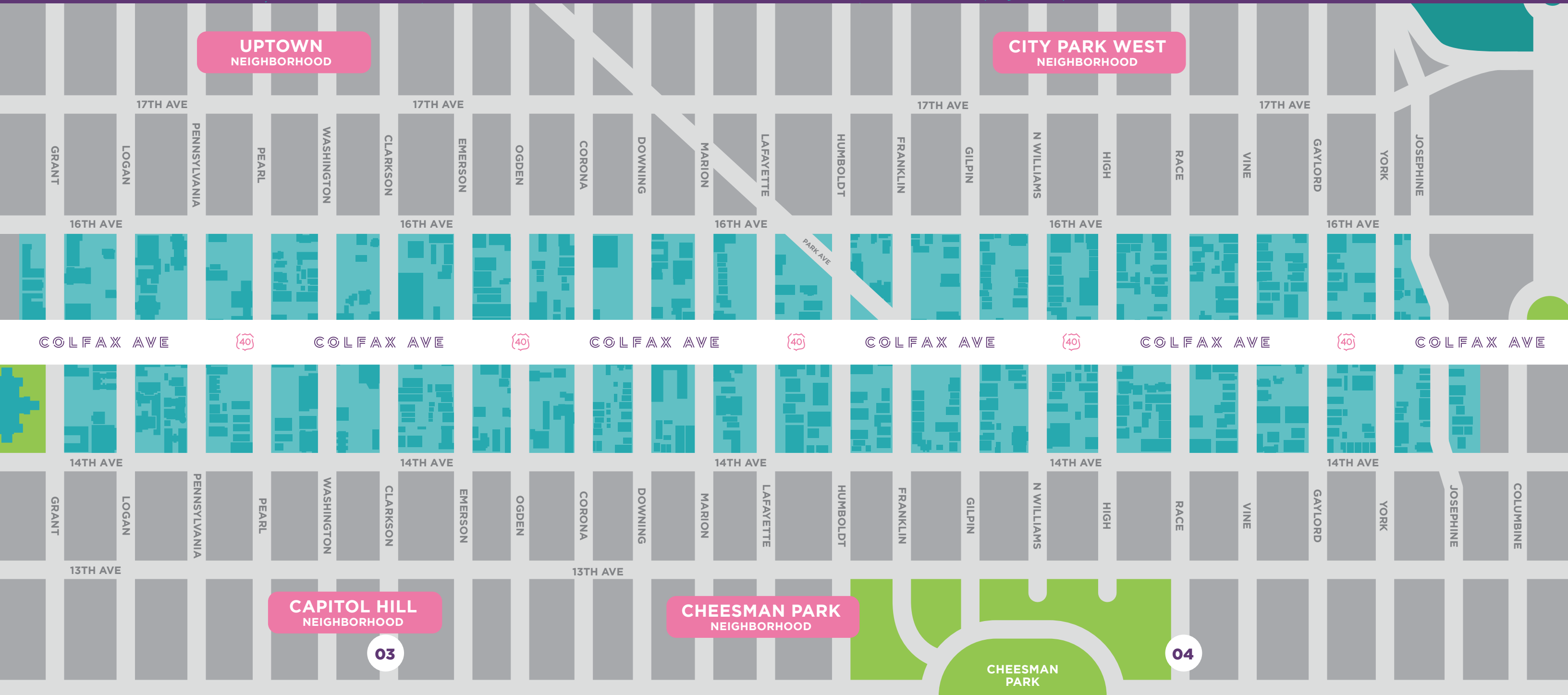


COLFAX AVE

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.



UPTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

CITY PARK WEST NEIGHBORHOOD

CAPITOL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD

CHEESMAN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

03

04



CHEESMAN PARK



MAINTENANCE

One of the main responsibilities of a Business Improvement District is to keep the area clean and welcoming for all. Our Colfax Ambassadors, in partnership with Block By Block (BBB), are out on the street every day (rain, shine or snow) – 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, street banners and art-wrapped power boxes.

TRASH UPGRADES

Ambassadors installed **padlocks and metal liners** to the BID's trash receptacles to deter theft and vandalism.

FRESH STARTS

The BID connected BBB with St. Francis Center's Employment Services that provides a "work first" path for people transitioning from homelessness.



REFINISHED COLFAX AVE SCULPTURE

The Colfax Ave logo sculpture, outside the Fillmore Auditorium, got a little TLC in 2023. Weathering and repeated graffiti made it necessary to re-powdercoat and apply an anti-graffiti coat to preserve the sculpture and bring it back to its original grandeur.



PEDESTRIAN LIGHT POLES

We have **204 pedestrian light poles** throughout the district. These lights increase safety by illuminating the sidewalk for those walking at night and display our street banners. While the poles themselves are in great shape, after more than 15 years of sun, rain, snow and the street itself, they've lost a bit of their luster. Since 2022, we've been giving them a makeover with sanders, primer and paint to make them look 15 years younger again. The light poles were also dressed up for the holiday and winter seasons with the installation of commercial-grade, warm white LED light strands.

05

MAINTENANCE BY THE NUMBERS

 **3,816**
pieces of graffiti removed

 **4,242**
stickers removed

 **13,749**
bags of trash removed

 **1,575**
block faces powerwashed

OTHER
Number of Colfax Ambassadors: 3
Block faces hand-swept with pan and broom: 4,966
Hospitality interactions: 2,925
Block faces cleaned using an all-terrain litter vacuum: 2,195

06



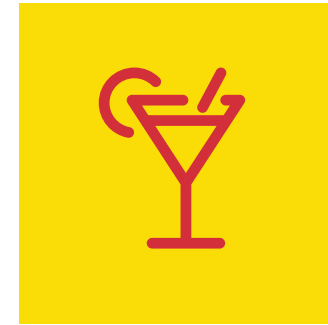
EVENTS + HAPPENINGS



INDEPENDENTS DAY

Independents Day was all about celebrating the local and independent businesses who make Colfax so special. Back for its fourth year, this weekend-long celebration held July 21-23, allowed people to support our local businesses, explore new art along Colfax, and maybe even discover a new favorite neighborhood spot.

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



07



THE COLFAX CRAWL

The second annual Colfax Crawl took place Sept. 9 and celebrated the district's watering holes - from dive bars to cocktail bars to queer bars and everything in between. The event included 19 bars, 150 crawlers, four recommended themed routes, and one hydration station at DVSN WEST making it an eventful second year. Each route included a manageable number of bars to hit up in one night and allowed attendees to "choose their own adventure" for the night. The Colfax team popped by various locations offering prizes and schwag to crawlers.



19
participating
district bars



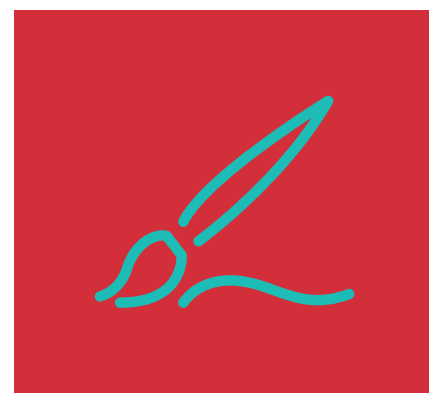
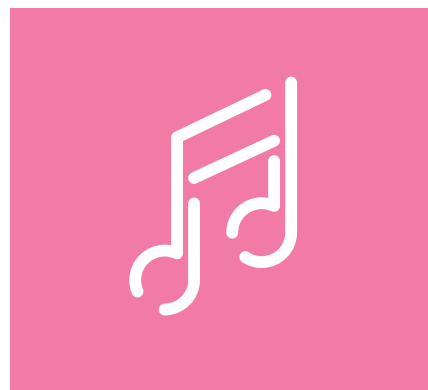
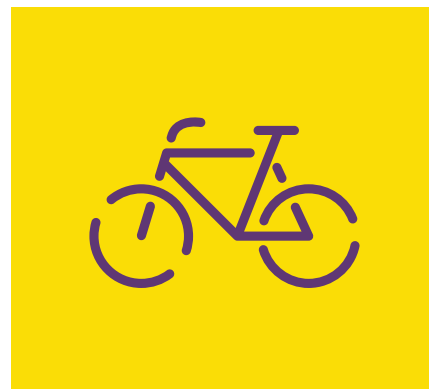
150
participating
crawlers

08



COLFAX INDIE BASH

New in 2023, the Colfax Indie Bash held on July 20 at Bruz Off Fax, kicked off the Independents Day weekend. Complete with a live recording of a City Cast Denver episode, and a unique cast of sideshow performers, the bash really set the stage for an amazing weekend. The event took the place of the more traditional holiday party but still showcased the incredible community members and businesses. Attendees enjoyed food and drinks from our local businesses, including Mora Pizza, Savageau, Spices, Porchetta House and French for Sugar.



3

Characters of Colfax Awards given to outstanding community members



Zach Kotel

Zach Kotel was awarded **The Visionary Award** for the creation of Lavender Hill, Denver's first Queer Cultural District.



The Center on Colfax

The Center on Colfax was awarded **The Cornerstone Award** for being an anchor on Colfax for LGBTQ+ programs and resources.



Blush and Blu

Blush and Blu was awarded **The Thick and Thin Award** for fostering an inclusive and welcoming community space on Colfax.



PROGRAMS

BAG OF COLFAX

Our successful Bag of Colfax program returned in 2023 to help remind people to shop local for the holidays. These gift bags, filled with a handful of products from local businesses (and custom Lavender Hill candles) were a hit again, bringing in nearly \$12,000 for participating businesses. The VIP bags - where curated goodies come packed in a durable tote made from upcycled material from our street banners - sold out quickly. We partnered with local non-profit Mile High Workshop to turn our street banners into bags. They create employment opportunities for those seeking to rebuild from addictions, homelessness and incarceration. This year's VIP bags featured the art from local tattoo artists and were a big hit with customers.

COLFAXAVE.COM/BAG-OF-COLFAX



BROUGHT LOCAL BUSINESSES
\$12,000



LAVENDER HILL CULTURAL DISTRICT

By partnering with The Center on Colfax, the Colfax Ave BID and Black Pride Colorado, we were proud to announce the official formation of the Lavender Hill Queer Cultural District in June 2023 - Denver's first Queer Cultural District. Embracing a color historically used to refer to the LGBTQ+ community, Lavender Hill honors the Queer community's contributions to the Mile High City while serving as a vital resource for all Denver residents and businesses. Lavender Hill's zone of influence spans beyond just the Colfax Ave BID limits into Capitol Hill, City Park West, City Park, Cheesman Park, Baker and Five Points. The idea for the district started with Zach Kotel, Denver's Society for Environmental Graphic Design (SEGD) chapter chair and lifelong resident - who also was the brains behind our brand. The #JoyofPride power box art was the first initiative to celebrate the Lavender Hill Cultural District.

Photo Credit: *Tyi Reddick*

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 a week. Now that's what we call **#ColfaxLove**.

COLFAXAVE.COM/WEAR-YOUR-HEART-ON-YOUR-STREET





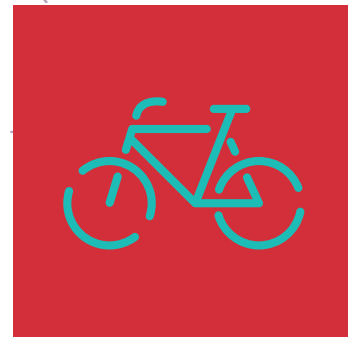
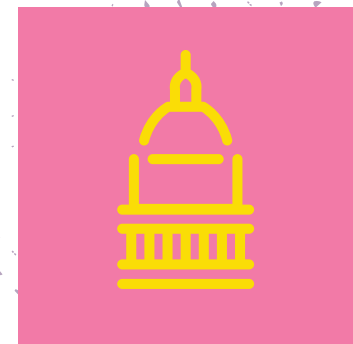
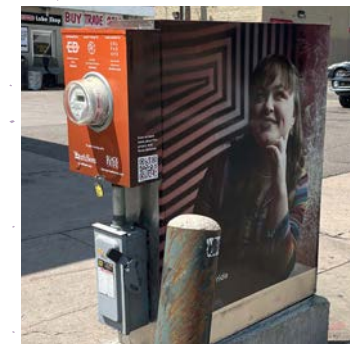
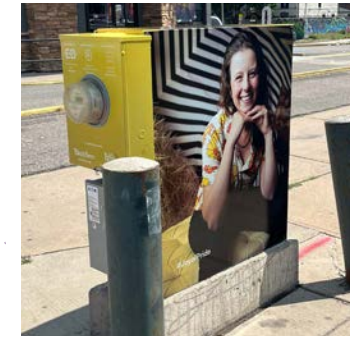
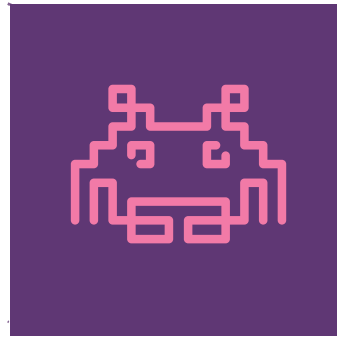
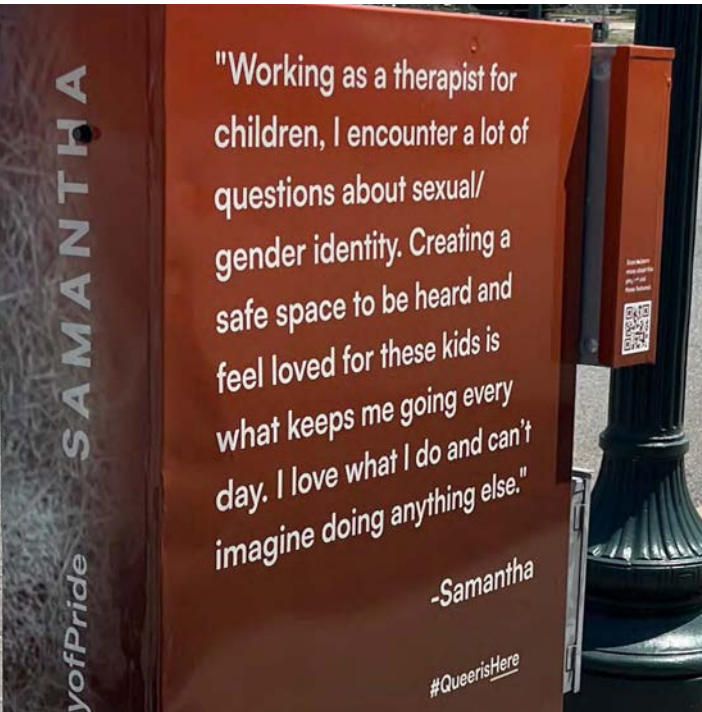
ART ON THE AVE



POWER BOX ART - JOY OF PRIDE

Each year we transform our power boxes into vessels for art and storytelling. In 2023, the BID partnered with YouthSeen, Black Pride Colorado and local photographer Eboni Boneé Coleman (EB Pixs) for the *Joy of Pride* installation. The power boxes featured photographs of and #JoyofPride stories from local powerhouses in the LGBTQ+ community.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/ART](https://colfaxave.com/art)



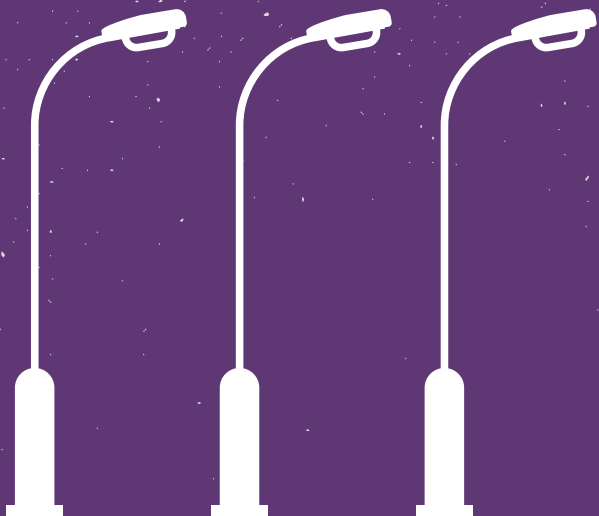


SAFETY

However one describes “safety” for themselves, we understand it to mean that people want to feel comfortable and secure in their surroundings. That means we work to make the Colfax community as comfortable as possible by adding light where it is dark, communicating with the *Support Team Assisted Response (STAR)* when there is a mental health crisis, contacting outreach workers to help the unhoused, and working with the police to address particular trouble spots. Every concern is not a crime. All events need effective responses, and we’ve been working in the community to help bring the right resources and tools to bear.

NEW LIGHTS, IMPROVED SAFETY

With \$200,000 awarded for safety improvements, the Colfax Ave BID worked closely with the community and the City and County of Denver to identify where additional street lighting is needed, and assembled the professionals to execute the plan. Better lighting has been proven to improve safety in urban settings.



ONGOING SAFETY EFFORTS

The Colfax Ave BID has worked with city agencies to remove graffiti tags that attract negative activity. With non profit service organizations, we helped to direct resources for people experiencing mental health or homeless crises, and provided dozens of businesses and residents safety resources from no trespassing signs to safety assessments with the police.



MATCHING SAFETY FUNDS

For the third time in recent years, we supported our local businesses with some funding to improve their safety on their property. All the businesses that applied received funds totaling more than \$26,000 in matching funds. This money helped them to make their areas safer, more secure and better lit.



NO TRESPASS AGREEMENTS

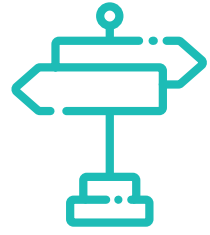
We offer free, legally-worded No Trespassing signs for business and property owners who have submitted a No Trespassing agreement with Denver Police District 6. They allow police to enforce No Trespassing laws even if the business owner is not physically present. The BID delivered 31 signs to business and property owners in 2023.



COMING IN 2024

In 2024, eight new pedestrian-scale street lights will be installed on the 1400 block of Ogden. They will also be tall enough to accommodate lights on a cable that can be hung from one side of Ogden Street to the other to create a “Festival Street” atmosphere (similar to Larimer Square). We will also be working to facilitate a “solutions committee” of city staff, community leaders and others to attend to the immediate and long-term safety needs in the community.





STREETSCAPE

The imminent construction of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system along Colfax scheduled to break ground in 2024 drove much of the streetscape work in 2023.

From evaluating the placement of the wayfinding kiosks to the nearest bus stations, to the 16th Avenue Neighborhood Bikeway designs. The once-in-a-century opportunity to “refresh” Colfax curbs, gutters, sidewalks, etc. as part of the BRT design gives us an opportunity to create the 21st century version of Colfax that maintains our gritty character.



BIKE CORRALS

With the BRT design affecting the space on sidewalks (generally creating more space), we have adjusted the locations of the bike corrals to align with the areas of greatest need.



16TH AVENUE BIKEWAY PROJECT

Designs have been created for the section of 16th Avenue between Park Avenue and York Street that create a safer street with the ability to direct people to the amenities on Colfax. In 2024, we anticipate that we'll have city support to acquire a state grant to implement the design and begin construction in 2025.



90 TREES

COMING IN 2024

As part of the BRT construction and Colfax Ave BID advocacy, we will be adding over **90 new trees along Colfax** with an irrigation system, and improved lighting.



COLFAX BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

Colfax is a key east-west transportation route and the backbone of a thriving and diverse community. The ridership for the 15/15L bus service is higher than all other RTD bus routes and light rail lines (except to the airport). Center-running BRT is planned from Union Station to Yosemite with a dedicated transit lane in each direction. Once operational, the project will increase the number of people coming to our area of Colfax by nearly 50%, provide more frequent and reliable access to over 250,000 jobs and community services along Colfax, reduce transit travel time, increase sidewalk space and improve pedestrian safety, and create exciting streetscape, placemaking and economic development opportunities.



2023 MILESTONES & HIGHLIGHTS

Station & Streetscape Design: The BRT team incorporated community feedback into a refined BRT station design concept to enhance transparency, accessibility, safety, and comfort. They also solicited feedback on early concepts for streetscape design including crosswalk treatments, paver styles, and street furniture.

BRT Name, Logo and Color Palette: Lynx was selected as the name for Denver's BRT. An animal native to Colorado, Lynx connotes speed and the ability to "link" thousands of riders daily to their jobs, schools, and communities. The color palette was also selected, including purple with teal and orange being accent colors.

Accelerated Timeline: The BRT team announced an accelerated project timeline. Previously set to begin operations in 2028, the Colfax BRT will now begin revenue operations by the end of 2027.

FTA Small Starts: In March 2023, The U.S. Department of Transportation recommended \$126.9M in federal funding for Colfax BRT. The funding recommendation followed a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) review of the project's viability and benefits, considering mobility improvements, congestion relief, cost effectiveness, economic development, environmental benefits and the reliability of project partners/matching funds.

Traffic, Safety and Parking Analysis: The Traffic, Safety and Parking Analysis confirmed that the BRT, when operational, will increase transit ridership by an estimated 30%, reduce CO2 emissions by more than 20,000 pounds per day, and result in fewer crashes along the corridor than today.

Selected Contractor: Kraemer North America was selected as the construction partner for the project.

PLANNED 2024 MILESTONES

- + Refining and finalizing the BRT station and streetscape designs.
- + Conducting curbside access management and safety analyses.
- + Working with Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO) and the City of Aurora to identify and provide support for small businesses in advance of project construction.
- + Achieving Envision sustainability certification.
- + Continued to coordinate with FTA to provide initial funding for the project.

- + The team will be analyzing traffic volumes and speed along 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th and 18th Avenues and will identify relevant solutions and recommendations for implementation alongside BRT construction.
- + Submit all environmental resource technical evaluations in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- + Finalizing the application of the logo and colors on signage and stations.
- + Finalize design and anticipate construction to begin in summer 2024.



COMMUNICATIONS

Colfax's reputation precedes it, which presents both opportunities and challenges when it comes to communications. The BID works to strengthen our image through authentic communications and storytelling that captures the unique character that our local businesses bring to the corridor.

We utilize a mix of promotional strategies, including social media, email campaigns, advertisements, and our website, as well as hosting events and promotional programs, to build a strong community along the street. Our aim is to share the stories of Colfax along with providing business and property owners with the necessary tools and resources they need to thrive on Colfax.

HIGHLIGHTS

27.2%

increase in social media followers in 2023

500

Instagram stories in 2023

51%

average open rate for Colfax Ave email communications (Industry average is 21.4%)

FOLLOW US



@ColfaxAveDen



@ColfaxAveDen



@ColfaxAve

WEB

colfaxave.com
charactersofcolfax.com

SHOP

You can now shop your favorite Colfax Ave apparel and drinkware and get it shipped directly to your home! Explore our Less Fancy, More Fun, Colfax Love, and Classic Colfax Ave collections. A portion of all sales from the Pride collection will go towards establishing Denver's first Queer Cultural District. All products are available at colfaxave.com/gear

JOIN US

GET OUR NEWSLETTER

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

VOLUNTEER

Email us at 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 for more info.



2024 FINANCIALS

42.8%

MAINTENANCE

9%

ORGANIZATIONAL

18.4%

ADMINISTRATIVE

6.7%

STREETSCAPE

5.4%

SAFETY

17.6%

BIZ SUPPORT / COMMUNICATIONS / PROGRAMS

C O L

F A X

A V E



@ColfaxAveDen

@ColfaxAveDen

@ColfaxAve

PO BOX 18853, DENVER, CO 80218

303.832.2086

INFO@COLFAXAVE.COM

COLFAXAVE.COM