



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, April 21, 2021

NOTE: DUE TO THE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS CAUSED BY COVID-19, THE MARCH BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED AS A VIRTUAL MEETING

Commissioners Present; Amish Das, Chair; Lauren Becker, Vice Chair; Miles Greathouse; Sherricka Day; Donna Hix; Marianne Richter.

Commissioners Absent: Jamie Waters, Secretary/Treasurer; Dan Gilbert, and Mamie Pound

Special Invitees: Amy Bryan, Columbus Chamber of Commerce; Helena Coates, Uptown Columbus; Norm Easterbrook, RiverCenter for the Performing Arts; Gerald Mitchell, Columbus Chamber of Commerce; Merri Sherman, Columbus Sports Council; Hayley Tillery, Columbus Convention & Trade Center.

Staff Present: Peter Bowden, Shelby Guest, Ashley Woitena, Carter Flynn, Andrea Smith, Joel Slocumb

Call to Order..... Amish Das

- The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair, Amish Das.

Approval of Minutes & Financials Amish Das

- In the absence of Secretary/Treasurer Jamie Waters, Mr. Das reminded the Board it would now resume approving the Minutes & Financials by way of a consent agenda.
- Mr. Das then asked the Board if there were any particular items from either the Minutes or the Financials that needed further discussion before a vote to approve was taken. Hearing none, he then asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. A motion to approve was made by Sherricka Day and was seconded by Miles Greathouse. A vote was taken and the motion was approved.

Special Presentation.....Tiffany Gallagher, CIVITAS

- Peter Bowden introduced Tiffany Gallagher with CIVITAS, who the CVB has worked with for several years in researching for additional funding opportunities for program of work. New conversations began with CIVITAS during the COVID-19 pandemic, as ideas have developed for destination marketing organizations (DMO) to assist in additional revenue streams, in particular, a program referred to as a Tourism Investment District (TID). CIVITAS has completed over 125 BID & TID formation projects throughout the world and drafted legislation in 16 states. A TID is a self-assessment program and is established with approval of payors, directed to a managing body, with funds used for promotions, marketing, sales, etc. to make the destination more appealing to visitors. A TID works when a fee is added to the line item on the hotel portfolio of a hotel customer, collected by the hotel and is the remitted to the City, who in turn

remits it to the DMO. Ms. Gallagher discussed the evolution of DMO funding and the differences of the traditional bed tax. In essence, a TID is industry-led and privately managed through a plan developed and approved by stakeholders; is a fixed percentage or dollar amount per occupied room based on the estimated benefit to the business. She included the steps to the formation of a TID and the timeline. (See attached presentation for complete details.)

Chair’s Report Amish Das

- Mr. Das introduced Marianne Richter, Executive Director of the Columbus Museum and Norm Easterbrook, Executive Director of RiverCenter for the Performing Arts. Each gave an update on the latest events and plans for the future post-pandemic at their respective facilities.
 - Columbus Museum—Ms. Richter began the presentation, titled “Connecting with Community, with highlights that included funding (downsizing the Museum’s budget due to the pandemic); the Museum’s closing from March 16-July 15, 2020 and operations of reduced hours since then. She explained staff is targeting June 1, 2021 to resume normal operating hours, while in the meantime encouraging visitors to explore the Olmsted Garden and attend virtual activities. Ms. Richter described new exhibits like 7+7—Established and Emerging Artists in the Chattahoochee Valley, Axis Among US-World War II POW Camps in the Chattahoochee Valley, and Quilts from the Collection of Paul M. Goggans. Ms. Richter ended the presentation with an announcement of a special exhibit—Alma W. Thomas: Everything is Beautiful, which will be on display beginning next July.
 - RiverCenter for the Performing Arts—Mr. Easterbrook began his presentation with a review of the impact of the pandemic, beginning March 12, 2020, with the cancellation of all of its scheduled Broadway shows and reducing rental activity by 90%. With RiverCenter’s doors closed, he said it equates to over 250,000 regular RiverCenter patrons not coming to the facility or circulating in the Uptown area. Permanent staff of 35 has been reduced to 11, all due to the pandemic. He reported RiverCenter has still been able to be active and adaptive to the situation to include hosting the holiday Gingerbread House display, blood drives, availability for extreme-weather shelter usage, as well as a COVID-19 vaccination site. RiverCenter also invested in services and hardware to live stream events like the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. Educational programming continued during the pandemic. Mr. Easterbrook said that “Broadway” is looking to reopen shows in September/October, this means touring shows will begin again, and he and his staff are looking to schedule programming for RiverCenter. A series of taped interviews are also underway with local arts leaders focusing on what’s to come post-pandemic. As the theatre rebuilds its program and things become busier, Mr. Easterbrook indicated they would be able to bring back some of the staff.

President’s Report..... Peter Bowden

- Mr. Das then asked Peter Bowden to present the President’s Report.
 - First on the agenda was the topic of the building lease for the VisitColumbus’ Visitor Center and admin offices. Mr. Bowden explained that revenue is still under performing, staff continues to look at ways to reduce expenses to include reaching out to CSU Foundation Properties with suggestions on how adjust the rental agreement so that it has less of an impact on expenses; however, the response from the Foundation was not what staff had hoped. Mr. Bowden’s suggestion was to put together a taskforce of Board members to help evaluate the conversation and look at Foundation Properties counter-proposal. Once that was the review is completed, the recommendation could be brought back and presented to the entire Board. Mr. Das asked the

Board for any volunteers. Mr. Das and Sherricka Day offered to serve. Mr. Bowden said he would reach out to other Board members following the meeting.

- The next item was an update from Joel Slocumb, Film Commissioner for the Columbus Film Office. Recent activity in the film industry in Columbus included the production of “Neon Highway” (\$3 million budget) wrapping, as well as the Kendrick Brothers (\$2 million budget), which would wrap at the end of April. Both projects used local lodging for cast & crew, catering and other incidentals. New projects on the horizon include a production to be set on a university campus, with other scenes possibly using locations in Uptown Columbus. He added that there are a few other productions in preliminary talks with the Columbus Film Office. Mr. Slocumb also stated the Film Office is talking with a representative to help market Columbus specifically for a TV series. According to Jeffrey Stepakoff, Director, Georgia Film Academy, there are more than 90 projects currently going on in the state, which is triple the amount in 2019.
- Ashley Woitena then gave an update for the Sales Department, to include a review the latest information from the Smith Travel Report (STR), highlighting monthly hotel performance in occupancy, Average Daily Rate (ADR), and RevPAR (Revenue per Available Room). She reviewed the meeting she attended with Georgia Society of Association Executives (GSAE) and the possibility of hosting a site visit, with the goal of bringing the annual conference in 2023 or 2024. The attendees of the annual conference are meeting planners. The return on investment is having those planners consider Columbus for their next meeting. She also mentioned efforts to bring the state’s annual tourism conference for 2023; the annual Georgia Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau’s (GACVB) annual meeting for 2023; and early discussions with the Southeast Tourism Society (STS) to host its conference and Marketing College.
- Mr. Bowden announced the Visitors Center would reopen Monday, April 26, keeping safety protocols in place.
- The final topic of the President’s Report was a mention of the upcoming National Travel & Tourism Week -- May 2-8. VisitColumbus will use social media to promote this and celebrate hospitality industry partners. Staff will place “Tourism Works Here” signs at all local hotel properties and make special visits to meet with front line staff.

Adjournment.....Amish Das

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Funding Destination Marketing Post COVID-19

—...—
Columbus, GA

| April 21, 2021 |

Today's Presenter:



Tiffany Gallagher
Eastern US Branch Manager



Nation's leading firm in developing long term funding solutions for Destination Marketing Organizations and downtown improvements
Completed over 125 BID & TID/TMD formation projects throughout the world and drafted legislation in 20+ states.

Funding Sufficiency vs. Funding Stability

Sufficiency

Do you have enough to adequately market your destination?

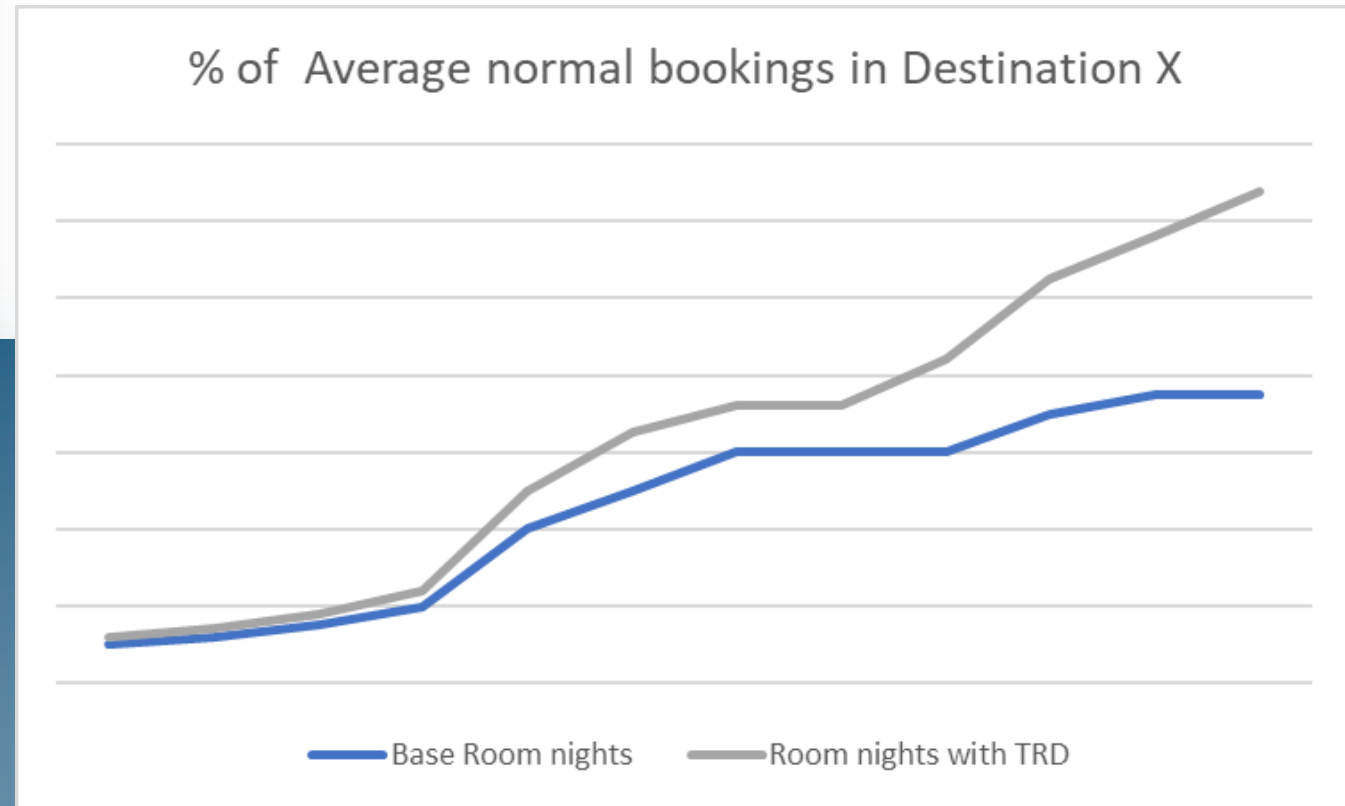
Stability

How reliable are your funding streams? Can they be diverted?

Be Ready



- The future of funding destination marketing efforts in the US is uncertain.
- There is data to support; there is a direct relationship between moving quickly, being prepared, lining up your resources and destination recovery.
- We know that well-resourced forward-thinking destinations recover faster and retain more market share.



The Political Opportunity

- ✓ Electeds desire to help our industry
- ✓ Significant declines in government revenue
- ✓ Excellent timing to request policy decision
- ✓ Advocate for stable, long term funding for recovery



Tourism Recovery and Improvement Districts



Stable funding sources for marketing efforts designed to increase occupancy and room rates for lodging businesses. TIDs are established with approval of payors, not electorates, and excess revenues can be used for promotions. Services include marketing, sales, promotions, website and Internet presence, group sales, and other projects designed to make the destination more appealing to visitors.



Hotel pays an assessment



Collected by the local government



And managed by the DMO



- Nation's leading firm in developing long term funding solutions for Destination Marketing Organizations and downtown improvements
- Completed over 125 BID & TMD formation projects throughout the world and drafted legislation in 16 states.

Evolution of Destination Marketing Funding

- From Traditional Bed Tax to TID -

Bed Tax	TID
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ No defined term➤ Government managed and imposed➤ No requirement of benefitting the paying businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Specific term and plan➤ Hotel managed and approved➤ Legal accountability to the district plan➤ Based on benefit to the tourism businesses➤ TID funds cannot be diverted

TID Impact: Lodging Industry Has a Stronger Voice

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Industry-led and privately managed through a Plan developed and approved by stakeholders.



Fixed percentage or dollar amount per occupied room based on the estimated benefit to the business



Existing funding protected; new funding stays with the industry



Assessments cannot begin without industry approval



Accountability and Transparency

National District Statistics



183 TIDs

Most Recent: Santa Ana, CA
(November 2020)

56%
Gross
Revenue %



44%
Fixed \$
Amount

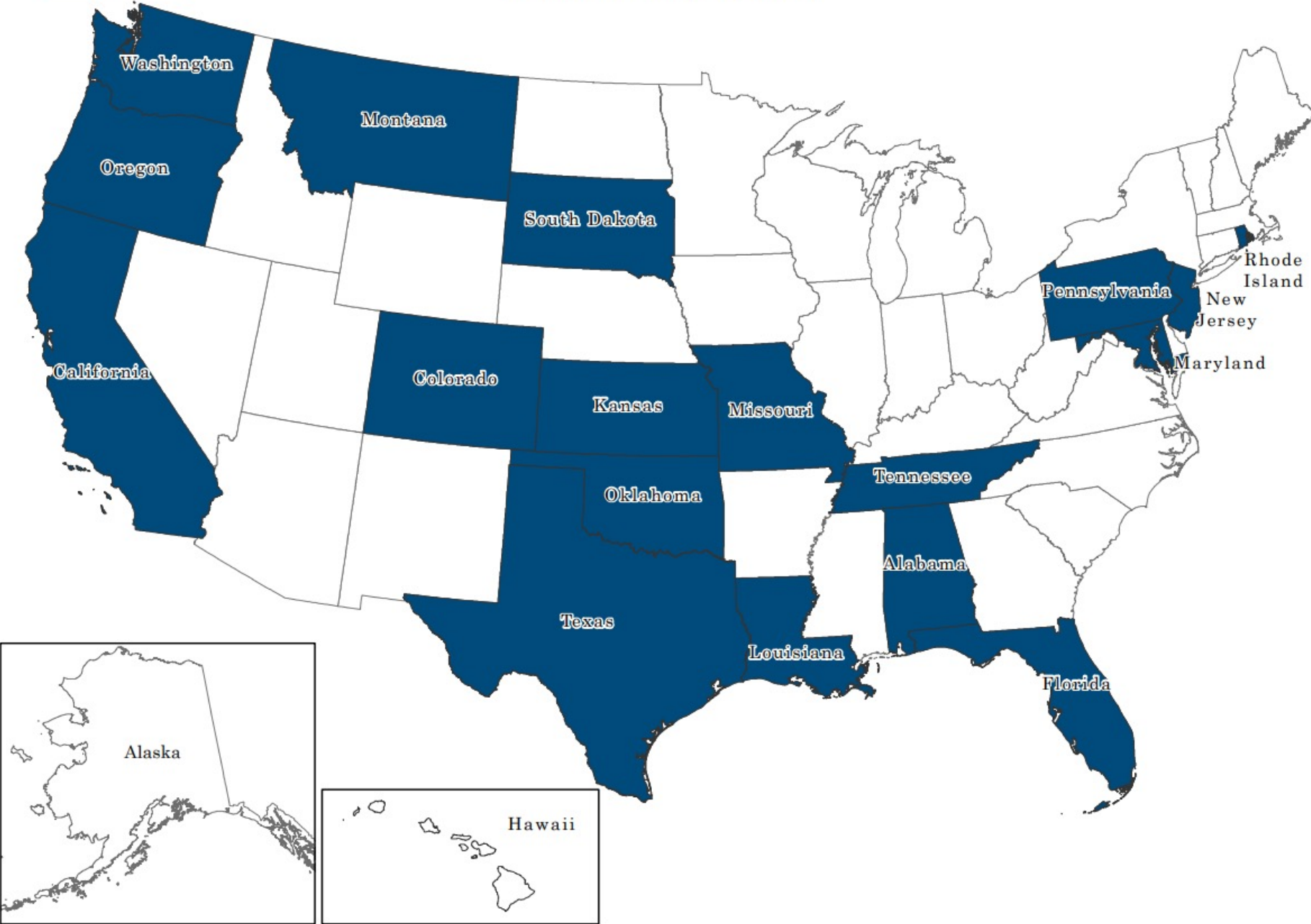
AMOUNT RAISED

Low	\$10,000
Median	\$787,000
High	\$41,000,000
Total	\$431,051,743

17 STATES

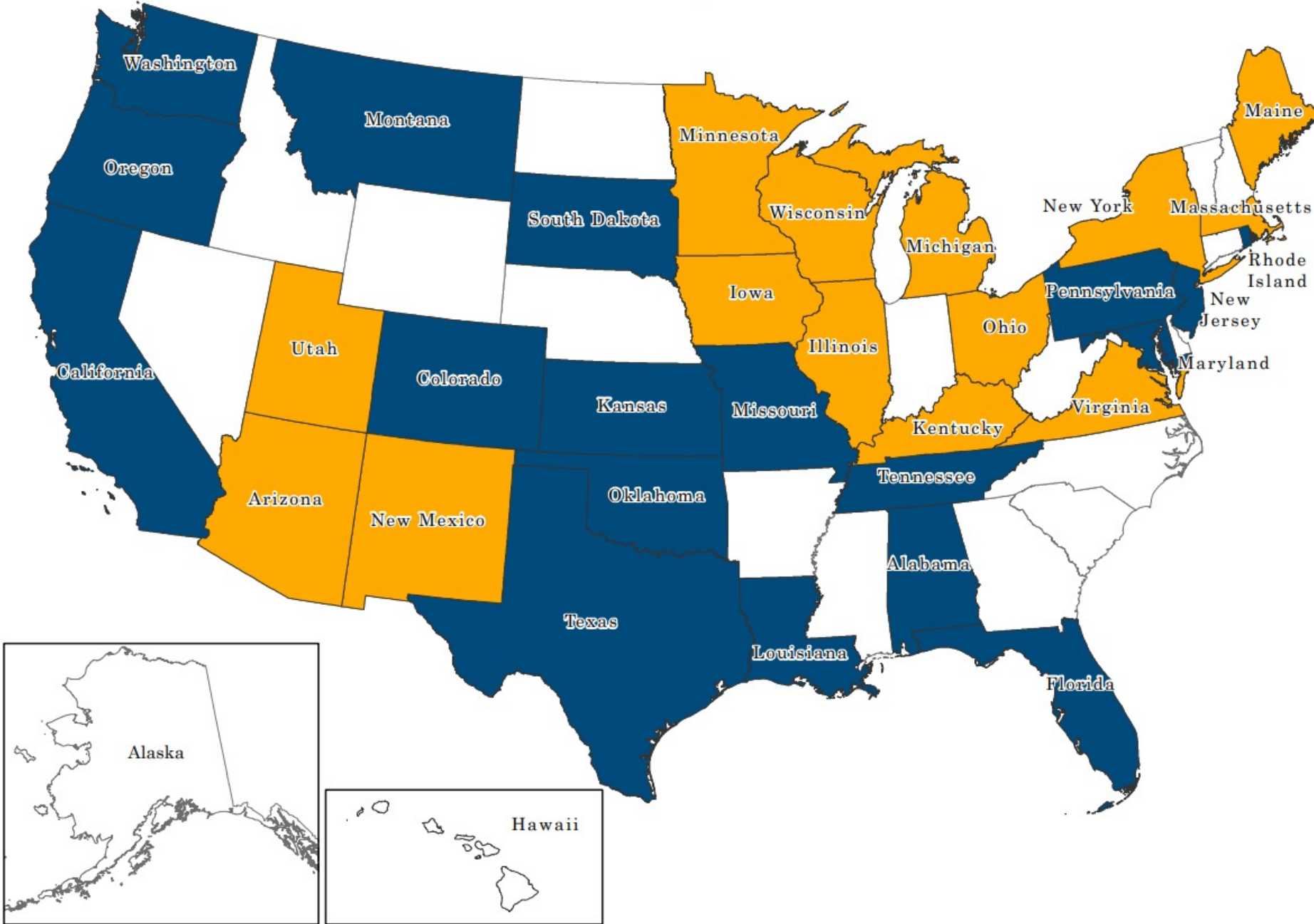
Tourism Improvement Districts
As of February 5, 2021

Active TIDs



- Considering TIDs
- Active TIDs

Tourism Improvement Districts As of February 5, 2021



Philadelphia Hospitality Investment Levy (PHiL)

- Funded by a **0.75% assessment fee** on the daily rate paid by hotel guests.
- Recommends an ROI of **8:1** for funds allocated.
- **\$5.6 Million** collected in their first year
- **92** Large conventions & events funded
- Resulted in **\$1.6 Billion** in economic impact
- PHiL reauthorized their TID 3 years into a 5 year term for a new twenty (20) year term.
- PHiL is looking to double their assessment in 2021 through the end of the twenty (20) year term.



Case Study: Newport, Rhode Island



Investments Year in Review

LEISURE



3.1K ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED **\$830K** REVENUE GENERATED

SEPT - DEC 2019 \$45,000 INVESTMENT

2.5K ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED **\$947K** REVENUE GENERATED

FEB - APRIL, JUNE - AUGUST 2020 \$50,000 INVESTMENT



1,200 HOURS AUDIENCE VIEWED **96%** VIEWED DIGITAL VIDEO IN FULL

DEC - APRIL, JUNE - AUG \$75,000 INVESTMENT



Case Study: Newport, Rhode Island



3,913,210 IMPRESSIONS DELIVERED

20K ADDRESSES GARNERED FROM EBLASTS

9.8% EMAIL OPEN RATE

JAN, FEB, MARCH, JUNE \$10,000 INVESTMENT



13,232 WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

7,679 VIEWED DEALS PAGE

1.54 AVERAGE MINUTES ON SITE



99 MEETING PLANNER CONTACTS



16 PROPERTY VIDEO AND PHOTOGRAPHY SESSIONS

COLLECTIVE THOUGHT MEDIA
\$5,250 INVESTMENT



16 EACH PROPERTY'S FEATURED LISTING ON WEBSITE

\$52,500 INVESTMENT



587 ADDRESSES FROM WEBINAR



COLUMBUS, GA TID PROJECTED ANNUAL REVENUE

DOWNTOWN (5) Properties	Assessment	Room Count	Occupancy Rate	ADR	Annual Room Nights	Annual Revenue	Projected TID Revenue
	1%	563	64%	\$77.02	131,517	\$10,129,424	\$101,294
	2%	563	64%	\$77.02	131,517	\$10,129,424	\$202,588
	3%	563	64%	\$77.02	131,517	\$10,129,424	\$303,883
	\$1	563	64%	\$77.02	131,517	\$10,129,424	\$131,517
	\$2	563	64%	\$77.02	131,517	\$10,129,424	\$263,034
	\$3	563	64%	\$77.02	131,517	\$10,129,424	\$394,550

Based on 2019 Data

Data determined from August 2020 STR Report.

City Business Improvement District

Suggested Use: To form a TID in the City of Columbus.

Pros: Stakeholders develop District Plan and can be managed by DMO.

Cons: Only available in municipalities and not in unincorporated areas of the county.

Approval Process: A district may not be created except upon a written petition signed by: “Municipal taxpayers owning at least 51 percent (by assessed value as shown by the most recent assessment rolls of the municipality) of the taxable property subject to ad valorem real and personal property taxation in the district.”

Available Projects: Advertising, promotion, sanitation, security, and business recruitment and development.

Home Rule Special District

Suggested Use: To form a TID the City of Columbus.

Pros: Allows for the industry to develop a tourism specific district. Stakeholders develop District Plan and can be managed by DMO.

Cons: Cannot be multi-jurisdictional.

Article IX, Section 2, Paragraph VI of the Georgia Constitution provides: "...special districts may be created for the provision of local government services within such districts; and fees, assessments, and taxes may be levied and collected within such districts to pay, wholly or partially, the cost of providing such services therein and to construct and maintain facilities therefor. Such special districts may be created and fees, assessments, or taxes may be levied and collected therein...by municipal or county ordinance or resolution, except that no such ordinance or resolution may supersede a law enacted by the General Assembly..."

The proposed Columbus Tourism Improvement District (CTID) would be formed pursuant to this Constitutional authority through the adoption of City/County ordinances. The first ordinance, an enabling ordinance, would establish the procedure for the subsequent establishment of the CTID. After adoption of the enabling ordinance, business owners may follow the process set forth in the enabling ordinance to request the City/County to form the proposed CTID.

Steps to Formation of a Tourism Recovery and Improvement District



1. **Feasibility Study**
 - a. Secure legal authority
 - b. Create an Industry Steering Committee
 - c. Determine proposed District policies and parameters
 - d. Identify the timeline for District formation.
2. *Stakeholders determine parameters and service plan*
3. *Plan prepared*
4. *Hotel approval process*
5. *Local government approval process*



Thank You and Stay Safe!

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Tiffany Gallagher, East Coast Branch Manager

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Connect with us on Linked  !

**CIVITAS**