CONVENTION CENTER

- A **$140 million renovation and expansion** of the Greater Columbus Convention Center was completed in July 2017. The 22-month project, highlighted by 373,000 sq. ft. of contiguous exhibit space, improves the guest experience with extensive upgrades, additions and hotel-grade finishes. Additional highlights include:
  - New show offices overlooking exhibit halls.
  - Nine new meeting rooms (with outside windows) for a total of 75.
  - Local food and beverage concepts in addition to 150+ pieces of local art displayed on the interior and exterior of the building and parking garages to give attendees a better sense-of-place.
- An interactive 14-foot sculpture by local artist Matthew Mohr titled “As We Are” is now permanently on display in the convention center’s north atrium.
- Food-service provider Levy has installed a Smartfarm at the center’s new Discovery Café. As the first convention center in the country with an indoor hydroponic vertical farm, the team yields about 5,000 pounds of produce per year and donates unused items to local charities.
- A **new 650-space garage will open at the Greater Columbus Convention Center** in February 2020, with a skybridge that also connects to the Hilton Columbus Downtown expansion tower.

ENTERTAINMENT

- **The National Veterans Memorial and Museum** is the only place where the stories of our veterans, their families and the Fallen – across all branches of service and all eras of conflict – are told together. At more than 50,000 sq. ft., the facility offers space for events, opportunities for reflection and exhibition galleries.
- Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens features the world’s largest collection of Chihuly in a botanical garden. The artwork has been on display since 2003, but will be completely reimagined beginning June 2019 to include unique and never before seen installations reflective of Chihuly’s new work.
- Columbus’ premier shopping destination, Easton, is expanding with a new 16-acre mixed use development that will include shopping, dining, a public green space for events, a hotel and residential units. The first wave of tenants, expected to open by the 2019 holiday season, will include the state’s first RH Gallery from Restoration Hardware, a 136-room Aloft Hotel, a Pins Mechanical co./16-Bit Bar + Arcade, The Beeline indoor/outdoor bar and entertainment space, Ivan Kane’s Forty Deuce Café and Speakeasy and Forbidden Root Restaurant & Brewery. Oprah-backed True Food Kitchen will join the lifestyle center’s offerings by 2020.
WHAT’S NEW IN COLUMBUS?

HOTELS

• A **468-room expansion of the Hilton Columbus Downtown**, a headquarter hotel of the Greater Columbus Convention Center, will bring the total number of convention hotel rooms on the property to 1,000 and total meeting space to 75,000 sq. ft. The new space, opening in 2022, will expand upon the existing contemporary design and continue the award-winning service currently enjoyed while providing new and exciting amenities to existing, new and larger organizations. An “open fire” restaurant will anchor the expansion.

• A **168-room Canopy by Hilton**, featuring a total of 2,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, including a rooftop bar and outdoor patio, is set to open across from the Greater Columbus Convention Center on Aug. 1, 2019.

• The Moxy Columbus Short North, a “boutique hotel with the social heart of a hostel” by Marriott, will open late 2019 with 118 guest rooms, meeting space and a rooftop restaurant.

• A 171-room Graduate Hotel with two food and beverage outlets and 4,000 sq. ft. of meeting space will open in Columbus’ Short North neighborhood fall 2019.

• A new development on Park Street across from the North Market in downtown Columbus will include a **160-room AC Hotel by Marriott** to open in early 2021.

OFF-SITE VENUES

• Opening in 2020, **The Fives** will be the largest event venue in downtown Columbus with a dedicated rooftop space. Located at the Reach on Goodale, where White Castle is building its new home office, The Fives will be operated by Two Caterers and accommodate seated events for 400+ and receptions for up to 750 guests. The rooftop terrace, with unparalleled views of the city skyline, can host receptions for 300+ guests.

• A new food destination will open in the city’s emerging Italian Village neighborhood in late 2019. Nationally recognized Cameron Mitchell Restaurants will transform the historic Budd Dairy building into the **Budd Dairy Food Hall**, a restaurant incubator offering spaces for up to 10 entrepreneurial, chef-driven concepts. The food hall will also include a live-performance stage, multiple bars, interactive games, private event space and a rooftop deck.

TRANSPORTATION

• Self-driving shuttles now offer passenger service along Columbus’ Scioto Mile, servicing four destinations: COSI, the National Veterans Memorial and Museum, the Smart Columbus Experience Center and Bicentennial Park.

• West coast service is expanding from John Glenn Columbus International Airport in 2019 as Alaska Airlines recently began a daily non-stop flight to Seattle, and Delta begins daily non-stop service to Salt Lake City in June.
NOTEWORTHY EVENTS

- Columbus has been chosen to host the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) 2019 Annual Meeting & Exposition. More than 5,000 attendees will convene at the renovated Greater Columbus Convention Center in August 2019, filling 16,800 hotel rooms.
- The 2018 National Urban League Conference brought 5,000 visitors to the city and added $3.6 million to the local economy. The booking represents the latest under Experience Columbus' LEAD it Home initiative designed to encourage locals with connections to national associations to bring their groups to Columbus.
- Multiple medical groups have chosen Columbus for annual conventions, including, the American Dental Hygienists Association in 2018, the American Psychiatric Nurses Association in 2018, the American Academy of Audiology in 2019 and the American Association of Physicists in Medicine in 2021.
- The Assemblies of God have chosen Columbus to host two large conventions: the 2020 National Youth Convention and Fine Arts Festival and 2023 General Council. Both conventions together will generate nearly 27,000 room nights.
- Columbus hosted 80,000+ fans at Nationwide Arena for the 2018 NCAA Women’s Final Four, March 30-April 1, 2018.

RECENT ACCOLADES

- New York Times, 52 Places to Go in 2019
- Chicago Tribune, 9 Must-See Destinations Worth a Visit in 2019
- TripAdvisor, 20 of the Top Places to Visit in the U.S. in 2019
- Food & Wine, 32 Places to Go (And Eat) in 2019
- Forbes, Top 10 Rising Cities for Tech Startups (No. 1)
- Resonance Consultancy, America’s Best Large Cities 2018
- TIME, 10 Best Big Cities
- Bloomberg American Cities Climate Challenge, Grant Winner
- SmartAsset, Best American City to Work in Tech
- Marriott, Top Destination for Solo Female Travelers
- Airbnb, Hottest Destinations of 2018
- Expedia, America’s 16 Most Tourist Friendly Cities
- Trivago, 10 Under the “Gaydar” LGBTQ Cities

*Columbus, OH received the highest numerical score among 8 cities in the Midwest in the J.D. Power 2016 Destination Experience Satisfaction Study, based on 26,124 total responses, measuring the experiences and perceptions of travelers who visited a top 50 U.S. destination, surveyed February-July 2016. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com.

Updated April 2019