



Phoenix Reveals Downtown Transformations as Conventions Return

A Sponsored Message From Visit Phoenix

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Phoenix experienced the second-largest growth in population of any U.S. city between 2017 and 2019. This momentum continued throughout 2020, resulting in new entertainment offerings, dining options, venues, hotels, and more. (by dspaz.com/Visit Phoenix)

The global pandemic may have paused meetings and conventions in Phoenix, but it didn't slow the Arizona capital's growth.

The country's fifth-largest city experienced the second-largest growth in population of any U.S. city between 2017 and 2019, according to [Freddie Mac research](https://myhome.freddiemac.com/blog/research_and_analysis/20210201_population_growth_in_us.page) (https://myhome.freddiemac.com/blog/research_and_analysis/20210201_population_growth_in_us.page). Over the past few years, the Sonoran Desert city has transformed itself into a tech industry center, with a revitalized downtown, and thriving hotel, resort, and dining scenes.

Story continues below.



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That momentum continued during 2020, said Eric Kerr, director of Research and Business Analysis at Visit Phoenix. "Things didn't slow down here as far as enhancements to the destination go," Kerr said. "No one sat back and waited for the pandemic to end before getting these projects going."

Phoenix [reopened for small meetings in October \(https://www.pcma.org/phoenix-ready-welcome-back-groups-safely/\)](https://www.pcma.org/phoenix-ready-welcome-back-groups-safely/), making every effort to ensure safe spaces for planners and their attendees. And the GBAC STAR-accredited Phoenix Convention Center (PCC), in the city's walkable downtown core, will host its first convention since the pandemic in June.

The city is welcoming meeting attendees with an abundance of new and transformed offerings, from dining and entertainment venues to improvements at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

Phoenix is teaming with indoor/outdoor venues like Luckys, which has a 2,400 square feet of indoor lounge and outdoor patio. (Photo by @luckysphx)

DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

Groups will find plenty to keep them happy at the Pemberton PHX, a collective of entertainment and dining options near Roosevelt Row Arts District in downtown. (Photo by @rachel_ventures)

Between October 2020 and February 2021, [52 new bars, restaurants, and dessert shops \(https://www.abc15.com/entertainment/events/new-restaurants-in-arizona-52-new-bars-and-restaurants-to-try-around-the-phoenix-metro\)](https://www.abc15.com/entertainment/events/new-restaurants-in-arizona-52-new-bars-and-restaurants-to-try-around-the-phoenix-metro) opened in the Phoenix area. That comes on the heels of more than [100 other new drinking and dining spots \(https://www.abc15.com/entertainment/events/new-restaurants-2020-100-eateries-have-opened-around-phoenix-during-covid-19-pandemic\)](https://www.abc15.com/entertainment/events/new-restaurants-2020-100-eateries-have-opened-around-phoenix-during-covid-19-pandemic) that previously opened during the pandemic, according to KNXV-Ch. 15 in Phoenix. Two venues — both in downtown's Roosevelt Row arts and entertainment district — stand out for planners because they can accommodate groups.

- [Pemberton PHX \(https://www.pembertonphx.com/\)](https://www.pembertonphx.com/): Centered on the historic Pemberton House, Pemberton PHX is an indoor/outdoor collective of permanent and rotating venues, as well as local food trucks, a beer garden, art installations, an outdoor movie theater, and fitness classes. It's available for group experiences.
- [Luckys Indoor Outdoor \(https://www.luckysphx.com/\)](https://www.luckysphx.com/): With 6,400 square feet of space that includes an indoor lounge and a 4,000 square foot outdoor patio, Luckys would be an ideal spot for a party or reception. Said to have a classic neighborhood bar feel, guests can play pool, skee ball, and other games while enjoying the creative cocktail menu as well as food from a rotating group of food trucks.

NEW AND RENOVATED VENUES

- Fiesta Bowl PLAY at Margaret T. Hance Park: This 20,000-square-foot, multi-themed play area for children is part of a greater [revitalization \(https://www.phoenix.gov/parks/hancerevitalization\)](https://www.phoenix.gov/parks/hancerevitalization) that will transform the park, located downtown, into an urban festival and culture center.
- [Phoenix Suns Arena \(https://www.phoenixsunsarena.com/\)](https://www.phoenixsunsarena.com/): A \$230-million overhaul is nearly complete, but the Suns already are playing in the arena and will be joined by the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury this summer. The renovations added nearly 70,000 square feet of new fan amenity space that can be utilized by groups. New clubs include two with 525-person capacity (post pandemic restrictions) and the two-story, 281-person Annex Social Club that has a private entrance. The reimagined entrance pavilion features the largest sports bar in Arizona — 60 feet in length — plus 7,000 square feet of LED video screens and a view onto the court.
- Coming soon: Phoenix Rising FC stadium (May 2021), Arizona State University multipurpose arena (December 2022), and [Legacy Sports Park Complex \(https://www.legacysportsusa.com/\)](https://www.legacysportsusa.com/) in Mesa (January 2022), a 320-acre complex that will be one of the largest privately owned sport and entertainment facilities in the country.

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- [The Pavilion at the Herberger Theater Center](https://www.herbergertheater.org/the-pavilion/) (<https://www.herbergertheater.org/>) — already home to three other stages with hybrid-event capabilities, a lounge, and a reception room — added the outdoor theater in 2020. The Pavilion, which is next to the convention center, can seat 160 socially distanced guests and more than 300 without restrictions. (Photo courtesy @herbergertheater)

HOTELS

In 2020, 17 new hotel properties opened, adding more than 1,900 guest rooms to capacity in the greater Phoenix area.

The completion of Terminal 3 in 2020 was one piece of the ongoing expansion at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. (Courtesy Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport)

TRANSPORTATION

[Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport](https://www.skyharbor.com/) (<https://www.skyharbor.com/>)

- Terminal 4 expansion (2022): Expect eight new gates, new retail and food/beverage concessions, and more
- [Phoenix Sky Train](https://www.skyharbor.com/PHXSkyTrain) (<https://www.skyharbor.com/PHXSkyTrain>): Stage 2 expansion (2022) extends the automa Car Center Station and adds two new stations and 20 new trains.

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- New connections: Southwest Airlines international service to three new destinations in Mexico. Domestic air service to Billings and Bozeman, Montana; Bismarck and Fargo, North Dakota; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Eureka, California; Idaho Falls, Idaho, and Prescott, Arizona.

Valley Metro Light Rail (<https://www.valleymetro.org/>)

- The 5-mile South Central extension connects downtown Phoenix to the area's rail system.
- The 1.55-mile Northwest Phase II extension connects the city to the former Metrocenter Mall and more hotels in the area northwest of the city.

There's Room to Meet in Phoenix

[\(https://www.visitphoenix.com/meetings/\)](https://www.visitphoenix.com/meetings/)

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