**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** Site Recommendation for the PLA 2024 Conference

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Approval of site and dates recommended for the PLA 2024 Conference

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

Melissa Faubel Johnson, CMP

Conference Manager

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

Approve Columbus, OH, as the site for the PLA 2024 Conference, Wednesday, April 3 – Saturday, April 6, 2024. Request approval of the site and dates to the ALA Executive Board. \*Contingent upon approval from local state chapters.

**DATE:** June 5, 2019

**BACKGROUND:**

PLA will hold the 2020 Conference in Nashville, TN, and the 2022 Conference in Portland, OR. According to our rotation schedule and policies, an eastern site is desired for the 2024 conference. See attached for more detailed background and site review.

# **Background**

Columbus conforms to all PLA conference site selection policies (see Attachment 1 for policies). Additionally, Columbus meets or surpasses all of PLA’s hotel and exhibit space requirements, (see attachment 2). Columbus provides geographic diversity.

PLA conference sites, past and future include:

1983 Baltimore March 23-26

1986 St. Louis April 2-5

1988 Pittsburgh April 27-30

1991 San Diego March 20-23

1994 Atlanta March 23-26

1996 Portland (OR) March 26-30

1998 Kansas City March 11-14

2000 Charlotte March 29-31

2002 Phoenix March 13-16

2004 Seattle February 25-28

2006 Boston March 20-25

2008 Minneapolis March 25-29

2010 Portland (OR) March 23-27

2012 Philadelphia March 13-17

2014 Indianapolis March 11-15

2016 Denver April 5-9

2018 Philadelphia March 20-24

2020 Nashville February 25-29

2022 Portland (OR) March 22-26

Additionally, the proposed dates do not conflict with major religious holidays or other major library conferences, including the Texas Library Association.

**Site Review**

In addition to viable dates and excellent meeting and housing facilities, Columbus is recommended for a number of reasons:

* The Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC) is located centrally to the downtown hotels. All hotels in the proposed PLA block are within walking distance.
* After negotiations by PLA staff, the Greater Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau has eliminated nearly all convention center rental fees.
* The GCCC just completed a $140 million renovation and expansion project in June 2017. The project is highlighted by 373,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space, 10,000 square feet of two-level meeting space, second-level show offices overlooking the exhibit halls and nine new meeting rooms, bringing the total to 75.
* The hotel package includes a range of hotel types and pricing.
* Columbus is within a 1-day drive or 1-hour flight of more than half of the U.S. population.
* The Columbus culinary scene features top-ranked chefs and one-of-a-kind restaurants.
* Neighborhoods on all sides of downtown are bursting with new places to eat and shop, and artisans are shaping new areas of the city into dynamic spaces to explore.
* Columbus is a smart and open-minded city where people are free to be themselves and follow their passions.**New & Improved Nature:** A $30 million expansion of the Denver Museum of Nature & Science was approved by voters in 2007. Next door, the Denver Zoo is undergoing a $130 million refurbishing that has included new primate areas and an African exhibit and will soon add a new Asian tropical rainforest.

**Mile High Art:** The Denver Art Museum doubled in size with a new building designed by world renowned architect Daniel Libeskind. The amazing titanium structure was complemented in 2007 with the opening of the new Museum of Contemporary Art, designed by David Adjaye.

##### MILE HIGH SPORTS CAPITAL

**A Sports Fan’s Dream City:** Denver is one of only two cities to offer eight professional sports teams and built FOUR new stadiums in the last decade to house them! The three new stadiums are: the 50,000-seat Coors Field, home of Major League Baseball’s Colorado Rockies; the 20,000-seat Pepsi Center, home of the NBA’s Denver Nuggets and the NHL’s Colorado Avalanche; the 76,000-seat INVESCO Field, where the NFL’s Denver Broncos play; and finally, the largest soccer stadium in the world, the 20,000-seat Dick’s Sporting Goods Park, home to Major League Soccer’s Colorado Rapids.

**Hit the Links:** Denver has 90 golf courses that remain open all-year long and have been played as often as 30 days in January.

**A Two-Wheel Town:** Denver boasts 850 miles of bike trails, all part of the largest city park system in the nation.

##### DENVER DAY TRIPS

**Wide Open Spaces:** Half of Colorado is public land open to all forms of recreation in more than two dozen national parks, monuments and forests.

**The Incomparable Rocky Mountain National Park:** 412 square miles of waterfalls, lakes and high mountain valleys lie just 70 miles from Denver.

**Test Your Luck:** The old gold mining towns of Central City and Black Hawk, located just 34 mile west of Denver, have come alive in recent years thanks to casino gambling and Wild West charm.

**The Best Skiing in the World:** Denver owns its own ski area – Winter Park Resort. You can travel to Winter Park on the Ski Train, the largest passenger train in America that leaves Union Station on weekends, climbing through 34 tunnels on the way to the ski resort 67 miles away. Many of Colorado’s top ski resorts including Vail, Keystone, Breckenridge, Beaver Creek, Copper Mountain and Winter Park, are just a little more than an hour from Denver.

**Natural and Manmade Wonders:** Garden of the Gods is an unusual geologic formation of brilliant red rocks, located at the base of Pikes Peak an hour from Denver. Royal Gorge, the world’s highest suspension bridge, is two hours from the city. You can walk or drive cross the bridge, descend to the bottom of the canyon on the world’s steepest incline railroad, take a train through the canyon, or ride down the rapids in a rubber raft.

**Road Trip Through the Clouds:** Mountain goats are a common sight on the Mount Evans Highway, which climbs to 14,260 feet above sea level, making it the highest paved road in North America.

##### WEATHER

**Mild, Sunny and Mile High:** While the Rocky Mountains are still snowcapped, Denver enjoys an early spring with delightfully warm, sunny days. More than 50,000 flowers are planted on the 16th Street Mall each spring. Dress in layers so that as the sun warms up, you can remove layers and stay comfortable. In summer, Denver offers natural air conditioning – a perfect combination of warm, sunny days followed by cool evenings where a light jacket or sweater is often welcome. Autumn can arrive early in the high country and the colorful turning of the aspen trees occurs in the mountains from mid-September to mid-October. Denver receives more hours of annual sunshine than San Diego or Miami Beach, so winter days in Denver are bright, sunny and surprisingly mild. In February, average daily highs are 45 degrees – warmer than New York, Chicago, Philadelphia or St. Louis.

##### DOWNTOWN HOTEL PACKAGE

**Easy Access:** Downtown Denver is home to 8,000 rooms within short walking distance of the Colorado Convention Center, including an adjacent 1,100-room Hyatt Regency, the 1,200-room Sheraton Hotel, the 615-room Marriott City Center, the 511-room Grand Hyatt and the 430-room Westin Tabor Center.

**Unique Boutiques:** Downtown also boasts upscale boutique hotels like the Ritz-Carlton, Brown Palace, Hotel Teatro, Hotel Monaco, Curtis, Oxford and Warwick, with a Four Seasons and W Hotel on the way.

**Low-Cost Convenience:** There are a number of convenient and affordable downtown chain hotels such as the Comfort Inn, Courtyard by Marriott, Hampton Inn & Suites, Hilton Garden Inn, Magnolia and Residence Inn.

##### METRO HOTEL PACKAGE

**Plenty of Rooms:** Metro Denver has 42,000 first class hotel rooms in the area, conveniently linked to downtown by efficient highways and light rail – just one reason why Denver beat out 26 other cities to host the 2008 Democratic National Convention. There are more than a dozen hotels in the Denver Tech Center led by the 628-room Denver Marriott Tech Center, all with easy-to-use light rail service to downtown.

**Luxurious Resorts:** Conveniently located just 15 minutes from Boulder and Denver, the Westin Westminster offers 369 luxury rooms with mountain or park views. The Omni Interlocken Resort has 390 rooms, a spa and 4-star golf course, while the Inverness Hotel and Conference Center has 302 rooms and a championship golf course.

##### 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT DENVER

* Denver really is exactly one mile high. There is a step on the State Capitol Building that is exactly 5,280 feet above sea level. In Denver’s rarified air, golf balls go ten percent farther. So do cocktails. Alcoholic drinks pack more of a wallop than at sea level. The sun feels warmer, because you’re closer to it, but your coffee is cooler, because water boils at 202 degrees.
* Denver has the 10th largest downtown in America. Denver has an exciting and walkable downtown – the 10th largest in the nation. Within a mile radius, downtown Denver has three major sports stadiums, the nation’s second largest performing arts center, three colleges with 30,000 students, an assortment of art and history museums, a mint producing 10 billion coins a year, a river offering white water rafting, more than 8,000 hotel rooms, a $140 million amusement park, a $100 million aquarium and 300 restaurants.
* Denver is near the mountains, not in them. There are 200 named peaks visible from Denver, including 32 that soar to 13,000 feet and above. The mountain panorama visible from Denver is 140 miles long.
* Denver has 300 days of sunshine a year. Located east of a major mountain range, Denver has a mild, dry and sunny climate with more annual hours of sun than San Diego or Miami Beach. In winter, Denver is dryer than Phoenix with an average daily high of 45 degrees in February. Golf courses remain open all year and have been played as many as 30 days in January.
* Denver’s history is short, but colorful. In 1858, there was not a single person living in the Denver metro area. Thirty years later, Colorado was a state with a population of almost 200,000. It was a Gold Rush that caused this boom, and in a 30 year period Denver saw some of the wildest events in the Wild, Wild West. This fascinating period lives again in museums, old gold mining villages and hundreds of elegant Victorian buildings.
* Denver has the largest city park system in the nation. Denver has more than 200 parks within the city and 20,000 acres of parks in the nearby mountains, including spectacular Red Rocks Amphitheatre. The city has its own buffalo herd and every year plants more than 200,000 flowers in 26 formal flower gardens.
* Denver is a cultural city with the second highest educated population in America. In its Old West days, Denver had a performance of Macbeth before it had a school or a hospital. Today, the Denver Performing Arts Complex has nine theatres seating 10,000 people and is second only to New York’s Lincoln Center. The seven county metro area has a self-imposed sales tax for the arts that raises up to $36 million a year, which is distributed to 300 arts organizations and facilities.
* Denver also loves its sports. Denver is one of only a few cities to have eight professional sports teams. Denver also has horse and dog racing and a professional rodeo. Denver has 90 golf courses, 850 miles of bike paths and the nation’s largest city park system.
* Denver is a city of many colors and cultures with great diversity. Denver grew by 30 percent in the 1990s – an average of 1,000 new people a week, every week for ten years. Denver’s diversity is celebrated at numerous festivals and events including the nation’s largest Cinco de Mayo celebration and the annual Juneteenth and Dragon Boat Festival.
* Denver brews more beer than any other city. Coors Brewery is the world’s largest. Denver’s Great American Beer Festival is the largest in the nation with 1,700 different beers. The Wynkoop Brewing Company is the largest brewpub in America. On an average day, Denver brews more than 80 different beers.

**Conclusion**

PLA conferences provide public librarians with the opportunity for high-quality, professional development and networking opportunities. Columbus has the facilities and attractions to host a very successful PLA 2024 Conference.

# **ATTACHMENT 1**

# Policy on National Conference Site Selection

In reviewing possible sites for PLA National Conferences or other major events, PLA will consider the following factors:

\* Whether the site meets the technical requirements for the event such as adequate meeting rooms, number of sleeping rooms, etc., as determined by the PLA staff and ratified by the PLA Executive Committee.

\* Whether the site conforms to the PLA Board's directive to have National Conference sites provide for geographic diversity.

\* Whether the potential host library(ies) is(are) supportive of the PLA event being held there.

\* Whether there is a regional welcome for the PLA event being held there.

\* Whether the city is an accessible destination.

\* Whether there are any state laws requiring public libraries in the city to conduct business in any manner that violates approved policies of the American Library Association at the time the site selection is made.

Final selection of a National Conference site shall be made in conformity with Section 6.4, Item VIII of the ALA Policy Manual, "Division National Conferences, Preconferences, and Related Activities."

Adopted by the PLA Board of Directors, June 1991; Revised February 1995.

**ATTACHMENT 2**

***Dates Offered*** Wednesday, April 3 – Saturday, April 6, 2024

***Convention Center Rental***  $0

***Convention Center Meeting Rooms*** More than adequate number of ballrooms, meeting rooms and breakouts to support current programs, factoring potential growth

***Convention Center Exhibit Space*** 373,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space

***Hotels*** 3600+ hotel rooms with a wide range of rates. Rates are negotiable.

***Hotel Tax*** 10%

***Airport Info*** The John Glenn Columbus International Airport provides more than 150 daily nonstop flights departing to 47 destinations.

***Average cost of Flight*** Approximately $250 round trip

***Distance from airport to downtown*** The John Glenn Columbus International Airport is just eight miles, or 10 minutes, from downtown.

***Cost of cab from airport*** $25 one way

***Shuttle service to/from airport*** $15 one way

***Mass Transit*** The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) provides direct bus service between the airport and downtown for only **$**2.75. AirConnect is an affordable and easy way to reach downtown hotels and the Greater Columbus Convention Center. 

***Accessibility***  Acceptable

***Attractions*** Shopping, restaurants and many attractions within walking distance