INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPOSED ARAPAHOE SQUARE ZONING AND DESIGN STANDARDS/GUIDELINES

How We Got Here

1996
B-8-A zoning created for Arapahoe Square

1998
Arapahoe Square/B-8-A Design Standards and Guidelines adopted

2007
Adoption of the Downtown Area Plan

2010
Adoption of the Denver Zoning Code
Zoning for Arapahoe Square (B-8-A) transferred to DZC but is not updated beyond the name change to D-AS (Downtown-Arapahoe Square)

2011
Adoption of the North East Downtown Area Plan
Recommended a form based zoning study and review of the design review process

“Enhance Urban Design” in Arapahoe Square” p. 66
“Buildings should add visual interest and pedestrian scale to the public realm” p. 66
“The mix of building forms in Arapahoe Square should include the podium and point tower, apartment, courtyard apartment and general building types” p. 66

“A five-story height datum line for upper story setbacks is recommended for all structures in Arapahoe Square over five stories to produce the effect that each new building reads as not more than five stories at the street level...this is a concept that allows taller buildings to related to a pedestrian scale” p. 67
“Height variations should be based on form alternatives rather than use premiums” p. 67

“Promote urban character by minimizing setbacks to provide a consistent street edge and to support pedestrian activity. Reinforce the character and quality of public streets with buildings that provide consistent siting, pedestrian orientation, and access to the street” p. 68

“Minimize the visual impacts of parking by structuring it within the development, or by locating surface lots to the rear or side of buildings” p. 68
“Give prominence to the pedestrian realm as a defining element of neighborhood character. Locate commercial uses on the ground floors to activate buildings and the street. Provide transparency and street facing entries to help activate and improve safety on the street. Create visually interesting and human scaled facades, and encourage variation in building form to provide opportunities for architectural scale relationships” p. 68

ARAPAHOE SQUARE PROJECT AREA
This project looked at areas that:
• Are currently mapped with D-AS (Arapahoe Square Zoning)
• Are in the area designated as “Arapahoe Square” by the Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan.

2015 – 2016
Arapahoe Square Zoning and Design Standards & Guidelines
Project Objectives:
1. Implement 2010 Northeast Downtown Neighborhood Plan Recommendations for Arapahoe Square
2. Update zoning to 2010 form-based code approach
3. Update existing design review system

• Develop the Arapahoe Square Zoning Technical Task Force, a volunteer group of stakeholders including residents, property owners, architects and design professionals
• Develop Building Form Standards
• Address Uses and Parking
• Conduct outside testing of draft building forms
• Develop Design Standards and Guidelines and Design Review Process
• Develop Zoning Map
• Release Public Review Draft
• Community Open House
• Public Adoption Process
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPOSED ARAPAHOE SQUARE ZONING AND DESIGN STANDARDS/ GUIDELINES

THE PROJECT INCLUDES NEW ZONING AND DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES TO PROMOTE:

1. Building heights that transition from downtown
2. A vibrant neighborhood with a mix of building forms
3. A pedestrian-oriented neighborhood
4. Quality, human-scale design that promotes a sense of place
5. Context-sensitive design

WHAT DOES THE ZONING ADDRESS?

As illustrated at right, the proposed zoning requirements shape the basic building form.

Prescriptive zoning requirements address:
- Height
- Build-to
- Street level & upper-story setbacks
- Parking location
- Street level transparency
- Permitted uses

WHAT DO THE DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES ADDRESS?

As illustrated at right, the proposed Design Standards & Guidelines inform a case-by-case design review process. A new Design Advisory Board (DAB) composed of architects, landowners and residents will review proposed projects using the Design Standards & Guidelines to ensure high-quality, context sensitive design.

Qualitative design standards and guidelines address:
- Building placement & open space
- Vehicular access and parking
- Building massing & articulation
- Building materials & transparency
- Scale transitions
- Signs
- Special consideration for key streets

PROPOSED DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

1. Pre-Application/Concept Review Meeting
2. Optional Concept Review by DAB
3. Design Review
   - Design Review Submittal(s)
   - Review by CPD Staff
   - Design Advisory Board Meeting
4. Design Confirmation
   - Final Design Review Submittal
   - Review by CPD Staff
   - Design Advisory Board Meeting and Recommendation
5. Final Determination
   - Utilizing recommendation of the Design Advisory Board, Zoning Administrator makes final determination.
Proposed Mapping

NE DOWNTOWN PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

HEIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPLEMENTING PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed zone district map at left closely follows recommendations of the NE Downtown Neighborhoods Plan, including:

*Arapahoe Square's urban design needs to create an identifiable character and successfully transition between areas that range from high intensity commercial and mixed-use districts to lower intensity and historic single-family neighborhoods* p. 64

*Building height will be highly varied depending on location, form and use of buildings* p. 67

*The concept building height map makes use of mid-block transitions between 21st and 22nd streets as well as Park Avenue and 24th Street to step down building heights. The height transition should occur somewhere in the block between the identified streets* p. 69

CURTIS PARK TRANSITION

IMPLEMENTING PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Arapahoe Square Technical Task Force is evaluating zone district mapping options for the area of Curtis Park within the dotted line on the maps above and at left to reflect concerns regarding the relationship of existing to planned zoning entitlement.

The proposed zone district map closely follows recommendations of the NE Downtown Neighborhoods Plan, including:

A.3 Low Intensity Development in Residential Neighborhoods (p. 20)

- In areas with established residential neighborhood character, including Curtis Park, San Rafael, and the neighborhood edge east of Downing Street:
  - Maintain the current mix of low scale building forms such as urban house, duplex and rowhouse.
  - Allow new development to replicate existing development patterns, including small lots, shallow setbacks and high building coverage with parking and access in the rear/off the alley.
  - Make use of entry features that connect the building and front yards to the street.
  - Allow a mix of land uses consisting primarily of residential uses with limited neighborhood-serving commercial.
  - Encourage the use of streetscape elements that promote residential character and pedestrian and bicycle use, such as detached sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting, and tree lawns.
A VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD
WITH A MIX OF BUILDING FORMS

INTENT OF THE GENERAL BUILDING FORM (ZONING P. 8.7-10 - 8.7-11)

This base building form provides the greatest design flexibility to meet the objectives of the Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan (NEDP), but has a lower height limit than other allowed building forms.

As illustrated below, proposed zoning requirements that apply to this building form include:

- Build-to (requires buildings near the sidewalk edge)*
- Upper story setback*
- Street level use requirements
- Maximum height limit in stories and feet

*May vary depending on the street. See Key Streets for more information.

This building form allows flexibility for:

- Row houses or other smaller-scale buildings
- Buildings with structured parking that is not wrapped with other uses (note that the Design Standards & Guidelines address the design of structured parking)

| Allows a wide variety of building types |
| Promote a mix of building forms (NEDP) |

Maximum Height
8 stories (110ft) towards Curtis Park
12 stories (150ft) towards downtown

Upper Story Setback
10’ for 65% on typical street*
Provide a datum to relate to the pedestrian scale (NEDP)

No Upperstory Parking Limitation**

*Upper Story Setback standards vary depending on the street, see Key Streets for more information.
** Allows structured parking that is not wrapped with another use. Note that the proposed zoning does not have minimum vehicle parking requirements.

COMMENTS

General Building Form
This building form allows greater building height (about 4 or 8 more stories depending on the district) as an incentive to limit the visibility of structured parking to meet the objectives of the Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan (NEDP) for a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood.

As illustrated below, proposed zoning requirements that apply to this building form include:
• Build-to (requires buildings near the sidewalk edge)*
• Upper story setback*  
• Street level use requirements  
• Maximum height limit in feet only (no limit on stories)  
• Limitation on visibility of structured parking above the street level

*May vary depending on the street. See Key Streets for more information.

INTENT OF THE GENERAL WITH HEIGHT INCENTIVE BUILDING FORM (P. 8.7-12 - 8.7-13)

Maximum Height in Feet
150' (approx. 12 stories) towards Curtis Park
250' (approx. 20 stories) towards downtown

Provide additional height for form alternatives (NEDP)

Parking Limitation
Above the Street Level  
70% wrapped by a use other than parking**
Reduce the impacts of structured parking (NEDP)

Upper Story Setback
10' for 65% on typical street*
Provide a datum to relate to to the pedestrian scale (NEDP)

Maximum Height in Feet
150' (approx. 12 stories) towards Curtis Park
250' (approx. 20 stories) towards downtown

Provide additional height for form alternatives (NEDP)

*Upper Story Setback standards vary depending on the street, see Key Streets for more information.
**Requires structured parking to be wrapped with another use, located underground, or not provided. Note that the proposed zoning does not have minimum vehicle parking requirements.
A VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD WITH A MIX OF BUILDING FORMS

This building form allows significantly greater building height (about 14 or 18 more stories depending on the district) as an incentive to limit the visibility of structured parking and reduce the mass of taller building elements. The form specifically implements Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan (NEDP) objectives a diverse mix of building forms, including tall, slender towers.

As illustrated below, proposed zoning requirements that apply to this building form include:
- Build-to (requires buildings near the sidewalk edge)*
- Upper story setback*
- Street level use requirements
- Maximum height limit in feet only (no limit on stories)
- Limitation on visibility of structured parking above the street level
- Limitation on the floor area of towers elements that rise above the fifth floor

*May vary depending on the street. See Key Streets for more information.

Maximum Tower Floor Plate
10,000 s.f.
Provide an increase in height for a reduction in upper story mass (NEDP)

Parking Limitation
Above the Street Level
70% wrapped wrapped by a use other than parking**
Reduce the impacts of structured parking (NEDP)

Upper Story Setback
10' for 65% on typical street*
Provide a datum to relate to the pedestrian scale (NEDP)

Maximum Height in Feet
250' (approx. 20 stories) towards Curtis Park
350' (approx. 30 stories) towards downtown
Provide the building form of a point tower (NEDP)

*Upper Story Setback standards vary depending on the street, see Key Streets for more information.
**Requires structured parking to be wrapped with another use, located underground, or not provided. Note that the proposed zoning does not have minimum vehicle parking requirements.
Building placement close to the sidewalk creates an interesting urban edge for pedestrians and prevents surface parking from fronting the public realm.

The proposed zoning requires:
- Buildings to be built 0-10 feet from the front property line for at least 70% of the frontage (build-to requirement)*

*Some of these standards vary depending on the street, see Key Streets for more information

The proposed zoning allows flexibility to substitute high-quality open space for a percentage of the build-to requirement.

### Transparency at the Street Level

Transparency requirements ensure an appropriate number of glass windows and doors at the street level to create an active, engaging and safe street level experience.

The proposed zoning requires:
- 60% minimum transparency on non-residential buildings
- 40% minimum transparency on buildings that only include residential

The proposed zoning prohibits highly-reflective glass.

### Facade Design at the Street Level

Thoughtfully designed, pedestrian-friendly, facades include human-scale articulation, scaling features such as awnings or canopies and strategically located pedestrian entrances.

The proposed zoning requires:
- Pedestrian entries
- Transparency (see above)
- Uses other than parking for most of the street level frontage (see below)

The proposed Design Standards & Guidelines promote:
- Features to define the street level
- Articulation
- Substantial floor-to-floor heights

### Uses at the Street Level

Locating active uses at the street level promotes a vibrant pedestrian environment.

The proposed zoning does not allow the following uses for most of the street level*:
- Parking
- Mini-storage
- Automobile services

*For smaller lots, additional flexibility is provided for this limitation

The proposed Design Standards & Guidelines encourage highly active retail uses, such as retail storefronts, cafes, building lobbies and cultural facilities at the street level adjacent to open spaces and along 21st Street.
A PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED NEIGHBORHOOD

OPEN SPACE & ENHANCED SETBACKS (ZONING P. 8.7-21 & DSG P. 14-15)
Privately-owned open space, where thoughtfully designed and easily accessible to the public, contributes to a vibrant pedestrian experience.

The proposed zoning allows build-to exceptions for pedestrian-friendly features such as courtyards, plazas, and outdoor cafe seating.

The proposed Design Standards & Guidelines promote:
- Safe, attractive places for pedestrians to linger
- Enhanced areas that serve as extensions of the sidewalk
- Open space areas that are activated by uses and building entries

STREETSCAPE (ZONING P. 8.7-21 & DSG P. 60-66)
High-quality, low maintenance streetscaping is an important component of a pedestrian-friendly street.

The proposed Design Standards & Guidelines promote:
- Appropriately spaced street trees to provide shade and buffer pedestrians from the street
- Distinctive paving patterns to help designate the pedestrian zone
- Street furniture and lighting that are designed to create safe, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes
Design techniques that break down the mass of large buildings into smaller modules are an important tool to promote quality, human-scale design that provides variety and pedestrian interest.

For larger or taller buildings, the proposed Design Standards & Guidelines promote:
- Changes in facade material
- Variations in facade plane
- Changes in the height of building setbacks along the street

Facade articulation reinforces building massing techniques and further promotes a cohesive and visual interesting facade.

The proposed Design Standards & Guidelines promote integration of:
- Facade plane changes
- Vertical projections
- Horizontal banding
- Cohesive window groupings and alignment
- Balconies

The Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan calls an upper-story building setback (or “Datum”) to minimize the impact of taller buildings on the pedestrian realm.

The proposed zoning requires:
- A minimum 10 foot setback anywhere below the sixth story for most of the building frontage*

The proposed zoning provides flexibility for the location and design of upper-story setbacks to allow flexibility and promote creative approaches.

*Some upper-story setback requirements vary depending on the street, see the Key Streets poster for more information.
QUALITY, HUMAN-SCALED DESIGN

**Facade Design**

**MATERIALS (DSG P. 39)**

The use and application of durable building materials provide a sense of human scale, increase sustainability and ensure a cohesive facade design.

The proposed Design Standards & Guidelines:
- Allow for a wide range of innovative and creative materials
- Discourage the use of cementitious stucco or fiber cement siding on large facade areas
- Do not allow use of synthetic stucco (EIFS)
- Promote high-quality masonry materials of facades facing a historic district (including alley facades)

**TRANSPARENCY (ZONING P. 8.7-11 - 8.7-15 & DSG P. 37-38)**

Facades with a high percentage of transparent windows promote a sense of human scale, enhance safety, and add visual interest for pedestrians.

The proposed zoning requires 60% transparency at the street level (40% for an all residential building).

The proposed Design Standards & Guidelines encourage:
- 50% transparency on the lower floors above the street level
- 40% transparency on upper floors
- 25% transparency on upper floors of alley-facing facades (note that any facade facing historic district must meet higher standards)

**STRUCTURED PARKING (ZONING P. 8.7-11 - 8.7-15 & DSG P. 41-41)**

Building facades that minimize the visibility of structured parking help maintain a sense of human scale and reduce visual impacts on the pedestrian environment.

The proposed zoning incentivizes building forms that wrap above grade parking, or provide all parking below grade.

The proposed Design Standards & Guidelines encourage:
- Use of materials and articulation patterns that are similar to other, non-parking portions of the building
- Creating patterns of openings in the parking structure that reflect the minimum transparency for non-parking facades
- Aligning openings in the parking garage with windows in the upper stories of the building
The proposed regulations recognize the importance of several Key Streets throughout Arapahoe Square. This includes variations in zoning build-to and upper-story setback requirements, as well as design standards & guidelines that promote context-sensitive approaches along each Key Street.

**21ST STREET**
This important corridor is planned to be the signature street for Arapahoe Square. A recent urban design plan for 21st Street reinforces the vision of the street as a high-quality public space with focus on pedestrian and bicycle travel.

- Proposed zoning build-to range is 0-20’ to encourage open space
- Proposed zoning upper story setback is 10’ at 100% (with additional flexibility to encourage gateway features and strong building elements by the DSG)

**20TH STREET & BROADWAY**
20th Street is the border between Arapahoe Square and the Central Business District. It is envisioned to have a more urban character common to the Downtown Core. Broadway is a wide arterial that cuts diagonally through Arapahoe Square. North of 20th, and is envisioned as a Grand Boulevard in the city’s adopted plans with a high-quality streetscape and pedestrian realm.

- The proposed zoning does not require an upper story setback on 20th or Broadway

**PARK AVENUE WEST**
This street, at the northeastern edge of Arapahoe Square, is a key transition between Downtown and the Curtis Park neighborhood. This corridor is identified as a Grand Boulevard in the city’s adopted plans, with a strong emphasis on the pedestrian experience.

- Proposed zoning upper story setback is 10’ for 100% of the frontage (flexibility is provided through design review) to ensure a successful transition to Curtis Park

**ARAPAHOE & CURTIS**
Both of these streets provide an important pedestrian connection between the Central Business District, Arapahoe Square, and Curtis Park. Arapahoe Street is also an important bike corridor with a protected bike lane.

- Proposed zoning build-to range is 0-15’ to encourage enhanced setbacks and open space
- Proposed Design Standards & Guidelines promote pedestrian-oriented streetscape features

**WELTON STREET**
Welton Street is an important transit corridor with light rail service that connects Arapahoe Square to downtown and the Five Points Historic Cultural District. It also forms a transition between Arapahoe Square and the Clements Historic District.

- Proposed zoning build-to range is 0-20’ on the SE side of the street to acknowledge the light rail
- Proposed Design Standards & Guidelines promote streetscape techniques that help to buffer pedestrians from the light rail
Historic Transitions

Context sensitive design includes respecting and responding to the historic resources in and around Arapahoe Square, which abuts three historic districts: Ballpark, Clements, and Curtis Park.

The Design Standards and Guidelines promote:
- Highlighting the historic resources in and around Arapahoe Square
- High-quality four-sided design on facades, including structured parking that may be visible from the adjacent historic district
- Design compatibility on facades adjacent to designated landmark structures
- Use of masonry and historically compatible materials adjacent to historic districts
- Mass and scale techniques that respond to the character of any adjacent landmark structure or district

Proposed tools to ensure four-sided design include:
- Transparency and material standard consistent with standards for the primary street-facing facade
- Facade articulation standards consistent with the standards for the primary street-facing facade
- Standards for to ensure that visible structured parking incorporates high-quality design techniques

DSG DO NOT ALLOW:
- Blank Facade
- Exposed Parking

DSG PROMOTE:
- Masonry Materials
- Facade Articulation
- Wrapped/Screened Parking
- Four-Sided Design