Meeting Agenda

3:00 – Opening/Welcome
3:05 – Introductions
3:20 – Presentation & Discussion on D-AS Zoning and Design Standards and Guidelines
4:30 – Overview of Denver Zoning Code
4:50 – Break
5:00 – Decision Making Process for Phase 2
5:10 – Review Roadmap for Phase 2
5:45 – Next Steps
6:00 – Adjourn
Introductions
Review of Current D-AS Zoning
D-AS Map
Background

• 1996: B-8-A zoning created for Arapahoe Square
• 1998: Arapahoe Square/B-8-A Design Standards and Guidelines adopted
• 2010: Adoption of new Denver Zoning Code
  – Zoning for Arapahoe Square (B-8-A) transferred to DZC but is not updated
  – Now called **D-AS (Downtown- Arapahoe Square)**
Summary of D-AS Zoning

• Utilizes Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to control the amount of development on the zone lot

• Base FAR of 4:1. Example:
  – Parcel = 10,000 Square Feet (SF)
  – 10,000 SF x 4 = 40,000 SF total allowed
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
FAR 4:1
=4 Floors on 100%
FAR 4:1

=16 Floors on 25%
Summary of D-AS Zoning

• FAR Premiums available
  – Housing
  – Residential Support Uses (schools, food sales)
  – Arts, Entertainment, Cultural
  – Historic Rehab
  – Public Art
  – Affordable Housing (defined in DRMC, Chapter 27, Article IV)

• Max FAR for any project may not exceed 6:1
  – FAR max of 7:1 if the entire building is subject to design review under the Design Standards and Guidelines (DSG)
Summary of D-AS Zoning

- Generally max height of 200 feet
  - For many lots, FAR limits do not allow building to reach 200 feet
- Some areas have max height of 80 feet
  - Ballpark Edge
  - Curtis Park Edge
• Build-To Requirement
  – Building must be within 0’-10’ of property line for 65% of frontage along all streets
12,500sf Zone Lot
Build-To
Build-To

Building setback 0’ from zone lot line

65% minimum lot frontage (build-to percentage)
Build-To

Building setback 10’ from zone lot line

65% minimum lot frontage (build-to percentage)
Varibale building setback from zone lot line

65% minimum lot frontage (build-to percentage)
Summary of D-AS Zoning

• Permitted Uses
  – Wide mix of land uses currently allowed: office, retail, residential
  – Surface parking lots allowed
  – Parking garages allowed with limitations
    • Zoning (8.7.1.4) contains minimum design requirements – accommodate pedestrian active uses at ground floor; provide “variety and human scale”
  – See pages 8.9-3 – 8.9-12 for full list of permitted, permitted with limitations, and not permitted
• Off-Street Parking Requirements
  – Recalibrated in 2010 when new code was adopted based on national and local research, including actual utilization in Denver by land use
  – Ratios are **minimums**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Minimum Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>0.75 spaces per unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant (Eating and Drinking)</td>
<td>2.5 spaces per 1,000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1.25 spaces per 1,000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>1.25 spaces per 1,000 SF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Could be Better?

1. Development capacity
2. Pedestrian-scale and activity
3. Height transitions to adjacent areas
1. Development Capacity

• Goal: ensure the zoning attracts the density and activity envisioned for Arapahoe Square
Recent Development in Arapahoe Square

Figure Ground 2006
Recent Development in Arapahoe Square

Figure Ground 2010
Recent Development in Arapahoe Square

Figure Ground Since 2011
25,000sf Zone Lot
Build-To: Building within 0-10’ of property line for 65% of frontage
FAR 4:1 – Full Lot Coverage
Building height cannot reach 80’ due to FAR
Building height cannot reach 200’ due to FAR
FAR 7:1 – Full Lot Coverage
Building height cannot reach 200’ due to FAR
FAR 4:1 – 65% Build-To

16 Stories

200' Max Height
FAR 7:1 – 45% Lot Coverage
FAR 7:1 – 45% Lot Coverage
“An organically evolving district with a broad range of existing buildings and future mid to high-rise buildings”

- Dense: 12 and 20 stories max
- Form-based: No FAR
Development Capacity
Comparison – 100% lot coverage

Existing
Zoning

FAR 7:1

FAR 4:1
Development Capacity
Comparison – 100% lot coverage

Existing Zoning

Plan Vision: General Building Form

- FAR 7:1
- FAR 4:1
- General 12 Stories
- General 20 Stories
Development Capacity
Comparison – 100% lot coverage

Existing Zoning

Plan Guidance: 12 and 20 stories

Plan Guidance: Point Tower Option

Plan Guidance: more development capacity than existing zoning (FAR of 10-18)
2. Pedestrian Scale and Activity

- Goal: balance the intensity/density envisioned for Arapahoe Square with pedestrian-friendly street life
  - Design of buildings (Form)
  - Ground floor uses within buildings
Form - Existing Zoning

• FAR approach makes building form unpredictable
• No requirement for pedestrian-friendly base to the building
• Create a maximum street frontage height through a datum line where the building sets back
• Creates a pedestrian-scaled base for taller buildings
• Existing zoning permits the following ground floor uses:
  – Ground level parking structures must have pedestrian active uses, or reserve space for them
  – Active ground floor use not otherwise required
  – Any allowed use could be located on the ground floor
Uses – Plan Guidance

• Locate commercial uses on the ground floors to activate buildings and the street.
3. Height Transitions

- Goal: ensure appropriate transitions in building height between Arapahoe Square and surrounding residential neighborhoods
• Arapahoe Square has the most development potential in NE Downtown
• More density along downtown edge
• Effectively transition building heights to adjacent residential neighborhoods
Height Comparison: Existing Zoning
Height Comparison: NEDN Plan
Need for New Zoning

- Limited Development Capacity
- Lack of Standards to Promote Pedestrian-Scale and Activity
- Inadequate Height Transitions

Need for Updated Zoning that Implements the Plan Vision
Review of Existing Design Standards and Guidelines (DSG)
Summary of DSG

• Adopted in 1998
• Amendment in 2014 to amend area of applicability
Summary of DSG

- Applicability: area shown in map
  - New construction
  - Renovations to existing structures when valuation exceeds 50% of replacement cost
  - Per zoning: apply to lower 80’ for all buildings; entire structure for buildings using FAR premiums up to 7:1
DSG Objectives

• Creation of a pedestrian-oriented urban environment that emphasizes architectural and urban design principles of **human scale, visual interest** and **contextual response** to the building

• The development of **quality structures** that contribute to the **long-term economic and social vitality** of the City and County of Denver
• Intent Statement
  – Define goals which the standards and guidelines are created to achieve

• Standards
  – Provide specific direction to fulfill the intent – utilize “shall” to indicate compliance is required. There is flexibility to deviate if an alternative better achieves the stated intent

• Guidelines
  – Utilize “should.” Are not required but are relevant to achieving intent and will be considered as part of design review
DSG Content

- Site Access
- Parking
- Loading/Service Areas
- Building Location/Orientation
- Building Facades
- Materials
- Transparency/Glazing
- Roof/Mechanical Equipment
- Security Bars/Fencing
DSG Design Review Process

Schematic Design Phase:
• Pre-submittal conference
• Schematic Design Submittal
• Notice
  • All RNOs within 200ft
• Review for Consistency
  • Within 30 days

Design Development Phase:
• Pre-application Conference
• Application for Design Review
• Notice
  • All RNOs within 200ft
• CPD Review
  • Staff recommendation to Planning Board
  • Within 30 days
• Planning Board Public Meeting
  • Within 60 days
  • Board Recommendation to Zoning Administrator
• Final Action by Zoning Administrator
What Could be Better?

• Better define purpose of DSG
  – What are DSG trying to accomplish? Can it be accomplished through zoning alone?
• Opportunity to define unique character areas
• Improved format, layout, and imagery
• Clearer, modernized standards/guidelines
• Streamline the review process
• Resolve overlap with landmark design guidelines
Overview of Denver Zoning Code
• Context-Based
  – Different neighborhoods in the City have different contexts
  – One size does NOT fit all
Distinguishing Characteristics
Block Pattern & Building Placement
Distinguishing Characteristics

Diversity & Pattern of Use

Parking & Access
Six Neighborhood Contexts

- Suburban Neighborhood
- Urban Edge Neighborhood
- Urban Neighborhood
- General Urban Neighborhood
- Urban Center Neighborhood
- Downtown Neighborhood
Neighborhood Contexts

General Urban Neighborhood
- Mixed Use; High Pedestrian Activity
- Primarily Residential; Grid and Alleys

Urban Center Neighborhood
- Downtown Uses; High Density

Downtown Neighborhood
Downtown Context – Article 8

• Five distinct areas
  – Downtown/Downtown Theater District
  – LoDo
  – Civic Center
  – Golden Triangle
  – Arapahoe Square

• Street grid with regular block pattern
• Buildings typically placed close to the street to create a continuous street edge
• Tallest buildings in the city
Form-Based Approach

• Form-based zoning:
  – Makes new code easier to understand and navigate than a text-based code
  – Reliance on graphics / tables to convey regulations vs. text
“Legalese” vs. Form-based

density, height limits or other established development standards are warranted, varied, changed, revoked or otherwise approved or amended, nor shall it be construed to extend the term of a variance, which variance, if granted, is only good for one (1) year from the date of approval.

(3) A subdivision final plan has been approved and recorded in the County Clerk’s office for the subject property, or the land on which the subject property is a part.

(4) The landowner has completed and submitted all documents and information as herein described, and notice and hearing requirements of this Article have been met.

(5) A landowner may only apply for a variances right after having obtained all other development approvals including, but not limited to, variances, expanded uses, zoning changes, subdivision special uses and conditional uses. (Prior Code 6-8-5, Jul. 18, 1999)

Sec. 16-19-40. Application.

An application for the creation of a variance shall contain, at a minimum, the following:

1. A proposed site specific development plan which shall contain, at a minimum, the following:
   a. Name, address, fax and telephone number of the landowner.
   b. Details of the proposed site development as follows (on one (1) or more twenty-four-inch by thirty-six-inch sheets):
      1. Name and address of the proposed development;
      2. Name, address, telephone number, fax number, and license number of applicants of the responsible consultant assisting in the preparation of the submission;
      3. North point, scale and scale sheet smaller than one (1) inch equals sixty (60) feet, with one (1) inch equals twenty (20) feet horizontally;
      4. Legal description of the site;
      5. A summary table describing the site area, site area coverage, gross floor area, building area, parking area, unobstructed open space and use, and off-street parking and loading spaces, if applicable;
      6. Adjacent and included public rights-of-way, easement locations and dimensions, and existing and proposed utility locations;
      7. Location and building outline of each existing structure to be retained, and all new structures proposed for the site;
      8. Location, dimensions, and site area of existing and proposed curb cuts and driving lanes, and off-street parking and loading areas, public transportation stops and passenger storage and truck drop-off facilities, if applicable;

(F) Transparency

(PRIMARY STREET)

(G) Transparency

(P) Pedestrian Access

Zone Lot

(A) Build-to Percentage with Alternative

(PRIMARY STREET)
Form-based approach

Urban Center
Context – General
Building Form
Break
Process for Phase 2: Decision Making
Three phase process:

• **Phase 1**: agree to process, goals, guiding documents. Sets the roadmap for Phase 2

• **Phase 2**: Draft the zoning code and updates to the Design Standards and Guidelines

• **Phase 3**: Public adoption process. Final adoption by City Council.
Proposed Process

- We are at the end of Phase 1
Roles and Responsibilities

- **Task Force**: Make consensus recommendations for key content in the zoning and design standards and guidelines. Attend meetings, read supporting documents and background, make best effort at protocols.

- **Facilitator**: moderate meetings, fair and impartial, manage the protocols, keep the group on task and moving toward consensus, prepare meeting notes.

- **Staff**: Communicate in a timely manner, provide background materials, respect protocols.

- **Council**: Coordinate with staff and facilitator, help group reach consensus. Ultimately, City Council (with recommendations from staff and Planning Board) will make the decision about the new zoning.
Proposed Protocols

What are the principles that guide good process?
- Transparency
- Inclusion
- Balance
- Representation
- High Quality Information
- Logical Sequence
- Clear Authority, Purpose, Deadline
- Honesty
- Honor and Trust-Building Behavior
- Other?
• Decision Making
• Seek consensus
• Find what you can live with – Allow things to move even if they aren’t perfect
• No voting
• Beware the tyranny of the majority
• For topics we can’t resolve – be as clear as possible on the principles at stake and carefully articulate these so the City staff and Council can make the best possible decision
• If we can’t reach consensus, the process (and the City) still move forward
Roadmap for Phase 2

• Group discussion on draft framework document
Next Steps
Next Steps

• Begin Phase 2 – Drafting of Zoning and Design Standards and Guidelines

• Meeting 1 of Phase 2: February 3, 2016
  – 3-6pm
  – Same Location