

MEETING SUMMARY

GOLDEN TRIANGLE REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION

Date: September 22, 2020
Meeting Info: September 17, 2020, 3:00-5:00 pm, virtual meeting
Subject: Advisory Committee Meeting #10

Attendance

- **Advisory Committee**
 - Present: Kristy Bassuener, Pete Dikeou, Charlie Hunt, Scott Johnson, Laura Liska, Anne Lindsey, Chris Parezo, Adam Perkins, Cherry Rohe, Brent Snyder, Byron Zick, Liz Zukowski
 - Not present: Chris Carvell, CM Chris Hinds, Jeff Samet
- **City Staff**
 - CPD – Lilly Djaniants, Kristofer Johnson, Krystal Marquez, Fran Penafiel, Bridget Rassbach

Meeting Summary

1. General Updates

- a. Outcomes from Previous Meeting (August 20)
 - i. Reviewed proposed standards for open space, nonresidential uses, and upper story setbacks to confirm approach, explain flexibility, etc.
 - ii. Further discussion about allowing additional building height to accommodate greater design flexibility and neighborhood/citywide incentives
 - iii. Sent follow-up survey to the Committee
- b. Summary of Small Group Discussion (September 10)
 - i. Reviewed recent comments from GTCD and DDP
 - ii. Discussion of open space as a requirement on larger lots vs. incentive
 - iii. City proposal to adjust Base FAR from 4.0 to 6.0 to accommodate parking and be consistent with other Base heights in Denver (5-8 stories) and research from citywide affordable housing project (lower Base = more utilization of incentives)
 - iv. City proposal to add Arts/Cultural/Entertainment Uses and Underground Parking as additional incentives
 - v. Preliminary conversation about height survey results and current proposed height
- c. GTCD Positions documented in September 4 letter
 - i. In favor of taller buildings as long as floor plates are reduced proportionally
 - ii. Support a Base FAR of 10.5
 - iii. Maximum FAR should be determined by Narrow, Standard, Wide, or Point Tower lots
 - iv. Affordable housing should not be included in revised zoning and instead implemented through citywide AHZI project
 - v. Apply TDR to Landmark and Character Buildings
 - vi. Public Art bonus should be increased, Open Space should be an incentive rather than a requirement, add incentives for arts-related uses and to fund 5280 Trail
 - vii. Refer to AIA Framework for Design Excellence in DSG's
- d. DDP Task Force Testing and Recommendations
 - i. In favor of creating a tiered height approach to allow more flexibility and character
 - ii. Support a Base FAR of 10.5
 - iii. Average density of approx. 12.0-15.0 FAR needed to meet Blueprint Denver targets
 - iv. In favor of alternative affordable housing options in the interim while waiting for full incentives as a part of citywide AHZI project

- v. Encourage standards that support neighborhood character and small lots
- vi. Open up TDR to all parcels (ie, all parcels can sell off rights)
- vii. Reduce FAR calculations for certain types of parking (flat plate, stackable, etc.)

2. Draft Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines

- a. **Lilly** introduced the draft of the Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines
- b. Draft document was provided in advance of meeting and includes the general guidelines to apply to GT and other areas
 - i. DSGs will apply to GT, Arapahoe Square, and CPV-Auraria
 - ii. Overall structure is as follows:
 1. Chapter 1 – Site Organization
 2. Chapter 2 – Building Mass and Scale
 3. Chapter 3 – Façade Design and Site Design Details
 4. Chapter 4 – Streetscape Design
 5. Chapter 5 – Neighborhood Specific Design
 6. Chapter 6 – Building Signs
 - iii. Downtown Design Advisory Board will have design review authority
 1. **Kristy** had questions about the role of the GTCD urban design committee and if a GT resident/representative was currently on the Downtown DAB
 - a. **Staff** answered that currently there was not direct representation of GT on the DAB, but are considering expanding from 7 to 9 members which would create that opportunity
 - b. **Staff** noted also that DAB members have staggered 3-year terms so there will be on-going opportunities
 2. **Anne** commented that it would be good for the GT representative on the DAB to also be a member of the GTCD urban design committee to ensure consistency
 - iv. Chapter 5 will include more neighborhood specific guidance (still in progress)
 - v. Request Committee feedback by Tuesday, October 6
- c. Focus of this meeting was to provide an overview and focus on GT-specific standards related to Key Streets
- d. Key Street recommendations were based on Neighborhood Plan recommendations
 - i. Acoma – Neighborhood Greenway
 - ii. Broadway – Grand Boulevard
 - iii. 12th Avenue – Cultural Corridor
 - iv. Intersection at 12th and Acoma – special context
 - v. 11th Avenue and Bannock as active retail corridors
 - vi. Also including guidelines that are relevant to 5280 Trail
- e. Committee recommended that Lincoln be included with Broadway and Speer Boulevard also be included as a special context
- f. **Anne** noted that Acoma should include DSGs related to pedestrian lighting. May not need to identify a specific fixture type, but should maintain same character of globe lights and then acorn style lights in other areas of the neighborhood.
- g. **Chris P.** noted that tree canopy should be highlighted for Acoma Street as a very important aspect to preserve/support
- h. **Chris P.** commented that the Neighborhood Plan recommendations and potential DSGs highlight the issues with streetscape consistency (ie, amenity zones, landscape, etc.) and the constraints associated with DOTI maintenance and required standards.
 - i. Staff noted that business improvement districts and other similarly funded organizations have much greater ability to manage and maintain enhanced streetscape materials, furnishings, landscaping, etc. They are critical to attaining an enhanced experience because DOTI and other City agencies are not capable of providing these services (due to lack of funding, equipment, etc.)

- i. **Chris P.** asked about green infrastructure and whether it would be required adjacent to the street. Staff responded that green infrastructure would be encouraged as part of courtyards, open space, etc. Green infrastructure next to the street would fall under DOTI regulations since they would be part of larger stormwater system.
- j. **Scott** supported the idea of intersection at 12th and Acoma as a special corner and wants to think more about it with their design teams
- k. **Adam** wanted to encourage the City to think about how to distinguish 12th Ave (and other streets) from each other through prioritizing different aspects
- l. **Pete** commented that we should make sure not to have very stringent guidelines on two streets
- m. **Staff** clarified that we will be reaching out to architects and other design professionals to get additional input and feedback. This is intended to be a preliminary draft to get feedback from the Committee and then we will broaden our outreach to the public and others.

3. Height Context and Additional Visual Analysis

- a. **KJ** provided an overview of how City staff are approaching allowed heights and the context that is going into those discussions
 - i. Blueprint identifies GT in medium-high intensity category
 - ii. Neighborhood Plan is explicit in support of buildings up to 200 feet. Staff believe there is sufficient guidance to justify introduction of Point Tower.
 - iii. Two existing view planes (Civic Center and Cheesman Park) currently apply to portions of the neighborhood. Civic Center is particularly limiting (70-130 ft max) on parcels in the north of the neighborhood.
 - iv. Adjacent neighborhoods range in scale from maximum heights of about 70-150 ft on east and west, 70-130 ft immediately to the north, and then 150-250 ft moving towards the center of Downtown.
 - v. Recent community input show support for buildings taller than currently allowed (approx. 175-200 ft) if they provide additional benefits to the neighborhood and are shaped to be more slender.
 - vi. There has also been community concerns expressed about how taller buildings may affect views to the mountains from Cap Hill and Cheesman Park.
- b. **Adam** commented that originally was nervous about a Point Tower, but has come around to the idea given that GT is lower in elevation and the need for additional housing identified in Blueprint
- c. **KJ** reviewed the responses from the Advisory Committee survey about height
 - i. General Form
 - 1. Even split between remain/lower or increase height
 - 2. Most respondents willing to consider additional height with conditions
 - 3. 35% were comfortable with an increase of 50 ft or less, half were comfortable with 50-100 ft
 - ii. Point Tower
 - 1. 64% felt the Point Tower should remain or be lower
 - 2. Only slightly more were willing to consider additional height compared to those that thought it should remain
 - 3. Even split between those comfortable with increase 50 ft or less and those comfortable with more than 50 ft.
 - iii. Key topics from written responses were focused on how GT fits within larger context/transition from Downtown and how taller heights can allow greater flexibility for building shaping
- d. **KJ** reviewed additional visual analyses of 350 ft Point Towers from Cheesman Park and two locations in Cap Hill (9th/Grant and 12th/Sherman)
 - i. 350 ft Point Towers will be tall enough to encroach on views of Mt. Evans and not just the foothills in the foreground

- e. **Charlie** noted that mountain views are less visible from neighborhood locations so additional building height is not as much of a factor.
- f. **Adam** asked about what the visual analysis would look like with leaves on the trees. Staff will follow up with trying to get some current photos.
- g. **KJ** posed question to the group that if max height is increased, how do we best address resident and neighbor concerns about impacts to views and relationship to lower scale found in GT
 - i. **KJ** suggested we may need to reconsider idea that areas north of 10th or 11th have more flexible height limits, but southern areas that are more visible have lower limits
- h. **Laura** asked about where the boundary would be and how do you define the north part of the neighborhood. **Staff** responded that we would have to determine where that boundary is most appropriate.
- i. **Charlie** noted that we might get some additional political support if we show that we compromise on height at the southern end of the neighborhood
- j. **Cherry** asked if there was any update on the proposed view plane from the art museum. **Kristy** responded that it has not moved forward and currently is not active. **Cherry and Kristy** were supportive of the additional view plane. **Pete** helped clarify that there would still be large portions that could take advantage of taller buildings.
- k. **Pete** asked if they would receive a revised FAR framework soon. **KJ** confirmed that staff will provide a revised framework to the group before larger public outreach.

Next Steps

- On-going Advisory Committee meetings
 - October 15
 - *November 19 (tbd depending on holidays)*
 - *December 17 (tbd depending on holidays)*
- Revised Framework Report for Public Comment – late October
- Additional stakeholder outreach – on-going
 - *Online meeting and Survey #4 coordinated with Revised Framework report*
 - *Proactive communication to CHUN and other surrounding RNO's*
 - *Present to GTCD Board as needed*
 - *CPD/DDP meeting (AHZI) – tbd (to be rescheduled)*
 - *CPD/DDP meeting (GT) – October 1*
 - *Planning Board Information Item (GT and Downtown DSG) – November 4*

Action Items

- Committee to provide comments on the initial Draft Downtown DSG by Tuesday, October 6
- Staff to prepare draft of DSG Chapter 5 for Advisory Committee review and comment
- Staff to provide a draft revised framework once it is ready