Golden Triangle
Zoning and Design Guidelines Update
GOLDEN TRIANGLE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN – REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION
Zoning/DSG Advisory Committee Meeting #2 – July 18, 2019
Goals for the Meeting

1. Community outreach results
2. Recent development trends

3. **Discussion: Priorities and Direction**

4. Zoning and DSG Tools Summary (Q&A if necessary)

5. **Discussion: Zoning Fundamentals (Objectives 5 and 6)**
   - Building Forms
   - Building Shaping
   - Height/Incentives

6. Next Steps
Committee Protocols

What are the principles that guide an effective process?

- Inclusion and respect
- Balanced representation
- Transparency
- Quality information
- Logical and deliberate sequence
- Clear purpose and decision points
- Honesty and trust
Committee Protocols

What are the outcomes from the committee that the process will need?

- Seek consensus
- Be open to compromise on the details if it achieves a higher objective
- Consider the larger goals of the neighborhood, not personal interests
- For topics we can’t resolve, be as clear as possible about the essential principles so City staff and Council can make the best possible decision
- If we can’t reach consensus, the process (and the City) will still move forward
Community Outreach Results
Prioritizing Objectives from the Neighborhood Plan

- 12 objectives identified from the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan
- Asked about priorities via Advisory Committee, community workshop, and online survey (~100 responses)
Zoning & Design Priorities

1. Encourage a range of uses and development types
2. Highlight certain streets/areas with different uses
3. **Promote a broad range of housing opportunities**
4. Evaluate minimum parking requirements
5. **Allow a diverse range of building forms/shapes**
6. Continue to allow current building height
7. Ensure building mass is compatible with adjacent buildings
8. **Encourage protection/reuse of existing buildings**
9. **Promote a high-quality pedestrian experience**
10. Ensure building design considers pedestrian scale and comfort
11. **Encourage provision of privately-owned public gathering spaces**
12. Improve activity and visual characteristics of parking
Key Takeaways – Future Uses

- Strong support for additional retail, eating/drinking, and commercial activity at the ground floor
- Strong support for additional publicly-accessible open space
- Less support for additional parking
Key Takeaways – Taller Buildings

- Strong support for taller buildings to provide neighborhood benefits or preserve existing smaller buildings
- Some support for allowing tall buildings without any special requirements
- Less support for buildings only located in specific areas or not at all
Photo Activity

- Participants were given several images in each of the categories (Land Use, Building Type/Form, and Street Level Experience)
- Asked to consider the future character of the neighborhood and place preferred images onto the map of GT
- Poor images were placed in the Discard area
- Eight groups participated and the results were tallied to determine preferences
Photo Activity – Preferred

Common Themes in Preferred Images

- Mix of active street level uses
Photo Activity – Preferred

Common Themes in Preferred Images
- Mix of active street level uses
- Range of architectural scales
Photo Activity – Preferred

Common Themes in Preferred Images
• Mix of active street level uses
• Range of architectural scales
• Streetscape character
Photo Activity – Preferred

Common Themes in Preferred Images

- Mix of active street level uses
- Range of architectural scales
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- Quality materials
Photo Activity – Preferred

Common Themes in Preferred Images

- Mix of active street level uses
- Range of architectural scales
- Streetscape character
- Quality materials
- Public gathering spaces
Photo Activity – Preferred

Common Themes in Preferred Images
• Mix of active street level uses
• Range of architectural scales
• Streetscape character
• Quality materials
• Public gathering spaces
• Public art
Photo Activity – Discards

Common Themes in Discard Images

- Overly bulky buildings
Photo Activity – Discards

Common Themes in Discard Images

• Overly bulky buildings
• Uninspiring/leftover spaces
Photo Activity – Discards

Common Themes in Discard Images

- Overly bulky buildings
- Uninspiring/leftover spaces
- Highly visible parking (surface and structured)
Recent Development Trends
Recent Development Trends in D-GT

- Analyzed 18 projects from last 10-15 years
- 85% residential projects = ~ 2750 residential units built or approved (range of scales and sizes)
- No major new office projects
  - 1 office project approved in May
  - 2 office projects submitted for permitting but no movement since 2017
- Has been some adaptive re-use of older structures for commercial
- One hotel (under construction) and one cultural project (Kirkland)
**Existing D-GT Zoning**

- **Height limit = 175 feet**
- **Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) = 4.0**
  (total amount of Gross Floor Area relative to the size of the Zone Lot)
- Possible to qualify up to **7.0** FAR
- Area used for parking is **not** included in calculation of FAR
Analysis of 18 projects

Height

- Less than 75’ = 8 projects (45%)
- 75-175’ = 4 projects (22%)
- +/- 175’ (max ht) = 6 projects (33%)
Analysis of 18 projects

Floor Area Ratio

- Less than 4.0 FAR = 10 projects (55%)
- Greater than 4.0 FAR = 8 projects (45%)
  - 7.0 FAR (max) = 4 projects (22%)
Analysis of 18 projects

**Floor Area Ratio**
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- Greater than 4.0 FAR = 8 projects (45%)
  - 7.0 FAR (max) = 4 projects (22%)

**Parking Included**
- Less than 4.0 FAR = 6 projects (33%)
- Greater than 4.0 FAR = 12 projects (67%)
  - Greater than 7.0 FAR = 8 projects (44%)
  - Highest FAR = 11.6 FAR
Analysis of 18 projects
Analysis of 18 projects

Total Floor Area
- 65% Residential
- 5% Commercial (cultural, hotel, office)
- 30% Parking
Residential Parking

- **Residential Vehicle Parking**
  - Minimum required = 0.75/unit
  - Projects providing 1.0 or more/unit = 93% (14 of 15)

- **Residential Bicycle Parking**
  - Minimum required = 0.5/unit
  - Projects providing 0.7 or more/unit = 20% (3 of 15)

93% Substantially more Vehicle Parking than required

20% Substantially more Bicycle Parking than required
Discussion Point #1

What do these results mean for our work?

Was there anything that surprised you?
Summary of Zoning and DSG Tools
Summary of Current Tools (Land Use)

1. Encourage a range of uses and development types
   - Downtown context, Main Street, and Mixed Use (including D-GT) allow widest range of uses
   - Does not determine location or amount, but allows mix to exist

2. Highlight certain streets/areas with different uses
   - Key Streets
   - Non-residential use requirement
   - DSG can apply specific standards
Summary of Current Tools (Land Use)

3. Promote a broad range of housing opportunities
   - Residential/affordable FAR premium (D-GT, D-C)
   - Affordable housing height incentive

4. Evaluate minimum parking requirements
   - No minimum vehicle parking (other Downtown districts)
   - Vehicle parking maximum
   - Minimum bicycle parking
Summary of Current Tools (Building Form/Type)

7. Ensure building mass is compatible with adjacent buildings
   - Protected districts
   - Historic landmarks and districts

8. Encourage protection/reuse of existing buildings
   - FAR premiums
   - Transfer of undeveloped floor area
   - Minimum parking exemptions
   - Historic landmark designation
Denver Historic Landmarks

Analysis of Landmark Buildings

- Cuba Cuba 1173 Delaware Street
- Residences at 106 & 108 12th Ave
- Evans School - 1115 Acoma Street
- The Church Night Club - 1160 Lincoln Street
Buildings of Architectural and Historical Interest
Summary of Current Tools *(Street Level Experience)*

9. **Promote a high-quality pedestrian experience**
   - Setbacks/residential setback
   - Build-to, Transparency, Active Use
   - Pedestrian entrances
   - Street-facing units

10. **Ensure building design considers pedestrian scale and comfort**
    - Upper story setback
    - Mass reduction
    - Façade articulation
Summary of Current Tools (Street Level Experience)

11. Encourage provision of privately-owned public gathering spaces
   • Private open space requirement

12. Improve activity and visual characteristics of parking
   • Limitation on visible parking (e.g., wrapped by Active Use)
   • Integration into architecture
   • Surface parking landscape and screening
Block Patterns and Alley Network

Typical blocks include alleys throughout Golden Triangle

[Map showing block patterns and alley network]
DISCUSSION:
Tools to Achieve Objectives 5 and 6
Summary of Current Tools (Building Form/Type)

5. Allow a diverse range of building forms/shapes
   - Building Forms (incl. Point Tower)
   - Floor Area Ratio
   - Mass reduction
   - DSG ability to influence massing

6. Continue to allow current building height
   - Height limits
   - Height incentives
Summary of Current Tools (Building Form/Type)

5. Allow a diverse range of building forms/shapes
   - Building Forms (incl. Point Tower)
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   - Mass reduction
   - DSG ability to influence massing

6. Continue to allow current building height
   - Height limits
   - Height incentives
Existing Building Envelope

- Existing zoning essentially creates one building form or envelope
  - Height limit
  - Setback requirement (65% must be within 5 feet of property)
  - Floor Area Ratio
Existing Building Envelope

- Single building envelope does not necessarily result in the same form or type of project
DZC Building Forms

- DZC uses more detailed zoning standards and building forms
- Can encourage diversity in building and project type by defining different building forms
- Especially useful when considering range of building height/type, varying lot sizes, and incentives
Using Different Building Forms

- Design standards/restrictions
- Additional requirements/incentives
- Allowed height/floor area

INCREASING
Discussion Point #2

How might different building forms address different building uses and the Plan objectives?
Relationship of FAR to Height

- Building mass (floor area) can be configured in numerous ways up to the maximum height.
- If height is too low for the allowed FAR, it can result in bulky buildings that fill the envelope.
Building Height

Analysis of existing building height

**Building Height Percentage Breakdown**

- 0-51 Feet: 81% (0-51')
- 52-102 Feet: 12%
- 103-152 Feet: 4%
- 153-203 Feet: 3%

**Building Height Legend**

- 0-51 Feet
- 52-102 Feet
- 103-152 Feet
- 153-203 Feet

[Map showing building height analysis]
Point Tower Building Form

- Point Tower can provide equivalent intensity in a narrower footprint
- Tower portion is restricted above a certain height (typ. about 5 stories)
  - Area
  - Linear dimension
  - Separation
- Can support multiple objectives:
  - Building variety
  - View “windows” and spacing between taller buildings
  - More access to sunlight at the street
  - More pedestrian-scaled “streetwall”
Point Tower Building Form

- Can support multiple objectives:
  - Building variety
  - View “windows” and spacing between taller buildings
  - More access to sunlight at the street
  - More pedestrian-scaled “streetwall”
Relationship of Point Tower to other forms

• Because of footprint restrictions, height becomes important to allow equivalent development potential (and financial feasibility)
To support building variety, is there an acceptable trade-off for greater height in exchange for a smaller footprint?

What limitations could apply, if any? (i.e., minimum lot size, incentives, etc.)
Existing Incentives

- Premiums in existing D-GT zoning allow increase from 4.0 max up to 6.0 max FAR
  - Housing
  - Residential support uses (grocery, school, or day care)
  - Arts, entertainment, or cultural uses
  - Rehabilitation of a Historic Structure
  - Public art
  - Affordable housing (substantially less than premium for market-rate housing)
  - Design review of entire structure (not a premium, but allows for maximum of 7.0 FAR)
Potential Other Incentives

- Potential additional incentives that could be considered in new zoning
  - Publicly-accessible open space
  - Adaptive reuse of buildings that are non-designated
  - Invisible or convertible parking
  - Others?

- Revisions to (or removal of) existing incentives to better address current conditions and policy direction
Would incentives for additional height or floor area be useful to encourage certain priorities?

What should the priorities be?
Next Steps
Next Steps

• **Rescheduled Advisory Committee Meeting #3 (one week earlier)**
  Thursday, September 12 – 3:00-5:00 pm
  Webb Building, 201 W Colfax Ave, Room 4.F.6
  - Confirm basic zoning tools and alternatives for community meeting
  - Review street level activation and open space tools, including Key Streets
  - Introduce Design Standards and Guidelines process

• **Community Open House #2**
  Wednesday, September 25 – 5:00-7:00 pm
  Denver Community Credit Union, 1041 Acoma St, 3rd Floor
  - Zoning/Design Tools and Alternatives

• [www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle](http://www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle)
  - Existing Conditions and Project Framework Interim Report
Thank you!