

MEETING SUMMARY

GOLDEN TRIANGLE REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION

Date: July 24, 2019
Meeting Info: July 18, 2019, 3:00-5:00 pm, Webb Building Room 4.F.6
Subject: Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Attendance

- **Advisory Committee**
 - Present: Kristy Bassuener, Chris Carvell, Pete Dikeou, Charlie Hunt, Anne Lindsey, Laura Liska, Chris Parezo, Cherry Rohe, Jeff Samet, Brent Snyder, Susan Stanton
 - Not present: Chris Hinds (District 10 participation tbd), Charlie Hunt, Scott Johnson, Rhonda Knop, Adam Perkins, Jeff Samet, Byron Zick
- **Public**
 - n/a
- **City Staff**
 - Kristofer Johnson, Abe Barge, Josh Palmeri (CPD)

Meeting Summary

- **Outreach Outcomes and Priorities**
 - Reviewed the results from the first Advisory Committee meeting, Community Open House, and online survey.
 - Survey Results
 - Indicated Objective 9 (Promote a high-quality pedestrian experience) to be the most important priority to address through new zoning and design guidelines
 - Showed strong support for additional places to shop, eat, drink, sit, and gather
 - Indicated a preference for taller buildings being appropriate when providing additional community benefits and protection of existing smaller buildings
 - Comment from the committee regarding the survey question about taller buildings and relatively low scores for “Get smaller as they get taller”. This was somewhat vague and could have received more responses if it directly referenced protection of views or sunlight. In future questions, be more explicit about describing potential outcomes.
 - Photo Activity Results
 - Common Themes in Preferred Images
 - Mix of active street level uses
 - Range of architectural scales
 - Streetscape character
 - Quality materials
 - Public gathering spaces
 - Public art
 - Common Themes in Discard Images
 - Overly bulky buildings
 - Uninspiring/leftover spaces
 - Highly visible parking (surface and structured)

- **Recent Development Trends**
 - Analyzed 18 projects completed or approved in the last 15 years to determine trends in how current zoning and entitlement is being utilized
 - Nearly all projects (85%) were residential use
 - Approximately half (45%) of projects were less than 75 feet tall (about 5-6) stories
 - Inclusion of parking in FAR calculations results in two-thirds exceeding the base maximum of 4.0 FAR with the highest calculation equal to 11.6
 - Parking comprised approximately 30% of total floor area with residential equal to 65% and 5% commercial
 - 93% of residential projects provide substantially more vehicle parking than required, whereas only 20% of residential project provide substantially more bicycle parking
- **Overview of Zoning and DSG Summary**
 - Reviewed the zoning and DSG tools summary sent out prior to the meeting and how they could apply to the 12 objectives of the Neighborhood Plan
 - Objective 3 (Promote a broad range of housing opportunities): discussion about difference between the residential and affordable housing FAR premiums. When zoning was created in 1994, emphasis was on bringing more residential use to Downtown, but not specifically focused on affordability
 - Objective 8 (Encourage protection/reuse of existing buildings): question on whether existing transfer of development rights system in D-GT zoning applied to all properties or only designated historic landmarks
 - Zoning language in Section 8.6.1.3.D.3 states “undeveloped floor area from designated Historic Structures ... may be transferred to other properties” pursuant to the procedures established by Section 8.3.1.4.D.3 for D-C and D-TD districts.
 - ***UPDATE: CPD staff investigated further and Section 8.3.1.4.D (subsections 2.a and 3) identifies two types of undeveloped floor area that may be transferred in the D-GT zone district, 1) undeveloped floor area from an Historic Structure (the difference between the floor area of the historic structure and the maximum allowed floor area on the zone lot) and 2) floor area received from the premium for Rehabilitation of an Historic Structure. Further, per Section 8.6.1.3.D.3, undeveloped floor area may be transferred to any receiving lot regardless of historic status, but the total transferred area cannot exceed more than 1 times the size of the receiving zone lot nor can it be used to increase floor area beyond the 7.0 maximum floor area ratio (FAR) using all premiums (bonuses).***
 - Objective 9 (Promote a high-quality pedestrian experience): discussion regarding the Build-To range (0-5 feet) and how current standards do not allow for design flexibility or space for outdoor seating. Staff explained how more recent zoning updates have incorporated a wider Build-To distance (0-15 feet) and other tools, such as setbacks and residential setbacks, to encourage improved transitions and space for enhanced amenities. Also, concern that requiring active street level uses could result in vacant storefronts and discussion about importance of having tall ground floors (16-18 feet) to allow for future conversion between commercial and residential uses.
 - Objective 12 (Improve activity and visual characteristics of parking): staff noted the typical lot depths found in the Golden Triangle are deeper than many other Downtown areas and can better accommodate minimum wrapped parking requirements
- **Discussion: Zoning Tools to Achieve Objectives 5 (Allow a diverse range of building forms/shapes) and 6 (Continue to allow current building height)**
 - Consensus that a suite of different buildings forms, rather than a single envelope, could address the Plan objectives and apply to different contexts (i.e., small lots vs. large lots)
 - Consensus that a Tower form or forms that restrict building footprint in exchange for greater height should be explored

- Discussion on tradeoffs between large/wide buildings that may block views and taller towers that would be spaced out from one another
 - Want to ensure podium/tower typology is not the only form option. There should be flexibility for the tower to come down to the street and for singular massed buildings. An uninterrupted 5-story podium is inconsistent with desire for variety
 - Understanding and consensus that floor plate-limited Tower building forms would need to exceed the current 175-foot height limit to be equal to existing entitlement
 - Discussion/concern raised about whether the existing 11,000 sf floor plate maximum for the Point Tower building form in D-AS- and D-CPV zone districts footprint was feasible. Suggested that perhaps a range could apply? (12,000-15,000 sf)
 - Discussion about how Point Tower can contribute to protection of views and sunlight at the street. Suggestion to consider how an urban design framework could be incorporated into DSG to consider view corridors to art museum, state capitol, or other landmarks
- Explained in more detail how the current FAR premiums (or bonuses) are applied to proposed projects
 - Discussed that if parking is included in FAR calculations, then an associated adjustment in the maximum is likely necessary. Alternatively, incentives could be offered if parking is constructed to be converted into different use later (i.e., counted at a reduced rate toward FAR)
- **Next Steps**
 - Advisory Committee Meeting #3 is **RESCHEDULED to Thursday, September 12** (one week earlier), 3:00-5:00 pm, Webb Building Room 4.F.6
 - Evaluate different scenarios for building forms, height, etc.
 - Confirm materials to be presented at Community Open House #2
 - Community Open House #2 – Wednesday, September 25, 5:00-7:00 pm, Denver Community Credit Union (1041 Acoma St, 3rd floor)
 - Existing Conditions and Project Framework Interim Report is posted on the website (www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle)

Action Items

1. Staff to post meeting materials to website
2. Staff to prepare alternative build-out and massing scenarios to evaluate different options for building forms and heights and provide to the committee in advance of the next meeting