Golden Triangle Zoning and Design Guidelines Update
GOLDEN TRIANGLE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN – REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION

Community Open House #2 – September 25, 2019
Goals for the Meeting

1. Brief overview of the Neighborhood Plan goals and zoning update

2. Review recent community input from the previous meeting, online survey, and Advisory Committee meetings

3. Describe initial ideas in response to your input and ask survey questions about a preliminary zoning framework

4. Gather more feedback through a Community Incentives activity
Introductions

CITY STAFF

• Community Planning and Development (CPD) Planning Services
• Team also includes involvement from CPD Development Services, Public Works, Parks, and Forestry

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

• 16-member committee of GT residents, property/business owners, design professionals, Planning Board and City Council
Zoning and Design Guidelines Update Project
Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan

• Planning area defined by Speer, Colfax, and Broadway-Lincoln

• Provides guidance to ensure the Golden Triangle is:
  A. Eclectic
  B. Connected
  C. Creative
  D. Livable

• Recommends regulatory changes (zoning and design guidelines) to achieve neighborhood goals
### Zoning & Design Related Objectives

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
D-GT Zone District/Design Guidelines

- D-GT (Downtown – Golden Triangle) zone district is based on zoning from 1994
- Current Design Guidelines were adopted in 2002 and apply to D-GT zone districts
- Design Guidelines are administered by City staff as part of development permitting process
What are Zoning and Design Guidelines?

**Zoning**
- Generally quantitative and less flexible
- Height, floor area, site coverage/open space
- Ground-level & upper-story setbacks
- Street level build-to and transparency
- Parking location
- Permitted uses

**Design Standards and Guidelines**
- Generally qualitative and context-sensitive
- Building placement & exterior spaces
- Building massing & articulation
- Building materials & detailing
- Vehicular access and parking
- Scale transitions
- Guidance for key streets
Project Schedule

- 3 months – Existing Context and Problem Identification
- 6 months – Regulatory Tools and Alternatives
- 3 months – Preferred Zoning/DSG Strategy
- 4 months – Drafting and Public Review
- 2-3 months – Adoption Process
- Approximately 18 months total
Community Outreach Results
Neighborhood Input

- 12 objectives identified from the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan
- Asked about priorities via Open House #1, online survey (~100 responses), and the Advisory Committee
## 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
Future Character Photo Activity

- Participants were given several images in each of the categories (Land Use, Building Type/Form, and Street Level Experience)
- Preferred images were placed onto the map, 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
• Streetscape character
• 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)
Preliminary Zoning Framework
Existing Building Envelope

- Existing zoning essentially creates one building form or envelope
  - Height limit
  - Build-to requirement
  - Floor Area Ratio = maximum amount of “floor area” allowed

175 feet
Existing Building Envelope

- Single building envelope does not necessarily result in the same form or type of project
- Many recent projects have filled most of this envelope (in part due to parking)
“Building Forms”

- Denver Zoning Code uses more detailed building forms and zoning standards
- Can encourage diversity in building and project type by defining different building forms
- Especially useful when considering range of building height/type, design requirements, varying lot sizes, and incentives
Point Tower Building Form

- Explore use of a Point Tower form that restricts building footprint in exchange for greater height
- Ensure Point Tower form is not the only option for Golden Triangle (desire for variety)
- Consider how towers can be properly spaced to support views/sunlight at the street
Point Tower Building Form

- Can support multiple objectives:
  - Can add building variety if used with other forms
  - View corridors and spacing between taller buildings
  - More access to sunlight at the street
  - More pedestrian-scaled “streetwall” to enhance street-level experience
System of Different Building Forms

Design standards/limitations
Additional requirements/incentives
Allowed height/floor area
## Potential Building Form Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Form 1 (General-Small Lot)</th>
<th>Form 2 (General-Large Lot)</th>
<th>Form 3 (Point Tower)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lot Size</strong></td>
<td>Smaller</td>
<td>Larger</td>
<td>Larger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Height</strong></td>
<td>Similar to existing</td>
<td>Similar to existing</td>
<td>Taller than existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum floor area</strong></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design requirements</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Questions

www.menti.com
I think a range of forms (including a Tower option) would help support an eclectic neighborhood with a mix of building types and sizes.
If buildings are allowed to be taller than the current height limit, they should...

- Be allowed without any special conditions: 7
- Provide additional neighborhood benefits: 28
- Protect an existing building that adds character: 25
- Be slender to preserve sunlight and views: 35
- I don’t support buildings taller than the current limit: 12
Making Parking Less Noticeable

- Minimum amount of parking is currently required by zoning
- Parking is not counted when calculating total floor area (even though it contributes to overall massing of the project)
Analysis of 18 Recent Projects

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)
Analysis of 18 Recent Projects

Parking Not Included in Calculation (current)

- Overall Max
- Between Base and Overall
- Below Base Max
- Parking Not Included in Calculation (current)
Analysis of 18 Recent Projects

**Parking Not Included in Calculation (current)**

- Overall Max
- Between Base and Overall
- Below Base Max

**When Parking Is Included**

- Exceed Overall Max (highest = 65%)
- Below Base Max
- Between Base and Overall
Analysis of 18 Recent Projects

Total Floor Area
- 65% Residential
- 5% Commercial (cultural, hotel, office)
- 30% Parking
Potential Ideas to Reduce the Impacts of Parking

- Include parking in floor area calculations
- Consider reducing/eliminating minimum parking requirements
  - Makes shared parking options easier
  - Market is driving amount of parking provided (not minimum requirements)
- Address visual impacts of parking
  - Limitation on visible parking (e.g., wrapped by Active Use)
  - Integrate design of parking structures into architecture
  - Surface parking landscape and screening
Survey Questions

www.menti.com
Most recent projects have actually built much more parking than is required. I think the new zoning should …

- Include parking in floor area calculations: 28
- Reduce/eliminate minimum required parking: 26
- Reduce the visual impacts of parking: 33
- Place a limit on parking (parking maximum): 14
- None (I like parking the way it is): 10
Protection/Reuse of Existing Buildings

- Existing zoning includes provisions to encourage protection through bonuses and flexibility to transfer unused floor area
- Applies only to Historic Landmark structures
- Rarely used because other bonuses (such as residential housing) are more easily attained
Other Buildings that Support Neighborhood Character

Variety

Eclectic

Scale

Materials

Sense of Place
“Character Buildings”

• Establish a new class of structure that is below Landmark, but still provides some level of future oversight and continuity = “Character Building”

• Desire from Landmark Preservation to create an additional tier for more broad protection citywide

• Goal is to be additive to Landmark designation and not a substitute

• Conservation vs. Preservation
### Potential Ideas to Protect/Reuse Existing Buildings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Landmark</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demolition Review</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior Modifications</td>
<td>Very minor</td>
<td>More flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Property owner or community</td>
<td>Property owner only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonuses/Incentives</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Use “Character Buildings” as a moderate step toward Landmark**
  - Voluntary designation by the owner
  - Allow more flexibility for modifications and adaptive reuse
  - Provide lower incentives to still encourage full preservation

- **Re-calibrate existing bonuses to more strongly encourage protection of existing buildings (either Landmark or Character)**
Survey Questions

www.menti.com
The three most important aspects that existing buildings contribute to the character of the neighborhood are...

- Size/scale: 21 votes
- Materials: 29 votes
- History: 26 votes
- Architectural style: 37 votes
- Other: 1 vote
- None (I only like new buildings): 3 votes
If the zoning supports protection of existing buildings, I prefer that it encourages ...

- Preservation (very minor changes): 12
- Conservation (minor changes): 34
- Adaptive reuse (major changes): 30
- None (I only like new buildings): 2
Existing Incentives

- Existing zoning encourages larger projects to provide a benefit back to the neighborhood
- Existing bonuses allow increase from base maximum up to overall maximum floor area
  - Residential use
  - Residential support uses (grocery, school, or day care)
  - Arts, entertainment, or cultural uses
  - Rehabilitation of a Historic Structure
  - Public art
  - Affordable housing (lower bonus than residential use)
  - Design review of entire structure (not a bonus, but increases overall maximum)
Neighborhood Plan Priorities

- Protection/reuse of existing buildings
- Range of housing options (including affordable housing, different unit sizes, for sale/rent, etc.)
- Public gathering spaces
- Highly active street level uses
- Arts, culture, and creative industries
Leverage ability of larger projects to support neighborhood priorities

Multi-tiered system that would require bonuses and building protection/reuse to reach maximum development potential

Base FAR Max = Tier 1 Maximum

Base FAR Max + Incentives OR Protection = Tier 2 Maximum

Base FAR Max + Incentives AND Protection = Tier 3 Maximum
Survey Questions

www.menti.com
I think allowing larger developments in exchange for community benefits would be useful in achieving neighborhood priorities.
The three most important priorities for the new zoning to encourage are ...

- Range of housing options: 15
- Small public gathering spaces: 21
- Protection of existing buildings: 20
- Public art: 14
- Enhanced street level activity: 34
- Cultural uses (arts, entertainment, etc.): 14
- Other: 8
- None (I don't like the idea of incentives): 2
Community Incentives Activity
Table Activity – Rules of the Game

1) “Build” 11 projects
   (insert project card into the foam core base and place on the map)

2) Earn community benefits with Type B and Type C
   (color in the circles according to your preferred benefits)

Things to Consider:

- Work as a table to determine how many of each type to build and what community benefits are most important to the group
- May build the same project type as many times as you like
- Think about location when identifying community benefits
- If you choose to “Protect an Existing Building” circle the building on the map
## Table Activity – Project Types and Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Max Height</th>
<th>Max Floor Area</th>
<th>Addl Design Requirements</th>
<th>Addl Neighborhood Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>lower (5-8 stories)</td>
<td>low-medium</td>
<td>limited</td>
<td>limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>medium (12-16 stories)</td>
<td>medium-high</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>taller (25+ stories)</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>many</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Potential Neighborhood Benefits

- **Public Gathering Space**
- **Range of Housing Options**
- **Enhanced Street Level Activity**
- **Wild Card / Dealer’s Choice**
- **Protect an Existing Building**
Next Steps
Next Steps

• **www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle**
  • Online survey next week (tell your friends!) – until October 18
  • Meeting materials and presentations
  • Dates for future Advisory Committee and community meetings
  • Interim project reports and draft materials for review/comment

• **Community Open House #3**
  tbd, January/February – 5:00-7:00 pm
  Denver Community Credit Union, 1041 Acoma St, 3rd Floor
  • Preferred Zoning Framework and Concepts
  • Design Standards and Guidelines Process
Thank you!