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

Zoning/DSG Advisory Committee Meeting #4 – November 21, 2019
Goals for the Meeting

1. Outcomes from Meeting #3
2. Key Takeaways from Recent Outreach
4. Next Steps
Committee Protocols

What are the principles that guide an effective process?

- Inclusion and respect
- Active listening
- 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
Meeting #3 Outcomes
Building Form Framework

- Agreement with overall system to support variety in form and adaptability to context

- General Form
  - Smaller lots have more flexibility to encourage small projects and deter lot assemblage
  - Larger lots have more requirements to address massing and human scale
  - **What is the correct lot size threshold?**

- Point Tower
  - Adds opportunity for building variety
  - Appropriate on larger lots
  - Requires taller height limit to allow equivalent development potential
Initial Standards

- Simplify height measurement and remove reference to Broadway
  - 200’ (16-story) limit
  - Point Tower = 300’ (no stories)

- Continue to use FAR as a tool to guide overall intensity and allow flexibility in massing

- Open space and non-residential use requirements (if used) should be carefully calibrated and located where most appropriate
Addressing Parking

- Eliminate minimum parking requirement
  - Align with other areas of Downtown
  - Remove barriers to shared parking options
  - Provide flexibility for smaller projects

- Include parking in FAR calculations
  - Evaluate adjustments to FAR maximums to still accommodate parking

- Explore ways to incentivize more “responsible” parking configurations (convertible floors, underground, etc.)
Incentives

• Attempt to focus on only a few premiums that address priority neighborhood goals

• Increase affordable housing premium (currently limited to 0.4 FAR)

• Encourage a stronger TDR market, but will require better tracking and administration over time to ensure compliance
Key Takeaways from Recent Outreach
Recent Outreach Efforts

- Advisory Committee survey (Sep 25-Oct 2)
- Open House #2 (Sep 25)
  - Survey questions during presentation
  - D-GT Future Character Activity
- Online Survey #2 (Oct 7-22)
- Planning Board Information Item (Nov 6)
  - **Strong consistency across multiple groups**
Building Forms

- A range of building forms, including the Point Tower, will support an eclectic neighborhood with a mix of project types and sizes.
Visual Impacts of Parking

- Eliminate minimum required parking and supporting shared parking solutions
- Screen parking behind active uses (or landscape in the case of surface lots)
- Limit the amount of parking (ie, include in FAR calculations or set maximum limit)
Existing Buildings

- Protecting existing buildings is important, but there should be flexibility for some visible changes
Taller/Larger Projects

- Approximately 75-80% of respondents support allowing buildings taller than the current limit
  - Most agree that taller/larger projects should do something special
    - Be slender to preserve sunlight and views
    - Provide additional neighborhood benefits like affordable housing or open space
    - Help protect an existing building that adds character to the neighborhood
D-GT Future Character Activity

- Five tables “built” 10-12 projects each
- Earn community benefits using larger building types (Types B and C)
  - Enhance Street Level Activity
  - Public Gathering Space
  - Range of Housing Options
  - Protect an Existing Building
  - Wild Card
- Can use the same building type or benefit as many times as desired
D-GT Future Character Activity

- 58% of all projects were Type B or C
  - Minimum 40% larger projects per table
  - Minimum two Type C (Point Tower) per table
  - Overall ratio of 1.8 benefits per project

- 4 of 5 tables used a mix of all three Types (other table used Type A and C only)

- Enhanced Street Level Activity and Public Gathering Space ranked highest, with Public Art most frequent Wild Card

- Open space and density focused in center of neighborhood (Acoma/Bannock)
Planning Board Info Item

- Like idea of more flexible building form for smaller lots
- Use existing building forms/tools and limit adding new complexity to DZC
- Explain why FAR is a useful tool in form-based code ... does FAR result in better buildings?
- Neighborhood Plan says “Continue to allow a maximum of 16-18 stories” – explain how Point Tower is consistent with plan guidance
Zoning Framework Evaluation
Preliminary Evaluation

• Evaluated elements of the preliminary zoning scheme against the 12 objectives identified in Neighborhood Plan and 5 criteria identified in Project Framework Interim Report

  1. Consistency – is it consistent with the Neighborhood Plan?
  2. Effectiveness – does it address more than one plan objective?
  3. Variety – does it encourage variety in use/form and support an eclectic neighborhood?
  4. Flexibility – is it flexible to adapt to different site and market conditions?
  5. Predictability – does it result in predictable outcomes? (not the same as repetition)
Preliminary Evaluation

- FAR-based tools are inconsistent with plan guidance as written, but can contribute to variety and other neighborhood goals.

- Some zoning elements still need further discussion and testing:
  - Limitation on Visible Parking
  - Mass Reduction
  - Non-Residential Active Use
  - FAR maximum values
  - Incentive topics and values
  - Etc.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONING/DESIGN STANDARD</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>Predictability</th>
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<td>Utilize a Max FAR / Base FAR incentive system</td>
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<td>D-GT, D-C</td>
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- = Strongly Meets Criteria  
  - = Meets Criteria  
  - = Does Not Meet Criteria Directly
Preliminary Standards
“Small Lot” Size Threshold

- Initially identified form with greater flexibility for lots less than 75-125’ wide
- Advisory Committee requested additional testing and confirmation
“Small Lot” Size Threshold

- Typical lot depth in Denver equals 125 feet (GT does have some deeper lots)
- Historic neighborhood layout was based on 25-foot parcel (125 feet = 5 parcels)
- 125 feet equals approximately 1/4 of total block length (projects larger than that tend to have an outsized influence on character of the block)
“Small Lot” Size Threshold

- Existing standards and guidelines in Arapahoe Square and CPV-Auraria direct changes in massing and façade articulation at 125-foot intervals.
“Small Lot” Size Threshold

- Lots 75 feet wide allow a single level of parking at street level that accommodates ~20-24 vehicles
- Under current rules requiring a minimum amount of parking:
  - Residential (0.75/unit) = 26-32 units or only 2.5-3.0 FAR (assuming 1000 sf avg)
  - Office (1.25/1000 sf) = 16000-19000 sf or only 1.5-2.0 FAR
“Small Lot” Size Threshold

- Lots 100 feet wide allow multi-level parking, but are less efficient than typical design (33% more expensive per space)
“Small Lot” Size Threshold

- Lots 125 feet wide allow multi-level parking and can accommodate a typical design with several extra feet for structure, etc.
- Accommodates flexibility for corner lots and internal parking layout (i.e., can be rotated without sacrificing efficiency)
“Small Lot” Size Threshold – Proposal

- Revised proposal: Set threshold at lots equal to or less than 125’ wide
  - Lots 125 feet wide are based on historic 25-foot plat, equal ~1/4 average GT block length, and typical Denver lot depth
  - Have existing DSG in Arapahoe Square and CPV-Auraria that break down building massing at 125’ intervals
  - Lots less than 125’ wide have difficult limitations for multi-story parking
Limitation on Visible Parking

- **Goal:** Reduce the visual impacts of parking on the street and pedestrians

- **Existing Standard:** 70% of the façade width above street level shall include Active Use for 15 feet min depth (remaining 30% may expose parking, but must still be screened)

- **Existing Use in DZC:**
  - CPV-Auraria applies to all projects
  - Arapahoe Square applies all projects greater than 8/12 stories
  - RiNo Design Overlay applies to all projects greater than 5 stories (*allows an alternative to “integrate into the architecture” and avoid Active Use requirement*)
Limitation on Visible Parking - Proposal

• **Proposal:** Follow RiNo example and apply to all projects greater than 5 stories

• **Considerations**
  - Should 5-story flexibility only apply to Small Lots or to all lot sizes and building forms?
  - Should there be an exception to the Limitation on Visible Parking on Small Lots through DSG and Design Review?
Maximum FAR

• Goal: Support more active uses within allowed building area while still accommodating typical parking needs (included in FAR calculations)

• Considerations
  • Understand how much floor area is being dedicated to parking in recent projects
  • More actively link projects that require additional FAR to achieving neighborhood priorities
  • Adjust maximum FAR limitations accordingly
Parking in Recent Projects

- Evaluated 15 recent residential projects ranging from townhomes to apartments
- Area dedicated to parking:
  - All residential projects = 15-40% (30% avg, 30% median)
  - 7 largest residential projects = 26-40% (33% avg, 29% median)
- Conclusion: approximately 30% of floor area in recent projects was dedicated to parking (note, most of those projects exceeded minimum requirements)
Adjusting Maximum FAR Limitations for Parking

- Current maximum FAR = 7.0
- Assuming typical parking configurations, maximum FAR would be adjusted to 10.0 to accommodate 30% parking

7.0 FAR + 3.0 FAR Parking = 10.0 FAR Parking = 30%
(note, area not required to be parking)
Linking Larger Projects to Neighborhood Priorities

- Utilize similar system as currently exists that establishes overall maximum and incentives necessary to reach it
- Create a multi-tiered system that supports use of both incentives and TDR
Linking Larger Projects to Neighborhood Priorities

- Encourage a variety of project types and sizes to support an eclectic neighborhood
- Support Small Lot projects
- Support slender buildings

- Higher FAR potential to support small lot projects
- Higher FAR potential to support slender buildings
### Adjusting Maximum FAR per Building Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Form 1 (Small Lot)</th>
<th>Form 2 (Large Lot)</th>
<th>Form 3 (Point Tower)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lot Size</strong></td>
<td>125’ wide or less</td>
<td>greater than 125’ wide</td>
<td>greater than 125’ wide</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Allowed Height</strong></td>
<td>200’ (16-story)</td>
<td>200’ (16-story)</td>
<td>300’ (no stories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum FAR</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.0 (+ 43%*)</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.0 (+ 29%*)</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.0 (+ 71%*)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAR w/out Incentives</strong></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Potential increase in overall floor area not considering parking
Potential Incentives

- Simplify!
- Input from outreach about priorities
  - Increase value of affordable housing
  - Desire for Street level activity / open space
  - Protect existing and historic buildings
  - More public art and creativity
  - Encourage “responsible” parking
Potential Incentives

- Affordable housing with no cap (similar to how residential currently works)
- Street level publicly accessible open space of minimum size
- Rehabilitation of landmark and character buildings with potential for TDR*
- Provision of public art
- Underground parking

Values = tbd
Next Steps
Next Steps

• Zoning Framework and Alternative Interim Report (Dec/Jan)

• **Advisory Committee Meeting #5**
  Thursday, January 16 – 3:00-5:00 pm
  Webb Building, 201 W Colfax Ave, Room 4.F.6
  • Preliminary Preferred Alternative
Thank you!