GOLDEN TRIANGLE ZONING & DESIGN GUIDELINES SUMMARY

WHAT IS ZONING?
Zoning is a set of rules that govern the uses, size, and basic design characteristics of development allowed on private property.

For example, zoning establishes quantitative rules about how tall a building can be, how far the building must be set back from the property line, and what uses are allowed within the building.

All land parcels within the City and County of Denver are designated by specific zone districts and the rules for each are defined in the Denver Zoning Code. The zoning that applies to most of the neighborhood is named Downtown–Golden Triangle, or D-GT.

WHAT ARE DESIGN GUIDELINES?
Design guidelines apply more qualitative guidance for the design of buildings and their immediate surroundings.

Because zoning tends to be inflexible and applies the same basic rules across wide areas, design guidelines are sometimes used as a supplemental tool to guide case-by-case review of the architectural details of proposed projects. The Golden Triangle currently has design guidelines.

WHY CHANGE THE RULES?
The D-GT zone district was last revised in 1994 and the design guidelines were last updated in 2002, so a key recommendation in the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan was to update the rules to better align with current neighborhood goals and priorities.

In 2014, neighborhood stakeholders collaborated with City staff and City Council to create and adopt the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan. The Neighborhood Plan established a vision for the future and described strategies to support an Eclectic, Connected, Creative, and Livable Golden Triangle.

WILL I HAVE TO DO ANYTHING ONCE THE CHANGES ARE MADE?
No. The new rules only apply to future development and construction in the neighborhood and will not require a property owner to make any changes to their existing building or land.

Over time, some existing properties may be substantially modified or redeveloped, and in that case will need to follow the new zoning and design guidelines.

WHEN WILL THE CHANGES BE APPLIED?
The target date for completion is by the end of 2020, but may be extended based on community input.

Additional meetings and discussion to refine the proposed changes and address comments received from various stakeholders are being planned for the summer and fall.

WHAT ARE THE NEW RULES INTENDED TO DO?
The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan includes many recommendations and strategies to improve the design quality, mixed-use activity, and pedestrian experience within the Golden Triangle.

The proposed changes are intended to:

- Encourage an eclectic mix of land uses, building sizes, and development types
- Promote a broad range of housing opportunities
- Reduce the physical and visual impacts of large parking structures
- Support the protection/reuse of existing buildings
- Ensure an improved pedestrian experience through thoughtful building design, highly active ground floor uses, and outdoor public gathering spaces
WHAT IS ALLOWED UNDER THE CURRENT RULES?
The existing D-GT zoning uses a “one size fits all” approach where the same rules apply to all projects regardless of size.

LOT SIZE THRESHOLDS
No zoning standards currently address different lot sizes.

HEIGHT
New buildings are allowed a maximum height of **175-200 feet** (16-18 stories) depending on their location in the neighborhood.

FLOOR AREA
New projects are limited by a maximum amount of floor area (ie, a measure of how much floor space exists on all levels of a building).
- Projects are currently allowed to build up to **4x** the size of the lot without any special conditions
- May qualify for an overall maximum of **7x** the size of the lot through floor area bonuses including market-rate residential housing, affordable housing, community-serving, arts, entertainment, or cultural uses, public art, or rehabilitation of a historic structure (only Landmark)
- Above-ground floor area that is dedicated to parking is **not** included in this calculation.

PARKING
A minimum amount of off-street parking is **required for all uses**.
- Current zoning standards require about 15-30% of the total floor area for parking depending on the type of uses (equal to a total floor area of about 8.5-10x the size of the lot)
- Recent projects are providing at least 30-45% of total floor area as parking (equal to a total floor area of about 10-12x)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Affordable housing is **not** required to reach the maximum floor area as market-rate residential housing qualifies for the same bonus.

STREET LEVEL ACTIVITY
65% of the building must currently be located **within 5 feet** of the front property boundary. Design guidelines only recommend the ground floor include active commercial or residential uses.

BUILDING SHAPING
No zoning standards currently exist. Design guidelines only recommend building shaping near Speer Blvd and Civic Center.

OPEN SPACE
Current zoning requires 25 square feet of open space per residence. This does **not** need to be publicly-accessible or at the ground level.

DESIGN REVIEW
Staff administered design review **applies only to the lower 80 feet of all projects**, or the entire building if pursuing bonus floor area to reach a maximum of 7x the lot size.

HOW DO I LEARN MORE?
The project website contains all project and meeting information: [www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle](http://www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle)
You can also contact city planner Kristofer Johnson via email: kristofer.johnson@denvergov.org

WHAT WOULD BE ALLOWED UNDER THE PROPOSED RULES?
The proposed changes to the D-GT zoning would tailor the rules based on the size of the project to provide flexibility for smaller projects and ensure larger projects provide high quality design and neighborhood benefits.

PROPOSED LOT SIZE THRESHOLDS
Different standards would be applied to different lot sizes.
- **Narrow Lots** = less than 75 feet, fewer standards
- **Standard Lots** = 75-150 feet, greater standards
- **Wide Lots** = greater than 150 feet, highest standards

PROPOSED HEIGHT
New buildings would be allowed a maximum height of **200 feet** (16-18 stories) regardless of location. One special type of tall slender building, or Point Tower, would be allowed a maximum height of **300 feet** (24-28 stories), however it must meet strict limitations on its size and width above 5 stories and have significant separation from other towers.

PROPOSED FLOOR AREA
New projects would also be limited by maximum floor area.
- Projects would be allowed to build up to **Xx (tbd)** the size of the lot area without any special conditions
- May qualify for an overall maximum of **9-12x** the size of the lot depending on the lot size category and building type through revised floor area bonuses that may include affordable housing, public art, and protection of an existing structure (not only Landmark)
- Above-ground floor area that is dedicated to parking would be included in this calculation

PROPOSED PARKING
A minimum amount of parking **would not be required for all uses** to allow more flexibility for shared public parking, changing market demands, and increasing mobility options.

PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Affordable housing, or comparable fees for non-residential projects, **would be required** to reach the maximum allowed floor area.

PROPOSED STREET LEVEL ACTIVITY
Proposed zoning standards would allow greater flexibility for location of buildings to provide more space adjacent to the sidewalk and have higher standards for window transparency, commercial uses, and setbacks for residential units at the street level.

PROPOSED BUILDING SHAPING
Various zoning standards would require upper story shaping on larger lot sizes in all locations to avoid bulky buildings.

PROPOSED OPEN SPACE
Large projects on wide lots would be required to provide publicly-accessible open space at the **ground level** in lieu of the current private open space requirement.

PROPOSED DESIGN REVIEW
Staff and Board administered design review would apply to the entire building on all projects.