Why is Design Quality important?

Addressing Design Quality in Blueprint Denver will:

1. Help enhance the overall character and sense of place of neighborhoods through all stages of development and reinvestment;
2. Help foster great urban design and the creation of authentic places that thoughtfully integrate streets, public spaces and private property; and
3. Help promote enduring and compatible design that responds to an evolving community while embracing character and cultural heritage.

What should Blueprint Denver recommend to achieve high-quality design from private development?

• Blueprint is policy – it does not have “teeth” to enforce or change the rules of development
• Implementation of Blueprint recommendations will rely on regulatory tools such as zoning and design standards and guidelines

Desired outcomes for Residential Areas:

Context-sensitive bulk and scale
Respect the public realm
Promote flexibility and creativity
Do not prescribe a particular architectural style

Desired outcomes for Centers and Corridors:

Active and engaging street levels that support pedestrian activity
Sensitive transitions to residential areas
Human-scaled facades with variation and interest
Respect and engage the public realm

Zoning and design standards and guidelines can all be used to help guide the creation of authentic places and enhance the quality and character of neighborhoods, corridors, and centers throughout Denver.
To help achieve the goals outlined in Blueprint Denver, a series of policies, objectives and strategies have been identified. Policies are statements that help to achieve the desired goal. Objectives are measurable and time-bound targets. Strategies are actions and incremental steps that help achieve the policies and objectives.

### Draft Policy 1: Ensure great design in all corridors and centers.

Example Strategies:
- Establish design review for major regional centers including Downtown.
- Consider design review for all community and regional-scale corridors and centers.
- Use zoning design overlays in areas where a specific design vision has been established through a planning process.
- Revise the zoning code to provide standards for quality street level design and better transitions to residential areas.

### Draft Policy 2: Ensure quality infill development in residential areas that respects the existing neighborhood character.

Example Strategies:
- Amend the zoning code to address items such as height, bulk, and lot coverage to achieve more context-sensitive residential infill.
- Consider some level of design review for higher-impact residential projects.
- Use landmark designation to preserve the overall character of a historic area and to limit the demolition of historic homes.
- Use zoning conservation overlays in areas seeking to preserve specific character features.

### HOW CAN ZONING, DESIGN GUIDELINES AND DESIGN REVIEW IMPACT DESIGN QUALITY?

**CASE STUDY: ARAPAHOE SQUARE**

**Zoning**

Zoning includes the basic regulations that shape property development. Zoning regulations are generally quantitative (based on a minimum or maximum numerical dimension). Applicable zoning regulations generally include:
- Allowed building locations
- Maximum height
- Minimum or maximum setbacks
- Specific design requirements
- Parking requirements
- Permitted uses

**Design Standards and Guidelines**

Design Standards and Guidelines help steer development, and unite design features for a more cohesive and recognizable neighborhood. The purpose of Design Standards and Guidelines is to promote the neighborhood vision by setting clear expectations for the level of design quality envisioned for proposed improvements on private properties and associated improvements in the Public Right-of-Way.

**Design Review**

Design review complements zoning with a parallel process to ensure high-quality design. Design review is conducted by staff or a separate board using flexible design standards and guidelines (DSG) that provide performance-oriented guidance for context-specific review of development projects.

Typical design standards and guidelines topics include:
- Context-sensitive site design
- Building mass & scale
- Facade character and materials
- Streetscape/landscaping