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INTRODUCTION
PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT
This Preferred Zoning Strategy Interim Report describes the proposed zoning framework that has been refined based on public feedback and will ultimately be carried forward into the drafting of text amendments to the Denver Zoning Code.

A preliminary zoning framework was prepared for public review and comment in March 2020. The preferred zoning strategy incorporates important feedback from residents, neighbors, property owners, and local development professionals that was provided over the ensuing months.

For more information about the planning context influencing the project and existing zoning and design guidelines, please refer to the Existing Conditions and Project Framework Interim Report and Zoning Framework and Alternatives Interim Report available on the project website.

PROJECT SCOPE
The existing zoning in the Golden Triangle was originally adopted in 1994 and was not updated to the new form- and context-based system in 2010, largely due to a lack of recent neighborhood policy guidance to help guide the changes.

With the adoption of the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan and similar regulatory implementation efforts in Arapahoe Square and Central Platte Valley-Auraria, this area of Downtown is now poised to build on these successes and establish a more current system of zoning and design standards and guidelines.

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan was an 18-month public process that culminated in the adoption of a small area plan in late 2014. The plan area was bordered by Colfax Avenue on the north, Speer Boulevard on the south and west, and Broadway/Lincoln on the east. The community vision described in the plan speaks to an eclectic, connected, creative, and livable neighborhood.

Several strategies are recommended to address this vision and they include making specific regulatory revisions to the existing zoning and design standards and guidelines (DSG). Denver’s Department of Community Planning and Development (CPD) is working with area residents, business owners, and neighborhood representatives to utilize these recommendations and update the zoning and design standards for Denver’s Golden Triangle neighborhood. CPD will be evaluating all relevant zoning aspects including building form, height, uses, and street-level design characteristics to implement the recommendations of the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan.

PROJECT PURPOSE
To update the Downtown Golden Triangle (D-GT) zoning and applicable design standards and guidelines to implement the recommendations adopted in the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan.

PROJECT AREA
Although the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan area was bound by Colfax, Speer, and Broadway/Lincoln, this project is focused only on the portion of the plan area with the D-GT zoning classification as illustrated below.

PROJECT SCHEDULE
CPD has conducted research, analysis, and public outreach to confirm and prioritize the key regulatory recommendations from the Neighborhood Plan. An evaluation of various zoning and design-related tools to address these objectives followed and will lead to proposed text amendments to the Denver Zoning Code and adoption of CPD Rules and Regulations. The project is anticipated to begin the legislative review process with Denver Planning Board and City Council in mid-2021.
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan includes many recommendations and strategies to improve the built environment and pedestrian experience within the Golden Triangle. It was determined to be too difficult to evaluate each of these individually, so they have been summarized into 12 objectives and organized into three fundamental categories.

A. LAND USE

The Land Use category includes objectives related to the way buildings/properties are used and how those uses are organized throughout the neighborhood.

1. Encourage a range of land uses and development types
2. Highlight certain streets with different use patterns
3. Promote a broad range of housing opportunities
4. Evaluate minimum parking requirements

B. BUILDING TYPE/FORM

Building Type/Form objectives relate to the scale and physical character of buildings. They address the overall size and shape of new buildings and their relationship to existing buildings.

5. Encourage a diverse range of building forms
6. Continue to allow current building height
7. Ensure building mass is compatible with adjacent buildings
8. Encourage protection/reuse of existing buildings

C. STREET LEVEL EXPERIENCE

Street Level Experience includes objectives that address the environment created at the street level and experienced by the pedestrian.

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Community engagement in this project includes a zoning Advisory Committee, community open houses, a public adoption process, and a range of other opportunities for participation. Each phase of the project used an iterative stakeholder engagement approach to identify issues and select strategies to address the recommendations of the plan and propose updates to the D-GT zoning and DSG:

- City staff conduct research and generate initial content
- Zoning Advisory Committee review and refine approaches
- Community members provide additional feedback to City staff and the committee

The Golden Triangle is the next step in the process to create more consistent and coordinated zoning and design review processes for all of Downtown.
ZONING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CPD convened a Zoning Advisory Committee to assist City staff with an evaluation of issues associated with implementing the recommendations of the neighborhood plan and refining specific zoning text amendments and DSG updates to address these issues. The 16-member advisory committee represents community and other stakeholder interests, including residents, property owners, Registered Neighborhood Organization (RNO) representatives, City Council and Planning Board members, developers, and design professionals to help ensure an inclusive public process.

So far, the advisory committee has met 13 times over nearly two years. Early in the process, meetings focused on confirming the plan recommendations and defining outstanding issues. The advisory committee then explored alternative zoning and design solutions and recommend specific strategies for updating the Denver Zoning Code. Most recently, the committee has been actively working to resolve outstanding concerns and broker compromise on challenging trade-offs to reach a preferred approach. All meetings are open to the public. Visit www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle for the latest meeting information.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

Community open houses provide an opportunity for members of the public to review key project documents and offer feedback to the zoning Advisory Committee and City staff. They were scheduled to coincide with project milestones, including issue identification, evaluation of alternative design solutions, and review of the proposed updates to the Denver Zoning Code.

With the onset of COVID-19 restrictions on public gathering in March 2020, in-person open houses became infeasible. City staff quickly adopted various online forms of engagement to continue to solicit feedback in lieu of large group meetings. While many prefer to meet and discuss important issues face-to-face, a positive outcome of moving to an online format is that it allows a more broad range of individuals to participate at a time and place that is convenient for them.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

The Golden Triangle Zoning and Design Guidelines Update has included a range of community outreach opportunities in addition to regularly-scheduled public Advisory Committee meetings. Key opportunities included:

- **Presentations to neighborhood organizations or others.** Upon request, City staff has and will continue to attend scheduled neighborhood organization meetings to present the project, answer questions and obtain feedback. City staff will also provide updates to the Zoning and Planning Committee (ZAP) of Inter Neighborhood Cooperation (INC).

- **Office hours/one-on-one sessions.** In later phases of this project, City staff have met frequently with a focus group of local property owners and developers to evaluate the potential economic effects of different proposed zoning standards. Staff are also available to individual residents or other stakeholders to virtually "drop-in" and discuss project recommendations.

- **Public hearings.** In the final phase of the project, the Denver Planning Board and City Council will review, and potentially adopt, proposed text amendments to the Denver Zoning Code. A public hearing will also be scheduled for the DSG that are adopted as department Rules and Regulations. Members of the public may sign up to speak at these public hearings.

- **Online surveys.** In coordination with in-person and virtual community engagement, online surveys have been used to gather additional feedback outside of the specific meeting date and time. The results of these surveys are posted on the project website and have been an important factor as staff and the advisory committee have evaluated different zoning concepts.

- **Website.** The project website provides updated information on project events, meeting materials, community feedback, and proposed updates to the zoning and DSG.
RECENT INPUT
INPUT ON THE PRELIMINARY ZONING FRAMEWORK

After a series of Advisory Committee meetings, community open houses, and online surveys throughout 2019 and early 2020, staff prepared a preliminary zoning framework. The preliminary framework was to be presented to the community in a third open house in March 2020, however the COVID-19 pandemic prevented all in-person meetings. In response, all the information was posted to the project website and an online survey was coordinated to gather input. The project team also increased the cadence of Advisory Committee meetings to a monthly schedule.

City staff received many comments through the survey and continued conversations with the Advisory Committee. The general approach to the zoning updates and many of the design-related concepts had broad support from respondents, as evidenced by the survey results shown below. These ideas have been carried forward into the preferred zoning strategy.

However, a few critical items were identified for further investigation and refinement based on feedback from stakeholders including:

- Proposed height limits for the Point Tower building form and the relationship with the Cheesman Park/ Botanic Gardens view plane
- The relationship of future zoning incentives to existing zoning allowances and potential effects on development activity in the area

SURVEY RESULTS

How successful are the tools to “Enable a Range of Building Types” at achieving the objectives of the Neighborhood Plan?

1. 18% - Not Successful
2. 8%
3. 21% - Somewhat Successful
4. 26%
5. 27% - Very Successful

Total Responses = 131

How successful are the tools to “Support Neighborhood Priorities” at achieving the objectives of the Neighborhood Plan?

1. 20% - Not Successful
2. 8%
3. 23% - Somewhat Successful
4. 23%
5. 26% - Very Successful

Total Responses = 133

How successful are the tools to “Shape Larger Buildings” at achieving the objectives of the Neighborhood Plan?

1. 18% - Not Successful
2. 7%
3. 19% - Somewhat Successful
4. 24%
5. 33% - Very Successful

Total Responses = 131
How successful are the tools to “Activate the Street Level” at achieving the objectives of the Neighborhood Plan?

1. 14% - Not Successful
2. 6%
3. 18% - Somewhat Successful
4. 25%
5. 38% - Very Successful

Total Responses = 124

Do you agree that buildings on wider lots (greater than 150 ft) should be more slender as they get taller and have higher standards at the Street Level?

- 67% - Yes, both should apply
- 9% - Yes, but only higher street level standards
- 7% - Yes, but only more slender
- 18% - No, neither should apply

Total Response = 135

You told us that affordable housing, preserving existing character, and new public art are the neighborhood’s top priorities. Do you still agree?

- 61% - Yes, I agree
- 33% - No, I don’t agree
- 6% - No opinion

Total Responses = 138

Do you agree that the street-facing side of a building should incorporate an Upper Story Setback to reduce its overall mass and scale?

- 50% - Yes, across the entire street-facing side
- 27% - Yes, only across part of the street-facing side
- 16% - No, an upper story setback should not be required
- 8% - No opinion

Total Responses = 128
Do you agree that projects on wider lots (more than 150 ft) should provide retail, office, or other non-residential uses on the ground floor?

- 55% - Yes, across the entire street-facing side
- 24% - Yes, only across part of the street-facing side
- 16% - No, non-residential uses should not be required
- 5% - No opinion

Total Responses = 128

Do you agree that projects on wider lots (more than 150 ft) should provide publicly accessible open space at the Street Level?

- 59% - Yes, open space should be provided
- 31% - No, open space should not be required
- 10% - No opinion

Total Responses = 127

Do you agree that property owners and/or developers should receive a bonus for protecting or reusing an existing building?

- 57% - Yes, make it a really large bonus
- 24% - Yes, but only make it a small bonus
- 13% - No, a bonus should not be provided
- 5% - No opinion

Total Responses = 128

POINT TOWER HEIGHT

The preliminary framework included proposed height limits for the two included building forms, General and Point Tower. The Point Tower form contributes to the neighborhood’s desire for a variety of building types and allows a taller height limit in exchange for strict limitations on the size of the building above 5 stories. The result is a taller, but much more slender building than is currently possible within the existing zoning. The proposed height limit for the Point Tower building form in the preliminary framework was 300 feet, or approximately 25 stories, and is about 50% taller than the current height limit in the Golden Triangle.

The Cheesman Park/Botanic Gardens view plane is an existing regulation that restricts the height of buildings within a specific area to ensure views to the mountains are preserved from Cheesman Park. Although the origin of the view plane is just east of the Denver Botanic Gardens, the most relevant view is from the Cheesman Pavilion which sits at an elevated position above the park with views to the west. The view plane boundary overlaps the easternmost area of the D-GT zone district, but ends at the centerline of Broadway. This means projects east of Broadway must comply with the view plane height limitations, while projects west of Broadway are not subject to any view plane restrictions.

Based on comments received from neighbors and residents near Cheesman Park, staff analyzed the potential of 300-foot tall buildings in Golden Triangle and what effects they may have on these important mountain views. The three-dimensional evaluation accounted for the distance from the Cheesman Pavilion to the Golden Triangle (approximately 1.25–1.5 miles) and the difference in ground elevation (D-GT is about 125 feet lower). The analysis shows that most cases of buildings 300 feet tall will be screened by existing trees and other structures. If a Point Tower was built to the maximum height at the far southern end of the district, it is possible that a small portion of the mountain foothills could be obscured. However, views to the highest and most important peaks would not be affected. The images below show the results of the analysis.

As a result, staff and the Advisory Committee were comfortable moving forward with at least a 300-foot height limit for the Point Tower. The analysis reveals that even taller height limits could potentially be appropriate at the northern end of the neighborhood and have very limited impacts to mountain views from Cheesman Park.
The Cheesman Park/Botanic Garden view plane (in purple) restricts heights in the easternmost portion of the D-GT district and ends at the centerline of Broadway.

A three-dimensional model of the Golden Triangle, including several Point Tower examples, was superimposed into this view from the Cheesman Pavilion. It reveals that most of the taller buildings would be screened by existing trees and structures.

A close-up of the southernmost portion of the D-GT district shows that a Point Tower could encroach slightly into some of the mountain foothill views.

This image is from a location just south of the pavilion and also shows that the view of the mountain peaks is unlikely to be substantially affected by buildings that are 300 feet tall.
FUTURE ZONING INCENTIVES

As evidenced by earlier surveys and community input, it is important for the new zoning to ensure larger projects contribute additional benefits back to the neighborhood. There is also overall support from area residents and property owners for robust development to continue and further encourage on-going revitalization of underutilized properties. One tool that can be successful in this type of situation is to create zoning incentives, or density bonuses, that convey additional development rights in exchange for support of citywide or neighborhood priorities such as affordable housing and historic preservation.

The existing zoning for the Golden Triangle area already includes incentives for various priorities that were important when the zoning was last updated in 1994. Most notably, locating residential housing downtown was a critical goal in the early 1990's to shift the area towards a more complete neighborhood and away from a purely commercial and work-focused location. Unfortunately, while the list of possible incentives is quite long, the residential housing bonus is used almost exclusively and the other bonuses have not been utilized over the years. The result is residential housing projects in Golden Triangle have been granted bonuses for little to no cost that allowed them to develop as much as 75% more building area than office or commercial projects.

City staff have learned that incentive systems work best when there are a limited number of bonus options to choose from and when the base level of development is relatively low. This focuses the use of incentives on the most important priorities and ensures that many projects will need to actually use the bonuses. If the base level of density is set too high, then many projects may simply build up to the threshold and not take advantage of additional development allowances.

The team received comments from several property owners, local developers, residents, and representatives from the Downtown Denver Partnership that while establishing a low base may work well conceptually for incentive systems, it may also have unintended consequences including:

- The neighborhood and local development community have become accustomed to the current allowed level of density and lowering the base threshold could unfairly affect this area over others
- If the costs of earning density bonuses are not economically feasible it could lead to a slow down in development activity
- Substantially lowering a base threshold could reduce land values and make existing uses, such as surface parking lots, more valuable to property owners than selling or redeveloping the land
- Incentives should be considered above the current allowed development limits to avoid negative effects on activity and encourage additional density where it is most productive (i.e., near downtown, jobs, transit, etc.)

City staff have worked closely with these stakeholders to arrive at an incentive approach that is intended to accomplish the following important goals of the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan, Blueprint Denver, and other adopted city policies:

- Support robust, market-driven development activity in the Golden Triangle
- Allow increases in density that align with Blueprint Denver’s growth strategy
- Encourage many projects to contribute to the city’s equity goals for more affordable housing choices
- Enable larger projects than are currently allowed if they support affordable housing and neighborhood priorities such as historic preservation
- Ensure all projects, and particularly larger developments, provide more human-scale design quality and architectural variety
PREFERRED STRATEGY AND PROPOSED ZONING UPDATES
PREFERRED ZONING STRATEGY

The following summary pages directly link the preferred strategy proposed for the new D-GT zoning to the 12 objectives identified from the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan in the categories of Land Use and Development, Building Form and Type, and Street Level Experience. The summary matrix then describes the range of tools proposed for the new D-GT zoning, their relationship to the objectives of the Neighborhood Plan, and the outcomes they are intended to influence.

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

The way buildings and properties are used and how those uses are organized throughout the neighborhood.

1. ENCOURAGE A RANGE OF LAND USES AND DEVELOPMENT TYPES
   - Create a system that applies to all types of projects
   - Tailor zoning standards to different lot sizes
   - Continue to utilize a FAR system that allows building shaping without loss of entitlement
   - Provide a modest base FAR
   - Allow a generous maximum FAR and height limit
   - Require street level nonresidential uses in large projects on key streets

2. HIGHLIGHT CERTAIN STREETS WITH DIFFERENT USE PATTERNS
   - Require street level nonresidential uses in large projects on key streets
   - Allow open space and public art as alternatives to street level nonresidential uses, and vice versa

3. PROMOTE A BROAD RANGE OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES
   - Create a system that applies to all types of projects
   - Promote affordable housing (units or fees depending on project type) through FAR incentives

4. EVALUATE MINIMUM PARKING REQUIREMENTS
   - Remove minimum parking requirements to allow more meaningful use of building space for active uses
   - Eliminate current barriers to public/shared parking outcomes
   - Include above-ground parking in FAR calculations

KEY OUTCOMES

- Tailor Zoning Standards to Different Sizes of Projects
- Remove Barriers to Other Uses
- Eliminate Outdated Parking Requirements and FAR Exceptions
- Support Housing that is More Affordable in Larger Projects
BUILDING FORM & TYPE

The overall scale and physical character of buildings and their relationship to the surrounding context.

5. ENCOURAGE A DIVERSE RANGE OF BUILDING FORMS
   - Incorporate a Point Tower building form option
   - Tailor zoning standards to different lot sizes
   - Provide a modest base FAR
   - Allow a generous maximum FAR and height limit

6. CONTINUE TO ALLOW CURRENT BUILDING HEIGHT
   - Maintain 200-foot height limit with simplified rule of measurement
   - Allow Point Tower to exceed current height limit in exchange for tower size restrictions
   - Enable extra height for projects that add incentive floor area

7. ENSURE BUILDING MASS IS COMPATIBLE WITH ADJACENT BUILDINGS
   - Require upper story setbacks on large projects to reduce the height of buildings along the street
   - Enable extra height for projects that add incentive floor area
   - Incorporate mass reduction on large projects to break down bulky buildings
   - Utilize DSGs and design review to shape buildings, especially when next to smaller structures
   - Continue to utilize a FAR system that allows building shaping without loss of entitlement
   - Allow a more flexible build-to range
   - Incorporate a minimum setback for large projects
   - Include a generous setback for street level residential units

8. ENCOURAGE PROTECTION/REUSE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS
   - Promote rehabilitation and use of historic buildings through FAR incentives
   - Utilize DSGs and design review to shape buildings, especially when next to smaller structures

KEY OUTCOMES

- Tailor Zoning Standards to Different Sizes of Projects
- Use Upper Story Setbacks to Make a More Comfortable Streetwall
- Allow Extra Height and Mass Reduction to Ensure Variety and Shaping
- Encourage Protection of Historic Properties
STREET LEVEL EXPERIENCE

The active environment created at the street level and experienced by the pedestrian.

9. PROMOTE A HIGH-QUALITY PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE
   • Require street level nonresidential uses in large projects on key streets
   • Allow open space and public art as alternatives to street level nonresidential uses, and vice versa
   • Require publicly-accessible open space at the street level on large projects
   • Allow a more flexible build-to range
   • Incorporate a minimum setback for large projects
   • Include a generous setback for street level residential units
   • Utilize DSGs and design review to promote high-quality design and activation
   • Promote public art as an alternative to open space and street level nonresidential use requirements

10. ENSURE BUILDING DESIGN CONSIDERS PEDESTRIAN SCALE AND COMFORT
    • Allow a more flexible build-to range
    • Incorporate a minimum setback for large projects
    • Include a generous setback for street level residential units
    • Require upper story setbacks on large projects to reduce the height of buildings along the street

11. ENCOURAGE PROVISION OF PRIVATELY-OWNED PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES
    • Require publicly-accessible open space at the street level on large projects
    • Allow open space and public art as alternatives to street level nonresidential uses, and vice versa

12. IMPROVE THE ACTIVITY AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARKING
    • Require the majority of above-ground parking structures in large projects to be hidden by active uses
    • Include above-ground parking in FAR calculations
    • Remove minimum parking requirements to allow more meaningful use of building space for active uses
    • Eliminate current barriers to public/shared parking outcomes

KEY OUTCOMES

- Use Upper Story Setbacks to Make a More Comfortable Streetwall
- Hide Parking Behind Active Uses
- Require Space for Porches and Stoops on Ground Floor Residential Units
- Activate the Street with More Flexible Build-to Range, Active Uses, Open Space, & Public Art
### ZONING & DESIGN TOOLS

#### HEIGHT AND FLOOR AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ZONING/DESIGN TOOL</strong></th>
<th><strong>NOTES/OUTCOMES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variety of Building Forms</strong></td>
<td>General and Point Tower building forms encourage variety in the area and support flexibility in development opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Various Lot Size Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Tailoring zoning requirements to lot size provides smaller parcels greater flexibility and development viability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base/Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</strong></td>
<td>Base/Max FAR structure ensures neighborhood and city priorities are supported by larger projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAR Incentives</strong></td>
<td>Limited set of incentives focuses on the most important priorities and those that cannot be required through zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum Height</strong></td>
<td>Maintains the relative scale of the neighborhood and still provides room for economically viable and creative solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SITING AND ORIENTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ZONING/DESIGN TOOL</strong></th>
<th><strong>NOTES/OUTCOMES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Build-To Range</strong></td>
<td>Increasing the appropriate distance between the property line and building allows more space for outdoor seating, pedestrians, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Setback</strong></td>
<td>Narrow setback creates more space for streetscape amenities and enables thorough review of right-of-way encroachments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Setback</strong></td>
<td>Generous setback for ground floor residential units ensures there is room for a buffer between the public sidewalk and private residential units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publicly Accessible Open Space</strong></td>
<td>Supports the desire for public gathering areas, active streets, and breaking down the scale and mass of large projects</td>
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</table>

#### MASSING TOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ZONING/DESIGN TOOL</strong></th>
<th><strong>NOTES/OUTCOMES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Story Setback</strong></td>
<td>Reduces the building height along the street and creates better access to sun and sky especially on larger projects and narrow streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Mass Reduction</strong></td>
<td>Breaks down the scale of large projects and long undifferentiated facades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point Tower Floor Plate Limitations and Separation</strong></td>
<td>Ensures the tallest buildings are slender and spaced apart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### DESIGN QUALITY TOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ZONING/DESIGN TOOL</strong></th>
<th><strong>NOTES/OUTCOMES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Street Level Transparency</strong></td>
<td>Requires large amounts of windows to activate the street level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedestrian Entries</strong></td>
<td>Promotes clearly visible and frequent public entries into buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Entries with Entry Features</strong></td>
<td>Complements residential setbacks to enhance the public-private transition and pedestrian experience adjacent to ground floor units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limitation on Visible Parking</strong></td>
<td>Requires portions of large parking structures above the ground floor to be wrapped by active uses to reduce their visibility and ensure they contribute to the activity and security of the facade and street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### STREET LEVEL USES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ZONING/DESIGN TOOL</strong></th>
<th><strong>NOTES/OUTCOMES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required Active Uses</strong></td>
<td>Establishes a minimum expectation of active uses, including residential, on the ground floor to activate the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required Nonresidential Active Uses</strong></td>
<td>Supports the mixed-use character of the neighborhood and focuses on key streets where commercial activity is most desired and likely to succeed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### PARKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ZONING/DESIGN TOOL</strong></th>
<th><strong>NOTES/OUTCOMES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remove Minimum Parking Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Removes existing barriers to public and shared parking outcomes and provides flexibility for projects to respond to market demands for parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Include Parking in FAR Calculation</strong></td>
<td>Accounts for above ground parking structures in overall building mass and encourages more meaningful use of allowed floor area</td>
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PROPOSED UPDATES TO THE D-GT ZONE DISTRICT

LOT SIZES, BUILDING FORMS & HEIGHT

One of the most fundamental proposed updates is to utilize a range of building forms and apply different rules as projects increase in scale rather than the current “one size fits all” approach where the same rules apply to all projects. Specifically, various street level and upper story massing standards will be applied as the width of the site increases.

The proposed zoning also introduces the Point Tower building form that offers a taller height limit in exchange for strict limitations on the building shape above 5 stories. The Point Tower form is only available on lots wider than 150 feet along the street to ensure there is proper spacing between buildings that take advantage of the taller height limit.

When determining the appropriate height limit for each building form, it was important to consider the existing scale of the neighborhood, anticipated growth in the area, and ensuring there is enough flexibility to successfully shape the allowed building area. A height limit that is too low will result in overly bulky buildings and limits that are too tall pose a risk to the existing character of the area and its relationship to the core of downtown. The proposed height limits strike a balance between the current height limit and allowing modest increases for projects that contribute back to the neighborhood through incentives, or utilize the more restrictive Point Tower format.

**Proposed Height Limit = General Form** = 200 feet (250 feet for projects exceeding the base FAR)

**Proposed Height Limit = Point Tower Form** = 250 feet (325 feet for projects exceeding the base FAR)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Zoning</th>
<th>GENERAL FORM</th>
<th>POINT TOWER FORM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75 ft or less</td>
<td>200 / 250 ft</td>
<td>250 / 325 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-150 ft</td>
<td>200 / 250 ft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 150 ft</td>
<td></td>
<td>250 / 325 ft</td>
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- **Proposed Design Standard**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Design Standard</th>
<th>Narrow Lots (75 feet or less)</th>
<th>Standard Lots (75-150 feet)</th>
<th>Wide Lots (more than 150 feet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Setback</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Story Setback</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Reduction</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrapped Parking</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Level Open Space</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresidential Active Uses on Key Streets</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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POINT TOWER LIMITATIONS

To correspond with the taller height limit allowed in the Point Tower form, there are three standards that restrict the size and shape of the building above 5 stories.

**Tower Floor Plate Area**
Restricts the overall size of a story within the tower.

Proposed Standard = 12,500 square feet maximum

**Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension**
Restricts the overall length of walls of the tower to avoid very long facades that tend to cast shadows and create an uninviting pedestrian environment. The linear dimension is measured diagonally across each story of the tower.

Proposed Standard = 180 feet maximum*

* A design review alternative may allow a maximum Tower Floor Plate Linear Dimension of 200 feet if the design meets certain criteria.

**Tower Floor Plate Separation**
Requires a minimum distance between buildings that utilize the Point Tower form to ensure buildings that take advantage of the increased height allowance are spaced apart.

Proposed Standard = 120 feet minimum

FLOOR AREA RATIO

Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is a zoning limitation that controls the overall intensity of an individual project, but allows flexibility in the way the floor area is shaped. It is calculated as the ratio of the gross floor area of the building (total floor area of all stories) in comparison to the area of the zone lot.

Note that currently any above-ground floor area that is dedicated to parking is not included in the calculation of FAR. The proposed zoning update will change this exemption and include all above-ground floor area, therefore the allowed FAR in the proposed zoning is greater than current limits.

Proposed Standard = Include all above-ground floor area in FAR calculations, regardless of use

Proposed Standard = Base FAR = 8.0

Proposed Standard = Maximum FAR = 15.0*

* To qualify for additional FAR above the Base, a project must meet the minimum standards for floor area incentives.

Using FAR as a zoning tool allows the same amount of building area to be configured in different ways up to a specified height limit.

Existing Zoning
Parking is excluded from FAR

Proposed Zoning
Parking is included in FAR

The proposed zoning will include above-ground parking area in the FAR calculation, therefore the allowed FAR maximums have been increased to accommodate this change.
FLOOR AREA INCENTIVES

Floor area incentives provide additional density above a baseline level of entitlement in exchange for support of citywide and neighborhood priorities. Many different options for incentives have been considered throughout the process. However, incentive programs that have too many choices can be ineffective and create “winners and losers” among the options. In addition, zoning cannot require certain priorities like affordable housing, but is able to apply standards for items like open space and public art. It was determined that the new zoning should simply require things that it can and utilize a limited set of incentives to support priorities that cannot be directly regulated.

In the proposed zoning for D-GT, a project may qualify for additional floor area by meeting minimum criteria for:

1. Providing housing units that are more affordable
2. Renovating a Denver historic landmark property

Support for more affordable housing is a priority across Denver, so projects may first earn up to 4.0 FAR of incentive floor area, or a total of 12.0, by meeting the requirements to provide housing that is affordable to people like nurses, teachers, retail and restaurant workers, recent graduates, etc.

A project can then earn an additional 3.0 FAR of incentive floor area, up to a total of 15.0, by either providing more affordable housing units or renovating a historic landmark property in the Golden Triangle. Bonuses and unused floor area from historic properties can also be transferred or sold to other locations within the D-GT zone district further encouraging the protection of significant buildings.

**Proposed Standard = Affordable Housing = up to 7.0 FAR of incentive floor area by:**

- Providing the baseline number of affordable units plus six times the baseline number of affordable units for the area above the Base FAR as required by Denver Revised Municipal Code (DRMC) Chapter 27, Article VI (residential projects)
- Providing the baseline amount of fees plus six times the baseline amount of fees for the area above the Base FAR as required by DRMC Chapter 27, Article VI (nonresidential projects)

**Proposed Standard = Landmark Rehabilitation = up to 3.0 FAR of incentive floor area by:**

- Earning 2 sf bonus for each 1 sf of rehabilitation of the exterior facade of a historic landmark structure
- Transferring unused floor area or rehabilitation bonuses to other properties in D-GT

**Proposed Zoning**

Existing Zoning

- 10.0 FAR
- 200 total units
- 0 affordable units

Proposed Zoning

- 10.0 FAR
- 200 total units
- 9 affordable units

The same project under proposed zoning would need to provide nine affordable units to qualify for the incentive floor area above the base.

160 units (Base FAR = 8.0)

140 units (Incentive FAR = 7.0)

160 units (Incentive FAR = 4.0)

160 units (Incentive FAR = 3.0)

160 units (Base FAR = 8.0)

200 units

10 affordable units

60 units

Historic Preservation

These examples show how affordable housing or a combination of affordable housing and historic preservation can be used to reach the maximum allowed FAR of 15.0.
PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Downtown zone districts in Denver typically have no minimum parking requirement. However, the current D-GT zoning requires all projects to provide parking for each use, for example 0.75 spaces per residential unit or 1.25 spaces per 1000 square feet of office space.

Unfortunately, this creates a barrier for larger buildings with parking garages to offer public parking, or a shared arrangement with a neighboring property, because that minimum requirement must always be “held open” for the existing uses on site. The result is many large parking structures are underutilized and have empty spaces that are not allowed to be made available to others.

Parking requirements also create a challenge for redevelopment of smaller properties where a multi-story parking garage is infeasible. This often leads to developers assembling multiple smaller adjacent lots into one very large parcel that can accommodate the required parking area.

For these reasons and the proximity of the Golden Triangle to employment, transit, and other amenities, the proposed zoning will eliminate minimum parking requirements. The goal being that more space will be made available for public parking and over time, new projects can respond to changes in mobility patterns and parking needs. This will also lead to more meaningful use of above-ground building space for active uses, commercial activity, and residential units, rather than empty parking spaces.

**Proposed Standard** = eliminate minimum parking requirements

STREET LEVEL SETBACKS

**Primary Street Setback**

Primary street setbacks will create additional area for pedestrians and allow more comfortable transitions to tall buildings and long street frontages.

**Proposed Standard** = 2-foot setback from street-facing property line on lots greater than 150 wide

**Residential Setback**

A residential use setback applies to individual street level residential units to provide space for an appropriate transition between the public sidewalk and private residential uses. Residential setbacks also require an individual entrance with entry feature, such as a stoop or porch, for each unit.

**Proposed Standard** = 7-foot setback from street-facing property line and unit must provide an entrance with entry feature to the street

*Residential setbacks and required entries with entry features help create a comfortable transition between the public sidewalk and private residential units.*

*By eliminating minimum parking, large parking structures can be more available for public parking, smaller projects will be more feasible, and buildings can be better utilized for active uses rather than empty parking spaces.*
UPPER STORY SETBACKS

Upper story setbacks help break down taller buildings and create a more comfortable building height along the street that typically ranges from 3-5 stories. There is flexibility built into the required upper story setback to avoid a monotonous datum line that applies to all projects and promote the variety in architectural form that the neighborhood desires.

**Proposed Standard** = 15-foot setback from the street-facing property line across at least 65% of the facade, taken at or below 5 stories*

* Upper story setbacks will apply to projects on Standard lots (75-150 feet) and Wide lots (more than 150 feet), and may be required at the third or fourth story on narrow streets.

MASS REDUCTION

Establishes a system of reductions to shape buildings and generally reduce their size as they get taller. Mass reduction is intended to limit large bulky buildings that have a tendency to cast shadows, block views, and create an imposing and uninviting pedestrian environment.

**Proposed Standard** = 15% reduction in stories 9-16 on Standard lots (75-150 feet)*

**Proposed Standard** = 15% reduction in stories 1-8, 30% reduction in stories 9-16 on Wide lots (more than 150 feet)*

* Mass reduction will apply to projects more than 8 stories on Standard lots (75-150 feet) and all projects on Wide lots (more than 150 feet).

Mass reduction requires a percentage of the floor area within a range of stories to be reduced. That floor area can then be reorganized to different areas of the building. The result is a more slender outcome.
**VISIBILITY OF PARKING**

The proposed zoning will include a standard that limits the visibility of parking structures by requiring a majority of the street-facing frontage to be wrapped by active uses. This will add more activity to the street environment and limit the visual impacts of large parking structures.

**Proposed Standard** = 70% of street-facing frontages must be wrapped by active uses*

* Wrapped parking standards will apply to projects more than 5 stories on Standard lots (75-150 feet) and Wide lots (more than 150 feet). Projects on Standard lots may pursue a design review alternative that allows wrapped parking requirements to only apply to the first 2 stories.

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**STREET LEVEL OPEN SPACE**

To add activity to the street and create small public gathering spaces, the proposed zoning will require larger developments to provide open space at the ground level. These open spaces are privately-owned, but must be publicly accessible at least during business hours, meet minimum size dimensions, and be open to the sky.

**Proposed Standard** = at least 5% of the area of a zone lot shall be provided as street level open space, either as a single space or multiple spaces*

* Open space requirements will apply to projects on Wide lots (more than 150 feet). This standard may also be met by providing public art or an equivalent area of nonresidential uses at the ground floor adjacent to the street.

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Publicly-accessible open spaces provide areas of respite in the urban environment and contribute to an active and engaging pedestrian-oriented street.

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A design review alternative for Standard lots may allow the parking structure above the second story to be visible, but it must be integrated into the architecture.
**NONRESIDENTIAL ACTIVE USES**

To add activity to the street and support the mixed-use character of the neighborhood, the proposed zoning will require larger developments to provide nonresidential active uses at the ground floor. This standard will only apply to projects on specific key streets where nonresidential active uses are most desired and most likely to succeed. These streets have been identified as:

- Broadway
- Lincoln Street
- Bannock Street
- Acoma Street between 10th and 12th Avenues
- 11th Avenue

*Proposed Standard* = Nonresidential active uses shall be provided on 50% of the ground floor frontage along a key street*

* *Nonresidential active use requirements will apply to projects on Wide lots (more than 150 feet) on specific streets. This standard may also be met by providing public art or an equivalent area of street level open space.*

**PUBLIC ART & ARTS/CULTURAL USES**

Supporting public art and arts and cultural uses in the Golden Triangle are important recommendations in the Neighborhood Plan and have been consistently raised by stakeholders. The ability for zoning to influence these aspects is relatively limited because tenants are typically not known at the time of zoning review and project permitting, uses change over time and on-going monitoring is infeasible for City inspectors, and maintenance of public art by the City is not funded.

However, because of the importance of these priorities as expressed by Advisory Committee members and neighborhood advocates, the proposed zoning includes standards that will make a meaningful impact. First, arts and cultural uses qualify as nonresidential active uses and can be used to fulfill the standard as required on key streets. Second, and perhaps more importantly, a new alternative has been incorporated that will allow public art to meet the standard for both nonresidential active uses or street level open space. The art must be maintained by the project owner and will be reviewed in consultation with Denver Arts and Venues to ensure it meets a standard of quality.

*Proposed Standard* = Arts and cultural uses shall qualify as nonresidential active uses

*Proposed Standard* = Public art shall be available as an alternative to nonresidential active use and street level open space requirements if it meets the following criteria:

- Qualifies as a ’work of public art‘ as defined by DRMC, Section 20–86
- Costs at least 1% of the value of construction or $500,000, whichever is less
- Displayed outside or on the exterior surface of the building and visible from at least one public street

**NEXT STEPS**

Based on the feedback gathered from internal and external outreach on the preferred strategy, City staff will begin drafting the revised language for the Denver Zoning Code. The public will have the opportunity to review the draft text prior to the first Public Hearing at the Denver Planning Board. A second Public Hearing will be available during the City Council review process. Please refer to the project schedule available on the project website ([www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle](http://www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle)).