COLORADO STATION GDP

Colorado Center Urban Design Standards and Guidelines

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CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

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The project site and its general area defined by the Primary GDP Area and Secondary GDP Area.
INTRODUCTION

Preamble
These Colorado Center Urban Design Standards and Guidelines (UDSG) are Rules and Regulations adopted by the Planning Board pursuant to Section 59-313(b) and Chapter 12 of the Revised Municipal Code of the City and County of Denver. Amendments to the UDSG are subject to the approval of the Manager of Community Planning and Development (CPD) in accordance with the Revised Denver Municipal Code Section 59-313(b) and Chapter 12. All amendments shall be filed and/or recorded in the same manner as the original Urban Design Standards and Guidelines. However, only the changed pages together with a statement from CPD, certifying that the amendments have been approved, need to be filed and recorded.

Overview
The Colorado Center site is located on an approximately 13-acre infill site (the Primary GDP Area) containing property owned by Lincoln ASB Colorado Center, LLC. The Primary GDP Area is located at the southeast intersection of Interstate 25 (I-25) and Colorado Boulevard in Denver, Colorado. A full legal description of the Primary GDP Area can be found on sheet one in the Colorado Station General Development Plan (Colorado Station GDP) recorded on ________________, reception number ______________. The Primary GDP Area was zoned to TMU-30 on July 24, 2007 (Ordinance 438, CB 372, Series of 2007). The Colorado Station GDP establishes the framework for development of the GDP Primary Area.

Purpose of Document
The UDSG for Colorado Center are presented in recognition of the special opportunity offered on this site for the creation of a high quality transit-oriented development that integrates with the surrounding community and connects the site to Denver’s urban fabric.

All existing structures on-site shall be deemed compliant with these Colorado Center UDSG. All design criteria within this document shall apply to new construction only. New construction shall include (a) all additions and (b) any remodeling where the cost of the remodel is more than 50% of the replacement cost of the building minus the land, unless 60% or more of the cost is dedicated to interior remodeling.

In the case of additions and remodels, only new additions or altered exterior portions of an existing building shall be subject to the design criteria within this document.

The purpose of this document is to elaborate on the concepts and requirements established in the Colorado Center Zoning and the Colorado Station GDP. It is intended to provide additional guidance to designers, developers, planners, and reviewing agencies for the realization of a coherent, high-quality urban community.

Design criteria within this document related to elements of the public ROW are intended to communicate desired intent and are for illustrative purposes only. The Department of Public Works must approve all elements within the public ROW.

Guiding Principles
The Colorado Station GDP was established to transform an auto-oriented office and retail development into a pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented, mixed-use development that is integrated with its neighbors and an asset to Denver. The guiding principles of the Colorado Station GDP and the associated UDSG reflect goals and strategies outlined in Blueprint Denver for encouraging quality urban environments. These goals and strategies include:

- Creating quality streetscapes and open spaces.
- Balancing automobile uses with the needs of pedestrians and other modes of transit.
- Combining mixed uses to create safe, vital communities.

Proposed land use and site design concepts elaborated in the Colorado Center zoning and Colorado Station GDP will realize these goals in a variety of ways:

- Combine residential and commercial uses to create a variety of activity patterns while responding to market conditions.
- Concentrate active uses along streets and provide a safe, logical, and attractive pedestrian streetscape.
- Locate higher density in a way that creates an urban, walkable environment.
- Orient proposed structures in a way that acknowledges the location of transit stops and reinforces pedestrian circulation opportunities.
The Primary GDP Area and its greater surroundings.
The Site (Primary GDP Area)

The Colorado Station Primary GDP Area encompasses an existing office and retail development owned by Lincoln ASB Colorado Center, LLC. Located at 2000 S. Colorado Boulevard, at the southeast corner of I-25 and Colorado Blvd., the site is approximately 13 acres in size. The site was recently rezoned to TMU-30 mixed-use zoning (ordinance 438, CB 372, series of 2007) to encourage transit-oriented development around the Colorado light rail station.

The Primary GDP Area contains existing buildings whose character and scale should be considered when determining the compatibility of any new development.

*Colorado Center Site (Primary GDP Area)*

The Primary GDP Area contains three existing office buildings, one existing retail building, two structured parking garages, and large surface parking areas. The site is directly adjacent to the Colorado Station light rail platform, which serves the Southeast light rail corridor, as well as an RTD bus stop that serves the 21, 40, 46, and DD bus lines. The entire site is located within a Blueprint Denver Area of Change.

The Colorado Center site was developed prior to consideration of the Southeast light rail corridor construction.

The parcel is bounded by I-25 and the I-25 Frontage Road to the northeast and Colorado Center Drive to the south. Colorado Boulevard, a major commercial arterial, forms the western boundary of the site.

*North and East of the Site*

Beyond I-25, to the northeast of the site, is the Virginia Vale neighborhood, characterized by single-family housing. This residential area is within a Blueprint Denver Area of Stability.

*South of the Site*

The area south of the site is characterized by auto-oriented, low-density, commercial development that is not integrated into the city street grid. This is another Area of Change according to Blueprint Denver. Further south is the residential neighborhood of Warren’s University, an Area of Stability.

*West of the Site*

Directly west is Colorado Boulevard, a commercial arterial designated as an Area of Change in this portion of the City. West of Colorado Blvd. lies the University Park residential neighborhood, another Area of Stability.
Organization of the Document

This document is organized into three sections: Introduction, Urban Design Standards and Guidelines, and Procedures for Design Review.

Urban design criteria in the form of Standards and Guidelines provide guidance as to how the vision for the Site may be achieved. Standards and Guidelines are intended to encourage creativity within the design framework while maintaining a consistent level of quality between individual projects. Standards and Guidelines do not mandate a particular architectural style or building material. Instead, Standards and Guidelines:

- Define a standard of design quality intended to enhance the public realm,
- Promote cohesive development patterns while allowing for diversity and variety in the design and construction of individual projects,
- Assist city staff, planners, designers, developers, and owners in making consistent choices that reinforce the vision,
- Recognize that the site will evolve over time and that development will respond to changes in the market,
- Integrate and transition new development into surrounding communities.

The three components of the urban design criteria - Intent statements, Design Standards, and Design Guidelines - are used together to achieve the vision for the Site. They balance structure and objectivity with creativity and flexibility in order to encourage the best design. This system allows more than one path to a mutually satisfactory result.

The three components are defined as follows:

**Intent:** Intent statements establish design goals which the Standards and Guidelines have been created to achieve. In circumstances where the appropriateness or applicability of a Standard or Guideline is in question or under negotiation, the Intent statement will provide additional direction.

**Design Standards:** Design Standards are objective criteria that provide specific direction for achieving the stated Intent. Standards denote issues that are considered critical. Standards use the term “shall” to indicate that compliance is required.

**Design Guidelines:** Design Guidelines provide alternative solutions for accomplishing the goals set forth by the Intent Statements. They are more flexible and harder to quantify than standards. They often amplify a related Standard. Guidelines use the term “should” or “may” to denote they are considered relevant to achieving the Intent Statement, and will be pertinent to the review process. When they amplify a Standard they are preferred, but not mandatory, criteria. Guidelines will, however, be strongly considered in circumstances when a Standard is not being met and an alternative is being sought. In such a case it must be demonstrated that the alternative meets one or more of the following criteria:

- The alternative better achieves the stated Intent,
- The Intent Statement that the Standard was created to address will not be achieved by application of the Standard in this particular circumstance,
- The application of Guidelines will better achieve stated Intents.
- Unique site characteristics or market factors make the Standard impractical or cost prohibitive.

References to Intent statements, Design Standards and Design Guidelines listed throughout this document pertaining to the public right-of-way (ROW) are used to convey intent, are for illustrative purposes only, and are not formally adopted by the Department of Public Works.

**General Compliance**

All projects in the Colorado Station Primary GDP Area must comply with any and all applicable statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations promulgated by the City and other agencies which have jurisdiction.

All existing structures on-site shall be deemed compliant with these Colorado Center UDSG. All design criteria within this document shall apply to new construction only. New construction shall include (a) all additions and (b) any remodeling where the cost of the remodel is more than 50% of the replacement cost of the building minus the land, unless 60% or more of the cost is dedicated to interior remodeling.

In the case of additions and remodels, only new additions or altered exterior portions of an existing building shall be subject to the design criteria within this document.
Definitions

Several terms are used consistently throughout this document to describe common aspects or elements of architecture and urban design. Where a term such as “floor area” is not specifically defined, customary use or the definition set forth in the Colorado Station GDP or the Denver Zoning Code shall apply.

Color Rendition Index – A measure of a lamp source’s ability to render true colors as compared to an “ideal” light source such as natural light. Color rendition typically ranges from 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

Expanded Streetscape – An area within a Private or Public Amenity Zone containing streetscape elements that directly adjoins and runs parallel with the unobstructed pedestrian walk.

Exposed to Public View – A portion of a building or site feature that is visible from a public ROW or private street.

Facade – Any face of a building fronting a public or private street.

Ground Floor Frontage – That portion of a building from grade to the second floor that adjoins the Streetscape or a significant street-level open space. Because pedestrians directly experience the ground floors of buildings, Standards and Guidelines related specifically to the ground floor are distributed throughout this document.

Heat Island Effect – The capacity of surfaces in an urban environment to absorb heat and alter the ambient air temperature of their surroundings. Large areas of asphalt, dark-colored paved areas, and dark-colored roofing can create heat island effects. Urban areas are particularly susceptible to the heat island effect, which can create fluctuations in local climate and temperature that may adversely affect nearby landscaping and increase the energy costs of buildings.

Open Space – For the purpose of this document, the term open space is used to collectively refer to any privately owned park or plaza and certain streetscape or streets. Except where open spaces with above-ground walkways already exist, all open space shall be open to the sky.

- Unobstructed Open Space – Refers to the minimum area of open space required by the Denver Zoning Code and the Colorado Center Zoning. This does not include any public land, park, or right of way.

Pedestrian Active Uses – Uses which generate significant pedestrian traffic and interest at street level including consumer and service-oriented retail, commercial and professional offices, and in some cases residential and residential-oriented services. Entrances and lobbies to groups of uses on higher floors are also considered pedestrian active uses.

Pedestrian Lighting – Lighting on public or private streets intended to provide additional streetscape ambience. Pedestrian lighting is usually decorative in character and of a lower intensity and height so that the lighting effect is comfortable for the pedestrian. Pedestrian lighting will only be allowed on public streets with a maintenance district.

Pedestrian Walk – The area of the Streetscape between the Public and Private Amenity Zones that is reserved for pedestrian traffic. The Pedestrian Walk is to remain clear and unobstructed for ease of travel and maintenance.

Primary Building Façade – The face of a building fronting a public or private street that contains a primary building entrance. Primary Building Façades should generally express a more refined degree of material quality and detailing.

Private Amenity Zone – A portion of the Streetscape between the unobstructed Pedestrian Walk (or public ROW or private street) and the building face. This area is reserved for Streetscape Elements that transition between Pedestrian Active Uses within buildings or plazas and the Pedestrian Walk.
**Private Street** – A through vehicular access way which is not dedicated to the public and is not publicly maintained. With the exception of above-ground walkways, which connect buildings and do not contain livable or retail space, all private streets shall be open to the sky. (see Figure 1.1a)

**Public Amenity Zone** – A portion of the public ROW or private street between the curb and the unobstructed Pedestrian Walk reserved for Streetscape Elements that serve and enhance the pedestrian experience.

**Right-of-Way (ROW)** – The land area owned by the City and dedicated as public ROW by ordinance. Within the ROW are found typical road improvements, storm drainage, sanitary sewers, sidewalks, landscaping such as tree lawns, trees, street furniture, and lighting. Location of any private elements, including signs, fences/walls, street furniture, or lighting within the ROW requires a revocable permit issued by the Department of Public Works. All items located within the ROW must be approved by Public Works. The public ROW shall be open to the sky.

**Signage, Building** – For the purpose of this document, building signage includes window, wall, arcade, monument and projecting signs whose design and content are related to the various Pedestrian Active Uses within the building. Unlike district, regulatory, and way-finding signage, building signs may change more frequently over time. All tenant signage should be contained on private property. Any signage in the public ROW must be approved by the Department of Public Works. All signs in the TMU-30 Zone district, both district and building, require a Common Sign Plan. See Denver Zoning ordinance Section 59-315(3).

**Signage, District** – For the purpose of this document, district signage includes monument, pedestal, and pole signs whose design and content are intended to create an identity for a gateway, street, or district. Within a given area, district signage helps to maintain a consistent character. All tenant signage should be contained on private property. Any signage in the public ROW must be approved by the Department of Public Works. All signs in the TMU-30 Zone district, both district and building, require a Common Sign Plan. See Denver Zoning ordinance Section 59-315(3).

**Street Lighting** – General illumination of the vehicular street typically provided from poles located within the Public Amenity Zone. Street lighting in the public ROW must conform to the regulations established by the Department of Public Works.

**Streetscape** – The general area between the curb and building face where pedestrian activity is concentrated and enhanced. Includes the Pedestrian Walk and Private and Public Amenity Zones.

**Streetscape Elements** – Elements placed within Public or Private Amenity Zones that help define street character. Elements may include street trees, tree lawns, street lights, pedestrian lights, traffic signage, benches and other seating, trash receptacles, bike racks, newspaper corrals and condos, kiosks, enhanced paving, public art, planter pots, bollards, bus shelters, awnings, canopies, and umbrellas or other shading devices.

**Street wall** – The cumulative effect of adjacent buildings facing onto and providing a consistent edge to a public or private street.

**Tree Lawn** – A portion of the public ROW or private street, typically between the curb and the unobstructed Pedestrian Walk, that is landscaped with trees and ground cover, usually sod.
1.1a Site Circulation Concepts: Private vs. Public Streets

*Note: Streets and curbs shown within the GDP Primary Area are for illustrative purposes only.*
1.0 Site Circulation

General Intent: To establish a logical and interconnected system of streets, sidewalks, and pathways that balance mobility with the making of significant urban places, consideration should be given to standards and guidelines related to general street character and access. Site circulation should provide adequate and safe access for automobiles, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Circulation concepts for the site are indicated in the Colorado Station GDP and Fig. 1.1a. Design standards and guidelines pertaining to the public ROW are for illustrative purposes only. ROW improvements must meet the separate standards and approval of the Department of Public Works.

1.1 Vehicular Circulation and Access

Intent
- To locate vehicular access in a way that minimizes conflict with other modes of transportation, especially pedestrian traffic.

Design Standards
- New curb cuts and driveways shall be perpendicular to the street that they serve.

Design Guidelines
- A single curb cut or driveway in the public ROW should not be wider than what is minimally required by the Department of Public Works for the safe movement of traffic.

- Curb cuts and driveways are discouraged close to street intersections and at the corners of blocks. (Fig 1.1b)

- Curb cuts should be shared between groups of buildings and uses.

Drop-offs in the public ROW that serve the entrances of specific uses such as hotels may be allowed (at the discretion of the Manager of Community Planning and Development and if approved by the Department of Public Works).

1.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation and Access

Intent
- To incorporate alternate modes of transportation, especially walking, into the design of vehicular street systems.

Design Standards
- Every new vehicular street shall have a corresponding parallel Pedestrian Walk at the same grade.

- Pedestrian crossings of collector and arterial streets shall be located a safe distance from vehicular curb cuts. For curb cuts in the public ROW, the distance shall conform to the requirements of the Department of Public Works.
• The proposed private Main Street located in the center of the site shall be designed as private open space. See Section 4.6.2. and Figure 4.6a.

**Design Guidelines**

• The system of pedestrian and bicycle circulation, namely sidewalks and shared vehicular streets, should be designed to connect to and extend from similar circulation systems on adjacent existing streets.

• Pedestrian crossings of major public and private streets should be accommodated at street grade without requiring the use of a bridge or tunnel.

• Pedestrian crossings should be located a safe distance from vehicular curb cuts providing access to parking and service areas. In the public ROW, this distance shall conform to the requirements of the Department of Public Works.
2.0 Site Planning

General Intent: The success of an urban environment is in the quality of its streetscapes. Planning should consider the complex relationship between vehicular streets, sidewalks, sidewalk amenities, landscaping, and the location and continuity of building edges. It is also important to thoughtfully consider the location and design of parking areas, service areas, and site utilities so they do not detract from the quality of the urban experience.

2.1 General Streetscape Design - Public Streets

Intent
- To encourage streetscapes that distinguish and support various modes of transit, including but not limited to vehicular traffic, cycling, and walking.
- To provide adequate and logical connections of streets and sidewalks within the development and between the development and adjacent neighborhoods.
- To provide sidewalks of adequate width to contain, define, and concentrate pedestrian uses.
- To encourage pedestrian activities on the sidewalk such as walking, eating, and browsing retail storefronts.

Design Standards
- All sidewalks within the public ROW must meet the separate standards of and be approved by the Department of Public Works.
- Every new sidewalk in the public ROW in the Primary GDP Area shall be designed to include at a minimum:
  - an eight foot wide Pedestrian Walk, free of all obstructions
  - a five foot wide Public Amenity Zone. This zone shall contain street trees. (Fig. 2.1a)

Design Guidelines
- Sidewalk design should exceed minimum width requirements for Pedestrian Walks and Public Amenity Zones where appropriate.
- Within the public ROW, sidewalk and tree lawn width and design should endeavor to exceed existing conditions where appropriate.
- Street trees in Public Amenity Zones should be selected to provide a continuous canopy at maturity and must meet the requirements of the City Forester.
- New streets should accommodate parallel parking on at least one side as a traffic-calming measure (as approved by the Department of Public Works).
2.2 General Streetscape Design - Private Streets

**Intent**
- To encourage streetscapes that distinguish and support various modes of transit, including but not limited to vehicular traffic, cycling, and walking.
- To provide adequate and logical connections of streets and sidewalks within the development and between the development and adjacent neighborhoods.
- To provide sidewalks of adequate width to contain, define, and concentrate pedestrian uses.
- To encourage pedestrian activities on the sidewalk such as walking, eating, and browsing retail storefronts.

**Design Standards**
- Every new sidewalk on a primary street within the Primary GDP Area (Figure 1.1a) shall be designed to include at a minimum:
  - an eight foot wide Pedestrian Walk, free of all obstructions
  - a five foot wide Public Amenity Zone. This zone shall contain street trees. (Fig. 2.1a)
- Every new sidewalk on a secondary street street within the Primary GDP Area (Figure 1.1a) shall be designed to include at a minimum:
  - a six foot wide Pedestrian Walk, free of all obstructions
  - a five foot wide Public Amenity Zone. This zone shall contain street trees. (Fig. 2.1a)
- The proposed private Main Street located in the center of the site shall be designed as private open space. (Section 4.6.2 and Figure 4.6a)

**Design Guidelines**
- Sidewalk design should exceed minimum width requirements for Pedestrian Walks and Public Amenity Zones where appropriate.
- Sidewalk and tree lawn width and design should endeavor to exceed existing conditions where appropriate.
- Street trees in Public Amenity Zones should be selected to provide a continuous canopy at maturity and must meet the requirements of the City Forester.
- Private streets should adhere to the same Standards and Guidelines as for public rights-of-way.
2.3 Building Location, Orientation and Use

2.3.1 - Build-To Requirements

Intent

- To create a street wall that defines the three-dimensional space of the street and contributes to its sense of place.
- To maintain the continuity of the street wall for the majority of the length of the street.

Design Standards

- All buildings shall adhere to the setback requirements of the underlying zone district in which the building or structure resides except as modified below.
- At least 50 percent of the building edge shall be built within 0-5 feet of the property line or minimum required setback line.

Design Guidelines

- Gaps in the street wall between adjacent buildings that are not part of a vehicular access point should be part of a designed public or private open space. (Fig. 2.3a)
- Where gaps between buildings are contemplated, they should be located and proportioned to:
  - relate to major transitions in use or character
  - relate to significant, designed open spaces
  - relate to adjacent buildings
- In general, ground floor arcades are discouraged in favor of building façades that directly front the street. However, arcades (Fig. 2.3b) may satisfy the build-to requirement when:
  - they extend no more than two floors in height
  - the exterior face of the arcade column line is within the build-to zone
  - the exterior face of the column line generally continues the wall plane of the building above
  - the average depth of the arcade is no less than six feet clear as measured from the back face of the column line
  - the average depth of the arcade is no more than 2/3 of its average clear height as measured from the front face of the column line
  - the arcade column width and column spacing does not substantially impede views of the Pedestrian Active Uses from the Pedestrian Walk

New streets should accommodate parallel or diagonal parking on at least one side as a traffic-calming measure (as approved by the Department of Public Works). No diagonal parking is allowed if it is at the expense of the tree lawn, the public and private amenity zones, or the required sidewalk/Public Amenity Zone widths.
2.3c Pedestrian Active Zones -- Areas where a minimum of 65 percent of all ground floor frontages shall be occupied by Pedestrian Active Uses.

*Note: Streets and curbs shown within the GDP Primary Area are for illustrative purposes only.*
2.3.2 - Pedestrian Active Use Requirements

Intent

- To locate and orient uses in a way that encourages and intensifies pedestrian activity and interest along the street.

- To promote pedestrian-friendly building frontages that activate the street.

Design Standards

- Within proposed pedestrian active zones, as highlighted in Figure 2.3c, at least 65 percent ground floor frontages facing the street shall be occupied by Pedestrian Active Uses.

Design Guidelines

- Commercial ground floor frontage not in Pedestrian Active Zones are encouraged to have Pedestrian Active Uses.

- Portions of the building not parallel with the street should be related to building uses that complement pedestrian activities along the street. (Fig. 2.3d)

2.4 Parking Location and General Design

This section addresses issues of general location and orientation. For Standards and Guidelines related to Building Design, Landscape, Lighting, and Signage, refer to Sections 3.0-6.0

2.4.1 - Surface Parking Lots

Intent

- To locate and orient surface parking on the site in a way that reduces its visual and environmental impact.

Design Standards

- All new surface parking shall meet the requirements of the Rules and Regulations for the Landscaping of Parking Areas for both public and private streets, for the B-8 zone district.

- No surface parking is allowed between that portion of a building fronting a street (public or private) and the street.

- Surface parking shall provide safe pedestrian passage by incorporating an efficient system of four foot wide pedestrian paths.

- At least thirty percent of the paved surface area of each surface parking lot shall be shaded by mature landscaping (within 5 years) and constructed of light colored/high-albedo materials with a solar reflectance of at least .30.

Design Guidelines

- Surface parking lots are encouraged to exceed landscaping requirements.
2.4.2 - Structured Parking Garages

Intent
- To provide structured parking that is screened from the street by active ground floor uses.

Design Standards
- At least 65 percent of the ground floor of new parking structures, including exposed below-grade parking structures, located in a Pedestrian Active Zone shall contain ground floor Pedestrian Active Uses. (Figure 2.3c)

Design Guidelines
- New above-grade parking structures should be located and oriented to minimize frontage on the public ROW.
- Below-grade structured parking should be considered, where it is financially feasible.
- All new above-grade parking should be wrapped with or contain commercial or residential uses, especially at the ground floor. (Fig 2.4a)
- The exposed, above-grade portions of below-grade parking garages that are not required to have Pedestrian Active Uses at the ground level should be designed in a manner that is visually compatible with the design of the building it serves. (Fig 2.3c)

Strategies to achieve this guideline may include:
- Use of similar cladding materials and material modules on the exposed portion
- Screening with landscaping, fences, or walls, if those fences or walls are visually compatible with adjacent buildings
- The use of open railing systems

2.5 Site Service and Utility Areas

Intent
- To minimize the visual presence of service functions, such as delivery and refuse pickup.

Design Standards
- New service and utility areas shall be concealed from the public ROW and private streets by employing means such as:
  - locating underground
  - locating internal to a structure or group of structures
  - providing enclosing walls, fences, screening and/or landscaping of sufficient height and density year-round
  - locating along internal alleys or service drives
Design Guidelines

- Service and utility areas should not be located:
  - within 25 feet horizontally of any pedestrian entry
  - between the front of a building and the public street

- Utility and service areas should be shared between buildings, among groups of similar uses, or otherwise consolidated to minimize the proportion of the site dedicated to these functions.

2.6 Open Space

This section addresses general location, configuration, and orientation of all open spaces accessible and visible from the street. This section does not address private open spaces designed for the exclusive use of building tenants or residents, including private internal courtyards and open-air terraces and patios. This section is not intended to replace minimum unobstructed open space requirements established by the Denver Zoning Code for the underlying zone district nor the general location, configuration, and design requirements of the Colorado Station GDP.

Intent

- To introduce elements of nature, such as trees and plants, into the urban environment.

- To provide open space of an adequate size and proportion to serve a variety of leisure needs.

Design Standards

- Open spaces shall be architecturally defined by the buildings that surround them.

- Open spaces shall have direct access from a pedestrian walk on at least one side and for at least 50 percent of the length of that side.

- The open spaces shall:
  - Be easily accessible and viewed from the street
  - Be at a level within 18 inches above or below the nearest adjoining public sidewalk
  - Be publicly accessible and publicly usable
  - Be open to the sky, except for existing open spaces that have an existing skywalk above them

Design Guidelines

- Open spaces should be of a size, proportion, and orientation in relation to surrounding structures that optimizes sky and sunlight exposure over the course of the year.
3.0 Building Design

General Intent: Buildings do more than contain uses. Their level of art, craft, and materiality help characterize and define the street, enhance the sense of “place,” and contribute to the high quality expected of a vibrant, mixed-use urban community. Buildings that enhance the urban realm pay careful attention to issues of massing, form, façade articulation and the location of entrances. Special consideration must be given to the thoughtful integration of building utilities and services as well as the design of parking structures.

Note: Buildings facing I-25 should have a complimentary level of architectural finish as buildings that front other streets or public rights-of-way.

3.1 Building Massing and Form

Intent

- To encourage buildings whose forms are responsive to the surrounding context.
- To generate visual interest in the built environment by emphasizing changes in use.
- To moderate scale changes between adjacent buildings.
- To encourage building forms that promote sun and sky exposure to streets and open spaces.
- To mitigate the wind downdraft effects of taller buildings.

Design Standards

- Stepbacks are required for any building facade that faces a Pedestrian Walk or open space and that is higher than 75 vertical feet.
- In Stepback Area “A” (Fig. 4.6a on page 36), at least 10 percent of the total façade shall step back 10 feet from the front lot line beginning no higher than 75 feet in height.
- For buildings not in Stepback Area “A” (Fig. 4.6a on page 36), at least 25 percent of the vertical length of the façade shall step back 10 feet beginning no higher than 75 feet in height.
- A wind tunnel study may be required by CPD for any new building outside of Stepback Area “A”.

Design Guidelines

- Additional bulk reduction is encouraged for buildings on the south and east sides of streets and open spaces to allow for greater penetration of sunlight into adjacent streets and open spaces.
- Articulation of the building form is encouraged to express typical architectural elements such as:
  - the location of entrances and vertical circulation
• significant changes in building use or occupancy
• changes from one residential unit to another
• the expression of structural bays
• the expression of balconies and above-grade terraces

• Articulation of the building mass and form is also encouraged to express a building’s relationship to its context, including:
  • adjacency to significantly lower or taller buildings
  • response to existing structures
  • relationships to the corners of blocks or major site entrances
  • response to the termination of views
  • the creation of an engaging profile or skyline

• For building façades parallel to I-25, stepbacks both horizontally and vertically, to break up long building façades, are encouraged. Additionally, building façades that are convex or vertically angled away, with respect to I-25, are encouraged.

3.2 Building Character

3.2.1 Materials

Intent

• To create visual interest through a varied palette of texture, color, and module.

• To give buildings and surfaces a human scale.

• To ensure the consistent use of high quality materials appropriate for an urban environment.

• To promote durability, sustainability, and ease of maintenance.

• To complement the materials of existing buildings on site, which are primarily made of pre-cast concrete. (Fig. 3.2.1a)

Design Standards

• Primary building materials shall be required for all facades visible from public or private streets for the first 20 feet in height. The following materials are approved for use in any quantity as a primary material:
  • brick, including glazed brick
  • natural and architectural cast stone
  • architectural pre-cast concrete
  • terra-cotta or architectural clay-tile systems
  • hard coat stucco
  • glass, glass block, and channel glass units
  • architectural metal panel systems
  • decorative metal framing systems with an exterior-grade finish system
  • concrete masonry units with an architectural coloration or finish
For building facades visible from a public or private street, 50 percent of the building face between 20’ and 75’ in height must be composed of primary building materials.

For façades exposed to the public view, architectural cast-in-place concrete (with or without integral or applied stain or color) shall be less than 20 percent of the opaque wall area.

Exterior insulation and finishing systems (EIFS) shall not be used on ground floor façades up to 20 feet in height.

Materials of a structural or unfinished nature such as tilt-up concrete panels and plain concrete masonry units, shall not be used in primary building façades exposed to public view.

**Design Guidelines**

- The expression of smaller material modules is encouraged to enhance the sense of human scale and interest, especially at ground and second floor façades.

- Only materials with the greatest durability, such as brick, stone, or architectural pre-cast concrete, should be used on ground floor façades, with the exception of storefronts.

- Materials should also be selected with consideration given to their environmental and sustainable attributes, including:
  - life-cycle cost
  - proportion of post-consumer or post-industrial recycled content
  - local or regional availability
  - re-use or recycling potential after useful life

- Materials should be composed within the building façade in a way that adheres to a visual and structural logic. For example, materials that clad or express a structural element should be more prominent than those that clad or express an infill element.

- The use of synthetic materials that imitate natural materials should be avoided. A synthetic material should be used in a way that reflects the material’s intrinsic characteristics.

**3.2.2 Fenestration**

**Intent**

- To enhance street-level activity and interest by providing a high degree of transparency, particularly at the ground floor.

- To provide a level of transparency at upper floors sufficient to be aware of internal activities when viewed from the street.

- To create rhythms and patterns on building façades that provide visual interest and reflect the uses within.

- To limit the glare from reflective glass.
**Design Standards**

- Commercial ground floor facades facing a street shall provide no less than 60 percent window to solid wall area. Commercial facades above the ground floor shall provide no less than 40 percent window to solid wall area. Certain commercial uses (theaters, etc.) may be exempt from these window requirements based on inherent needs.
- Residential facades shall provide no less than 20 percent window to solid wall area.

- All ground floor glazing shall have a minimum of 60 percent light transmittance factor.

- In new construction, no highly reflective glazing shall be permitted. All glazing shall be clear and have a maximum reflectance factor of 0.20. No first-surface reflective coatings shall be permitted.

- No more than 50 percent of the required glazing area in a ground floor facade shall be consolidated in one single area.

- For all walls with punched windows (curtain walls excluded), fenestration should recess or project from the adjacent wall surface or surround a minimum of 3”.

- Individual windows above the ground floor exceeding 35 square feet shall be subdivided by at least one horizontal or vertical mullion or joint. (Fig. 3.2.2a)

**Design Guidelines**

- Glazing serving ground floor Pedestrian Active Uses should have greater than a 60 percent light transmittance factor.

- Where the required window wall ratio is not feasible or is in conflict with internal functions, elements such as public art, retail displays, or enhanced signage and building detail should be integrated to maintain the visual interest at street level.

- Glass block or other glazing products that provide adequate light transmission but distort views should not be used on ground floor building façades.

- Clear glazing is preferred at the ground floor, but the use of colored, patterned, or fritted glass may be allowed when it is above the required transparency amount.

- Fenestration should recess or project from the adjacent wall surface or surround to create a highly visible shadow line.

- Large areas of glazing should be subdivided by mullions, joints, or similar scaling elements to provide a reasonable level of scale and detail, especially at the ground and second floors.

3.2.2a Example of Window subdivision
• Louvered or other unglazed facade openings should also be articulated with a system of scaling elements to provide a level of scale and detail complimentary to glazed areas.

• Durable and permanent low-emissivity coatings on the second or third glazing surface are encouraged to provide greater energy efficiency.

• Sun-shades and screens are encouraged as long as they do not significantly obstruct views through the window in either direction.

3.2.3 Façade Articulation

Intent
• To create visually interesting and human-scaled façades, particularly those that face streets or open spaces.

• To avoid large areas of undifferentiated façades.

Design Standards
• For each building façade or portion of a building façade that extends 250 linear feet along the street, those façades visible from the public or private street shall incorporate, at a minimum, three of the following architectural scaling elements:
  • A change in color
  • A change in material or material module or pattern
  • A system of horizontal and vertical scaling elements such as a belt course, string course, projecting fins, or projecting cornice or eyebrow
  • Expression of the structural system and infill panels through a change in plane of at least 3” on average
  • Articulation of window and doorway surrounds, which may include sills, lintels, pilasters, and mullions, through a change in plane of at least 2” on average
  • A system of horizontal and vertical articulating reveals of 3/8” width by 3/8” depth
  • A system of art or ornament integral to the building (such as an inset decorative panel or metal framework anchored to embeds in the building façade)

• Architectural scaling elements shall occur both horizontally and vertically and be part of a cohesive system. They shall not occur only to satisfy minimum requirements.

Design Guidelines
• Architectural scaling elements should be composed in a way that highlights a building’s intrinsic architectural characteristics, including but not limited to the building’s:
  • structural module
  • vertical divisions represented by the floor, sill, lintel, and parapet
  • “base,” “middle,” and “top,”
  • patterns of fenestration
  • primary uses or transitions between use or ownership
• Façade articulation should be scaled down and more detailed at the ground floor.

• Architectural scaling elements should be integrated into the building façade and not appear as an insubstantial overlay.

• Where a primary building façade abuts a façade of secondary importance (such as along an alley or internal service area), architectural scaling elements should be integrated into that portion of the secondary façade exposed to public view.

3.3 Building Entries

3.3.1 Pedestrian Entry and Access

Intent

• To provide convenient access to buildings and Pedestrian Active Uses from the street.

• To clearly articulate and create a visual hierarchy of building entrances as an aid in way-finding.

• To locate building entrances in a way that activates streetscapes, enhances building corners, and invigorates open spaces.

• To create iconic elements that mark entrances and terminate views.

• To encourage pedestrian activity between buildings and the street by providing adequate ground level, street-oriented entrances.

• To promote pedestrian safety by separating pedestrian and vehicular points of access.

Design Standards

• Every single building or combined structure shall provide at least one primary building entry opening directly onto a public or private street for every 250 feet of building frontage.

• Groups of uses on higher floors with no direct street connection shall be accessed by at least one primary building entrance at the ground floor serving as a common lobby and facing a street.

• Primary building entrances serving pedestrians shall be oriented toward and visible from the street (private or public).

Design Guidelines

• Building entries should be incorporated into the composition of a building’s mass and form, and in the case of pedestrian building entries, may be located at corners or take advantage of the termination of views.
Primary building entrances should be articulated in a way that differentiates them from adjacent storefronts, building façades, and secondary building entrances. Strategies may include:
  - concentrating or relaxing architectural scaling elements
  - greater differentiation of the color, scale, and module of those elements
  - substantially greater or lesser transparency
  - inclusion of building accessories and lighting (see Section 5.0)

Locating primary pedestrian entrances within an arcade is discouraged in favor of entrances that open directly to a public street, private street, or open space.

Each tenant at the ground floor should have one primary tenant entrance opening onto a street or plaza with broad public frontage. Exceptions may be made for entrances from a common lobby if that lobby opens directly onto a street or publicly accessible plaza.

Buildings directly adjoining structured or surface parking may have a secondary building entrance oriented to and accessed from that parking.

Service entrances visible from the street should not be emphasized or articulated in a manner that visually competes with a primary building entrance or significant tenant entrance facing a public ROW or private street.

Service entrances should be screened.

### 3.3.2 Vehicular Entry and Access

**Intent**

- To provide for safe and efficient vehicle ingress and egress.
- To promote pedestrian safety by segregating pedestrian and vehicular points of access.
- To locate vehicle entrances in a way that preserves the continuity of the pedestrian streetscape.

**Design Standards**

- The location, width, and spacing of all vehicular access points within the public ROW shall be approved by the Department of Public Works.

- Driveways directly accessed from the street and serving individual tenants in multi-tenant buildings or serving individual dwelling units shall not be allowed.

- All parking access control gates shall be recessed 20’ from the property line.

- Vehicular entrances incorporating a ramp shall be screened from view of private streets and the public ROW, or match existing construction.
• Service entries shall appear visually distinct from the primary and secondary pedestrian building entry.

• A vehicular entrance shall not be combined with a pedestrian entrance.

**Design Guidelines**

• Where feasible, driveways serving groups of similar uses should be consolidated.

• Vehicular entrances should be spaced in a manner that minimizes Pedestrian Walk interruptions.

• Driveways serving individual tenants may be allowed at the discretion of the Manager of Community Planning and Development if, for example:
  - The tenant is of sufficient size
  - The tenant’s building is physically isolated from other nearby buildings
  - If the driveway is in the public ROW, its design is approved by the Department of Public Works

• Building entries should be incorporated into the composition of a building’s mass and form.

### 3.4 Building Accessories

**Intent**

• To integrate building accessories into the architectural composition.

• To design building accessories that enhance the pedestrian environment, improve building performance and are attractive.

**Design Standards**

• All building accessories shall be of durable material and construction suitable for an urban environment.

**Design Guidelines**

• All building accessories customarily attached to the building face (including awnings, canopies, attached metal fabrications providing shade or screening) should be complementary to the building design in terms of structural and architectural rhythm and proportion while allowing for creative use of form, material, and color.

• Accessible ramps, stairs, platform lifts, and railings customarily located adjacent to the building face, when visible from the street, should be compatible with the building design in terms of materials, details, massing, and form.

• For building lighting, see Section 5.4.

• For building signage, see Section 6.1.
3.5 Building Services and Utilities

Intent
- To reduce the visual impact of building services and utilities on the public realm.

Design Standards
- Utility pads and similar “on-grade” building services shall not be located between a building façade and a street or open space or entirely located in the street. These services shall be located along an alley, service drive, or within a screened service area whose design is compatible with the building being served in terms of form, material, detail, and color.
- Rooftop mechanical units or other services and utilities located above grade shall be screened from the public ROW and private street by implementing one or more of the following strategies:
  - locating the utility within or behind an architectural screen
  - enclosing the utility within a roof that is integrated into the building form (Fig. 3.5a)
  - locating the utility within an enclosed mechanical penthouse whose materials and detailing complement the building architecture (Fig. 3.5b)
  - locating the utility far enough from the parapet so as to be effectively invisible from adjacent public rights-of-way and private streets (Fig. 3.5c)

Design Guidelines
- No utility or service should be visible from a public ROW or private street, regardless of architectural or landscape treatment.
- Utility pads and similar “on-grade” building services should be screened from view from adjacent properties.
- Small-scale utilities and services (individual meters, telephone and communications pedestals, HVAC condensing units, and the like) should not be mounted on or in front of primary building façades without screening that is integrated into the building architecture or landscape design.
- Landscaping may be an adequate screening material for small-scale utilities and services if its branch structure is sufficiently dense or it has foliage throughout the year.
3.6 Parking Garages (Visible from the Street)

Parking garage location and orientation is addressed in Section 2.4. This section addresses the architectural character of above-grade parking garages or portions of below-grade parking garages exposed to public view.

**Intent**
- To minimize the visual impact of structured parking garages on the public realm.
- To mitigate the impact of vehicle noise, headlights, building lighting, and mechanical systems associated with parking facilities.
- To design garages to be visually compatible with the surrounding development.
- To encourage garages with a mixed-use character.

**Design Standards**
- The façades of new parking garages exposed to view shall be orthogonal in composition and shall not express ramping systems.
- Spandrel panels or walls of adequate height to screen the view of parked cars and car headlights from the opposite street shall be required. (Fig. 3.6a)
- Rooftop parking deck lighting shall be limited to a height of 25 feet.
- Lighting from new parking structures shall be screened from public and private streets.

**Design Guidelines**
- Parking garages exposed to view should be subject to the same standards as buildings in terms of massing, form, and building character.
- Internal lighting should be designed to limit the visibility of light sources from the public ROW and nearby occupied spaces. Strategies may include providing full-cutoff fixtures for interior lighting near perimeter openings.
- Non-pervious (solid) architectural screening may be substituted for spandrel panels if it can be demonstrated that car headlights will not create glare as seen from the public ROW and private streets or by occupants of nearby spaces.
4.0 Landscape Design

General Intent: Denver has a long-established tradition of green streets and neighborhoods dating back to the founding of the city when residents took the initiative to beautify their residential streets by planting street trees. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the City Beautiful movement profoundly influenced the public perception of civic green space. Modern landscape design expands these early concepts to include a greater sense of environmental stewardship and broader range of recreational choices.

The Standards and Guidelines of this section address general landscape requirements as well as requirements of specific streetscape and landscape components. In general the Design Standards and Guidelines of this section are intended to supplement the design criteria addressed in the Streetscape Design Manual (City and County of Denver, 1993). Where an element of landscape and streetscape design is not specifically addressed in this document, it is assumed that the applicable Standards and Guidelines in Streetscape Design Manual govern.

4.1 General Landscape Requirements

*Inten

- To ensure that all site areas receive thoughtful landscape design.
- To preserve existing mature landscape.
- To encourage landscape and hardscape design that is resource efficient, improves site permeability, reduces the urban heat island effect and is easily maintained.

*Design Standards*

- All areas of the site not including those areas covered by buildings, structures, parking areas, service areas, standard walks, pathways, or other non-decorative improved impervious surfaces, shall be landscaped or hardscaped.
- Trees in the public ROW shall adhere to the requirements of the City Forester.
- Irrigation systems shall be required for all landscaping within the public ROW or private streets. Irrigation systems within the public ROW must comply with CCD Rules and Regulations concerning Minor Encumbrances.
- On any single street front, public or private street trees shall be a minimum of two species, planted in a uniform pattern, centered on the width of the Public Amenity Zone and spaced equally to create a relatively continuous canopy upon maturity.
- Plant material, fencing, screening, or any other landscape improvement within the public ROW shall adhere to the requirements of the Streetscape Design Manual and the Department of Public Works.
Design Guidelines

- No area of the site exposed to public view should be left without landscape or hardscape treatment.

- Small variations in street tree location or spacing are allowed in the public ROW if approved by the City Forester, or as dictated by utility easements.

- Effort should be made to reuse existing topsoil removed during construction activity for areas of the site requiring re-vegetation and landscaping, if topsoil is suitable.

- General landscape design, including the location of landscaped areas, their type, form and materials, should endeavor to control erosion and limit sedimentation of municipal water drainage systems.

- Landscape design within the development should endeavor to use 20 percent less water than conventional designs. Strategies to reduce consumption may include the following:
  - Specification of low-water need plant materials
  - Specification of mulches or ground covers that limit evaporation
  - Use of drip irrigation or other systems that more efficiently deliver water to plants
  - Use of reclaimed or captured, rather than potable water

  *Note: Complete elimination of plant materials in favor of paving systems or inorganic mulches are not encouraged as a water conserving technique.*

4.2 Landscape Component Standards

**Intent**

- To ensure that specified plant materials are healthy, meet industry minimum standards, and are suited to an urban environment.

- To encourage the use of plant materials which are resource efficient.

- To encourage reasonable water conservation practices.

**Design Standards**

- All plants shall be A-Grade or No. 1 Grade, free of any defects, of normal health, height, leaf density and spread appropriate to the species as defined by the American Association of Nurserymen or as approved by the City Forester.

- Street trees within the Public Amenity Zone shall be deciduous and have a minimum 2-1/2” caliper. Ornamental trees as approved shall have a minimum 2” caliper.

- Coniferous trees shall not be located in the Public Amenity Zone.
• The minimum shrub size shall be five gallon.

• The minimum vine and perennial size shall be one gallon.

• The minimum size for mass ground covers shall be 2-1/4” with a minimum planting density of 6” to 9” on-center.

**Design Guidelines**

• Plant materials should be selected that are appropriate for the regional climate, reflective of historic patterns, and provide seasonal interest.

• Plant materials that are drought tolerant, suited to the climate, and/or native to the region are encouraged.

• Plant materials with similar water and light needs should be grouped together.

• Landscaped areas within the development should endeavor to exceed a 20 percent reduction in the use of potable water over conventional landscape practices.

• Where feasible, irrigation systems should be automatically controlled to respond to daily and seasonal variations in evapotranspiration rate and precipitation levels.

### 4.3 Hardscape Component Standards

**Intent**

• To encourage a logical, hierarchical system of standard and decorative paving.

• To provide paving materials which are safe, durable, and easy to maintain.

• To promote hardscaping material and patterning that is consistent with existing hardscaping.

**Design Standards**

• All sidewalk paving in the public ROW shall meet City standards and, where required, be part of a Maintenance District.

• Improvements to the public ROW, such as corner bulb outs, handicapped curb ramps, curb and gutter and sidewalks shall be provided consistent with Department of Public Works standards and CPD approval.

**Design Guidelines**

• Special paving systems used in private spaces should be coordinated with existing paving systems and with paving systems in public areas where they are both visible from the public ROW.
Special paving systems should be appropriate for heavy urban traffic. Colored concrete, brick, concrete unit pavers, and unpolished stone are recommended (must be approved by the Department of Public Works if in the public ROW).

The use of permeable pavement systems is encouraged. Any paving in the public ROW must be approved by the Department of Public Works.

4.4 Screening, Fencing, Walls, and Railings

**Intent**

- To conceal undesirable uses or services without impeding the transparency and visibility of the pedestrian realm.
- To integrate screening, fencing, walls, and railings into the general architectural character of the development.
- To encourage design of these elements that is safe, durable, and easy to maintain.

**Design Standards**

- Fences and walls shall use similar materials, modules, and details as those on nearby or adjacent buildings.
- Railings located at the ground floor between buildings with Pedestrian Active Uses and the street shall be at least 50 percent open or transparent.

**Design Guidelines**

- Fencing, walls, and railings visible from the public ROW or private street should be of high-quality materials, decorative rather than utilitarian, and substantial in appearance commensurate with an urban environment and the scale of adjacent buildings.
4.5 Site Furnishing Standards

**Intent**
- To provide street and open space furnishings that unify and add character to the streetscape.
- To encourage pedestrians to inhabit and engage the streetscape and open spaces through activities such as relaxing, eating, browsing, gathering, and reading.
- To provide street furnishings that are durable, attractive, and maintenance free.

**Design Standards**
- Site furnishings shall not impede the required clear width of the Pedestrian Walk.
- Permanent seating shall be placed to serve bus stops, plazas and other open spaces. Seating shall meet the following requirements:
  - a minimum depth of 15”
  - a minimum width of 18”
  - a height between 16” and 20”

- Plazas and expanded streetscapes shall be required to have a minimum amount of seating. (see Section 4.6)

**Design Guidelines**
- Seating should be located in an aesthetically pleasing environment receiving good natural light and adequate air flow.
- Low site walls, including those for water features and planter beds, may be used to satisfy the seating requirement if they meet the minimum dimensional criteria above and are not obstructed.
- Seating at least 30” in depth and with access to both sides may count double toward seating requirements.
- Trash receptacles should be placed convenient to seating areas, but not directly against any individual seat.

4.6 Open Space Landscaping

4.6.1 Plazas and Expanded Streetscapes

**Intent**
- To introduce natural elements into the built environment.
- To provide spaces which give relief to the streetscape and create opportunities to gather and interact.

**Design Standards**
- A minimum of 20 and maximum of 40 percent of the area of a plaza or expanded streetscape shall be composed of planting materials (grass, ground covers, planting beds).
Design Guidelines

- Plazas and expanded streetscapes are encouraged to accommodate at a minimum one linear foot of seating for every 50 square feet of area.

- Trash receptacles are encouraged to be provided at a minimum of four cubic feet of capacity for every 1,500 square feet of plaza area.

- One tree should be planted for every 2,500 square feet of plaza.

- In addition to tree planting and seating area requirements, each plaza should contain at least one of the following amenities:
  - Formal planters, planting beds, or hedges
  - A drinking fountain
  - Public art, a shelter (gazebo, trellis), a water feature (fountain, water wall), or similar permanent focal element. Elements shall consider year-round appearance.

- Plazas and expanded streetscapes should be oriented to take advantage of views and sunlight.

- Plazas should visually and physically connect to the adjacent streetscape.

- No portion of the surface area of a plaza or expanded streetscape should be greater than 18 inches vertical from adjoining grade to preserve a sense of physical connectedness.

- Plazas and expanded streetscapes should provide adequate permanent seating supportive of informal gathering.

- The placement of trees and planting should conform to an overall identifiable design and should not be located in a way that would prevent optimal growth and maintenance.

- The quantity, placement and design of outdoor amenities should respond to the natural environment, adjacent structures, and the proximity of other amenities.

- Ornamental trees and plantings that provide seasonal interest are encouraged.
4.6a Open Space Network

Note: Street, curbs, and open spaces shown within the GDP Primary Area are for illustrative purposes only.
4.6.2  Main Street Open Space

Intent

- To create a vibrant, urban open space that accommodates pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

- To encourage an active, pedestrian-friendly expanded streetscape that will anchor the site’s open space network. (Fig. 4.6a)

Design Standards

- The proposed Main Street’s design shall comply with General Streetscape Design for Private Streets (Section 2.2), Hardscape Component Standards (Section 4.3), Landscaping for Plazas and Expanded Streetscapes (Section 4.6.1), as well as those Standards and Guidelines outlined below.

- The proposed Main Street open space shall incorporate a special paving material for all Pedestrian Walks.

- Both sides of the proposed Main Street open space shall include regularly-spaced plantings (including formal planters) and seating areas.

Design Guidelines

- New sidewalks on the proposed Main Street should exceed the minimum requirements for Pedestrian Walks and Public Amenity Zones for private streets. (Section 2.2)

4.6.3  Site Detention Areas

Intent

- To accommodate detention of storm water on-site in a way that is a positive part of an integrated landscape design.

- To create stormwater detention areas that are attractively landscaped and can serve the active and passive recreational needs of the community.

Design Standards

- Site detention areas shall use land forms and live plant material in a way that satisfies detention and water-quality requirements while allowing for passive or active recreational uses.

- No aggregate more than 4” in diameter is allowed in the public ROW.

Design Guidelines

- Site detention areas should minimize the use of pea gravel, rip-rap, rock, cobble stones, or other non-organic landscape materials.

- Site detention should creatively combine detention strategies and technologies, including but not limited to the use of planted roofs, below-grade vaults, water features, and pervious paving systems.

- Encourage the dispersal of site detention to reduce size.
4.7 Parking Area Landscaping

**Intent**
- To enhance the aesthetic appearance of surface parking lots and screen from view
- To reduce the urban heat-island effect attributed to large areas of exposed paving.
- To provide safe and attractive pathways through parking lots for pedestrian traffic.

**Design Standards**
- Minimum parking area landscaping standards shall be governed by the current Rules and Regulations for the Landscaping of Parking Areas for zone district B-8.

**Design Guidelines**
- Surface parking lots should have a minimum 42” high perimeter wall, not to exceed 48”, or landscaped screening, along all sides facing a public ROW or private street.
- All surface parking lots with sky exposure, regardless of whether they are located at grade or exposed to view from a street or public ROW, should be landscaped.
- Landscaping within a parking lot should be evenly distributed.
- Parking lots should accommodate safe and direct pedestrian passage between building entrances, through the parking lot, and from the parking lot to the street public ROW.
5.0 Site and Building Lighting

General Intent: Illumination of building and landscape elements can provide additional nighttime interest and foster community identity. Enhanced street lighting, if designed properly to reduce glare and limit contrast, can enhance feelings of pedestrian security and safety. However, lighting design must consider energy efficiency and glare control so that it does not detract from the quality of the urban environment.

5.1 Parking Area Lighting

Intent

- To limit the potential negative effect of parking lot illumination on adjacent properties.
- To provide adequate light levels to create a safe, secure environment.

Design Standards

- Parking area lighting shall be designed to:
  - provide no more than the basic level of illumination recommended for pedestrian and vehicular safety,
  - reduce glare into adjacent properties,
  - avoid extreme contrasts between light and shadow,
  - minimize light trespass directly to the sky by orienting fixtures downward and/or shielding the fixture.
- Maximum light pole height shall be 25 feet.

Design Guidelines

- Light sources should be placed closer to, rather than further from, the surface being illuminated. For example, a closer spacing of lower-height light poles is preferable to a greater spacing of taller light poles.

5.2 Open Space Lighting

Intent

- To create a comfortable and safe nighttime ambience in plazas and expanded streetscapes.
- To provide continuity in light levels between streetscapes and adjoining plazas.
- To highlight appropriate elements of plazas and expanded streetscapes to aid in orientation and provide visual interest.

Design Standards

- Lighting in plazas and expanded streetscapes shall be designed to:
  - provide a sense of safety and security,
  - reduce glare into adjacent properties,
  - minimize light trespass directly to the sky.
• General illumination of entire plazas from remotely-mounted fixtures shall not be allowed.

• Illumination of individual landscape elements (trees and individual planter areas) shall be limited to 2,500 lumens.

• General overhead or service pack lighting shall not be used.

**Design Guidelines**

• Pedestrian lighting may be used in plazas to illuminate primary walking paths or accent paved areas.

• Focal points such as gazebos, trellises, and water features should be lit in order to become an inviting presence at night.

• Illumination sources that are low to the ground such as bollard, step, and walkway lighting are encouraged.

• Lamps should provide a minimum color rendition index of 60.

### 5.3 Building Lighting

**Intent**

• To provide appropriate building accents above street level.

• To ensure an appropriate quality of lighting for service areas.

**Design Standards**

• Building lighting shall be designed to light specific building elements or usable exterior spaces such as balconies and terraces rather than provide general illumination of a façade.

• Building lighting shall be designed to:
  • reduce glare into adjacent properties
  • minimize light trespass directly to the sky
  • integrate into the building architecture by being concealed or through materials, detailing, form, and spacing that complements the building being illuminated

• Building light fixtures shall be of architectural quality in regard to durability, construction, and aesthetic appearance.

• Building light fixtures, whether exposed or concealed, shall not have exposed conduit runs, junction boxes, or other “unfinished” elements exposed to view.

• Utilitarian building lighting fixtures located in service areas shall be concealed from view from the public ROW and private streets.

**Design Guidelines**

• Where lighting of buildings and buildings elements is proposed, the overall lighting design should:
• reflect primary building entrances,
• complement adjacent plazas and expanded streetscapes
• avoid illuminating building faces adjacent to and directly facing existing residential areas,
• avoid glare

• Building illumination above the second floor should be shielded or provide full cutoff to minimize the view of exposed lamps from the street or an adjacent occupied space.
6.0 Site and Building Signage

General Intent: Mixed-use communities contain an intensity and density of uses commensurate with an active urban environment. A well conceived system of site and building signage is important for making sense of this environment. To be most effective, signs should be integral and complementary to the character of the streetscape and the architecture of the buildings that they serve. In addition to basic functions such as tenant identity and way-finding, signage should enhance the character of specific building types, reinforce the hierarchy of streets and spaces, and contribute to the ambience of the district.

Signage requirements are addressed in the Denver Zoning Ordinance for all zone districts (Sec. 59-536 to 59-545), and are specifically modified for mixed-use districts (Sec. 59-315). Existing regulations govern signage within the Primary GDP Area unless specifically modified below.

6.1 Building Signage

Intent

- To create signs and graphic elements that are appropriate to and expressive of the use they identify.

- To encourage signs which are creative in their use of form, materials, lighting, and graphics without creating visual clutter.

- To provide building signage that communicates effectively and is visually integrated into the building architecture.

- To mitigate the external effects of building signs on neighboring residential areas.

Design Standards

- All building signs shall conform to the Denver Zoning Code and any Common Sign Plan.

- All buildings with ground floor commercial uses shall provide areas of the primary building façade designed to accommodate changeable tenant signage. Structure, materials, detailing and power sources shall be designed with consideration of signage installation requirements and shall be readily adaptable and repairable as tenant sign needs change.

- All building signs shall be of durable and attractive materials and construction suited to an urban environment.

- All conduits, transformers, or other “unfinished” elements providing support or power to building signs shall be concealed from view from the public ROW and private streets.

- In addition to one universal parking sign, parking garages shall be allowed only one other building identification sign per vehicular entry and exit.
• No portion of a projecting tenant sign shall be located closer than 25 feet horizontally from any other projecting sign.

Design Guidelines

• Building sign design should be compatible with the architecture of the building being served in terms of form, material, color and detailing.

• Externally lit signs are preferable to internally illuminated signs.

• Building signs of any type should not be located within the façade of any residential portion of a mixed-use building.

• Wall, window, and arcade signs should not overlap or conceal major architectural elements. Certain projecting signs may overlap architectural elements if specifically approved by the reviewing authorities.

6.2 District Signage

Intent

• To identify and mark gateways, streets, or districts within the Primary GDP Area.

• To create an organized and interrelated system of signs, sign structures, sign lighting, and graphics.

• To create signage that is creative in its use of form, materials, lighting, color and graphics.

• To accommodate signage that aids in way-finding while enhancing the character of a district.

• To mitigate visual clutter of the streetscape.

Design Standards

• All district signs shall conform to the Denver Zoning Code and any Common Sign Plan.

• All district signs shall be of durable and attractive materials and construction suited to an urban environment.

• All conduits, transformers, or other “unfinished” elements providing support or power to district signs shall be concealed from view from the public ROW and private streets.

• No portion of a district sign shall be located closer than 25 feet horizontally from any other district sign.

• Any signage in the public ROW must be approved by the Department of Public Works and should be part of a Comprehensive Sign Plan to be approved by CPD.
Design Guidelines

- District signage should be located in the Public Amenity Zone aligned with, centered between, or otherwise integrated into the design of the street tree and street furnishing system.

- District signage should be located within 25 feet vertically of adjacent grade and oriented toward the ROW or private street.

- District signage design should be compatible with the architecture of surrounding buildings in terms of form, material, color, and detailing.

6.2a Example of district signage.
7.0 PROCEDURES FOR DESIGN REVIEW

7.1 Design Review Process

The following process is adopted pursuant to Section 59-313(b) to create a Design Review process that supersedes the process set forth in Section 59-313(c) of the Denver Revised Municipal Code so that Design Review will proceed, as far as possible, concurrently with development/site plan review (“Design Review”).

7.2 Applicability

All of the Primary GDP Area is subject to these Colorado Center Urban Design Standards and Guidelines (UDSG). Design Review shall be conducted by Community Planning and Development (CPD) for compliance with the UDSG.

7.3 Objective

The objective of the Design Review process is to create a clear, consistent, and predictable process for development within the Primary GDP Area as envisioned in the Colorado Station GDP. It is the goal of CPD to simultaneously perform the Design Review with the site plan review process.

7.4 Submittal Requirements

The Applicant shall meet with or submit to CPD design documents at the following three key project phases: Pre-Submittal Conference, Schematic Design Phase, and Design Development Phase. Design Review meetings may be requested by the Applicant at any point in the development process to provide clear direction on specific design issues.

7.5 Pre-Submittal Conference

A mandatory Pre-Submittal Conference shall be held between the Applicant and CPD staff to review the scope of the site plan and the Design Review process and to identify all requirements, presumptions, and considerations. Prior to the Pre-Submittal Conference, the Applicant shall submit the following:

- Project intent, including design intent
- Project scope, project uses and adjacent uses and site description
- Context photos
- Conceptual site plan
- Special considerations such as project phasing, etc.

7.6 Schematic Design Phase

For the Schematic Design Phase, the Applicant plan shall submit the following materials:

- Preliminary Plan submittal as defined in the Denver Planning Office’s PUD/PBG Site Plan Rules & Regulations,
- Narrative of how the UDSG have been met by the Schematic Design Phase submittal,
- Schematic Building Elevations.
- Schematic Floor Plans

If a Standard is not met, the Applicant must demonstrate in the narrative that the alternative shown on the Schematic Design Phase submittal meets one or more of the following criteria:

- The alternative better achieves the Intent Statement,
- The Intent Statement that the Standard was created to address will not be achieved by application of the Standard in this particular circumstance,
- The application of Guidelines to achieve the Intents will be improved by not applying the Standard in this particular case,
- Unique site characteristics or market factors make the Standard impractical or cost prohibitive.

The Schematic Design submittal shall be reviewed and comments given by CPD within twenty-five (25) working days after receipt of a complete submittal. Review periods may be extended by an amount of time equal to any delay caused by the Applicant, or with the Applicant’s consent. Any proposed alternatives shall be deemed acceptable if approved by CPD.

7.7 Neighborhood Notification

Within five working days of a Schematic Design Phase submittal, CPD shall notify the City Council member(s) in whose District the project is located and all Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs) within 200 feet (200’) of the project, in accordance with Section 12-96, of a submittal that requires Design Review. Such Council member(s) or RNOs may request additional information. Written comments may be submitted to CPD within fifteen (15) working days after the notice is sent.
7.8 Design Development Phase

For the Design Development Phase, the Applicant shall submit the following materials:

- Final Plan submittal as defined in the Denver Planning Office’s PUD/PBG Site Plan Rules & Regulations,
- Reply to written CPD comments on the Schematic Design Phase submittal with updated statement of how the UDSG’s have been met,
- Design Development Building Elevations,
- Design Development Floor Plans,
- Design Development landscape/streetscape plan and materials,
- Design Development cross sections, if required by CPD,
- Design Development façade details and treatments,
- Exterior building materials and sample board,
- Renderings and/or model – optional.

The Design Development Phase submittal shall be reviewed and comments given by CPD within ten (10) working days after receipt of a complete submittal. Review periods may be extended by an amount of time equal to any delay caused by the Applicant, or with the Applicant’s consent. CPD shall approve, recommend that the Applicant revise and resubmit, or deny the submittal.

7.9 Modifications

Proposed modifications to an approved Design Development Phase submittal may be administratively approved (redlined), if such modifications are consistent with these UDSG. CPD shall review the proposed modifications and shall approve or deny the request within ten (10) working days of receiving a complete request. If the modification is substantial, CPD staff may request that the modification go back through the Design Review process.

7.10 Criteria for Special Review Uses

Certain uses in the Primary GDP Area’s T-MU-30 zoning may require Special Review. The following are the criteria to be used by the Zoning Administrator for determining whether the standards for approval of special review uses as found in Section 59-306(f) of the Revised Municipal Code have been met:

7.11 Standard 1

The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the special review use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety or general welfare of the community.
Criteria:

- The special review use shall be consistent with the Colorado Station GDP and the Primary GDP Area’s zoning.

7.12 Standard 2

The use and enjoyment of other existing uses on the surrounding property will not be substantially impaired by the establishment, maintenance, and operation of the special review use.
Criteria:

- The special review use shall be consistent with the Colorado Station GDP and the Primary GDP Area’s zoning.
- The concerns of abutting property owners can be reasonably mitigated.

7.13 Standard 3

The establishment of the special review use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.
Criteria:

- The special review use shall be consistent with the Colorado Station GDP and the Primary GDP Area’s zoning.
- The special review use shall not change the character of the site where it is located, as described on GDP.
- The concerns of abutting property owners can be reasonably mitigated.

7.14 Standard 4

The proposed special review use meets all of the applicable provisions of Chapter 59 (zoning) and all applicable regulations.
Criteria:

- The special review use shall be compliant with T-MU-30 zoning requirements, as applicable to the Primary GDP Area.

7.15 Standard 5

The aggregate impacts of similar uses shall not result in harmful external effects or environmental impacts.
Criteria:

- The special review use shall be consistent with the Colorado Station GDP and the Primary GDP Primary Area’s zoning.
7.16 **Standard 6**

The special review use shall conform to all applicable regulations of the zone district in which it is located.

Criteria:

- If the special review use complies with all applicable regulations of the zone district or any variances granted, it will be deemed to comply with the Zoning Code and applicable regulations.

7.17 **Standard 7**

The special review use shall be consistent with the Colorado Station GDP and shall enhance access to or use of multiple modes of transportation.

Criteria:

- The arrangement of the special review use shall allow residents, workers and shoppers to walk to transit and other destinations within the project.
- The special review use shall be consistent with the Colorado Station GDP and the Primary GDP Area’s zoning.

7.18 **Standard 8**

The proposed use shall be consistent with the purpose and objectives of the Primary GDP Area’s zoning in which it is located.

Criteria:

- The arrangement of the special review use shall allow residents, workers and shoppers to walk to transit and other destinations within the project.
- The special review use shall be consistent with the Colorado Station GDP.

7.19 **Standard 9**

The proposed special review use shall be sited and designed to be compatible with adjacent uses.

Criteria:

- The special review use shall be consistent with the Colorado Station GDP and the Primary GDP Area’s zoning.

7.20 **Standard 10**

The potential impacts of the proposed special review use will be adequately mitigated.
COLORADO STATION GDP
Urban Design Standards and Guidelines

Adopted __________, 2008

Approved for Legality

_________________________________________ Date
Jo Ann Weinstein
Assistant City Attorney, City and County of Denver

Approved and Adopted

_________________________________________ Date
Barbara J. Kelly
Chair, Denver Planning Board

_________________________________________ Date
Peter J. Park
Manager, Community Planning and Development

Adopted and published as enabled by Section 59-314(e)(2)a and pursuant to Section 12-18 of the Revised Municipal Code, as amended, of the City and County of Denver.