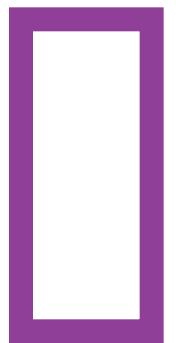


A Framework of Subdistricts



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Section 1: Downtown Denver Overview



Denver, Colorado is located on high, rolling plains with clear views of the Rocky Mountains. It was one of the few cities in history that was not adjacent to a major road, railroad, lake, navigable river or body of water when it was founded. Rather, Denver was formed where the first few flakes of gold were found in 1858. It was here that the first camp was made and the first known permanent structure recorded was a saloon.¹ It is also noted that the Indians

¹ Colorado tourism Colorado.com

warned early settlers not to build here, but they did not listen. Ironically, in its first few years Denver was destroyed twice by fire and flood.

Since the turn of the 19th century, Denver has become a place of wealth and industry. Silver and gold barons once resided in the surrounding areas and their wealth was prominently displayed in the construction of new mansions. The core of Denver was further



defined by the Platte River and an industrial boom came with the arrival of the railroads.

Denver today is still very much a Western City (ironically it is geographically closer to the exact center of the US), experiencing wealth, prosperity and loss. Denver's architecture today reflects the city's three boom periods: Victorian, when silver was discovered in Leadville; turn-of-the-century, when gold was discovered in Cripple Creek; and contemporary, when the energy boom added 16 skyscrapers to the downtown skyline in a three year period, 1980-1983. However, today portions of the core of Downtown Denver appear undeveloped, abandoned and underutilized.

For the past 25 years, Denver has experienced rapid growth with a changing and adapting urban center. The building boom in recent years has seen Denver more than double in population since 1960. In 1983 alone, as much office space was added to the city as already existed. Overall, Denver has more than doubled in population since 1960 and the metro population has increased by 29.8% since 1990. In 2000, the City & County of Denver had a

population of 554,636, making it larger than the entire population of Wyoming (480,000 people)². Surprisingly, Denver is the 20th largest metro area in America, and has the 10th largest downtown area³.

Today, downtown Denver is known for its creative culture, renowned sporting venues, upscale restaurants and bars, a historical street mall and as a place of residence. As a gateway to the Rocky Mountains, tourism is an integral component to Denver's economy. Many visitors decide to stay and call Colorado home.

Just as explorers came to seek their fortune in gold, visionaries and entrepreneurs attempt to capitalize with development and businesses in the current Downtown. The infill opportunities for downtown Denver are inevitable and predictable. These opportunities afford planners a venue for business to thrive and must be anticipated.

Section 2: Development Potential Summary



(SOURCE: DOWNTOWN DENVER PARTNERSHIP)

As mentioned earlier Denver is a destination city of the West where the downtown is recognized for all the choices that it offers. It is a lively gathering space with number of different restaurant pubs and bars, which supports the retail business along the 16th Street Mall. During the day

² Denver Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau www.denver.org

Downtown Denver transforms into a bustling financial district along 17th Street while at night it is hub for the club hoppers and other visitors who after spending the day in the mountains head downtown for a sporting event, concert, symphony, restaurants and bars. Downtown Denver truly offers a unique and colorful experience to all residents and visitors.

In 2004, the Downtown Partnership launched a redevelopment plan known as the Silver Triangle Framework Plan looking to capitalize on the major projects that are shaping the area. The area bounded by Speer Boulevard, Lawrence Street and the western half of the 16th Street Mall and, Broadway and Colfax. This is the center of new development including the recent Colorado Convention Center expansion, the new Hyatt Regency Denver Hotel, the



Art Museum expansion and the Buell Theater Renovation at the Denver Center of Performing Arts.⁴

³ Denver Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau www.denver.org

⁴ <http://www.downtowndenver.com/pdfs/050824-Silver%20Triangle%20Framework%20Plan.pdf>



Currently the majority of the vacant parcels in Downtown is being utilized as Pay and Park sites and offers a unique opportunity in terms of future uses. Colorado Convention Center and the Silver Triangle have been major cultural destinations making 14th Street a prominent link. It is the street that connects the visitors and the residents alike to the best attractions in Downtown Denver.

But the area between these cultural destinations, the 16th Street Mall and the historic spine of Downtown Denver have been underutilized. 15th Street has never been more than a secondary retail strip. We found that the vacant parcels in these areas can be better utilized in creating new retail areas to connect and extend the 16th Street Mall into other peripheral areas. Census information shows that people drive for over thirty minutes to get to Downtown. By creating more residential uses we will be able to cut commute time while promoting more nighttime activities in the area.

Although all the current vacant parcels are being utilized for parking needs, parking still remains a challenge, especially on game day. Downtown parking is often compared to suburban parking, which is usually, plentiful and free and since employers subsidize parking it adds to the cost of doing business in this area. Our redevelopment plan includes parking structures at various key locations to address the issue of parking.

The park sites along Speer Boulevard and the Civic Center have become a challenge due to the number of transient and homeless people and this is a challenge that needs to be addressed as this should not become Denver’s identity or image.

Our group understands that in order to maintain the existing synergy of Downtown Denver it is crucial that we provide links to the 16th Street Mall, Larimer Square, the Art Museum and the Civic Center and capitalize on these existing assets. Current expansion projects include public institutions and hotels with an investment in excess of \$300 million. The future of this area should build from these projects to create an active pedestrian friendly, public destination. With majority of the development being residential and promotion of businesses and services that will support the residential use including grocery stores, school, parks and parking plazas for all the downtown visitors helping and creating a contemporary urban district.



Section 3: Proposed Buildout Scenario Description

The buildout scenario proposed in this report was inspired by the Silver Triangle Framework Plan, a vision for downtown Denver that was drafted by Design Workshop for Downtown Denver Partnership. This research component was completed in August of 2005 and was an important first step in understanding what opportunities and constraints the business owners, developers, policy makers and residents envisioned for the city.

Three of the five goals of the plan are in direct correlation to the Final Project; to stimulate redevelopment, to provide an overall framework to guide future redevelopment and planning and to create a vision that defines the future character and uses. By using this plan as our inspiration and guide, we envisioned a development strategy that would resemble an *implemented* strategy based upon policies put forth in the Silver Triangle Framework Plan which are supported by the city and development community.

The primary intent of the plan is to establish an identity for the Silver Triangle. The proposal identifies various opportunities for future development capitalizing on investments already made in major cultural centers like the expansion of the Convention Center, the Art Museum addition, construction of a new Hyatt Regency and the renovation of the Buell Theater. Current retail destinations include Larimer Square and the Denver Pavilions.

The Plan identifies and organizes the area into several districts within the boundaries of Speer Boulevard, Lawrence Street, the western portion of the 16th Street Mall, Broadway and Colfax to the north. Districts were defined in terms of their adjacency to important attractions such as Coors Field (Ballpark District) or the Financial District (17th Street area).

Using these important landmarks as guides for growth, sub-districts were designated. The Silver Triangle Plan designates 14th Street as its linear core as illustrated in Diagram 1 below.



Diagram 1: District Sub-Areas These define suggested land uses and redevelopment possibilities for specific areas in the district.

We expanded upon the key Subdistricts defined above. Supplement 1 shows our proposal of the continuation of the Districts to the Northeast while maximizing the infill buildout potential, current zoning and observing key connections. The subdivision of the districts in this manner allows 14, 16 and 17th Streets to link the districts together as seen in Supplement 2. The four distinct areas (Larimer Square, Subdistrict 3, Subdistrict 2, and Subdistrict 1) are summarized below;

Larimer Square is its own unique sub-district due to many of its buildings are designated historic and serving retail while preserving a time in Denver’s history as marketplace and saloon. We

chose to convert parcels 23 and 25 to structured parking. This was in an effort to make up for the surface parking removed by the overall buildout plan. Larimer Square hosts many patrons due to sporting events held in the vicinity and the perception of plentiful parking is important if visitors intend to go downtown early for dinner or a drink at a local establishment. Two hour parking meters simply do not fill this need.

Sub-district 3 is known as the Lawrence Street Performing Arts District. Two important intersections identified by the Plan are at 14th Street and Arapahoe/Lawrence. These transportation nodes connect Speer Boulevard to Downtown. To anchor this portion of the district lot 26a was designated as Residential/Mixed Use, lot 26b is structured parking, 26c is a local park or civic space and 26d is primarily retail. This mix of uses on one block serves as an introduction to the overall character of Downtown as a regional draw and its ability to function at all levels.

This district in particular concentrates on connections to Skyline Park and the Denver Center for Performing Arts (DCPA). To capitalize on Skyline Park, several smaller parks (lots 5, 26c, and 17) were added in order to create a greenway corridor in downtown. By adding this corridor, a recreation amenity is provided to residents and encourages pedestrian movement among visitors to the city center.

Sub-district 2 is known as the Convention Center District and is organized around the Colorado Convention Center, Regency Hotel and its boundaries are 14th Street, 16th Street, Welton and Champa. Key intersections are at California and Stout Streets where they intersect 14th Street. These transportation corridors are envisioned as gateways into the district while also providing connections to the 16th Street Mall retail corridor. 14th Street is an opportunity to connect Larimer Square to the Civic Center.

To support the DCPA, we have designated lot 41 (lot size is 22,331 square feet and 17 floors) to serve the performers by providing a low-cost hotel that is in close proximity to the venue as well as convenient retail.

New opportunities for student housing are found in this district by providing a high density campus village at lots 36 and 80 to serve Auraria/UCD students. This move is in response to the Auraria administration's requirement that all freshmen and incoming international students reside in Campus Village housing. The current plan consists of 230 units and we have anticipated the possibility of a future need of students wishing to reside in campus housing beyond this first year requirement by providing an additional 817 units.

Sub-district 1 is referred to as Tremont Place Residential District and has direct connections to many of Downtown's amenities such as the Pavilions retail center, Civic Center Park and the Art Museum. A pedestrian-friendly civic boulevard is envisioned for adjacent Colfax Avenue on the southern border of the Silver Triangle. Connection to the arts and government buildings is a primary function of this district.

The downtown area is projected to accommodate an increasing residential population, therefore high density residential, food markets and pocket parks were are recommended for this sub-district due to its location and relative size. An amenity our group added to the program was an elementary school (Lot 81) to support the new residential component.

A residential cluster (lots 1, 0, 82, 60 and 52) is created around a central food market (lot 54) and adjacent hotel. The hotel (lot 63) is specified as an extended stay establishment available for visiting relatives of residents or the business traveler. An additional support component in this district is small pocket parks (lot 46, 59, 71) designed to act as public gathering spaces for residents.

Another provision that our group added as a benefit was the designation of lot 2 as a homeless facility. This facility is envisioned as a partial solution to the large numbers of homeless populating the downtown area. By providing services and short-term accommodations we believe this will enhance the downtown experience for visitors and residents.

Some general components that apply to all of the districts are the importance of public parking structures, the addition of parks in all districts and providing shopping/retail as a draw to area and to support residential.

Parking structures have been provided in a limited and deliberate fashion for all districts. The role of these structures is to support the residents and their guests. Most new buildings in this scenario only account for the parking needs of a base number of residents but neglect those who may be visiting or those units that have more residents that anticipated.

Another general component added to all districts was the addition of parks to each of the areas. This was in anticipation of the needs of an increasing residential population. Green spaces in an urban environment provide opportunities to connect to nature, trees can function as air cleaners and sitting areas create civic spaces where residents can interact with one another. Also, it is likely that many residents will bring a pet into the city to live and these parks can serve as a space to exercise them. When reviewing the calculations for residential without parks, total units were 10,631 versus 9412 with parks. We believe that the quality of life gained by adding these green spaces to the urban environment outweighs the revenue lost to the 1,219 units.

The last general component is the provision of shopping and retail to all of the districts. This addition is in an effort to act as a draw to the area and to support the residents who live in the district.

Development and buildout of Downtown Denver is inevitable and can be a predictable process. This proposal for the creation of a Framework of Subdistricts is a thoughtful and logical way to further organize Denver's core into a lively, functional and comfortable place for future residents and visitors.