



TO: Denver Planning Board, Julie Underdahl, Chair

FROM: Sarah Showalter and Steven Chester – CPD Planning Services; Chris Gleissner – CPD Development Services; Cynthia Patton – Public Works

DATE: September 24, 2014

RE: **Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan – Information Item**

Our Golden Triangle planning team is pleased to submit the final draft of the Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan for your final consideration and approval as a supplement to the Denver Comprehensive Plan. This memorandum documents the plan contents and process based on the three criteria established in Plan 2000:

1. Consistency with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and applicable supplements
2. Inclusive public process
3. Long-term view

The memo concludes with the staff recommendation to the Denver Planning Board. To review the draft plan, please refer to the hard copy provided in your packets for the last meeting (September 17 information item) or download the PDF from the website:

www.denvergov.org/goldentriangle

1 - Plan Consistency

Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000

Environmental Sustainability Chapter

Objective 2: Ensure environmental stewardship of natural resources, taking into account the entire ecosystem, not just human needs. Preventing pollution will be the action of first choice in accomplishing this objective.

2-E – Conserve raw materials by: Promoting efforts to adapt existing buildings for new uses, rather than destroying them.

2-F – Conserve land by:

- Promoting infill development within Denver at sites where services and infrastructure are already in place.
- Designing mixed-use communities and reducing sprawl, so that residents can live, work and play within their own neighborhoods.
- Creating more density at transit nodes.
- Sharing parking at activity centers.
- Protecting natural corridors, wetlands and floodplains from the encroachment of development.
- Encouraging the redevelopment of brownfields.

Land Use Chapter

Objective 3: Preserve and enhance the individuality, diversity and livability of Denver's neighborhoods and expand the vitality of Denver's business centers

3-A – Complete neighborhood and area plans for parts of Denver where development or development is likely or desirable.

3-B – Encourage quality infill development that is consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood, that offers opportunities for increased density and more amenities, and that broadens the variety of compatible uses.

Objective 4: Ensure that Denver's [plans] and regulatory system support the development of a clean, efficient and innovative transportation system that meets Denver's future economic and mobility needs.

4-B—Ensure that land-use policies and decisions support a variety of mobility choices including light rail, buses, paratransit, walking and bicycling, as well as convenient access for people with disabilities.

Mobility Chapter

Objective 1: Provide Denver's diverse residents, workers and visitors with a choice of transportation modes that are safe and convenient.

1-B - Promote public transit, both bus and rail, as a safe, attractive and convenient choice for people who might otherwise drive to employment, education, cultural, shopping or other destinations.

1-C - Identify areas throughout the city where transportation policies should reflect pedestrian priorities. These include areas such as schools, child-care centers, civic institutions, business centers, shopping districts and parks.

Objective 7: Address neighborhood transportation issues in a manner that balances overall mobility with neighborhood integrity.

Objective 8: Provide safe and convenient facilities to encourage bicycling and walking for commuting, recreation and other trips.

8-A—Ensure safe and convenient access and accommodation of bicycle riders, pedestrians and transit riders.

Denver's Legacies Chapter

Objective 3: Incorporate visionary urban design principles into new development patterns to achieve a higher concentration and more diverse mix of housing, employment and transportation options in identified areas of the city.

Objective 5: Preserve Denver's historic resources.

Objective 9: Plan for the maintenance and expansion of Denver's parks and recreation system.

Objective 11: Strengthen Denver's system of "green" connections: trails, bicycle routes, parkways, greenways and watercourses.

Economic Activity Chapter

Objective 5: Support the creation and growth of neighborhood businesses that enhance the vitality and quality of life in their communities.

Neighborhoods Chapter

Objective 1: Strengthen the positive attributes and distinctive character of each neighborhood to help sustain Denver as a healthy, vital city.

Objective 3: Make neighborhoods clean and safe places that inspire community pride, where residents and visitors feel secure and comfortable.

Arts and Culture Chapter

Objective 1: Support and promote a flourishing artistic community.

1-C—Support a full range of cultural and artistic opportunities within Denver’s neighborhoods and among its diverse communities, including festivals, performing and visual arts events, and cultural activities.

Blueprint Denver (2002)

Key Concepts:

- All areas of Denver are either an Area of Stability or Change, or on a continuum from change to stability
- Direct growth to places that will benefit from an infusion of activity, population and investment
- Character preservation, reinvestment and limited growth are the primary concerns for stable residential neighborhoods
- Regulations should encourage development with standards for appropriately located density
- Public private partnerships create innovative projects
- Public infrastructure investments stimulate private investment and improve the physical environment
- Smart growth connects residents to transit, jobs and centers of activity, and increases housing and employment opportunities

Guiding Principles: Areas of Change

- Contribute to urban design vision
- Respect valued attributes of area
- Expand transportation choice
- Improve environmental quality

Civic Responsibilities of Small Area Plans

- Affordable housing
- Transportation system integrity
- Transit oriented development
- Community facilities
- Consistency with adopted plans

Downtown Denver Area Plan (2007)

Strategy D1 – Restore and activate the iconic features, such as mountain views, major public buildings, cherished history buildings and parks and parkways, that provide distinctive identity to Downtown and the Denver region, and foster a collection of identifiable districts throughout Downtown.

D1e. Prepare and update adopted plans for district areas (e.g. Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan . . .) to reflect changing character and other planning issues.

Key Recommendations for the Golden Triangle (page 47):

- Activate the restored Evans School and develop compatible infill on the remainder of the site to facilitate appropriate development along Acoma Avenue of the Arts.
- Enhance the pedestrian and bike environment throughout the district and provide improved pedestrian crossings of the Grand Boulevards where appropriate.
- Connect to Civic Center Station via the Downtown Circulator.
- Orient development to reinforce the scale, quality and character of Speer and Broadway/Lincoln, the bordering Grand Boulevards.
- Encourage growth of existing arts-oriented retail uses.

Strategic Transportation Plan (2008)

Vision

A great city is livable for all of its citizens now and in the future. The STP creates a multimodal transportation system to support a livable, connected and sustainable city.

- Multimodal
 - Safe pedestrian linkages
 - Comprehensive bicycle system
 - Dependable transit options
 - Efficient and well-maintained infrastructure
- Safe, Efficient, Reliable
 - Connected multimodal system
 - Safe transportation network
 - Manage congestion
 - Accessible to all

Innovation

- A transformative approach to transportation.
- Plans for travel sheds, not just travel corridors.
- Move people, not just vehicles.
- Does not grow Denver's road footprint.

Strategy

- Maintenance and efficiency are fundamental to our current transportation system, followed by improvements and planning for future transportation.
- A balance of behavioral, physical and operational recommendations are included.
- The result is a comprehensive plan for each travel shed.

Strategic Parking Plan (2010)

This guiding document for on and off street parking policies in Denver is a comprehensive, city-wide framework that helps articulate and clarify the threefold vision and approach for parking management in Denver.

- Acknowledge a variety of land use patterns and contexts so that no one-size-fits-all approaches are unilaterally applied
- Manage parking as a valuable asset to keep the asset healthy and sustainable for the public good
- Take an integrated approach to parking management with partnerships, coordination, and public outreach

The SPP establishes a five-step process with incremental tools and strategies to deal with parking pressures from an asset-management perspective to maximize use of existing parking inventories.

- **Demand** –tools that mitigate or reduce the demand for parking
- **Location** - tools that move demand away from the core and into areas with excess parking supply and clearly locate or define where parking is available for users
- **Time** – tools that introduce or modify time restrictions to encourage turnover and better use of parking spaces.
- **Pricing** – tools that introduce a fee, which provides a wide range of flexibility. When appropriately calibrated, pricing tools can reduce occupancy in high demand areas and create a market for off -street parking
- **Supply** – tools that evaluate existing supply and work to optimize its use to the maximum extent before building/developing new supply.

Finding: the proposed Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan is consistent with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and relevant amendments and supplements.

2 - Inclusive Public Process

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan is based on an extensive public input. The public process utilized to develop the plan is described below.

- Stakeholder Advisory Group — composed of 20 stakeholders who represent the Golden Triangle area including Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs), land owners, business owners, and major cultural institutions. This group met four times during the planning process to provide input on the vision and draft plan.
- Denver Planning Board—interim presentation on public review draft of plan; informational presentation on draft plan; public hearing
- RNOs—the Planning Team made periodic presentations to the Golden Triangle Museum District and the Golden Triangle Association.
- General Public
 - Three Community Workshops
 - Visioning: August 2013 (over 60 attendees)
 - Draft Plan Framework: December 2013 (over 40 attendees)
 - Review Draft Plan: July 2014 (over 70 attendees)
 - Triangle Transformations (September 19, 2013): an interactive event where the planning team demonstrated potential improvements to the neighborhood. This event drew over 200 attendees, who tested and gave input on items such as expanded sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and improved crosswalks.
 - Intercept Surveys at Civic Center Eats, National Night Out, and Taste of Colorado
 - denvergov.org/goldentriangle and email updates throughout the process.

Finding: The Plan was developed through an inclusive public process. Hundreds of people have attended various public meeting throughout the process.

3. Long-term view

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan establishes a vision framework that will guide change in the neighborhood for up to 20 years. Many of the recommendations are based on a long-term vision that will take many years to achieve. The plan's implementation chapter calls for partnerships that will last well into the future to further plan implementation for years to come.

Finding: the plan has an appropriate long term perspective.

Staff Recommendation: Based on the findings that the plan is consistent with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and applicable supplements, that an inclusive public process was utilized, and that the plan includes a long-term view, staff recommends **approval with the condition that the document be edited for clarity and correctness.**