

DOWNTOWN BUILDING HEIGHT

The History,
Evolution, and
Current Standards
for Building Height
in Downtown
Colorado Springs



Dec. 11, 2023

Peter Wysocki and Ryan Tefertiller – Planning + Neighborhood Services

ZONING HISTORY

Prior to 1960

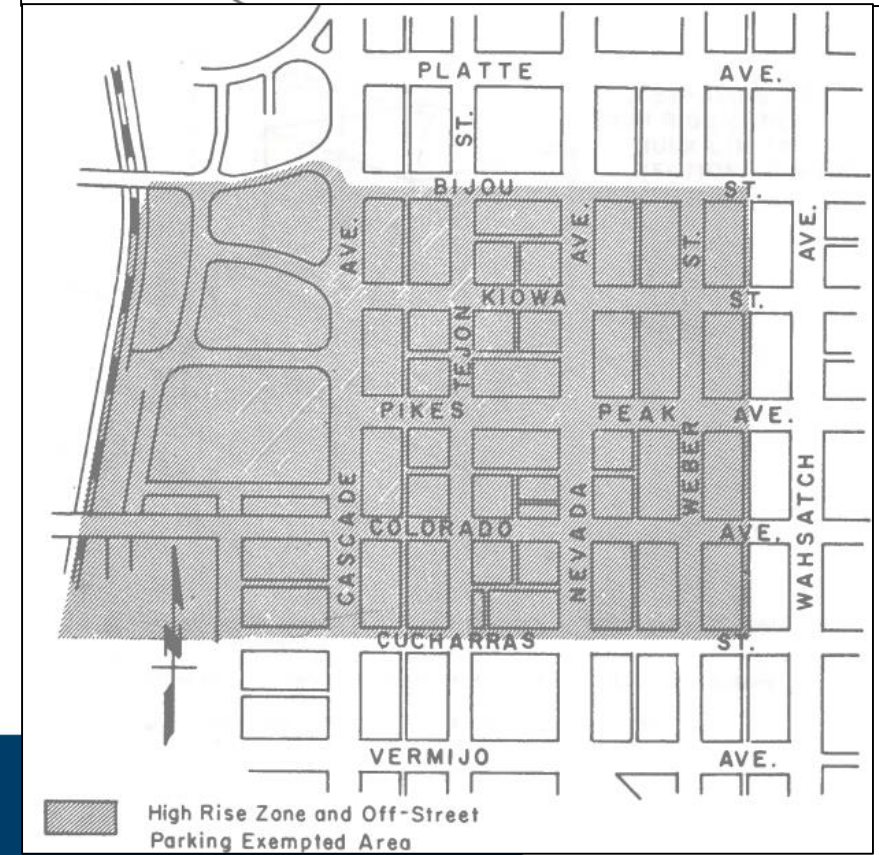
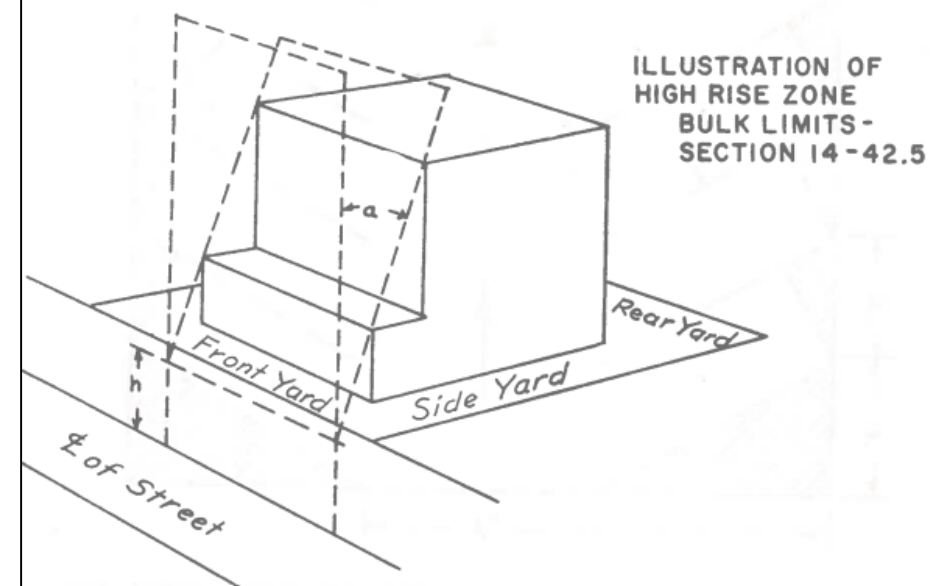
- Height limited by base zone
- Tallest buildings 50' per C6, M2, & PBC3 zones
- Exceptions for public assembly / CPC waivers
 - 148' tall St. Mary's Cathedral built in 1902
 - 149' tall Historic County Courthouse built in 1903
 - 112' tall US Bank Building built in 1909



ZONING HISTORY

1960 High Rise Zone

- Applicable to roughly 135 acres (0.2 sq. miles) of Downtown
- Limits FAR (10 in C6)
- Max residential density
- Bulk Limitations
 - Sloping Plane
 - Slope and starting point vary per base zone
- Minor changes through 2009



BUILDINGS BUILT UNDER HIGH RISE OVERLAY

1.



NAME	HEIGHT	FLOORS	YEAR
Wells Fargo Tower	247'	16	1990

*Tallest building in Colorado Springs since its completion in 1990.

4.



NAME	HEIGHT	FLOORS	YEAR
Colorado Square	185'	14	1976

2.



NAME	HEIGHT	FLOORS	YEAR
FirstBank Building	201'	14	1966

*Was the tallest building in Colorado Springs between 1966-1990. Formerly known as the "[Holly Sugar](#) building."

5.



NAME	HEIGHT	FLOORS	YEAR
Alamo Corporate Center	170'	9	1983

3.

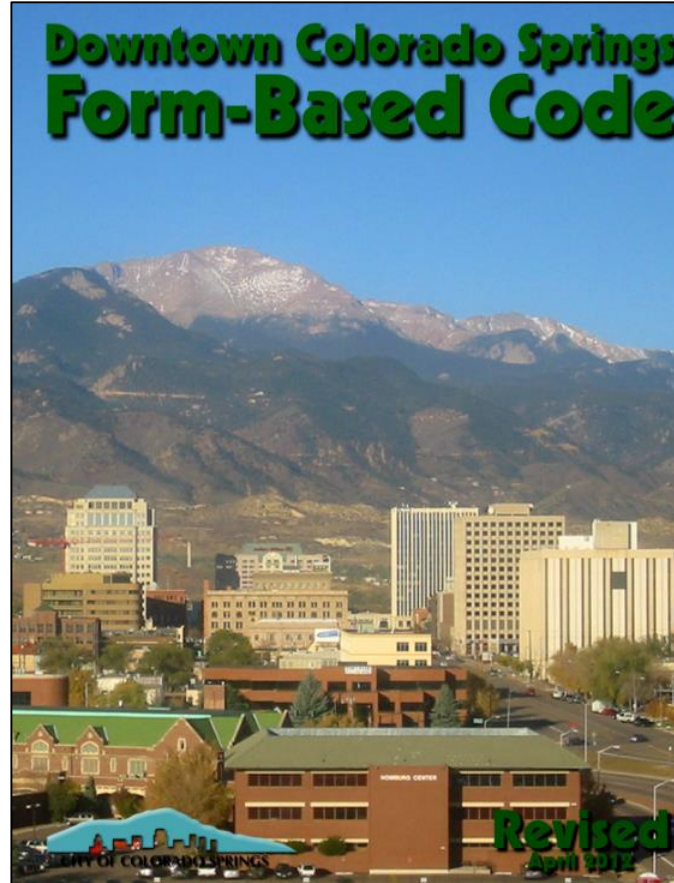


NAME	HEIGHT	FLOORS	YEAR
Plaza of the Rockies South Tower	193'	13	2001

2007-2009 PLANNING & ZONING CHANGES

2007 – 2009 City and Downtown Partnership efforts

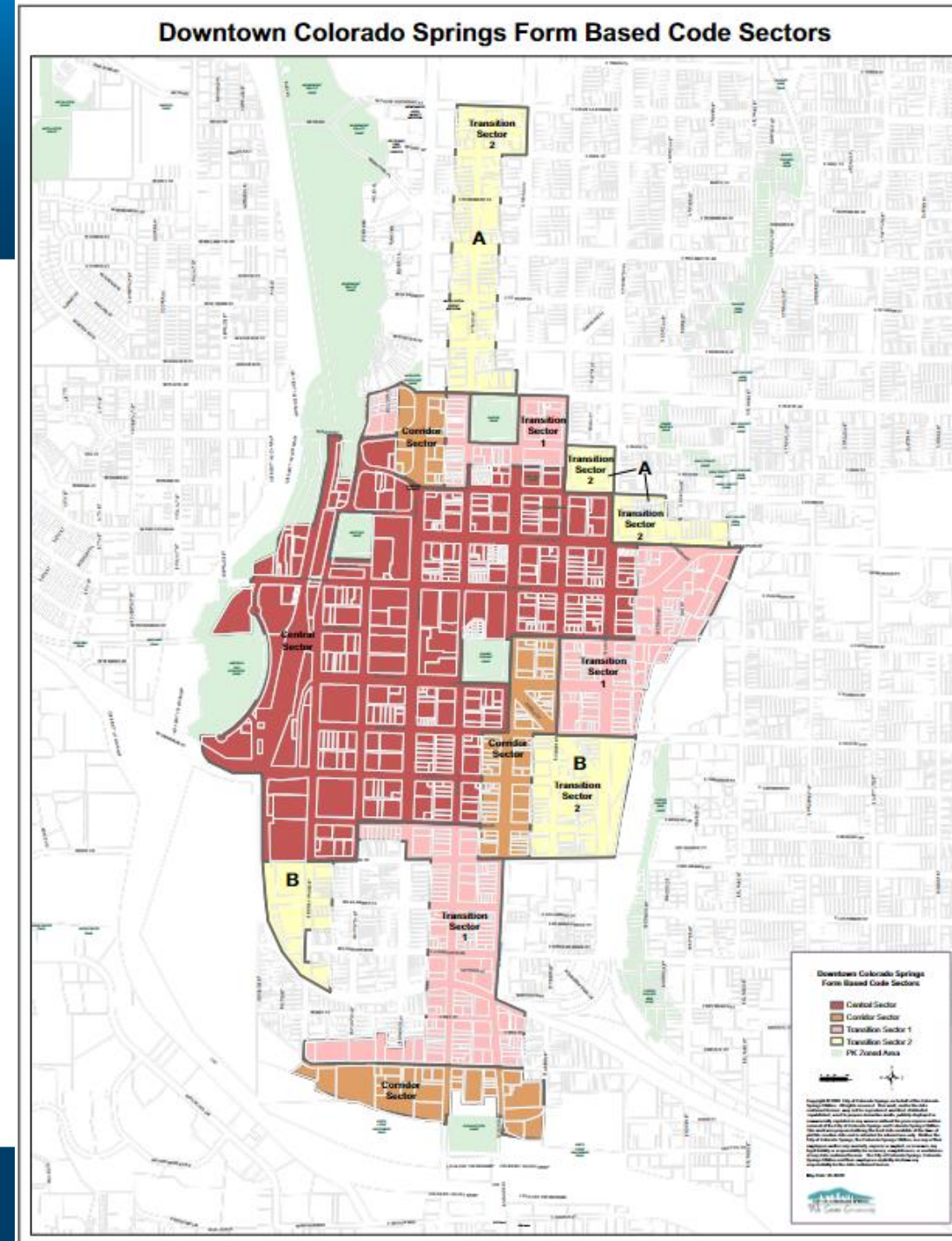
- Imagine Downtown Master Plan
- Form-Based Zone
- Significant stakeholder involvement
- Peer Review
- Approval by Planning Commission and City Council June 2009



FORM-BASED ZONING

- Popular in urban areas over last 50 years
- Success in peer cities
- Focus on “form” not use
- Quality pedestrian experience
- Quantifiable standards not subjective criteria
- Predictability

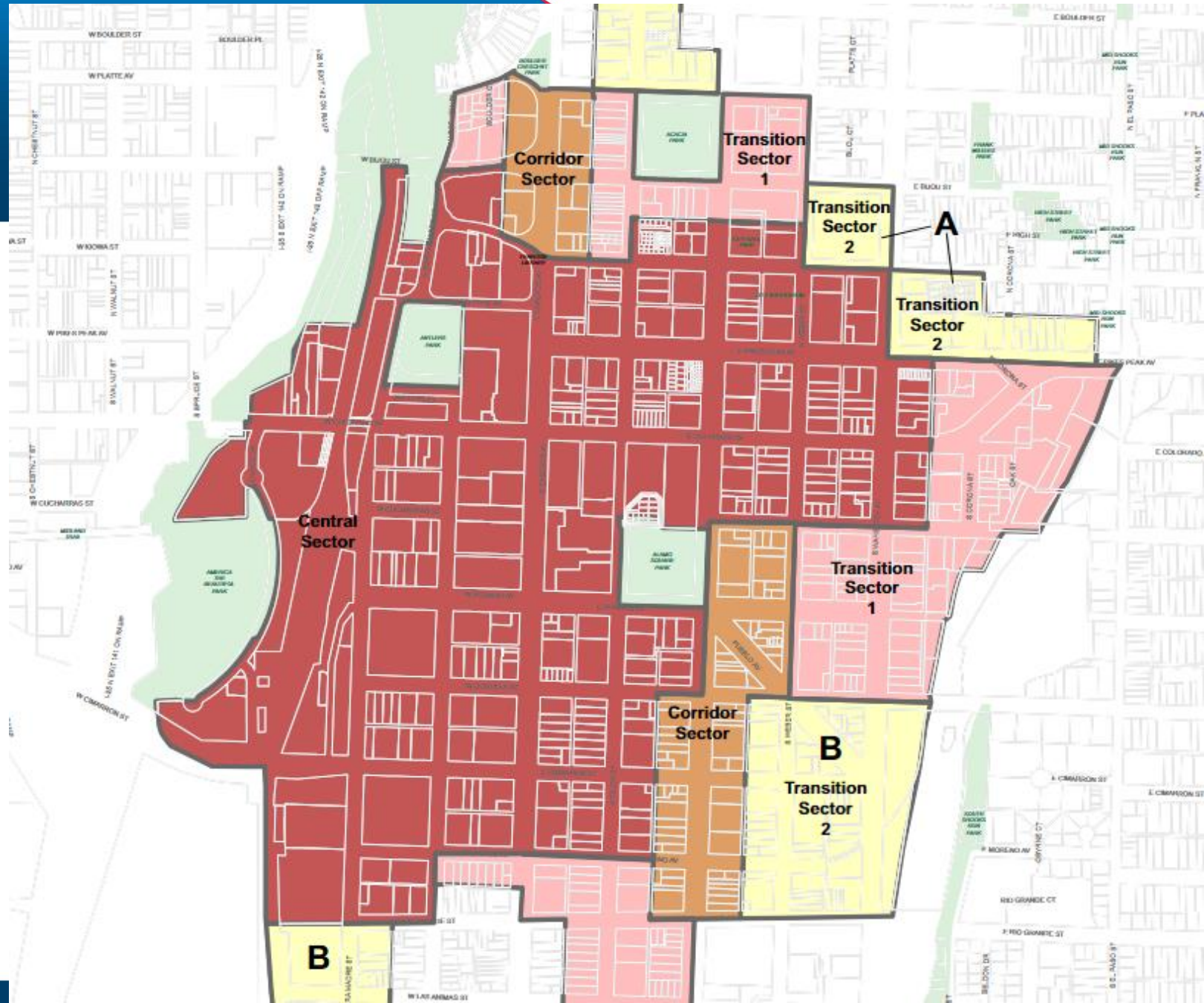
Downtown Building Height



FBZ SECTORS

Approx. 1 sq. mile of
FBZ

- 4 “Sectors”
- Approx. 0.4 sq. mile is Central Sector
- Central Sector includes core of downtown and SW Downtown district
- Many standards correlate to sectors



Downtown Building Height

SECTORS & BUILDING HEIGHT



Max height measured in stories, not feet

- Provides diverse skyline

Max height tied to Sector and Building Type

- Central – unlimited
- Corridor – 10 stories
- Trans 1 – 6 stories
- Trans 2 – 4 stories

2.3.4 Building Height

The maximum and minimum height of new structures varies according to building type and sector. The following table describes the maximum and minimum number of stories relative to building type and sector:

Building Type	SECTORS							
	Central		Corridor		Transition 1		Transition 2	
	max	min	max	min	max	min	max	min
Mixed Use Building	unlimited	2	10	1	6	1	4	1
Live/Work Building	4	2	4	1	6	1	4	1
Civic Building	unlimited	2	10	1	6	1	4	1
Apartment Building	unlimited	2	10	1	6	1	4	1
Small Commercial Bldg.	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rowhouse	N/A	N/A	4	1	4	1	4	1
Accessory Unit	N/A	N/A	2	1	2	1	2	1

*See Section 3 - Density Bonus for exceptions to this table.

TALLEST BUILDINGS APPROVED UNDER FBZ

- Hilton Garden Inn – 11 stories
- Weidner Apartments – 7 stories
- Narrate Mixed Use – 7 stories
- Cimarron Apartments – 7 stories



HEIGHT CONSIDERATIONS

- Market limits height
- Urban infrastructure supports high density
- Urban density drives economy, vibrancy, & sustainability
- View impacts for high-rise and mid-rise similar for adjacent properties



URBAN SKYLINE

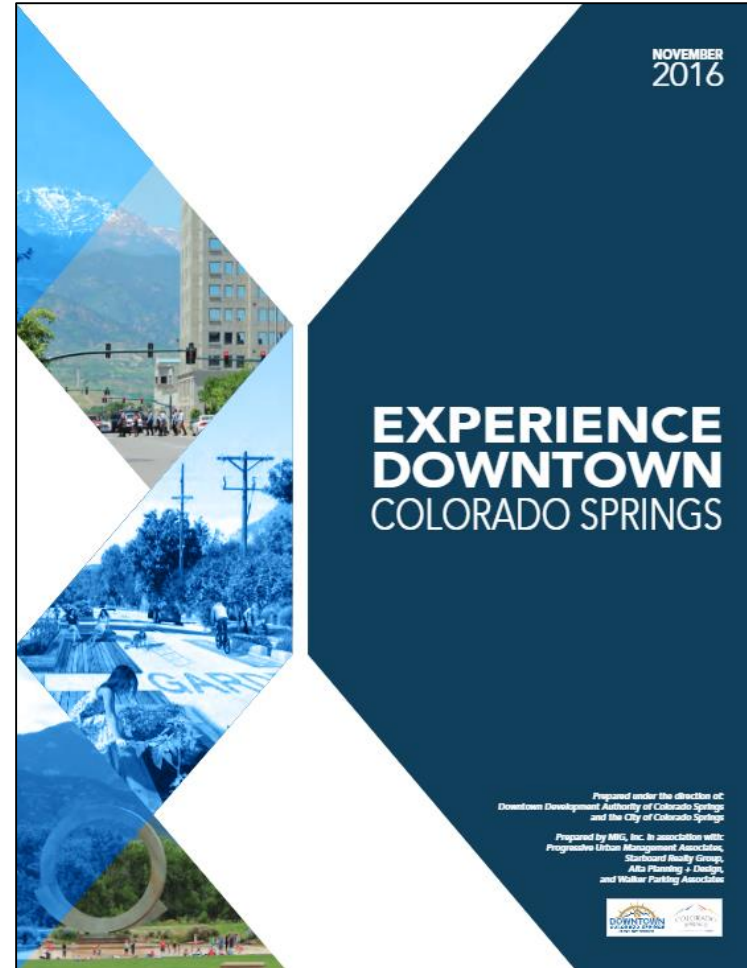
The primary impact
10+ story buildings
have on the Downtown
skyline is on views
from other parts of
town



2016 EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN PLAN



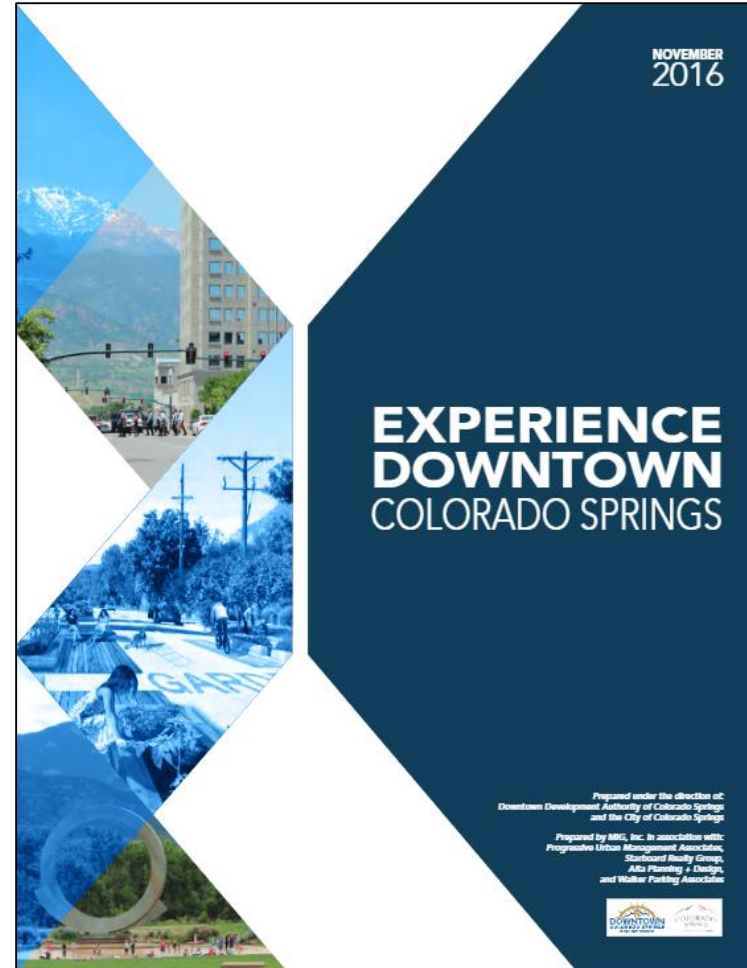
- Update to the Imagine Downtown Master Plan
- DDA Plan of Development + Master Plan
- Significant stakeholder involvement
- Approval by Planning Commission, Downtown Review Board, and City Council Nov. 2016



2016 EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN PLAN

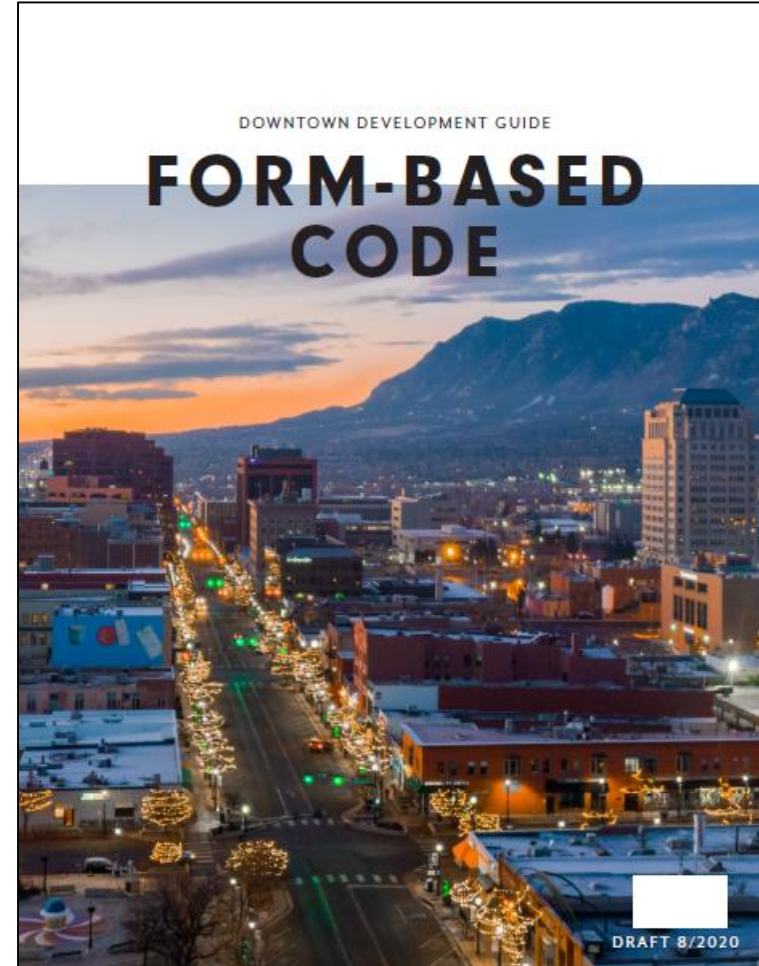


- Chapter 5 includes considerations for future updates to the Form-Based Code
- Stakeholders and officials discussed restricting building height in the Central Sector
- Final draft did not include any recommended changes to height standards
- The Plan does include recommendations regarding design guidelines



FBZ UPDATES

- Planning Staff has been working to draft updates to the Form-Based Code
- To include: clarifications, improved graphics, address emerging issues, possible map changes
- Needs stakeholder vetting
- Future public hearings



DOWNTOWN BUILDING HEIGHT

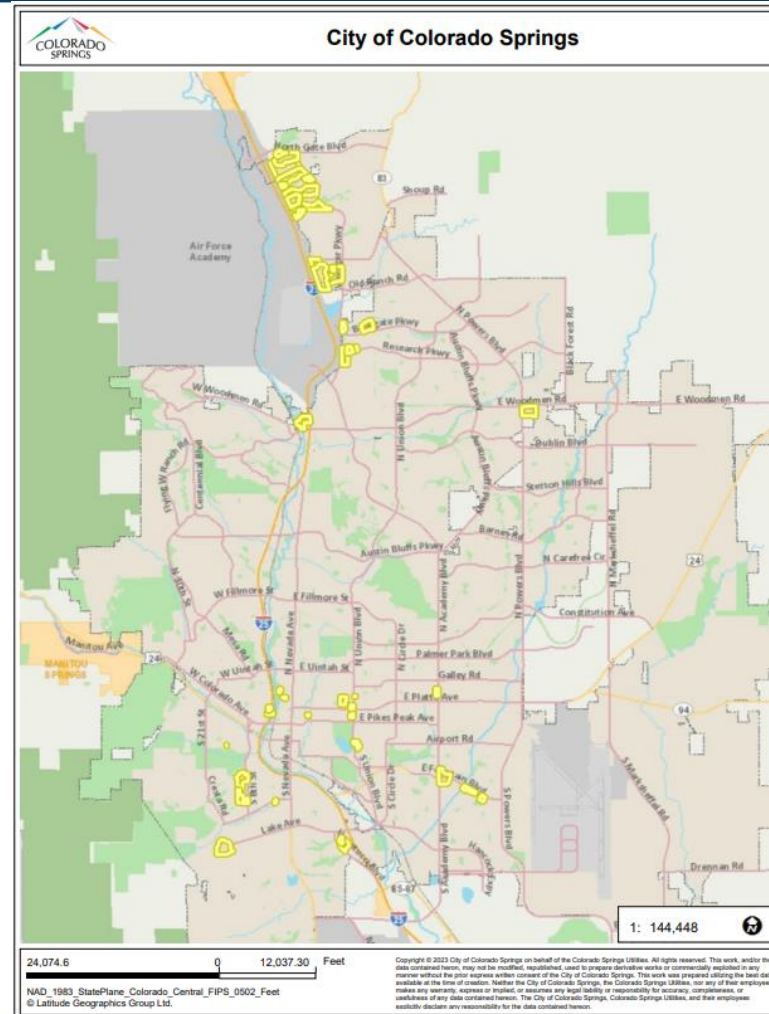
Questions?



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CITY-WIDE HR OVERLAY



UDC HR OVERLAY

Table 7.2.6-C
HR-O District FAR Limitations

Zone District	FAR Factor
R-5	3
MX-T	2
OR	3
MX-N	3
MX-M	5
MX-L	10
BP	2
LI	3
GI	4
PF	2
PDZ	3

Note

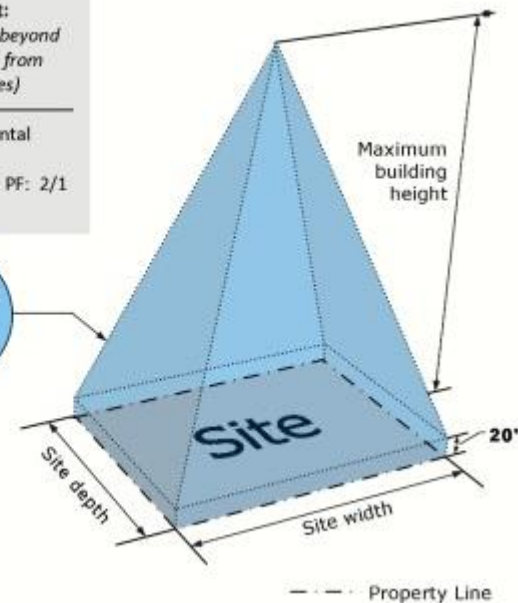
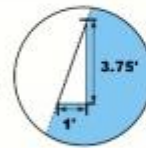
An indoor parking area for vehicles on a lot shall be considered additional lot area for the purposes of determining the required lot area per dwelling unit. The square footage of the parking area shall also be excluded from the gross floor area calculated for purposes of this Section.

Slope Angles by Zone District:

(Buildings shall not encroach beyond the sloping planes, measured from twenty (20) feet above lot lines)

ML-L: 3.75 vertical/1 horizontal
MX-M: 3/1
PUD, R-5, MX-N, MX-L, MX-T, PF: 2/1
GI: 1/1

Example:
MX-L Zone
District



TALLEST BUILDINGS COS



Rank	Name	Height (ft)	Height (m)	Floors	Year	Notes
1	Wells Fargo Tower ^[1]	247	75	16	1990	Tallest building in Colorado Springs since its completion in 1990.
2	FirstBank Building ^[2]	201 (≈)	61.3 (≈)	14	1966	Was the tallest building in Colorado Springs between 1966-1990. Formerly known as the "Holly Sugar building."
3	Plaza of the Rockies South Tower ^[3]	193 (≈)	58.8 (≈)	13	2001	
4	Colorado Square ^[4]	185 (≈)	56.4 (≈)	14	1976	
5	Alamo Corporate Center ^[5]	170 (≈)	51.8 (≈)	9	1983	
6	Penrose Hospital ^[6]	163 (≈)	49.7 (≈)	12	1959	Was the tallest building in Colorado Springs between 1959-1966.
7	Phoenix Tower ^[7]	160 (≈)	48.8 (≈)	12	1975	
8	The Broadmoor Main ^[8]	154 (≈)	46.9 (≈)	9	1918	Was the tallest building in Colorado Springs between 1918-1959.
9	Satellite Hotel ^[9]	148 (≈)	45.1 (≈)	14	1968	
10	Antlers Hilton Hotel ^[10]	147 (≈)	44.8 (≈)	14	1967	Formerly known as the "Antlers Doubletree Hotel."
11	Old El Paso County Courthouse ^[11]	147 (≈)	44.8 (≈)	3	1903	Was the tallest building in Colorado Springs between 1903-1918.
12	Qwest Communications Building ^[12]	145 (≈)	44.2 (≈)	7	?	
13	Great Wolf Lodge ^[13]	140 (≈)	42.7 (≈)	10	2016	
14	Pikes Peak Towers ^[10]	134 (≈)	40.8 (≈)	14	1967	
15	Hilton Garden Inn ^[14]	128 (≈)	39 (≈)	10	2019	
16	The Broadmoor South ^[15]	126 (≈)	38.4 (≈)	9	1961	
17	CityWalk Downtown Lofts ^[16]	122 (≈)	37.2 (≈)	13	1962	
18	Memorial Hospital Central ^[17]	121 (≈)	36.9 (≈)	7	1997	
19	Plaza of the Rockies North Tower ^[18]	120 (≈)	36.6 (≈)	8	1984	
20	Centennial Plaza Apartments ^[19]	116 (≈)	35.4 (≈)	11	1979	

TALLEST BUILDINGS DENVER



Rank	Name	Image	Height ft / m	Floors	Year
1	Republic Plaza		714 / 218	56	1984
2	1801 California		709 / 216	53	1983
3	Wells Fargo Center		698 / 213	52	1983
4	Four Seasons Hotel & Residences		640 / 194	45	2010
5	1144 Fifteenth		617 / 188[15]	40	2018
6	1999 Broadway		545 / 165	43	1985
7	707 17th Street		522 / 159	42	1981
8	555 17th Street		507 / 155	40	1978
9	Hyatt Regency Denver at the Colorado Convention Center		492 / 150	38	2005
10	Spire		478 / 145	41	2009
11	Block 162		460 / 140	30	2021
12	1670 Broadway		448 / 137	34	1980
13	17th Street Plaza		438 / 134	33	1982
14	633 17th Street		434 / 132	32	1974
15	Brooks Tower		420 / 128	42	1968
16	Denver Place South Tower		416 / 127	34	1981
17	One Tabor Center		408 / 124	30	1984
18	Johns Manville Plaza		404 / 123	29	1978
19	Granite Tower		398 / 121	31	1983
20	The Ritz-Carlton		390 / 119	38	1983
21	U.S. Bank Tower		389 / 119	26	1975
22	621 17th Street		385 / 117	28	1957
23	1600 Glenarm Place		384 / 117	32	1967
24	One Lincoln Park		380 / 110	32	2008
25	Denver Financial Center I		374 / 114	32	1981

26	The Confluence		371 / 113	34	2018
27	Dominion Plaza		368 / 112	28	1982
28	Lincoln Center		366 / 112	30	1972
29	1125 17th Street		363 / 111	25	1980
30	United Western Financial Center		357 / 109	24	1961
30	1625 Broadway		357 / 109	29	1980
32	1600 Broadway		352 / 107	26	1972
33	The Curtis		350 / 107	30	1974
34	1800 Larimer		344 / 104.7	22	2010
35	The Quincy		337 / 102.7	28	2017
36	410 Building		335 / 102	24	1978
36	Larimer Place		335 / 102	32	1981
36	1001 17th Street		335 / 102	21	1977
39	Elitch Gardens Observation Tower		330 / 100.6	—	1995
40	Country Club Tower II		328 / 100	32	2017
41	Denver International Airport Tower		327 / 99.6	—	1993
42	Daniels & Fisher Tower		325 / 99	20	1910
42	1675 Broadway		325 / 99	28	1979
44	Independence Plaza		322 / 98	25	1972
45	Grand Hyatt Denver		320 / 97.5	26	1979
46	Country Club Tower III		315 / 96	32	2017
47	Barclay Towers		314 / 96	30	1981
48	AT&T Building		311 / 95	24	1929
49	Civic Center Plaza		310 / 94.5	22	1984
50	The Pinnacle at City Park South Tower		305 / 93	27	2009

TALLEST BUILDINGS - ALBUQUERQUE

Rank	Name	Height ft / m	Floors	Year
1	Albuquerque Plaza Office Tower	351 / 107	22	1990
2	Hyatt Regency Albuquerque	256 / 78	21	1990
3	BBVA (formerly Compass Bank Building)	238 / 73	18	1966
4	500 Marquette	235 / 72	15	1986
5	Bank of the West Tower	213 / 65	17	1963
6	New Mexico Bank & Trust Building	203 / 62	14	1961
7	Dennis Chavez Federal Building	197 / 60	13	1965
8	PNM Building	184 / 56	12	1968
9	Simms Building	180 / 55	13	1954
10	Pete V. Domenici United States Courthouse	176 / 54	7	1997



TALLEST BUILDINGS - BOISE

Rank	Name	Image	Height	Floors	Year
1	Eighth & Main		323 ft (98 m)	18	2013
2	US Bank Plaza		267 ft (81 m)	19	1978
3	One Capital Center		206 ft (63 m)	14	1975
4	Idaho State Capitol		198 ft (60 m)	4	1920
5	The Grove Hotel		196 ft (60 m)	16	2000
6	The Aspen		194 ft (59 m)	17	2009
7	Wells Fargo Building		182 ft (55 m)	11	1988
8	Banner Bank Building		181 ft (55 m)[1]	11	2006
9	Key Tower		174 ft (53 m)	13	1963
10	Albertsons Stadium		170 ft (52 m)		1970



TALLEST BUILDINGS - OMAHA

Rank	Name	Stories	Height	Year Completed	Primary Purpose
1	First National Bank Tower		45 634 feet (193 m)	2002	Office
2	Woodmen Tower		30 478 feet (146 m)	1969	Office
3	Union Pacific Center		19 317 feet (97 m)	2004	Office
4	First National Center (Omaha)		22 295 feet (90 m)	1971	Office
5	Mutual of Omaha Building		14 285 feet (87 m)	1970	Office
6	AT&T Building (Omaha)		15 265 feet (81 m)	1919	Office
7	Northern Natural Gas Building		15 260 feet (79 m)	1957	Residential
8	Elmwood Tower		21 256 feet (78 m)	1963	Residential
9	1200 Landmark Center		15 255 feet (78 m)	1990	Office
10	Omaha World-Herald		16 250 feet (76 m)	1980	Office



TALLEST BUILDINGS – KANSAS CITY

Rank	Name	Address	Height feet / m	Floors	Year
1	One Kansas City Place	1200 Main Street	624 / 197[1]	42	1988
2	Town Pavilion	1111 Main Street	591 / 180	38	1986
3	Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center	2345 McGee Street	504 / 153	45	1980
4	Kansas City Power and Light Building	1330 Baltimore Street	481/145	32	1931
5	909 Walnut	909 Walnut Street	470/143	35	1932
6	Kansas City City Hall	414 E. 12th Street	445/136	30	1937
7	1201 Walnut	1201 Walnut Street	427 / 130	30	1991
8	Commerce Tower	909 Main Street	421 / 128	30	1965
9	City Center Square (Lightwell Building)	1100 Main Street	404 / 123	30	1977
10	Oak Tower	324 E. 11th Street	379 / 116	28	1929



TALLEST BUILDINGS - RENO

Name	Floors	Year
• Silver Legacy Resort & Casino	38	1995
• Grand Sierra Resort & Casino	27	1978
• Harrah's Reno West Tower	24	1969
• Atlantis Casino Resort	27	1991
• Circus Circus Sky Tower	28	1986
• Harrah's Reno East Tower	26	1995
• Eldorado Hotel Casino	26	1973
• Reno City Hall	16	1962
• The Montage	24	1978
• Arlington Towers	22	1968



TALLEST BUILDINGS - TULSA

Rank	Name	Height ft (m)	Floors	Year
1	BOK Tower	667 (203.3)	52	1975
2	Cityplex Central Tower	648 (197.5)	60	1979
3	First Place Tower	516 (157.3)	40	1975
4	Mid-Continent Tower ^[c]	513 (156.4)	36	1918/1984
5	Bank of America Center	412 (125.6)	32	1967
6	320 South Boston Building ^[d]	400 (121.9)	22	1917
7	110 West 7th Building	388 (118.3)	28	1971
8	University Club Towers	377 (115)	32	1966
9	Cityplex West Tower	348 (106.1)	30	1981
10	Philtower	343 (104.5)	24	1927



