Reviving Main Street:
Form Based Zoning in Denver

Railvolution 2005
Salt Lake City
Main Street: Planning Framework

Colfax

Downing

York

Cherry Creek

Colorado

CBD

I-25

City Park

UHSC
Main Street Zoning Goals

1. Establish appropriate form of Main Street

2. Simplify regulations (easy to use and administer)

3. Improve investment climate (predictable environment)
Main Street Types

**MS-1**: low intensity, near stable residential areas or on small development parcels, further from Downtown

**MS-2**: medium intensity, near more intense residential areas or on larger development parcels

**MS-3**: high intensity, at the intersection of major transit routes or near downtown
Main Street: Key Elements

- Building Placement
- Building Envelope
- Windows & Entrances
- Residential Buildings
- Parking
Building Placement
Main Street Building Envelope: Height

1. MS-1: 38 feet

2. MS-2: 65 feet (24’ min. height)

3. MS-3: 100 feet (24’ min. height)
Building Envelope: MS-2 Upper Story Setback
Adjacent to parcel with an existing structure under 38’ tall
Building Envelope: MS-3 Upper Story Setbacks
Adjacent to parcel with existing structure under 38’ tall
Minimum Window Requirements

Zone of Transparency

ZONE OF TRANSPARENCY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary Street</th>
<th>Secondary Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS-1</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS-2</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS-3</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ZONE OF TRANSPARENCY**
Miscellaneous Requirements

- Location and screening of parking lots, drive aisles, service facilities
- Building entrances
- Parking structure design
Main Street Residential

- Sense of privacy
- Option A: zone of transparency exception
- Option B: build-to requirement exception
Parking Requirements
1967 Parking Code

• Obliterated historic building patterns

• Dramatically altered the land development potential of the city

• Required significantly greater amount of surface parking

• Favored auto-oriented patterns of development such as low density commercial uses surrounded by parking
Consider Factors Affecting Supply

• Mixed-use development environment reduces auto trips by building in resident and/or worker customer base

• High frequency transit corridor & bike route connections encourage alternative mode access

• Reduced number of vehicles per household along transit corridors and in the city core (Census)
Parking Geometry & Land Use

- How much land does a typical parking lot require? What are the required dimensions for a parking space and drive aisles?
- What other site elements compete for land that might otherwise be used for parking?
  - Dumpsters, utilities, or other service facilities
  - Required alley improvements
- What is the minimum amount of land required for an efficient ground floor commercial floorplate?
- What are the development implications for small lots?
Lot Depth: < 50’
Lot Depth: > 75’
Lot Depth: >125’
Main Street
Standard Parking Requirements

- Non residential uses:
  - 1 space per 500 SF

- Residential uses:
  - 1 space/unit (market rate)
  - 0.8 space/unit (affordable housing)
  - 1 space/four units (special purpose)
    - Senior housing
    - Special needs housing
    - Housing for 40% AMI or lower
    - Units less than 550 SF
## Parking Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Scenario:</th>
<th>1-Story Building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>Bldg. SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6250 (50x125)</td>
<td>5400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9375 (75x125)</td>
<td>5280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12500 (100x125)</td>
<td>5184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15625 (125x125)</td>
<td>7440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18750 (150x125)</td>
<td>7560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parking Requirement Relief

• Small lot exceptions

• Landmarked structures & buildings (built prior to 1967) that meet the form standards are exempt

• Parking requirements may be met off site through lease agreement or as provided through a parking management district
Form Based Zoning: Create a Place for People

- Counteract the corrosive effect of parking
- Eliminate sprawl inducing land regulations
- Reduce dependence on cars
- Increase the convenience, ease & enjoyment of walking & transit
- Efficiently utilize urban land in transit rich areas
Thank you!

For more information:

www.denvergov.org/EastColfax