Doubling Downtown Denver

Over the past 18 years Denver has experienced a renaissance that has doubled the size of downtown. Denver’s Riverfront Park and Union Station Neighborhood have added hundreds of thousands of square feet of retail and office, thousands of residential units, and acres of new public space all integrated into the existing downtown and centered around a new world class transit center.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss Public-Private Partnerships and the key entities that made the Riverfront Park Master-plan and subsequent implementation possible.

2. Demonstrate how the form-based code has maintained its integrity decades after its original conception.

3. Describe how the comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system has driven decisions about land use and planning framework.

4. Learn how to enhance a community with cultural enrichments in an affordable, active and diverse environment.

FIELD SESSION LEADERS

CHUCK WARE | DESIGN WORKSHOP

Chuck Ware is a Principal with Design Workshop, where he practices planning, urban design and landscape architecture. Chuck recently co-authored a textbook on Documentation Practices for Landscape Architects and has been teaching and practicing design in the Middle East. He currently serves as an Arts Commissioner for the City of Newport Beach. Chuck played a lead role in the design of Riverfront Park, with primary responsibility for public space design, including the 16th Street Mall extension.

ANNA CAWRSE | DESIGN WORKSHOP

Anna Cawrse joined Design Workshop in 2012. With a Master of Landscape Architecture from Harvard’s Graduate School of Design and a bachelor’s of Landscape Architecture from Colorado State University, Anna brings a passion for urban design and public infrastructure to every project. Anna is an active urbanist in her local community, serving on the ASLA Colorado Board as the Professional Education Coordinator, on the ASLA Emerging Professionals Committee, and as an ULI Young Leader along with volunteering in numerous downtown organizations.

JOSHUA BROOKS | DESIGN WORKSHOP

Joshua graduated from Louisiana State University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Landscape Architecture and a minor in Environmental Sciences with a focus on ecological design and planning. Joshua has diverse professional portfolio in urban planning and site design for projects in Australia, North Africa, and North America. He received several awards for his academic and professional work including a National ASLA Award in Analysis and Planning for his thesis “Microcosm of America,“ as well as the Honor Award from the Colorado Chapter of ASLA for the P Street Corridor Master Plan Lincoln, Nebraska. He has lectured at his alma mater, served as a quest critic at the University of Nebraska and University of Colorado and has published a number of articles on the urban environment.

FIELD SESSION PRESENTERS

TODD WENSKOSKI | THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

Todd Wenskoski is an urban designer and landscape architect with experience designing complex urban redevelopment projects, parks and public spaces. Todd began his career working on large urban design and public space projects, most notably the 16th Street Mall Extension and Millennium Bridge at Riverfront Park in Denver, Colorado. He has planned and designed projects internationally, including large-scale urban redevelopments, waterfronts, parks, plazas and private landscapes.
KEN SCHROEPPEL | UC DENVER ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

Ken Schroeppel most recently worked as a redevelopment and urban renewal planning specialist at the Matrix Design Group before joining UC Denver Faculty as an instructor in Planning and Design in the College of Architecture and Planning. Schroeppel is also the founder and administrator of DenverUrbanism and its companion website and blog, DenverInfill. The popular blogs enjoy about 30,000 (DenverInfill) and 10,000 (DenverUrbanism) visits a month. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Downtown Denver Partnership’s Denver Civic Ventures organization and the Board of Directors of Union Station Advocates.

CHRIS FRAMPTON | EAST-WEST PARTNERS

Chris Frampton is a managing partner with East West Partners. He is responsible for the company’s efforts in Denver including Riverfront Park, Union Station and The Landmark. East West is first and foremost a placemaker. Developers of apartments, hotels, condominiums, office buildings, retail, and, surprisingly, train stations, the company is active throughout the United States. Chris is also president of the board of the Civic Center Conservancy.

DAVID LYNN WISE | DAVID LYNN WISE ARCHITECTURE + URBAN DESIGN

David Lynn Wise AIA has been practicing architecture primarily along the Front Range, Mountains and Eastern Plains of Colorado for over 25 years. He began his own practice in 1991 after extensive experience as a project architect and urban designer for some of Denver’s most respected design firms during the 1980’s. During the last 15 years the firm has developed a reputation for quality design and building expertise. Today, David Lynn Wise Architects continues to design complex and refined commercial, institutional and residential projects as a small but highly capable and versatile firm.

TYLER GIBBS | CITY OF STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

During his 18 years (1992-2010) as Plan Implementation Manager for the City & County of Denver, Department of Community Planning and Development, Tyler managed planning, urban design and landmark preservation programs. He was a member of the management team for the rewrite of the Denver Zoning Code that was dated by over 50 years. Significant projects included: Planning and Design Standards for the Redevelopment of the Commons/Riverfront Park Neighborhood, Downtown Denver Urban Design Standards and Chairman of Design Committees for Mile High Stadium (Sports Authority Field) and the Colorado Convention Center.

FRANK CANNON | CONTINUUM PARTNERS

Frank Cannon is a Development Director with Continuum Partners, LLC a Denver based real estate development company. Frank has significant experience from both the private and public sectors in the planning, design and implementation of urban redevelopment and transit oriented development projects. Prior to joining Continuum, Frank was a Principal with Civitas, Inc., a national planning, urban design and landscape architecture firm. His portfolio of experience includes directing redevelopment planning efforts for an area of downtown Brooklyn, New York and planning, design and development projects in Colorado, including the master planning and design for Denver Union Station.
 Doubling Downtown Denver

**HOW DID WE DO THIS**

1. Consolidated property ownership (railroads) eliminated need for land assemblage
2. Federal, state, and local funds for infrastructure and environmental remediation
3. Creation of a metropolitan (taxing) district
4. Visionary citizens, planners, and designers
5. Strong political leadership
6. Public-private partnerships
7. Citizen support at the polls
8. Risk-taking, committed developers
9. Strong local economy
10. Perseverance
As 16th Street approached the Central Platte Valley the road was on a viaduct cutting through the neighborhood. This is still apparent in several buildings which have doors on the second level.
The Riverfront Park Neighborhood is rich in parks and open space. Connecting the city to its birth place is Commons Park, originally conceived within the master plan, was designed by Civitas and Jones and Jones. Running along the edge of the park is Little Raven Street, designed by Design Workshop, which serves as a promenade and community space. The iconic Millennium Bridge and 16th Street Mall Extension, designed by Design Workshop and Architecture Denver, was conceived as an elevated plaza. Today it serves as a vital connection across the consolidated main line to the Downtown.
THE VISION + EXECUTION

From the beginning, Riverfront was envisioned as an intensively urban district invigorated by a mix of residential, office and retail uses. Walkability, recreation, and foot traffic drive the success of this place, where downtown Denver once stopped, a new urban form now exist. Full of beautiful architecture and public spaces, and bookended by the park and train terminal this district is uniquely Denver. The partnership that made this dream a reality consisted of numerous public agencies and private developers with one consolidated vision. Although direction on how to reach the end goal may have differed, they were aligned in a singular vision.

Today many of the goals can be seen completed through executed architecture and public spaces.
**Doubling Downtown Denver**

**DESIGN GUIDELINES + FORM BASED CODES**

The form based code, authored by Design Workshop, has shaped the urban form of the community from the creation of the 17th Street Promenade to the articulation of building elements seen in many of the buildings today. These guidelines were integral to ensuring the overall vision was executed over the many years of build-out.

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Parking Garage Screening

Align openings vertically and horizontally: no exposed ramps.

Conceal view of parked cars from adjacent public space.

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Describing various examples of build-to zones and street rights-of-way (R.O.W) with detailed specifications including:

- 33% of X
- 34% of X
- 17% of X
- Total Combined Frontage

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**PEDESTRIAN ZONE**

**THRU LANE**

12'

**8’**

12' SETBACK

BUILDING APPURTENANCE ZONE (Private Area)

3' 5' 8' 12' 12' 8' 10'

PLANTING STRIP WALK PLANTER PARKING THRU LANE THRU LANE PARKING THRU PLANTER WALK PROPOSED COMMONS PARK

18' MIN. PEDESTRIAN ZONE

46' MAX. STREET

80' R.O.W.

LITTLE RAVEN PARKWAY
TRANSIT + THE PROMENADE

The 17th Street Promenade, designed by Hargreaves Associates, AECOM, and SOM, was originally conceived in the master plan and now sits on top the consolidated bus terminal. The promenade also connects the Union Station train terminal to the light rail platform. Transit has become the heart of this area of town. All but one train line that comes into downtown comes through Union Station and the associated light rail platform. Starting in 2016 the much anticipated rail line to the airport will open and run continuous service to DIA further expanding the importance of this node.
UNION STATION AT THE HEART OF IT ALL

After a century of amazing history, the union station building is fully functional once again. It is now home to the Crawford Hotel, the Terminal Bar, an amazing restored interior, and many new and unique local restaurants. Today you can see, as you could a century ago, people traveling by train (or bus), locals walking through on their way to work, and a buzz of economic activity around the new hub. As tower crane after tower crane rise up over the once desolate rail yards, a new urban district has taken shape. This district, The Central Platte Valley, has doubled the land size of downtown Denver and has helped forge a Denver’s place in this new century. After decades of visionary leadership, planning, and design by numerous entities one can finally see the incredible nature of this project.

Today, just a few months after the grand opening, it is hard to imagine Denver without Union Station, and the associated urban district that has grown around it.
METRICS

1. 60-acre Brownfield Redevelopment
2. $180 sq/ft increase in Land Value
3. Attracted major corporate headquarters into Downtown Denver
4. $445 million in Home Sales by 2011
5. Increased Walkabilty and transit ridership due to central transit hub and robust public space
6. 10% affordable housing
7. Attracted Museum of Contemporary Arts away from arts district
8. Initial $1.3 Million Endowment, via transfer tax, for neighborhood art
9. Immediate access to 10.5 miles of walking and biking trails
10. 2010 Richard J. Driehaus Charitable Trust Form Based Code Award

RIVERFRONT PARK LAND VALUES

Price per square foot

- Original Purchase
- Sale to Developer
- Resale
- Bulk Purchase for Residential
- Purchase for Commercial/Office
- Purchase for Regional Transit Authority

Current Value