



ACTIVE CENTERS AND CORRIDORS PLANNING AND DESIGN GUIDELINES



**BERKELEY-REGIS
UNITED NEIGHBORS**

January 07, 2022

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ABOUT BRUN AND THIS DOCUMENT

Berkeley-Regis United Neighbors (BRUN) is a registered neighborhood organization (RNO) with the City of Denver located in Council District 1. It is also Denver's largest RNO. The RNO's boundaries are Federal Blvd to the east, Sheridan Blvd to the west, 38th Ave to the south, and 52nd Ave to the north.

The Berkeley-Regis neighborhood is rich in history, it is walkable, and possesses an amazing mixture of people and businesses - all good reasons why Berkeley-Regis is one of the most vibrant and thriving neighborhoods in Denver.

Membership is available to households and businesses within BRUN's boundaries. It is with that membership that information is shared with the neighborhood regularly through email blasts and postings on various forms of social media as well as the BRUN website. Broadcasts include notices of upcoming meetings and summaries of those past. General meetings with the BRUN Board are held monthly and are open to the public.

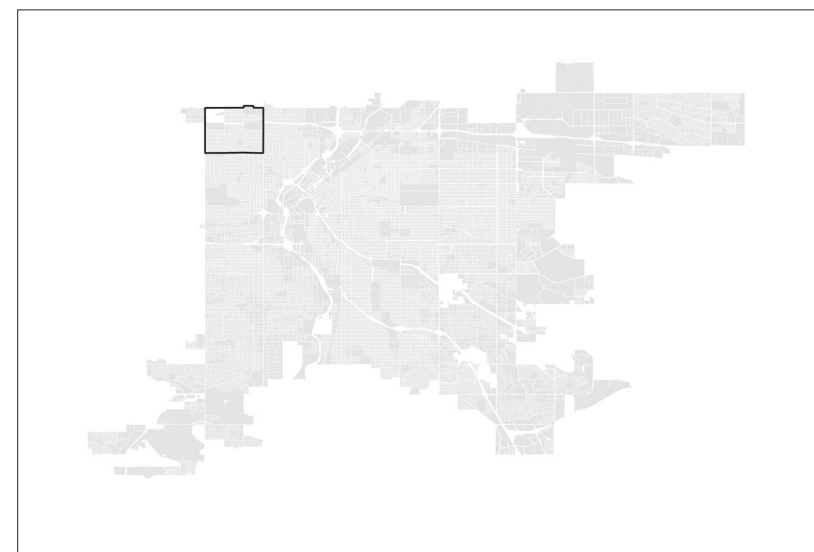
[Link to BRUN RNO](#)

Since the inception of the revised Denver Zoning Code in 2010, a wave of development has come to the Berkeley-Regis neighborhood. Like many neighborhoods in Denver, Berkeley-Regis has been challenged to integrate that development into the exiting neighborhood fabric. The result of those challenges has not always been successful. BRUN, through its Zoning and Planning Committee, has studied the development trends. The result of that study is this planning and design guidelines handbook. It is an aspirational synopsis of how future development could take shape in the Berkeley-Regis neighborhoods and associated commercial districts. BRUN hopes this handbook is informative and inspirational.

Note: Documents noted or referenced are current to the issue or revision date of this Handbook. The user is responsible for verifying and using the most current version of all noted or referenced documents.



BRUN Boundary Map



BRUN Area Map

HISTORIC CONTEXT

There are many MX and MS zoned properties within BRUN’s embedded commercial districts, with Tennyson Street being the most prominent commercial corridor. Early in Denver’s history, a rich cultural landscape gave birth to a corridor of great importance and opportunity. Tennyson Street’s identity began as a commercial and civic Main Street in the Town of North Denver in 1863. When Elitch’s Botanical and Zoological Gardens were established at W 38th Ave intersection, the door opened wide for Tennyson Street’s expansion.

The Berkeley Motor Trolleys route through the town contributed to the blossoming of culture, art, and commerce in this embedded commercial district. The populations of residents, visitors, and shop owners grew as the street was built up with commercial storefronts, cottages, a school, a post office, a theater, grocery stores, a pharmacy, and more. The building types, construction materials, and architectural styles reflected the varied community-serving uses of the buildings gathered along the corridor.

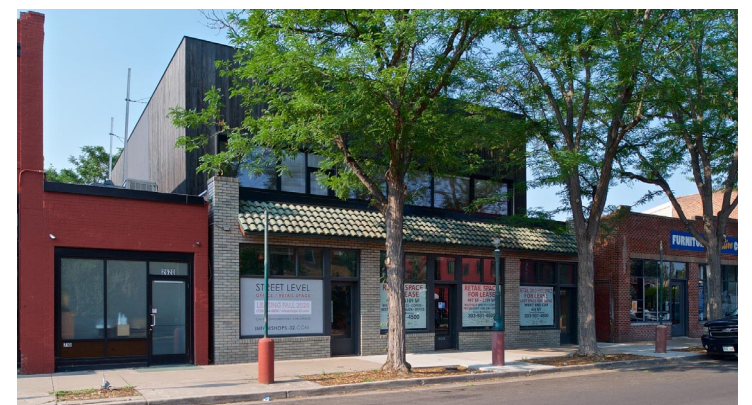
The Town of North Denver became the Town of Berkeley and was annexed by the City of Denver in 1902. The uses of buildings, old and new, evolved but its identity was respected and maintained for decades. Century-old bungalows still contribute their unique charm to historically rich Tennyson Street which remains the heart of North Denver. Eight blocks will thrive for decades more if they remain filled with restaurants, breweries, boutiques, coffee shops, studios, a theater, and local retail of all sorts.

BRUN encourages the incorporation of existing structures and their significant design elements in site and design plans. Tennyson Street’s role as a historic commercial area should be recognized and considered in any new construction in order to conserve and enhance the established qualities of the corridor.

Compatibility with design traditions is essential to maintain the vibrancy, energy, and financial feasibility of Tennyson Street and other Berkeley-Regis commercial districts. The fundamental design characteristics of traditional commercial and main street development along Tennyson Street significantly impact one’s experience. While variety in architectural design is part of what makes Tennyson Street unique, visual continuity is created through fundamental design elements that are shared among traditional buildings. Development should be compatible with the fundamental design character of Tennyson Street to maintain the historic character of the street. The siting and scale of buildings, composition of street-facing façades and the use of masonry materials are all key elements that visually tie the street together and convey the sense of over 100 years of history and place. If entire buildings cannot be preserved, preservation of the street façade and setback of new upper stories is highly encouraged.

The Design Guidelines in this handbook are inspired by the rich history of our Berkeley-Regis Neighborhoods, and will assist in maintaining and highlighting Historic Resources in and around local commercial districts. Historic Landmarks include: Howard Berkeley Chapel, Smiley Library and Historic Elitch Gardens Theater, and serve bookends to our Tennyson Street corridor.

The residents of Berkeley-Regis appreciate the contribution that this lively street makes to their quality of life and many would agree with their CM Sandoval’s words in a letter to City planners: “The Berkeley-Regis community has worked for years to protect the integrity of their beloved community shopfront corridors.” Developers and builders are encouraged to explore design resources and tools available at the Main Street program sponsored by Colorado Department of Local Affairs.



ZONING WITHIN BRUN

The majority of the geographic area within BRUN has an URBAN neighborhood context, as designated by the Denver Zoning Code (DZC). There are 22 zone designation and 6 PUD’s. Of the 22 zone designations, 7 are holdover designations from the old Chapter 59 zoning code.

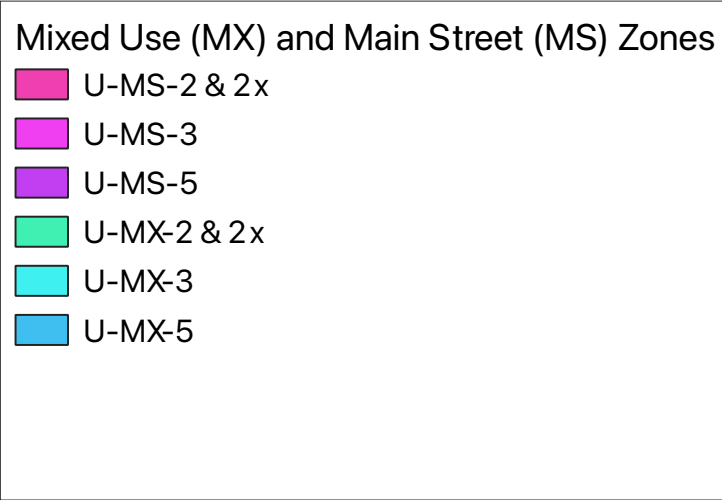
This document addresses development within the following zone designations:

- U-MX-2
- U-MX-2X
- U-MX-3
- U-MX-5
- U-MS-3
- U-MS-5
- E-MX-2

Complete descriptions of these zone designations can be found in this link to the Denver Zoning Code.



BRUN Zoning Map

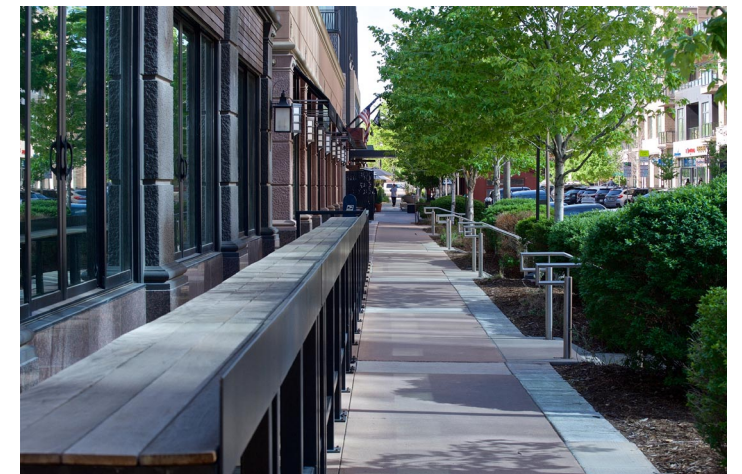


MX / MS Zoning Legend

ADDRESSING THE STREET

Addressing primary and side streets is a prime consideration in any urban context building project. It is a critical concern for projects within BRUN.

- The building facade at the street level should activate the adjacent sidewalk.
- Design considerations should include what happens between the property line and the curbline. This area provides definition between vehicles and pedestrian uses.
- Orient building to create a well-defined street frontage that enhances the pedestrian experience for each street-facing facade.
- Utilize enhanced setbacks to provide for outdoor dining, or customer seating for commercial uses, or courtyards, stoops or small private yards for residential uses.
- The deep sidewalks, in some areas of BRUN, allow for outdoor dining without inhibiting the pedestrian.
- For those projects with corner lots, the side street should allow for an extension of the building-public interface.
- Streetscape design should include adequate pedestrian-scaled lighting, integral planter / seating elements, patterned sidewalks, street furniture, amenity zones trash receptacles and bike racks wherever possible.
- Amenity Zones can include landscaping, paved pedestrian use areas, and street furniture.
- Amenity Zone location and design should protect pedestrians from moving traffic.
- Landscape area should be provided with adequate irrigation.
- All flat surfaces, street furniture, planters, landscaping, lighting and such should be easily maintainable and sustainable.



BUILDING SETBACK

Building setback is more than just a dimension set out in the zoning code. There is more to planning the mass of the project than just meeting the build-to line.

- Siting the building should create a sense of place making an inviting building to its occupants and enhances the pedestrian experience that generates customers.
- The design process should analyze the neighborhood context.
- Design analysis should consider surrounding building character in establishing setback patterns.
- Enhanced setbacks extend the public use area, allow for the creation of open space areas, pedestrian seating, outdoor dining, and amenity zones.
- Utilize enhanced setbacks to provide relief where pedestrian activity is high.



FACADE

The architectural character of a building is shown in its facade. The facade design should:

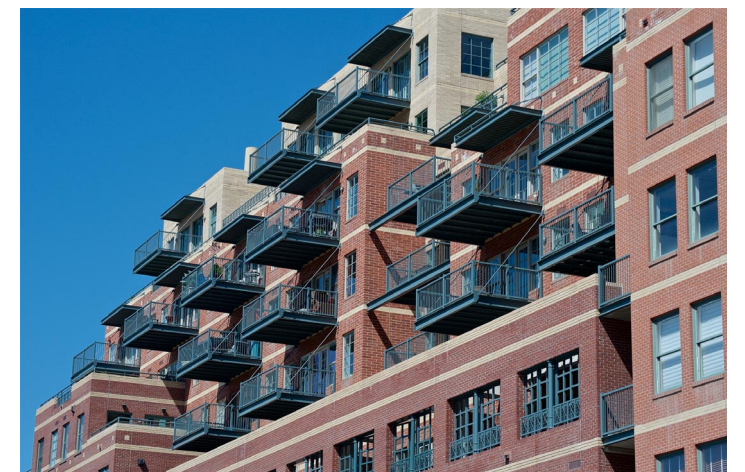
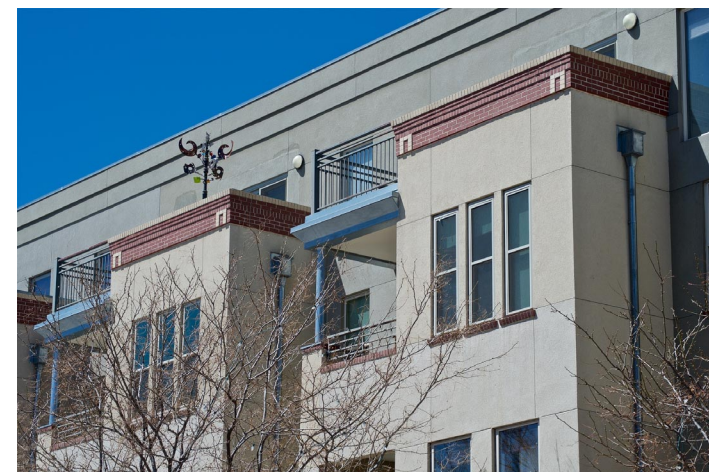
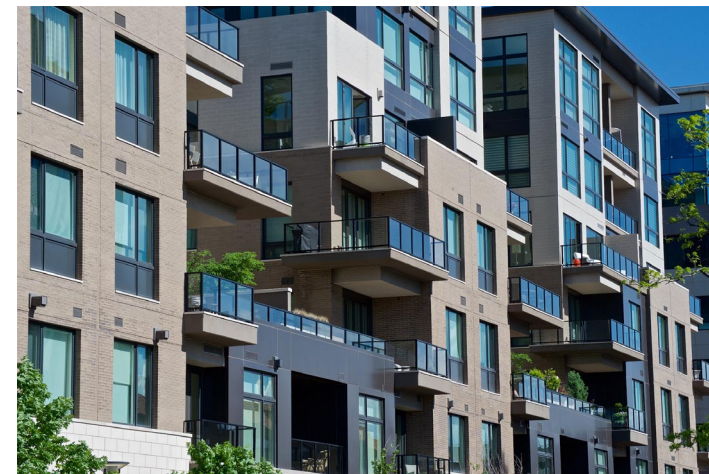
- Create a sense of human scale and provide visual interest.
- Create visual interest through interplay of light and shadow.
- Enhance “eyes on the street”.
- Ensure that building activities are visible from the public realm.
- Create cohesive articulation across the entire facade to reinforce an overall massing pattern.
- Articulate facade plane changes to avoid creating flat or featureless expanses.
- Use facade articulation to reinforce the overall pattern of the design.
- Have articulation generally align between lower and upper stories to avoid visual disconnect between facade elements.
- Highlight key building features such as entries and corners.
- Clearly define a pedestrian oriented street level for each street-facing facade.
- Facades adjacent to Historic resource with visible Structural Parking above street level incorporate high quality design techniques consistent with design standards and guidelines for Primary Street Facing Facades.
- The Mass and Scale of new buildings should reflect Mass and Scale characteristics of adjacent Landmark Structures and Historic Resources.
- Consider that a building has four sides. Side and rear (especially alley-facing facades) should incorporate vertical and horizontal articulation that promotes a visually interesting design.
- Screen rooftop equipment from opposite street level public view.



BUILDING MASS AND UPPER STORY SETBACK

Building massing can promote a sense of place through creative human scale design. The intent is to:

- Encourage varied massing to promote a sense of place through human scale design.
- Apply massing and articulation techniques that visually divide the building facade into smaller modules.
- Utilize massing techniques to create projecting or recessed elements.
- Encourage context-sensitive building massing - modules that reflect size and shape of, and relate to adjacent buildings.
- Coordinate massing techniques between lower and upper story facades to promote a cohesive design.
- Have upper story setbacks preserve views and sky exposure.
- Incorporate upper story setbacks to reduce visual impact of upper stories on the public realm.
- Integrate upper story setbacks with the overall design.
- Develop roof forms that relate to the heights, proportions, and forms of surrounding buildings of similar scale.
- New buildings adjacent to historical or designated structures should incorporate massing of design elements that recognize the design rhythms of the adjacent structure as well as being consistent with Primary Street-facing facade guidelines.
- Mass and scale of new structures should reflect the mass and scale characteristics of adjacent Landmark or Contributing structures.

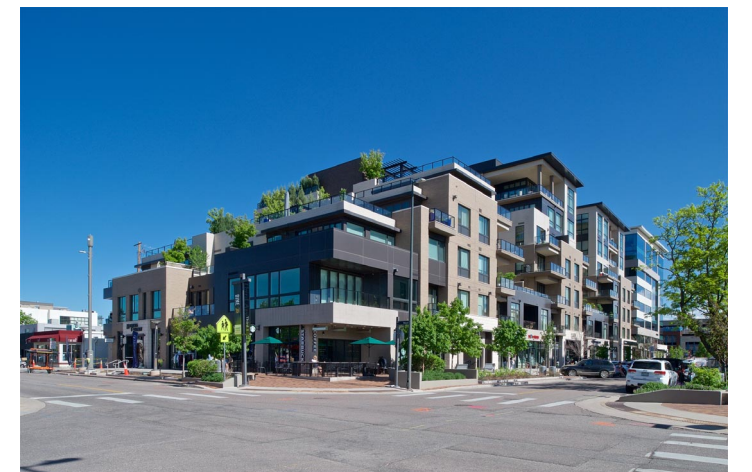


MIXED-USE

As generally defined, according to Wikipedia, mixed-use zoning or mixed-use planning is a type of urban development, urban planning, and/or a zoning type that blends residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment uses into one space, where those functions are to some degree physically and functionally integrated, and that provides pedestrian connections. The term may be applied to a group of buildings or a single building, in an urban or suburban environment, in an existing or new neighborhood, or in zoning policy across an entire city.

The Denver Zoning Code defines mixed-use as the development of a site or building with two or more different principal or primary uses including, but not limited to residential, office, manufacturing, retail, public or entertainment uses. To that end this definition applies to all MX and MS zone districts.

- Projects developed within BRUN's boundaries within MX and MS zone districts, including those within the DO-8 area, should be designed to accomodate mixed uses as defined by the Denver Zoning Code.
- In mixed-use design, level of transparency should reflect the different uses within the building.
- Develop clear separation between entries for street-level commercial and upper story residential uses.



ENTRY: DOORS AND STOREFRONTS

Entrances and shop-front windows are the interface building elements between private interior space and the public realm.

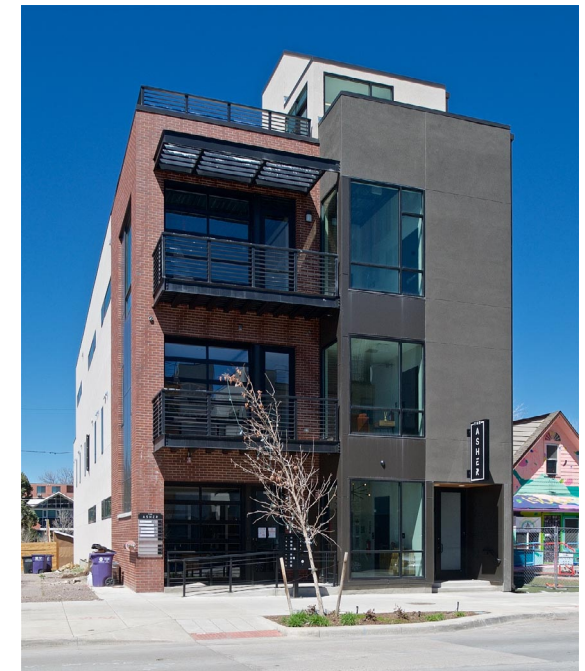
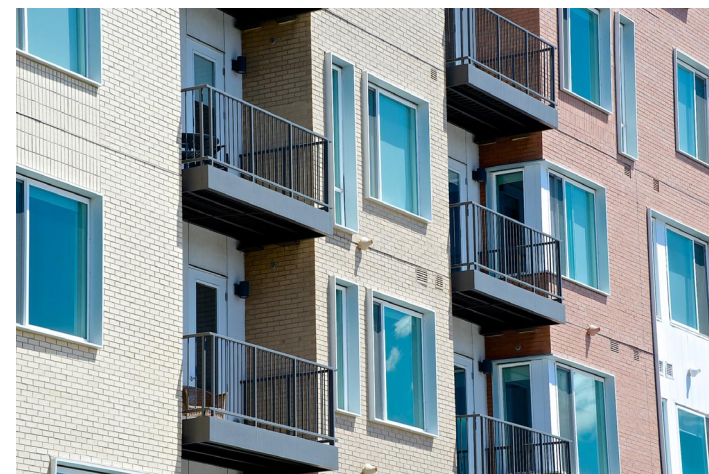
- Design doors and storefronts to create visual interest for pedestrians.
- The building design at the street level should enhance visibility of the street level activities from the public realm.
- Use building massing or architectural elements (signage, canopies, eyebrows) to highlight storefronts or tenant entries.
- Ensure that pedestrian entries are clearly visible.
- Pedestrian entries (both commercial and residential) should provide a clear and obvious public connection between the primary street and uses within the building.
- Pedestrian entries (both commercial and residential) should face the public street and be clearly noticable from the public street and sidewalk.
- Primary entrances should respond to the street level building use.
- Canopies and awnings at the street level should be integrated into the building design.
- Landscaping should not block transparent windows.
- Windows and storefronts should provide transparent glass at street level.



WINDOWS, BALCONIES, AND ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS

Windows, balconies, and associated elements can provide a depth of detail in the facade design.

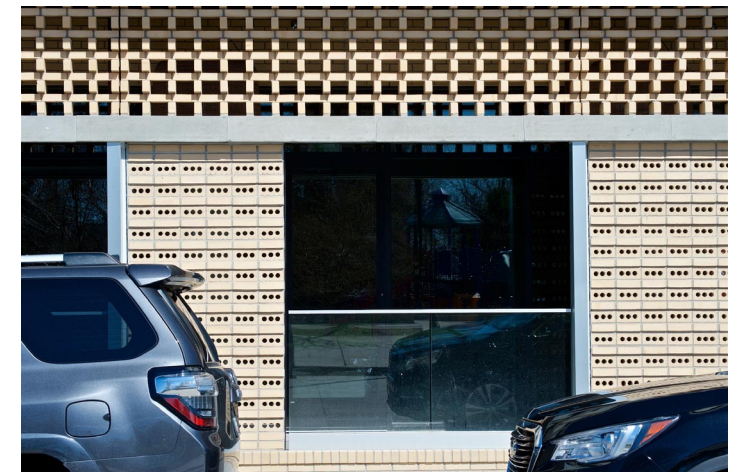
- Street level windows should have transparent glazing linked to the building use.
- Upper story windows should provide “eyes on the street”.
- Spacing and dimensioning of windows and openings should reflect those of adjoining buildings, where applicable.
- Window eyebrows or fins create visual variety in the overall facade design.
- Where balconies are provided, they should be integrated into the vertical and horizontal articulation pattern of the building facade design.
- Partially or fully projecting balconies create rhythms that break down building mass and scale.
- Balcony railings should not block visibility of the facade areas that contribute the overall transparency standards.



MATERIALS

The interplay of various materials in the facade contribute to a strong sense of design.

- Materials used on all facades should provide visual interest and a sense of human scale.
- Ensure that materials are integrated into a cohesive design.
- Avoid materials that enhance a flat, featureless surface.
- Materials should be durable, high-quality, and sustainable.
- Materials should convey scale in their proportion and detail.
- Use materials that project shadow lines to help convey sense of scale.
- Dissimilar material joints should be carefully detailed.
- Changes in materials should be combined with facade plane variation of 12” dimension minimum.
- Material changes should be at inside corners.
- Materials on side and alley-facing facades should be consistent with materials used on the Primary Street-facing facades, whenever possible.
- Facades adjacent to historical or designated structures should incorporate materials that recognize the design rhythms and materials of adjacent structure as well as being consistent with Primary Street-facing facade guidelines.



SIGNAGE AND GRAPHICS

Key components to the successful design of any mixed-use project are signage and graphics.

- Signage and Graphics should contribute to an overall harmonious facade design, have distinctive, durable materials, and be well detailed.
- Consider a hierarchy and scale for primary and secondary signage.
- Signage and graphics for wayfinding and orientation should be thoughtfully integrated into the building's facade.
- Building identification / address signage should be incorporated into the facade design.
- Upper story signage should be consolidated to identify the building.
- Consolidate multiple tenant signs whenever possible.
- Tenant signage should not be located significantly above street level unless it is located and designed integral with the facade design.
- Pub signs are a traditional way of announcing a place of business to pedestrians moving along a sidewalk.
- On-building signage should be easily read from the street or opposite sidewalk.
- The facade design should consider future signage locations with power sources incorporated into the facade design.
- Non-permanent marketing signage should be kept to a minimum whenever possible.
- Building signage should be adequately lit, but not cast light into residential windows.
- Landscape elements should not block key building signage.



DESIGN OVERLAY 8 (DO-8)

OVERVIEW

- The 2010 Denver Zoning Code created several zone designations that allowed for mixed-use development. Two of these designations - MX (Mixed-use) and MS (Main Street) - are addressed in Design Overlay 8 (DO-8).
- DO-8 requires most projects to provide a mix of uses including non-residential space at street level.
- There are four applicable zone designation within BRUN boundaries.
U-MX-2 / U-MX-3 / U-MS-3 / U-MS-5
- Concerns of both CM Espinoza in 2015 and currently CM Sandoval, along with concerns of the community, lead to development of DO-8 based on the underlying guidance in Comp Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver.

IMPACTED AREAS

- The accompanying map shows the areas outlined in red within the Berkeley and Regis. neighborhoods that are impacted by DO-8.
- DO-8 applies to only those zone designations at the locations shown on the map.
- There is no change to the underlying zoning.



BRUN DO-8 Area Map

DESIGN OVERLAY 8 (DO-8)

PLANNING OBJECTIVES

- Mixed-use areas, especially Local Centers and Corridors, should provide goods, services, and amenities alongside residential.
- Support Neighborhood quality of life, economy, and resiliency.
- Encourage high levels of pedestrian activity.

DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Strong streetwalk presence, but with flexibility for outdoor dining, retail, etc.
- Space for streetscape amenities and generous pedestrian areas.
- High levels of transparency.
- Comfortable transitions between public and private space.
- Generous ground floor heights that support vibrant commercial activity.

THE OVERLAY

- DO-8 considers these four attributes:
 - Active Uses
 - Form Limits
 - Siting
 - Design Standards

ACTIVE USE REQUIREMENTS

- Non-residential active use standard for a portion of the Primary Street frontage on larger lots.
- No parking, storage/warehousing, or primary or accessory residential uses.
- Minimum 15'-0" depth.
- Applies to 3-story districts and taller (no requirement in 2-story districts)
 - Lots \leq 37.5 feet wide = no requirement
 - Lots 37.5 to 50 feet wide = ~50% of street level
 - Lots $>$ 50 feet wide = ~75% of street level

LIMIT BUILDING FORMS

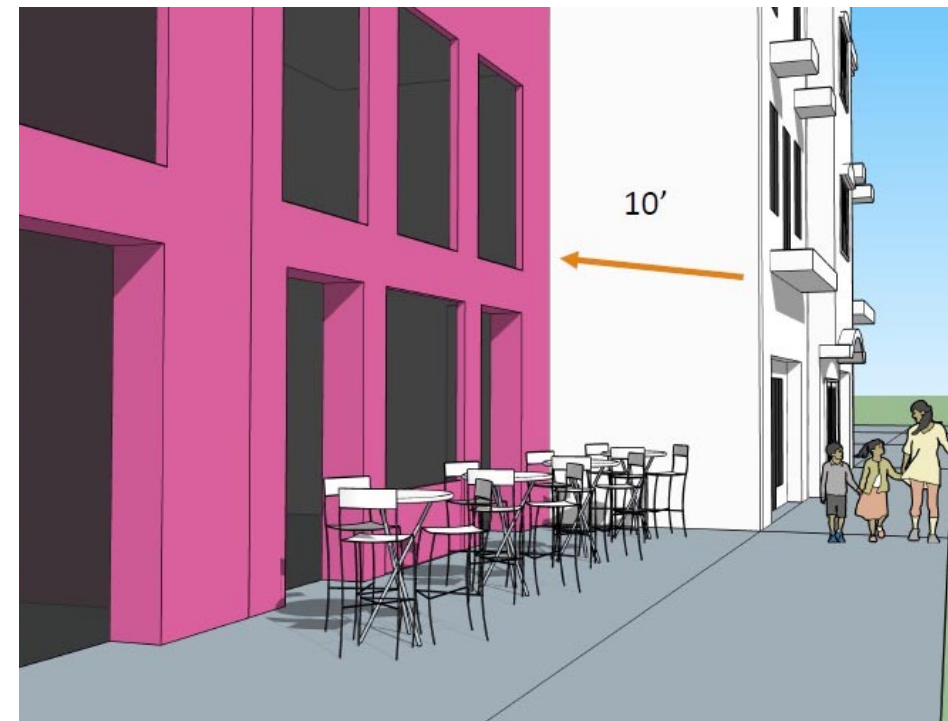
- Limit building forms to Shopfront and Town House (no General or Drive-thru)

INCREASE BUILD-TO RANGE AND SETBACKS

- Increase Build-to range from 5 feet to 10 feet to allow more flexibility for outdoor dining and pedestrian area.
- Require minimum 2-foot setback to increase pedestrian area.



Active Use at Street Frontage



Increase Build-to and Setbacks

DESIGN OVERLAY 8 (DO-8)

RESIDENTIAL SETBACK

- Require a minimum 7-foot setback for any street level residential units. (also includes a requirement for a porch and/or canopy entry feature)

REMOVAL OF MOST TRANSPARENCY ALTERNATIVES

- Allow Permanent Art (30% max) as the only transparency alternative.

MINIMUM STREET LEVEL HEIGHT

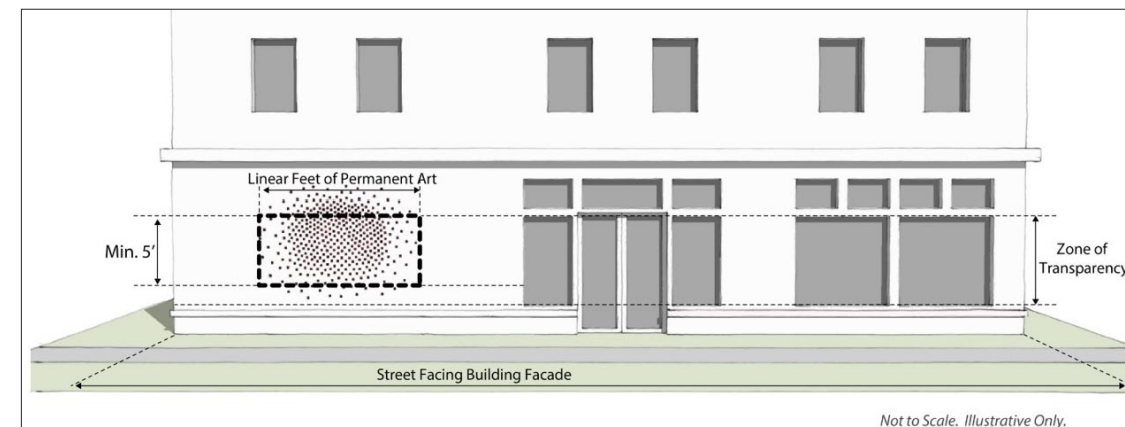
- Require a minimum 14-foot street level height - measured from floor-to-floor. (floor-to-floor ceiling height may be less than 14 feet)

SUMMARY

- Limit building forms to Shopfront and Town House (no General or Drive-thru)
- Increase Build-to range from 5 feet to 10 feet to allow more flexibility for outdoor dining and pedestrian area.
- Require a minimum 2-foot setback to increase pedestrian area.
- Require a minimum 7-foot setback for any street level residential units - including a requirement for a porch and/or canopy entry feature.
- Allow permanent art (30% max) as the only transparency alternative.
- Requires a minimum 14-foot street level height, measured from floor-to-floor. (floor-to-ceiling height may be less than 14 feet)



Residential Setback



Minimum Street Level Height



Minimum Street Level Height

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability Guidance for MX and MS Projects within BRUN Boundaries

In 2020, the Denver Climate Action Task Force adopted an aggressive goal, inter-lacing equity and eliminating greenhouse gas emissions.

“Denver will be a model for the nation and world by working urgently to create, pass, and implement bold policies that achieve 40% greenhouse gas emission decrease community-wide by 2025, 60% by 2030, and 100% by 2040, using a 2005 baseline. We will center policy design, programs, and investments in frontline communities, and inspire people in our city to embrace sustainability as a value.”

The Berkeley-Regis neighborhood is one of Denver’s frontline communities. The neighborhood has been and continues to support and participate in sustainability activities. Since buildings and homes represent 49% of Denver’s 2018 greenhouse gas emissions, BRUN is offering guidance to developers seeking to undertake sustainable projects in the neighborhood.

Sustainability is a broad concept that refers to a building’s overall ability to provide a comfortable, healthy, and productive environment over the long term without negatively impacting the environment. Sustainable buildings aren’t only about the environment, but take into account all three pillars of sustainability: planet, people, and profit. How can a building be built and used with consideration for the future of people, the planet, and the business itself? To truly be a sustainable building, these principles must be in every stage of a building’s life cycle.

For example:

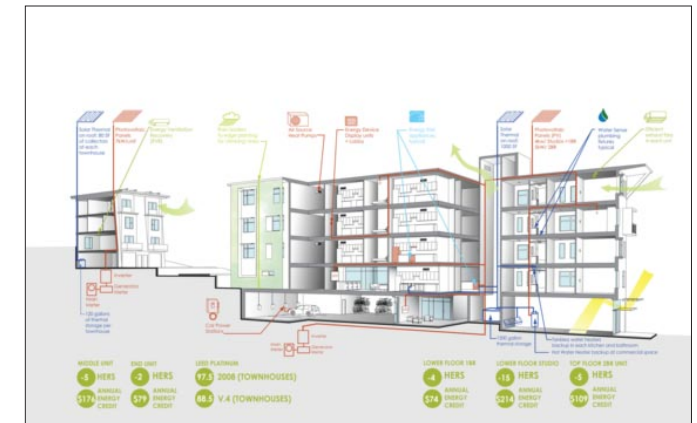
- Planning - What kind of land are you building on? How is the building sited?
- Design - Consideration for the placement of Doors, Windows, Balconies, Overhangs.
- Mechanical Systems - The right balance between natural and mechanical ventilation.
- Energy Systems - Will the project use natural gas, electricity from the grid or renewables?
- Construction - Are materials environmentally safe? Does the process conserve resources?
- Operations and Maintenance - Can the building be efficiently?

Green Building Ordinance

Denver’s Green Buildings Ordinance took effect Friday, November 2, 2018. This ordinance applies to the following:

- New buildings 25,000 square feet or larger
- Roof permits for existing buildings 25,000 square feet or larger
- Additions of 25,000 square feet or larger

The ordinance does NOT apply to parking structures, temporary buildings, air-supported structures, greenhouses, single-family homes, duplexes, or rowhomes consisting of three or more units, where each unit, from foundation to roof, is not more than 3 stories above grade plane.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

BRUN and the BRUN Zoning and Planning Committee would like to acknowledge and thank Council Member Amanda Sandoval for her support of BRUN's urban planning efforts and her hard work on enacting DO-8.

A special thanks to Naomi Grunditz, Denver Council District 1 Planner, for all her insight through this planning process.