

golden triangle

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



**INTERNATIONAL
DOWNTOWN
ASSOCIATION**



**2018
DOWNTOWN
ACHIEVEMENT
AWARDS**



March 2018

City and County of Denver, Community Planning and Development
Golden Triangle Partnership
Downtown Denver Partnership

Project Name: Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan

Project Location

Denver, Colorado

Project Budget

\$283,000

Project Duration

2013-2014

Project Website

https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/646/documents/planning/Plans/Golden_Triangle_Plan.pdf

Project Team

City and County of Denver, Community Planning and Development
Golden Triangle Neighborhood Association
Regional Transportation District

Consultant Team

MIG, Inc. (Prime Consultant)
Fox Tuttle Hernandez
Engineering and Entitlement Solutions (EES)
Winter & Company
Skye to Ground

Overview

The Golden Triangle is a unique Downtown Denver neighborhood located between the Cherry Creek greenway, the Downtown Central Business District, and Capitol Hill. The district, rich in history and culture, contains many of the City's key cultural and civic assets, including the state capitol, Civic Center Park, the main library, museums, residences, restaurants, shops and other popular destinations.

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan, unanimously adopted in 2014, outlined a vision, goals, plan framework, and implementation strategies for the district's evolution and improvement. The Plan built upon the area's rich and storied past while setting the course for an even brighter future. It proposed **bold new catalytic projects and tactical "quick wins"** that were accomplished cost-effectively shortly after plan adoption. The Plan set forth a comprehensive, holistic approach, weaving together a nuanced set of strategies that collectively fostered **an eclectic, creative, connected, and livable Golden Triangle.**

Major emphases of the project included establishing a more **coherent and recognizable brand and identity** for the area and providing direction for how new mixed-use development can best support the overall neighborhood. The Plan provides conceptual design for streetscape and open space improvements to link the various institutions, businesses and residents, as well as existing and new development. In a few short years since the plan's adoption, the Golden Triangle has blossomed into a rich mosaic with many **new public improvements, private developments, creative programs, and entrepreneurial investments.**

Innovation

By the time the Plan was adopted in 2014, the renovated Denver Union Station had reopened and the surrounding area was brimming with construction attracted by the large public investments in new transit, streets, public spaces and a grand anchor. At the same time, developers, creative businesses, restaurateurs, and the influx of new residents were beginning to look beyond downtown at inner ring neighborhoods and districts. Meanwhile, the Golden Triangle already had well-established and historic anchor institutions and the eclectic mixed-use fabric that other "hot" neighborhoods outside of downtown were working hard to establish.

The challenge facing the Golden Triangle was the lack of a **coherent or compelling story and brand.** The area was so diverse and had such varied potential that no one knew where to start. The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Association (GTA) had the resources, but didn't know what it was branding or selling. The Downtown Denver Partnership (DDP) had identified the area as an important arts, culture and civic district in its Downtown Area Plan, but that barely scratched the surface of describing what the Golden Triangle is or can become. Ultimately, the Neighborhood Plan 1) involved a broad constituency to cultivate and articulate the brand and vision for the district; 2) identified projects, programs and policies to better establish the brand; 3) conceptualized short- and long-term solutions to better weave old and new together; and 4) provided clear guidance on where and why new developers, businesses and residents should consider the Golden Triangle first.

Replication

The Plan demonstrates how strategic planning that is action-oriented and rooted in the history and culture of a downtown can lead to tangible results. The adoption of the Plan didn't come with the approval of any specific public or private investments.

Nonetheless, the clear vision and direction provided through grassroots and hand-on engagement of downtown and neighborhood stakeholders has resulted in the district regaining its stature as a must-see downtown district and a place to call home. The **holistic approach** that addressed branding, land use, urban design, transportation, events and programming, public open space and broader policy **should be applied to all downtown neighborhoods and districts.** The Plan made sense of the sometimes messy ingredients that comprise a true place and the plan framework gave structure, legibility, and a degree of certainty to those interested in investing or reinvesting in the area.

Representation

The creation of the plan involved a **concerted and collaborative alignment of resources** for the neighborhood to attain its vision. The City and County of Denver, DDP, GTA, Denver Public Library, Civic Center Conservancy, State of Colorado, Historic Denver, Clyfford Still Museum, Golden Triangle Museum District, Cultural Arts Residential Organization, Denver Health, residents, business, and property owners were critical partners in moving the neighborhood forward.

A special aspect of the planning process was a pop-up demonstration event, "Triangle Transformations", in September 2013. This workshop held in the district engaged community members and visitors alike. Participants interacted with a series of pilot project ideas, including new configurations to the street design, poster boards and other displays. Music, outdoor activities, and food were all part of the event. Triangle Transformations attracted people from the neighborhood and its surroundings, as well as many visitors who simply happened upon this unique experience.

As the Prime Consultant, MIG's role on the Plan included leading visioning, branding, land use planning, urban design and stakeholder and community engagement. The DDP was instrumental in helping to make the project happen and also sat on the Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Sustainability

The Neighborhood Plan breathed new life into a well-established but floundering downtown district. The Plan process began an ongoing dialogue among DDP, the City, major institutions, the arts community, residents and businesses. The stakeholders bought in

during plan development and have continued to partner through plan implementation. The Plan also resulted in the formation of the Golden Triangle Creative District, a **self-sustaining membership-based organization** that uses the Neighborhood Plan as its guide to tackle District Advocacy, Infrastructure, Mobility, Maintenance, Programming and Events, and Brand/Marketing/Communications.

Execution

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan was unanimously adopted by Denver City Council with broad support from elected officials, staff, residents and businesses. In June of 2016, **the Golden Triangle was designated and certified as Colorado's first Creative District by the State of Colorado.** This Creative District designation advances the Triangle as an internationally-celebrated arts and culture destination by encouraging urban revitalization, economic development, and support for creative individuals and businesses. The Golden Triangle Partnership (GTP) is a nonprofit organization formed in January 2017 from the merger of the GTA. GTP serves as the manager and leader of the District and works closely with the DDP to address advocacy, programming and events, neighborhood beautification/maintenance, mobility/transit, neighborhood branding, marketing and communications, and small business and residential support.

Outcome

The Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan has **helped to attract well over \$500 million in private investment** in the district since 2013 when the planning process began. In addition, the **City of Denver is planning over \$50 million in public improvements** related to streets, public spaces and infrastructure to support the resurging district. The GTP now has a staff focused on implementing the recommendations of the Plan and is currently exploring the feasibility and desirability of a General Improvement District (GID) that can be utilized by stakeholders to invest in the Golden Triangle. A GID is a special district tool provided for by Colorado statute that create a sustainable source of implementation funding.