DOWNTOWN BUILDING HEIGHT

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

June 24, 2024

Ryan Tefertiller – Planning + Neighborhood Services

ZONING HISTORY

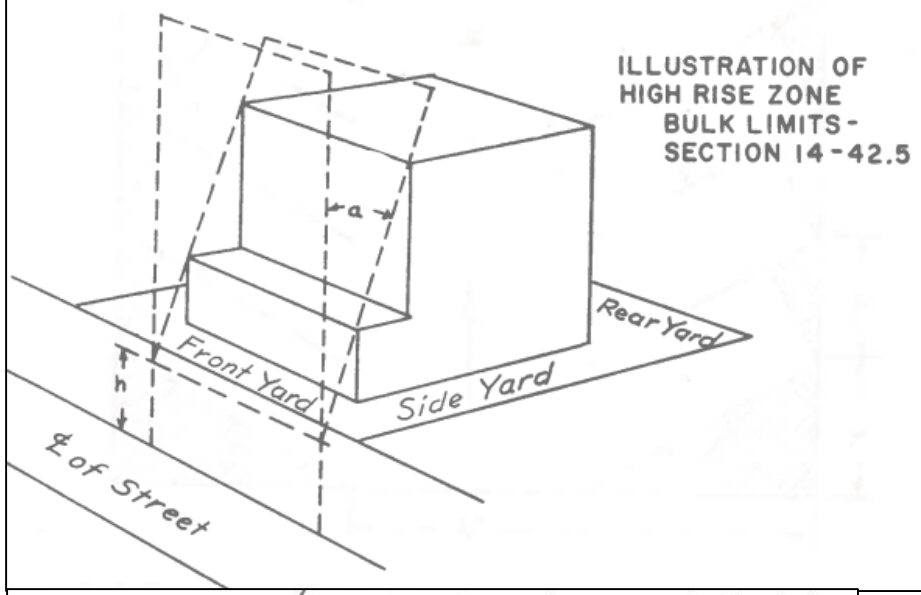
Prior to 1960

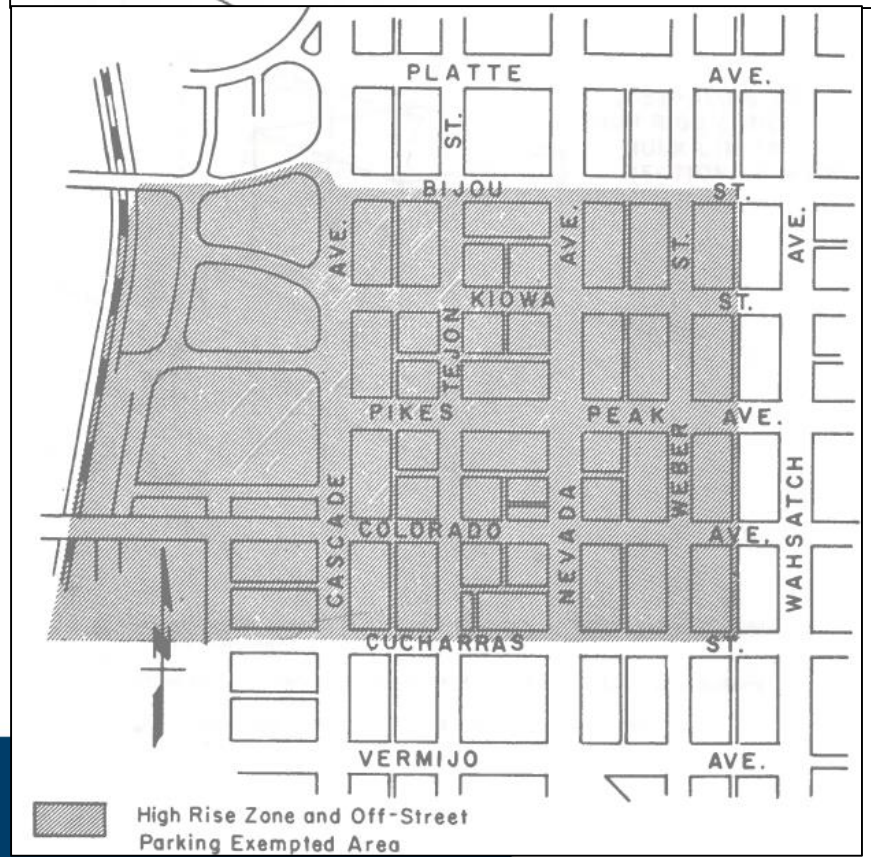
- Height limited by base zone
- Tallest buildings 50’ per C6, M2, & PBC3 zones
- Exceptions for public assembly / CPC waivers
  - 148’ tall St. Mary’s Cathedral built in 1902
  - 149’ tall Historic County Courthouse built in 1903
  - 112’ tall US Bank Building built in 1909

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





TALLEST BUILDINGS IN COLORADO SPRINGS

All were built using High-Rise Overlay standards

1.

NAME	HEIGHT	FLOORS	YEAR
Wells Fargo Tower	~~247~~' 248'	16	1990

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

2.

NAME	HEIGHT	FLOORS	YEAR
FirstBank Building	~~201~~' 206'	14	1966

*Was the tallest building in Colorado Springs between 1966-1990. Formerly known as the "Holly Sugar building."

3.

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

4.

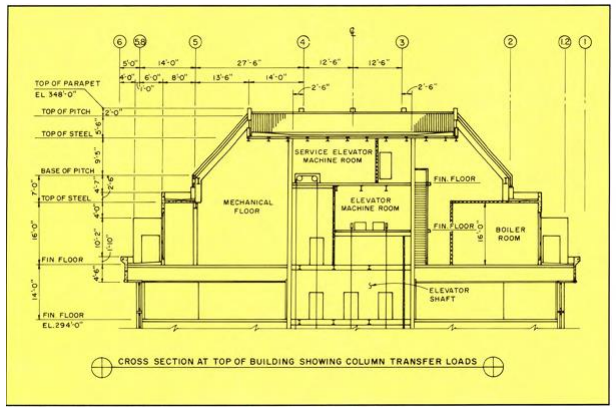
NAME	HEIGHT	FLOORS	YEAR
Colorado Square	185'	14	1976

5.

NAME	HEIGHT	FLOORS	YEAR
Alamo Corporate Center	170'	9	1983

TALLEST BUILDING RESEARCH

Nov./Dec. 1990 issue of the PCI Journal (a publication of the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute)



Design-Construction of United Bank Tower

Cornelius R. (Kin) Du Bois, A.I.A.
Principal
Klipp Partnership, P.C.
Denver, Colorado

Brian R. Klipp, A.I.A.
President
Klipp Partnership, P.C.
Denver, Colorado

Presents the design-construction highlights of a $13 million high rise office building in Colorado Springs. A major feature of this prestigious building is the integration of both architectural and structural precast, prestressed concrete components and especially the dual function of exterior wall panels which provide aesthetic expression and serve as loadbearing elements.

R. Wayne Muir, P.E.
Principal-in-Charge
Structural Consultants Inc.
Denver, Colorado

Bruce R. Wolfe, P.E.
Project Manager
Structural Consultants Inc.
Denver, Colorado

The new United Bank Tower is the predominant feature of the Palmer Center — a multipurpose redevelopment complex in downtown Colorado Springs, Colorado. In addition to the Tower building, the Palmer Center includes the 13-story Antlers Doubletree Hotel, a four-level underground parking structure, a retail arcade, a conference center and an attractive courtyard comprising water fountains and a pergola.

The 16-story building, which reaches a height of 248 ft (75.6 m) above grade, is the tallest structure in Colorado Springs — a thriving metropolis with a population of 300,000. The building comprises a gross area of about 249,000 sq ft (23160 m²).

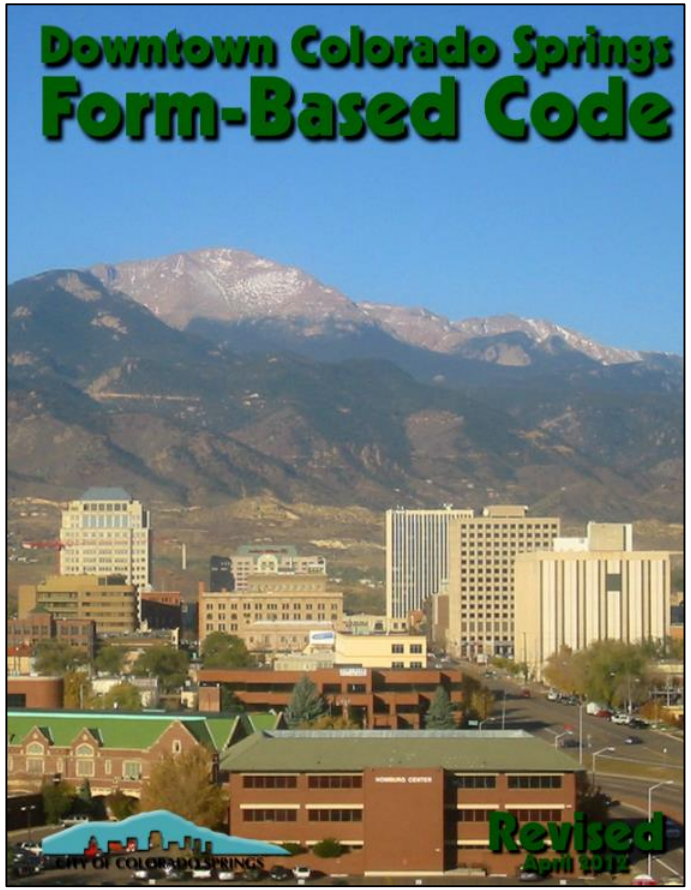
The new building re-establishes the

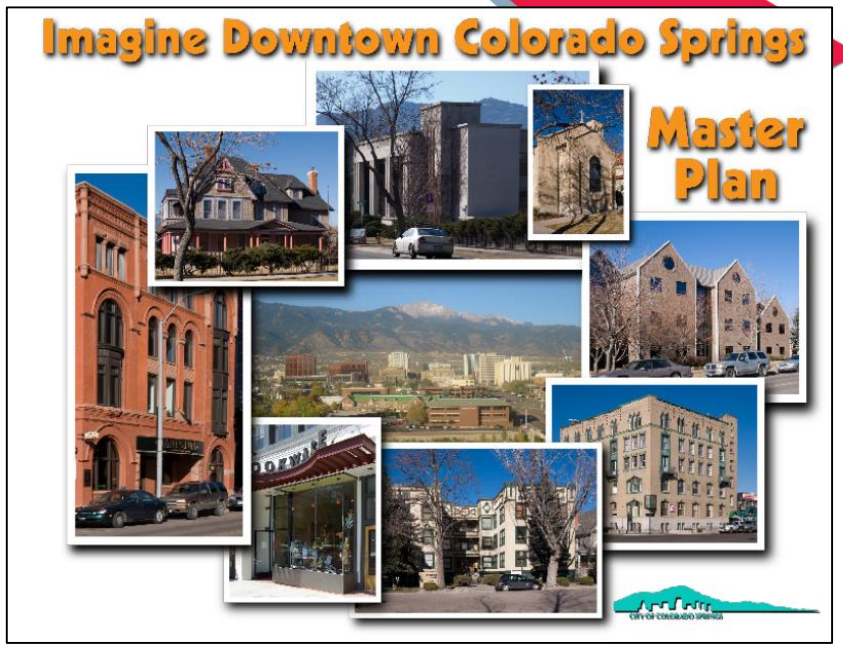
Downtown Building Height

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

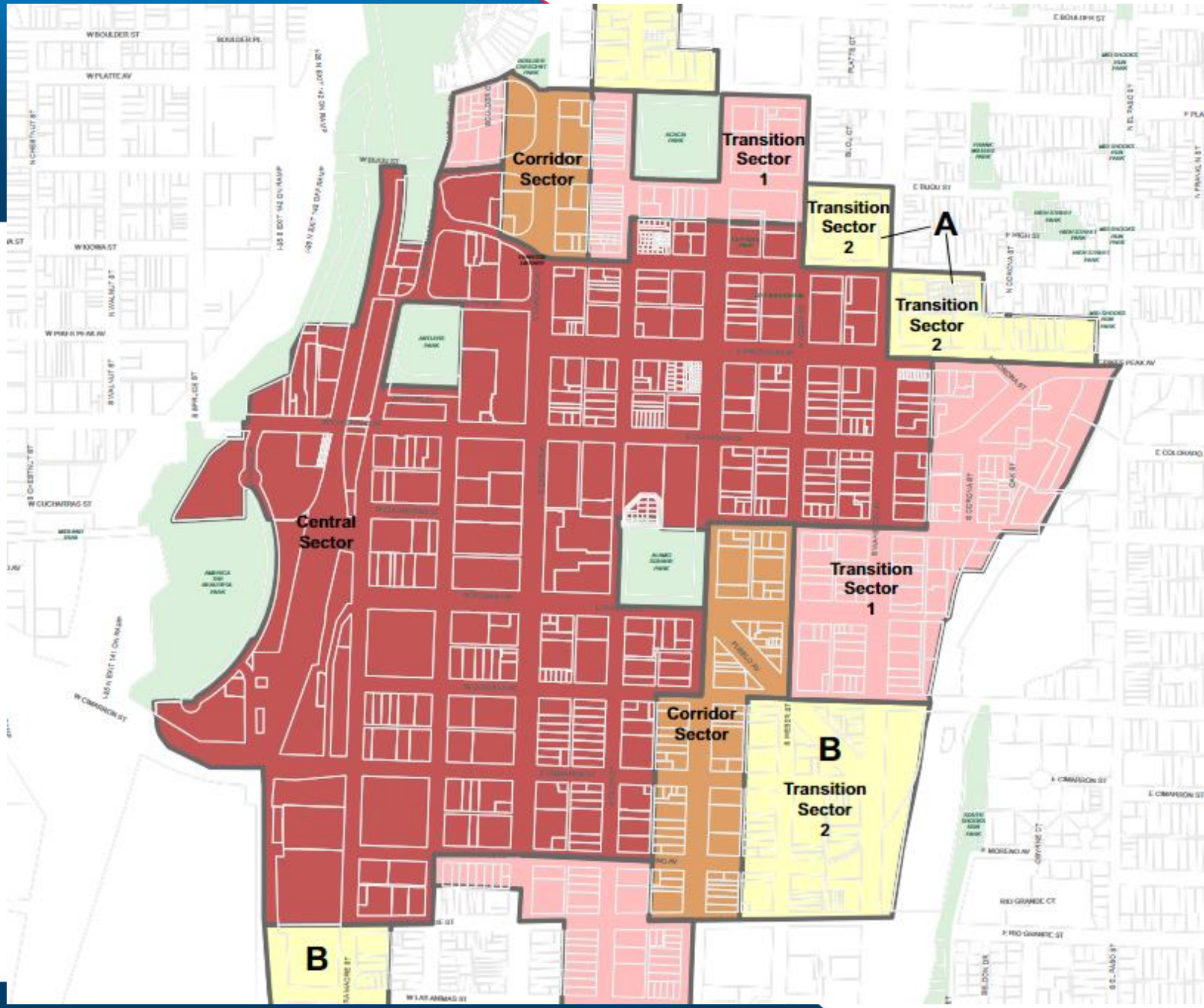




FBZ SECTORS

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



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:

	SECTORS							
	Central		Corridor		Transition 1		Transition 2	
Building Type	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.

DOWNTOWN BUILDING HEIGHT

Questions?

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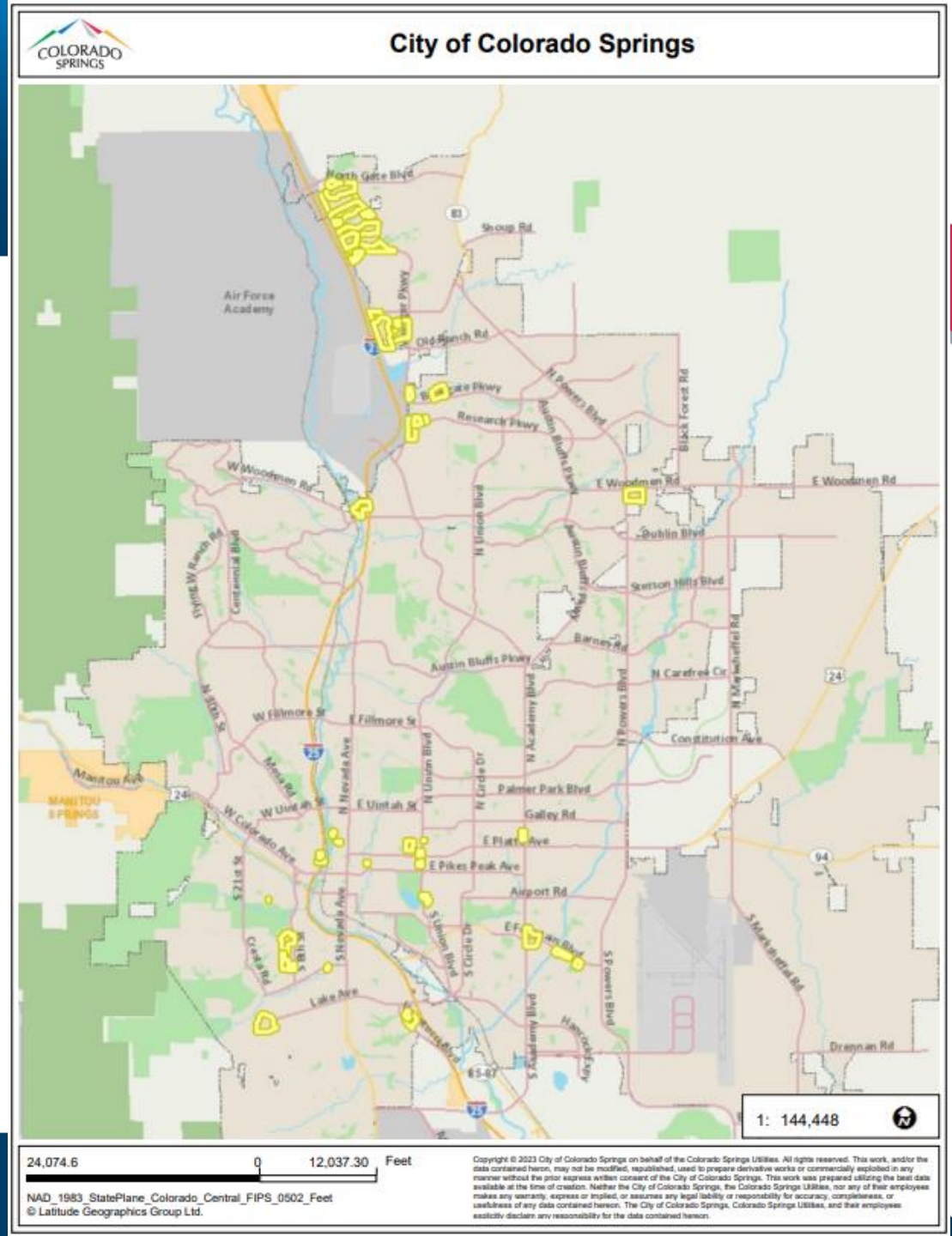
CITY-WIDE HR OVERLAY



Downtown Building Height

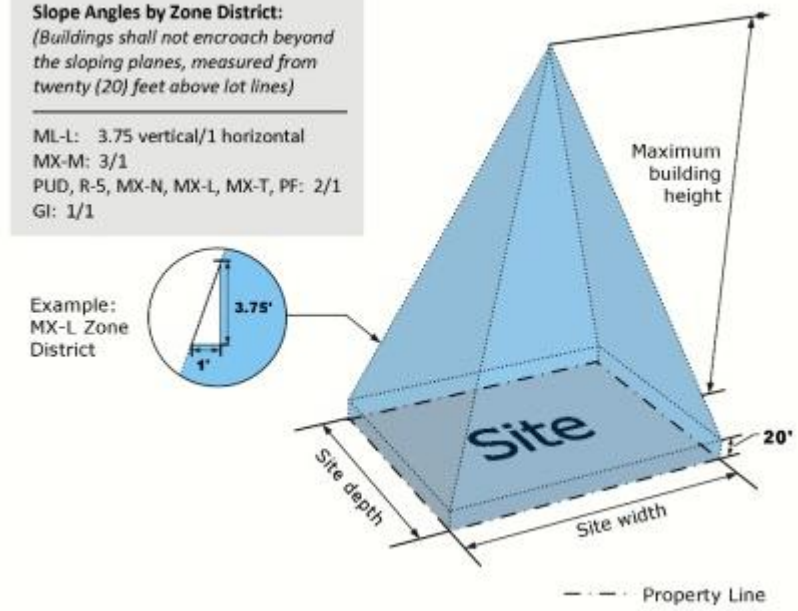
UDC HR OVERLAY

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)

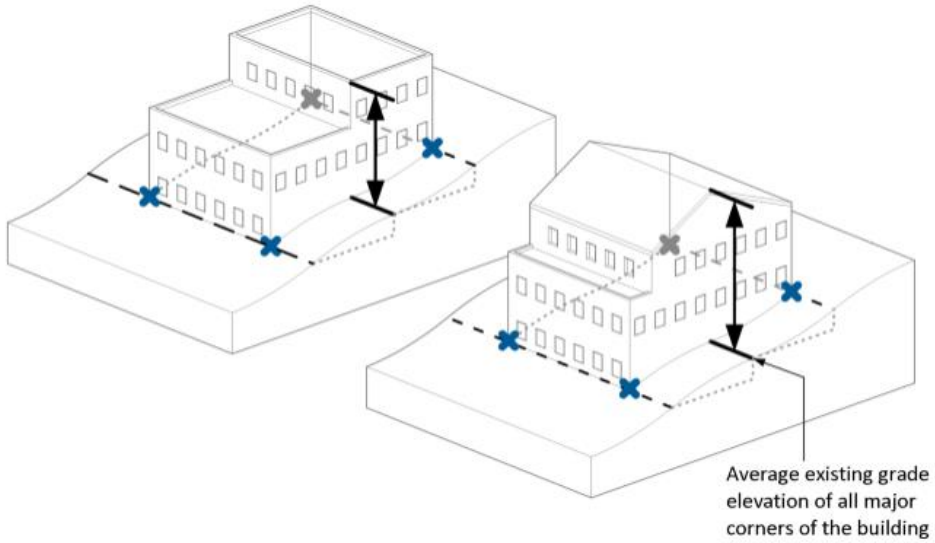
ML-L: 3.75 vertical/1 horizontal
MX-M: 3/1
PUD, R-5, MX-N, MX-L, MX-T, PF: 2/1
GI: 1/1



UDC HEIGHT MEASUREMENT

A. Building Height:

1. Non-Hillside Overlay: Outside the HS-O district, the vertical distance measured from the average finished grade adjoining the building to the highest point of a gable, hipped, or gambrel roof. If a flat roof, height would be measured to the highest point of the building, excluding the parapet. The average elevation of the finished grade adjoining the building shall be the average of the exposed exterior elevations of all major corners of the building. The height of a stepped or terraced building is the average of the highest and lower height of any segment of the building



UDC HEIGHT EXCEPTIONS

B. Height Exceptions:

1. No building or structure or part of a building or structure shall exceed the maximum building height within any zone district as shown in Tables 7.4.2-A through D, unless authorized in Table 7.4.2-F below or elsewhere in this UDC.

2. Building features that extend beyond the maximum building height pursuant to Table 7.4.2-F shall be designed or screened to minimize visibility from the R-E, R-1 9, R-1 6, R-2, and R-Flex Low zone districts, and from any portion of a PDZ district developed or designated for attached or detached single-family or two-family dwelling structures. Screening may not extend taller than the permitted exception to the maximum building height.

Table 7.4.2-F
Authorized Exceptions to Height Requirements

Structure, Feature, or Use	Maximum Height and Conditions
Antennas used for reception of television, multi-channel video programming and radio such as OTARD antennas, television broadcast band antennas, and broadcast radio antennas	As determined by the Manager as necessary to comply with Federal Communications Commission regulations and guidance, provided that the height of the antenna structure may not exceed the distance of the antenna structure from the nearest property line to the base of the structure.
Chimneys, flues, vents, cupolas with a footprint of 36 square feet or less, parapet walls, and other similar features	May exceed the maximum height of the applicable zone district by 5 feet. Additional requirements and separations may be required if located within the WUI-O district.
Flagpoles	Maximum height of 45 feet or the height allowed in the zone district, whichever is greater.
Mechanical equipment such as vents, cooling towers, elevators and mechanical penthouses, and accessory water tanks	May exceed the maximum height of the applicable zone district by 5 feet.
Religious institution spires and towers and satellite dishes	May exceed the maximum height of the applicable zone district, provided the largest horizontal cross-section of the spire or tower does not exceed 5 percent of the footprint of the primary structure from which it rises.
Solar collector, accessory	In all Mixed-Use and Industrial zone districts, may exceed the maximum height of the applicable zone district by 5 feet. In all residential districts, may exceed the maximum height of the applicable zone district by 18 inches. For attached or detached single-family and two-family dwellings: 18 inches. For multifamily development, permitted nonresidential development in residential districts, and in Mixed-Use and Industrial zone districts, 5 feet.
Television or CB radio antennas and lightning protection systems	Excepted from all height limitations
Wireless Communication Facilities (WCF)	See Subsection 7.3.303H.1 (Wireless Communication Facility)

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	