



Legislation Text

File #: CPC MP 09-00027-A1MJ16R, **Version:** 1

Experience Downtown Plan of Development

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Summary:

The Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan is a major update to the 2007 Imagine Downtown Plan of Development for the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) as well as the 2009 Imagine Downtown Master Plan (FIGURE 1). The new Plan represents a market-based, tactical update that builds on previously approved City plans (e.g. Parks Master Plan, Infill supplement to the Comprehensive Plan, etc.) as well as significant community input. The Experience Downtown Plan will help guide efforts and efficient use of public and private resources to maximize success in Downtown Colorado Springs.

Previous Council Action:

City Council has previously approved a number of planning documents relative to Downtown Colorado Springs. In 1971 City Council approved the first master plan for Downtown referred to as "The Downtown Plan." That plan was replaced in 1992 by the "Downtown Action Plan." The "Imagine Downtown Plan of Development" was approved by City Council in 2007 via Resolution #56-07 (FIGURE 2). The "Imagine Downtown Colorado Springs Master Plan" was approved by City Council in June 2009. The new Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan was presented to City Council at the October 24, 2016 Work Session.

Background:

The new Plan includes two sections: Volume 1 serves as an update to the 2007 Imagine Downtown Plan of Development which guides the actions of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA); Volume 2 is the new land use master plan which will replace the 2009 Imagine Downtown Master Plan. Both Plans utilize a set of 8 goals which describe how Downtown will look, feel, and function in the near future. The goals are:

- Economic and Cultural Heart of the Region
- Diverse and Inclusive Place to Live, Integrated with Adjacent Neighborhoods
- Celebrating and Connecting with Outdoor Recreation and Exceptional Natural Setting
- A Place for Health and Active Lifestyles
- A Walkable and Bike-Friendly Center Connected Through Safe and Accessible Multimodal Networks
- A leader in Innovative Urban Design and Sustainability
- Offering an Unforgettable Visitor Experience

- **A Place for Inspiration, Honoring History and Facing the Future**

The Plan also includes additional tactical and specific “action steps” that will move each goal toward implementation.

The Plan covers a wide range of traditional planning topics including: land use; catalytic sites; parks, trails and waterways; gateways and districts; mobility, transportation, and parking; and urban design and public spaces. Each chapter of the plan provides background on the current context, past efforts, and recommended actions for future success.

The Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan is well aligned with the City’s Strategic Plan which aims to promote job creation, maintain and improve City infrastructure, and build community and collaborative relationships. There are many objectives that are directly applicable to the Plan including: the desire to support the community’s economic development goals through partnering with existing and future businesses and economic development partners to identify and remove barriers to business growth and development; to partner closely with organizations that are driving catalytic projects downtown; to enhance accessibility and connectivity of the City’s trails, sidewalks, and facilities; to prioritize walkability and bike-friendliness of and between existing trails, parks, and other amenities through partnerships and grants; and others.

Financial Implications:

The City’s Finance Department has issued a letter documenting the finding that the Plan will not have an adverse fiscal impact on the City. (FIGURE 3)

Board/Commission Recommendation:

The Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan has been presented to a number of Boards and Commissions. The Downtown Development Authority voted to approve the plan on September 1, 2016. The Active Transportation Advisory Committee voted unanimously to support the plan on September 20, 2016. The Citizens’ Transportation Advisory Board voted unanimously to support the plan on October 4, 2016. The Downtown Review Board voted unanimously to support the plan on October 5, 2016. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board voted unanimously to support the plan on October 13, 2016. The City’s Planning Commission voted unanimously to support the plan on October 20, 2016.

Stakeholder Process:

The Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan was informed by numerous official City Plans all of which included significant stakeholder involvement. Additionally, the early stages of Plan creation included a variety of opportunities for public input including:

- Over 1,200 perception surveys were completed online in 2014 and 2015.
- A public workshop with over 150 attendees was held in November of 2015 to discuss early concepts, goals, and concerns about Downtown.
- Targeted focus groups were organized gaining participation from over 60 key stakeholders.
- Numerous one-on-one interviews were held by the project team.
- Three stakeholder charrettes were held with roughly 75 participants.

The City has also worked with Downtown Partnership Staff to issue a press release in late September 2016 to announce the final draft of the plan and publicize upcoming opportunities for public input at formal public hearings.

Alternatives:

1. Approve the Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan updating both the 2007 Imagine Downtown Plan of Development and the 2009 Imagine Downtown Master Plan;
2. Modify the proposed Plan;
3. Deny the Plan leaving the existing Plans in place;
4. Refer the matter back to Staff, Boards, and Commissions for further consideration

Proposed Motion:

Approve the resolution adopting the Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan of Development based on the findings that the plan complies with the necessary State statutes and based on positive recommendations by the Downtown Review Board, the City Planning Commission and other Council appointed boards and commissions.

N/A