City of Colorado Springs

Regional Development Center (Hearing Room)
2880 International Circle

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Downtown Review Board

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 **9:00 AM** **2880 International Cir., 2nd Floor, Hearing Room**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: 8 - Board Member Nolette, Board Member Kuosman, Board Member Coats, Board Member Lord, Board Member Friesema, Board Member Mikulas, Board Member Sokol and Board Member Luciano

Absent: 1 - Board Member Hensler

2. Changes to Agenda/Postponements

3. Communications

Ryan Tefertiller - Urban Planning Manager

Ryan Tefertiller, Urban Planning Manager, said although the Downtown Review Board had not met since November and had seen few major applications, staff had remained busy with administrative reviews and smaller permits. Mr. Tefertiller informed the board that the 2025 DRB Annual Report had been circulated after the February meeting was canceled and invited board members to reach out with any questions. He also provided an update on the Palmer High School project, informing the board that their recommendation from November would move forward to City Council on March 10, following a favorable recommendation from the Planning Commission. Mr. Tefertiller mentioned that staff did not expect items ready for the April 7th meeting but advised keeping the date reserved in case the Palmer development plan or other applications progressed. He also reiterated ongoing work on updates to the Downtown Form-Based Code, explaining that staff planned to align that update with the newly refreshed Elevate Downtown Plan and that further public engagement and board review would occur in the coming months.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.A. DRB 2304 Minutes for the November 4, 2025, Downtown Review Board Meeting.

Presenter:
Bobby Mikulas, Downtown Review Board Acting Chair

Attachments: DRB_Minutes_11.4.25 Draft

Motion by Board Member Mikulas, seconded by Board Member Friesema,

to approve the November 4, 2025, Downtown Review Board Meeting. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0-2-1.

Aye: 6 - Board Member Kuosman, Board Member Coats, Board Member Lord, Board Member Friesema, Board Member Mikulas and Board Member Sokol

Absent: 1 - Board Member Hensler

Abstain: 2 - Board Member Nolette and Board Member Luciano

5. Consent Calendar

6. Items Called Off Consent Calendar

7. Unfinished Business

8. New Business

Elevate Downtown Plan

8.A. NPLN-26-0001 The Elevate Downtown Plan, an update to the 2026 Experience Downtown Plan.
(Legislative)
Council District 3

Presenter:
Ryan Tefertiller, Urban Planning Manager, City Planning Department
Kevin Walker, Planning Director, City Planning Department

Attachments: Elevate Downtown Plan DRB Staff Report
2026-ElevateDowntownPlan-PublicDraft-Reduced

Ryan Tefertiller, Urban Planning Manager, presented the Elevate Downtown Plan, which is an update to the 2016 Experience Downtown Plan. Mr. Tefertiller said the plan had been in development for about a year and represented extensive collaboration between City Planning staff, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Downtown Partnership, and consultant team MIG. Mr. Tefertiller said the Downtown Review Board (DRB) was being asked to make a recommendation before the plan proceeds to the Planning Commission and ultimately City Council. He described the plan's two-volume structure: Volume 1, the formal Plan of Development supporting the DDA's operations and use of tax- increment financing, and Volume 2, a traditional land use and policy plan addressing topics such as mobility, economic vitality, public realm, culture, infrastructure, and utilities. Mr. Tefertiller highlighted the large-scale community engagement effort, thousands of survey responses and numerous events, and noted that the plan is consistent with the City's comprehensive plan and zoning code purpose statements.

Chelsea Gondeck, CEO of the Downtown Partnership, emphasized that the plan reflects extensive stakeholder input and represents a roadmap for downtown's next chapter. She underscored that many residents and business owners felt genuine ownership of the plan and its priorities. Chris Lieber, NES, former chair of the DDA, expressed the DDA board's strong support, citing robust public engagement and the plan's value in promoting public-private partnerships and continued economic and physical growth.

Elly Schaefer, Senior Project Manager, MIG Inc., provided a detailed overview of the plan, including its broad community engagement, updated goals and vision, and significant new content from the prior plan. She described major themes raised by the public, small business support, safety and cleanliness, homelessness, mobility, arts and culture, density, and the need for a downtown grocery store, and walked through highlights of each chapter. These included updated building height analysis, catalytic sites, mobility and trail integration, public-realm and urban design strategies, cultural and creative economy initiatives, and infrastructure considerations. Board members asked questions about building height treatment, homelessness, pedestrian oriented streets, form-based code sector adjustments, creek corridor activation, safety, housing diversity, and potential boundary expansions. Ms. Gondeck and Mr. Tefertiller addressed these questions, noting where items were incorporated into the plan and here subsequent form-based code updates would tackle more specific regulatory details.

After concluding public comment, which included no speakers in support or opposition, Chair Lord expressed strong appreciation for the extensive work by staff and partners, noting how far downtown has progressed since earlier decades. Board member Friesema highlighted the plan's ambition and stated that its clear goals would give the Board greater leverage in advocating for bold updates to the form-based code, emphasizing the importance of aligning zoning tools with the vision. Board member Sokol praised the plan's breadth and offered several reflections, including the need to consider sound mitigation along the I-25 corridor, the potential expansion of parking-minimum exemptions beyond the core, and clarifying language about the history of adjacent neighborhoods. Board member Mikulas emphasized the value of embracing natural assets and noted that unmatched access to nature goal would require consistent commitment. Several members, including Chair Lord and Board member Friesema, reiterated interest in evaluating future expansion of downtown boundaries and ensuring predictable criteria for considering such adjustments. Board members also discussed the opportunities and challenges along the creek corridor, with Board member Mikulas raising safety concerns and the importance of thoughtful trail-oriented design. Board member Sokol acknowledged the plan's progress and expressed support for continuing to refine how the BID and DDA boundaries may evolve. Across the discussion, members praised the community engagement process and the integration of topics such as safety, homelessness, mobility, economic vitality, and housing diversity. The Board collectively conveyed strong confidence in the direction of the plan, appreciation for the presenters, and enthusiasm for the next phase of implementing corresponding updates to the form-based code.

Motion by Board Member Friesema, seconded by Board Member Sokol, to recommend approval to City Council the Elevate Downtown Plan.
The motion passed by a vote of 8-0-0-1.

Aye: 8 - Board Member Nolette, Board Member Kuosman, Board Member Coats, Board Member Lord, Board Member Friesema, Board Member Mikulas, Board Member Sokol and Board Member Luciano

Absent: 1 - Board Member Hensler

9. Presentations

10. Adjourn