AURARIA AND THE UC DENVER

Located in downtown Denver, the Auraria Campus houses three institutions of Higher Education in Colorado. These include the Community College of Denver (CCD), the Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD), and the University of Colorado Denver. This unique partnership is the only one of its kind in the country. Located at the core of the City of Denver and the heart of the larger metropolitan area, the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC or Auraria) campus occupies 126 acres within a five minute walk of Denver’s financial district, its theater and convention district, and many of its most vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods. Leaders of the campus’ three educational institutions have long valued the proximity of the campus to the civic core and the relationships with the civic leadership and business and cultural community that the location affords.

The Auraria Concept

In addition to the programmatic benefits, the concept of ‘Auraria’ allows the three institutions to share both physical and human resources. The schools share administrative and classroom buildings, the library, student union, childcare center, physical education, recreation, and other facilities. Centralized services such as facilities management, parking, public safety, mail services, purchasing, and telecommunication, are provided by a fourth partner in the Auraria formula. This is the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC). AHEC acts like a city manager providing vital support services to the three institutions. Since it’s inception in 1976, Auraria has become Colorado’s largest campus. The three institutions collectively educate approximately 26,000 Full Time Equivalent students and employ over 3,500 persons. The 126-acre campus is bounded by Speer Boulevard, the Auraria Parkway, and West Colfax Avenue. Being the south edge of the central business district and within a short walk of the civic center, gives Auraria one of the most outstanding sites of any campus in the U.S. Proximity to downtown Denver provides unique opportunity for the institutions to make vital connections to the community. This enables students and faculty to use the community as a learning laboratory and to weave classroom theory into the cultural, economic, social, and political practices of the city. Practical applications and internship possibilities are unlimited. Denver has essentially become a programmatic element of Auraria.

The campuses buildings and infrastructure are as diverse as the community itself. The buildings share campus grounds with reminders of the past. The historic Ninth Street Park, restored church buildings, and the Tivoli Brewery, built in 1882, all bring a sense of legacy of Denver’s past. Although the campus was built primarily in the 1970's, the scale and character of these facilities help provide architectural collegiality to Auraria. Today,
the churches—except for St. Elizabeth’s—are used for a variety of needs by both the institutions and the community. The homes in Denver's historic Ninth Street Park house administrative offices.

Denver experienced a tremendous growth in young people demanding a college education following World War II. The baby boom, coupled with the numbers of returning veterans, partially drove Colorado’s need to improve opportunities to further one’s education beyond high school. The higher education push was on. By the early 60's this apparent need became a concern with Colorado Legislators and a task force on Post High School Education was formed to make recommendations on the concern. In 1962, this task force recommended the establishment of the Metropolitan State College, a four-year college open to all students interested in furthering their education. It finally opened in 1965 and was housed in leased facilities in downtown Denver. At the same time, the University of Colorado’s Denver Extension Center was also lobbying for expanded facilities to meet their program expansion. The Extension Center had been shuffling in and out of different facilities in the Denver area since the early 1900's, and was currently located in renovated Denver Tramway Company buildings on the northeast bank of Cherry Creek. In 1967, the Community College of Denver also opened the first of three campuses to meet the enrollment bulge in higher education. It wasn’t long before all three institutions were competing for space throughout the Denver area. In 1968, the Auraria Concept began to take shape. The newly formed Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) developed a concept to combine the three institutions on a single site. The site for this new tri-institutional campus was just across the Cherry Creek and Speer Boulevard, known as the Auraria site. The Auraria site was at the time, a diverse residential community with strong ethnic heritages. The site was shared by people of German, Irish, Jewish, and Hispanic ancestry. Just one year later in 1969, the Auraria site was designated an urban renewal site by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This gave the Auraria concept the opportunity to become reality.

Executives, planning officers, directors, administrators, faculty, and students were brought together under the direction of the CCHE to begin the planning and explore the possibilities of implementing the new concept. Although somewhat hesitant at the beginning, the various institutions worked together and soon realized the potential for excellence, both individually as well as collectively. The concept did not come without controversy. It meant relocating 155 families, 70 individuals, and 237 businesses from the neighborhood, some of which never reopened their doors. In November of 1969, despite the opposition, city voters passed a bond issue to allow the City to provide funding to help with the project.

In 1970, the Colorado legislature passed Senate Bill 67 which approved funding and the selection of the Auraria site. Land acquisition and physical planning began immediately. The first Board of Directors was formed in August of 1971. The Governor-appointed members included influential members of the Denver Community, along with the president or acting chiefs of each institution. Two years later, in the spring of 1972, the Committee was granted the final approval. Funds were approved for the State’s largest Capital Construction project ever: over $40 Million. The original plan accommodated
13,000 FTE (full time equivalent students) and was built in three phases. Phase I constructed the South Classroom and the Technology Building for the Community College of Denver. Phase II built classroom facilities for the Metropolitan State College of Denver and a Library for both programs. Finally in 1976, Phase III was completed which allowed occupancy by the remaining institutional programs.

Seven years later, on January 21, 1976, Colorado Governor Richard Lamm opened the Auraria Campus, beginning a new era in Colorado Higher Education. Two elements of the pre-existing community were honored in the planning and design of the campus: the historic street grid system of the Town of Auraria and the preservation of architecturally and culturally significant buildings (including the Tivoli Brewery building, St. Elizabeth’s Church, St. Cajetan’s Church, the Emmanuel Gallery, and the historic homes along what is now 9th Street Park – some of which were relocated to 9th Street from other locations). With a large amount of acreage on the new campus, the first generation of academic buildings were developed at three stories or less and concentrated on the eastern half of the campus. Portions of the west edge of the campus are in the 100-year floodplain of the Platte River, and the majority of campus land west of 9th Street was dedicated to surface parking.

**Chronological Facts**

- 1965 Metropolitan State College opens with 1,189 students.
- 1968 Community College of Denver opens
- 1968 CCHE presents idea for “educational park” comprising several institutions at the Auraria site, already approved for MSCD.
- 1968 CCHE commissions study to determine feasibility of clustering several institutions on one site in Denver. UCD is included in the planning.
- 1970 Governor signs $1.9 Million appropriation for land and planning of the campus.
- 1971 Governor Love establishes Auraria ExecutiveBoard.
- 1972 Auraria Presidents announce plans to collaborate three institutions at the site.
- 1972 In May, Colorado’s Joint Budget Committee appropriates $39.9 Million of the $84 Million needed to construct the Auraria Campus. Urban Renewal funds provide $22 Million.
- 1973 October 4th sees the Auraria campus construction begin with ground breaking ceremonies.
- 1976 On January 21st, the Auraria Campus is formally dedicated. CCD occupies buildings in late 1975 and early 1976.
- 2009 Auraria enrollment reaches 26,000 FTE.

**Existing Conditions**
Neighborhood Context
The campus and downtown Denver are located just to the east of Interstate 25. Access is available via all three campus bounded streets: Speer Boulevard on the east, the Auraria Parkway on the north, and Colfax Avenue to the south. These three major thoroughfares provide vehicular access to and from the campus while simultaneously creating barriers to the surrounding community. The state highways also segregate the community into distinct neighborhoods.

To Auraria’s immediate east, across Speer Boulevard, is the central business district and the Denver Performing Arts Complex. To the north, across the Auraria Parkway, is the Pepsi Center, home of the National Hockey League Colorado Avalanche and the National Basketball Association Denver Nuggets. Auraria’s south, across Colfax Avenue, consists of primarily residential property and small scale retail shops.

The combination of diverse neighbors benefits the campus because of the variety of services and opportunities that are available within a short distance of campus. With Denver’s overlay of an efficient transit system, including light rail, students, faculty, and staff truly can experience the one stop shopping concept. Over the past decade, the entire region—and especially the surrounding community—has undergone a revitalization that includes a combination of renovations, remodels, and new construction. The combination of entertainment and new business ventures is bringing a new life to the Platte Valley. The Auraria Campus is at the heart of it all. Beyond the immediate neighborhood is an extremely diverse, ever-changing regional student population which the campus also supports. The entire state of Colorado relies on the Auraria campus to provide higher education opportunities to students that either can not, or chose not, to attend a large or residential college or University.

Campus Siting
The Auraria campus sits on the site of Denver’s earliest settlement. To this day, when changes are incorporated into the lands, a sense of care is taken because archeological sites still exist underground. The campus opened in 1976 with an enrollment of just over 10,000 FTE. Today, Auraria serves more students than any other campus in Colorado. Its almost 26,000 FTE is ethnically, economically, and socially diverse. It is comprised of 95 percent Colorado residents. Its Denver location puts the campus within 45 minutes of nearly 75 percent of the State’s residents, making Auraria quite accessible to the commuter. Unlike the typical residential campus, the student demography is 80 percent employed, over 40 percent of which work full time. Average ages range from 27 years at the Metropolitan State College of Denver to almost 30 years at the University of Colorado Denver. Many part-time instructors are utilized to support the flexibility needed in class and laboratory scheduling. These people tend to be professionals who come from businesses located in downtown Denver.
The 126 acre main campus consists of 41 buildings, which house approximately 1.6 million assignable square feet of building space to support its programs. In addition to this, various campus programs lease space in downtown Denver.

The campus is opened 7 days per week (including events) and utilized from 7:00 am to 10:30 on weekdays. This makes the campus one of the most efficient users of building space in the country. Today’s utilization practices result in approximately 60 assignable square feet of space per student, one third that of other Colorado campuses.

**Land Use**
When the Auraria campus began over twenty years ago, land resources were never a concern. Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) provided ample land resources to begin the campus. The amount of building space needed at this time was minimal so it was decided to construct campus buildings in a relatively low profile. This spread facilities out over multiple city blocks and preserved mountain views for downtown neighbors. Because of this, land use and building needs were all intermingled within a small, single academic core. The core was anchored by the centrally located Auraria Library. All other facilities were located within a five minute walking distance from this point, making for a relatively efficient layout.

Auraria began its development at the south end with its first two buildings, the South Classroom and the Technology building. Using the existing street layout as a urban design grid, the campus moved north with three additional buildings, the Library, Central Classroom, and the Science Building. These buildings, along with the preserved historic structures, established the initial campus. In its next five years, the campus enrollment increased 50 percent. Parking demands and vehicular access created a sea of asphalt fed by numerous state highways and fast moving streets. Soon after, Larimer and Lawrence Streets, which funneled 34,000 cars daily through the center of campus, where closed. The Auraria Parkway opened to reroute this traffic around the edge of campus, allowing the campus to expand to the north. Lawrence Street was turned into a pedestrian mall. Helping to anchor the mall were three buildings adjacent to it. These were the North Classroom, Arts, and Student Union buildings (now the Plaza Building). The concept paved the way for a new pedestrian oriented campus.

Today, the predominant academic core is located in the central part of the campus. It is surrounded by administrative, student support, and parking functions. Recreation and athletic activities occur to the north. Facilities support functions are generally located west of 7th Street, outside the general academic core. Seventh Street is the main vehicular access point to and through the campus. It virtually divides campus property and is a safety concern for pedestrians. Much of the parking is located west of 7th and people must cross the four-lane road to get-on to-campus. In the academic area, each school’s administration is focused within a particular area of campus. CCD lies in the southern part of campus, MSCD is centrally located, and UCD is primarily in the north. Ninth Street consists of primarily administrative functions and the Tivoli (north) houses most student support functions.
**Building Use**
The majority of buildings on the Auraria campus house traditional academic, administrative, and support functions. Instructional classrooms, laboratories, office space, and library spaces, make up over 80 percent of the 1.6M assignable square feet. The majority of all space types are found in all major buildings throughout the campus, a somewhat mixed use; however, buildings can be classified into six major categories for their most prominent types. These include: Academic, Administrative, Parking, Service, Support, and Others. Academic buildings make up the majority of the campus. They were designed and constructed to support specific functions, rather than a specific school (The Auraria Concept). This concept was then coupled with the need to consolidate specific institutional administrative functions. Although general instruction spaces are shared by all three institutions, administrative spaces were located in specific buildings, providing a sense of “home.” The Community College of Denver resides in the southern part of campus, primarily in the South Classroom Building. The Metropolitan State College of Denver sits within the central core primarily within Plaza, Central, West, Science and Arts Buildings. The University of Colorado at Denver resides in the northern part of campus, primarily in the North Classroom, Arts, Plaza, and Science Buildings. Service and Support facilities were located at the perimeter of the academic and institutional buildings. This helped develop a simple academic core, but is now in jeopardy as the campus grows. The new center of campus has expanded and now includes the old “outlying” support buildings.

**Space Efficiency**
The Auraria campus is one of the most efficiently used campuses in the United States. Many facilities are open 7 days/week and throughout the evening. Classroom utilization exceeds the State of Colorado’s guidelines. Average classroom utilization is 42 hours per week with some rooms being used as much as 80 hours per week.

**Building Conditions**
Except for buildings that existed on the site prior to the Auraria development, the majority of the facilities were built when the campus began in 1976. Because of this, most building conditions are relatively the same, indicating the need for major maintenance in the near future. Since much of the campus was constructed in the resource scarce 1970's, there is a major concern about the life space of campus building at Auraria. The philosophy during this period was to build as much space for as little as possible, resulting in buildings with shorter life spans. Auraria is beginning to see the problems with this approach. Now that the general age of the buildings are reaching 20+ years, building components are rapidly deteriorating.

**Today - Campus in the City: Momentum for Change**
As the Denver metropolitan area has grown in the last three decades, so too has the student population educated at the Auraria campus. Today, as the City and other jurisdictional agencies enthusiastically embrace growth through a number of concurrent planning and development activities (including RTD’s FasTracks program, the update
of the Downtown Denver Area Plan, station area planning activities around light rail stations, and City planning and zoning code updates to guide private investment), they similarly show their enthusiasm for the health and growth envisioned by AHEC for its campus.

Recent municipal plans contemplate the relationship of AHEC to its surroundings in ways that seek to improve both the physical and perceptual connection of the campus with the city’s core business district. For example, the 2003 document “Denver Park and Recreation Plan” (DPR) is the first of the City’s plans of the last decade to articulate a vision for the Auraria campus – proposing a “land bridge” over Speer Boulevard to connect the Auraria Campus and the Denver Center for the Performing Arts to improve pedestrian connections and expand downtown green space. In the same year, development of the city and region’s transportation strategy took form in the Regional Transportation District’s (RTD’s) FasTracks program, establishing a mass transit plan of new light rail, commuter rail, and enhanced bus service to meet the needs of the metropolitan area’s projected population of over 3.5 million residents by 2025. The FasTracks plan locates a new transit station at the west edge of the campus, bringing two additional lines to the campus in addition to the existing three lines that serve the Colfax at Auraria and existing Auraria West stations. Because of the convergence of rail lines serving the Central Business District, the southeast metropolitan corridor, the southwest metropolitan corridor, and the west metropolitan corridor, RTD estimates that upwards of 26,000 daily transfers will take place at the new Auraria West Station – making this station the second busiest in the entire regional light rail system.

In development concurrent with this Plan, the Downtown Denver Area Plan (DDAP) is striving to describe a dynamic, safe, and pedestrian-oriented Downtown comprised of a number of distinct districts – including the Auraria district. The DDAP’s “Auraria Connection Working Group” is contemplating public-private partnerships to densify both the campus and privately-held properties at its edges, integrating the campus with Lower Downtown and the central business district through better relationships at the Speer Boulevard, Auraria Parkway, and Colfax Avenue edges. The group sees benefit in improving the pedestrian crossings and urban character of these streets and in enhancing cultural, economic, and job-training connections between the campus and the city.

**University of Colorado Denver – Development East of Speer Boulevard**

Unlike the other institutions at the Auraria Campus, UC Denver also has a significant presence in the downtown including the Lawrence Street Center and the UC Denver Building. This presence has been expanded with the purchase of the building at 1475 Lawrence for the Business School. UC Denver has a unique situation because of having programs and offices in both the campus and downtown Denver. A summary of the east property inventory is presented below.

**CU- Denver Building**
The CU-Denver Building was designed by Muchow Associates and constructed in 1977. The building contains two distinct structures. The tower is eight stories and is located on the south end of the parcel. The annex, located on the north end of the property, is a split level structure totaling two stories. Below ground lie two levels of parking, containing 160 spaces.

Address: 1250 14th Street, Denver
Year of Construction: 1977
GSF: 160,022
Stories: 8 +2
Purchase Date: June 2006
Purchase Price: $36.5 Million (includes Lawrence Street Center)

In 1982, in addition to its program space on the AHEC campus site, the University of Colorado Denver maintained several locations in downtown Denver. Most of the administrative offices at that time resided in the Tramway Tower, now the Hotel Teatro, located on 14th Street between Lawrence and Arapahoe. The Graduate School of Public Affairs’ Institute for Urban and Public Policy Research (IUPPR) and the College of Business (COB) were both leasing space. IUPPR was leasing space in the Kittredge Building at 16th and Glenarm, while The College of Business first occupied space that year at 11th and Wazee, before moving to the CGG Building in 1985, where at the height of their tenancy they occupied 20,000 rentable square feet.

The Tramway Tower was in disrepair and, in 1983, it became necessary for most of the central administrative units to move into a new facility. The university entered into an agreement with Equitable Assurance Company, Inc. to lease space in the Dravo Building, located at 1250 14th Street. The building was little over a decade old, and was ideally located directly adjacent to the main campus. As leases expired and space became scarce on the main campus, more units began to move into the Dravo Building. By 1987, the administrative offices were joined by the School of Education and several departments in the College of Architecture and Planning, totaling over 43,000 rentable square feet.

By 1992, UCD occupied 132,571 of the 149,663 rentable square feet (RSF) in the Dravo Building, including the entire College of Business and College of Architecture and Planning. Of the remainder, 10,875 was vacant space, with the balance being occupied by The Executive MBA program and a computer retail store. UCD began to look for a way to take an ownership position in the Dravo Building to guarantee space for the university in a location close to the main Auraria Campus, and to protect the university from the volatility of the Downtown Denver rental market. A proposal was put forth to use the Auraria Foundation, a non-profit entity formed to further the interests of the Auraria Campus, as a financial vehicle to purchase the Dravo Building. The proposal was accepted and on September 12, 1995, the Auraria Foundation purchased the Dravo Building and executed a master lease agreement with the University of Colorado at Denver to occupy the entire building. The building was also renamed the CU-Denver Building. The building was purchased in 1995 by the Auraria Foundation through the issuance of tax-exempt revenue bonds. The $11.46 million of Colorado Postsecondary
Educational Facilities Authority Revenue Bonds – Series 1995 were refunded in 2001. The 2001 bond issuance was for $9.86 million of Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority tax-exempt revenue bonds.

**Lawrence Street Center**

The Lawrence Street Center was designed by McMorran Obermeier Goss Bershof Architects and constructed in 1982. The Lawrence Street Center, which is 14 stories tall, is one of two structures sharing a single parcel. Directly adjacent to the Lawrence Street Center across a common plaza is the Residences at Lawrence Street (RLS). The RLS, a private condominium development, is a ten-story structure. Collectively, these buildings lie on two levels of shared parking, totaling 189 spaces.

Address: 1380 Lawrence Street  
Year of Construction: 1981  
GSF: 185,322  
Stories: 14  
Purchase Date: June 2006  
Purchase Price: $36.5 Million (includes CU-Denver Building)

Shortly after the purchase of the CU-Denver Building, overcrowding in that building made it necessary for several UC Denver groups to lease space in the Lawrence Street Center, located at 1380 Lawrence Street. The first of these programs was The Institute for International Business in 1995, followed a short time after by the College of Business, which needed a satellite office for faculty who could not fit in their space in the CU-Denver Building. By 1998, UC Denver occupied 35,357 rentable square feet of the 172,978 rentable square foot building. With the need for leased space increasing dramatically and lease rates continuing to rise, a formal proposal was put forth to purchase the Lawrence Street Center, using the same relationship used to purchase the CU-Denver Building.

On October 22, 1998, the Auraria Foundation purchased the Lawrence Street Center, and simultaneously entered into a master lease agreement with UCD to lease the entire building. The purchase was funded through the issuance of bonds that were partially taxable as follows:

- $6.74 million for the 1998A Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority Tax-Exempt Revenue Bonds
- $14.02 million for the 1998B Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority Taxable Revenue Bonds

In June 2006, The UC Denver entered into a Facilities Acquisition Agreement with the Auraria Foundation to have conveyed to the University both the Lawrence Street Center and the CU-Denver Building. In conjunction, UC Denver retired the existing bonds on
both buildings, and re-issued the debt, expediting the title transfer of both properties to UC Denver.

**1475 Lawrence Court**

Pending availability of donor funds, the Lawrence Court building will be renovated to house the Business School of the UC Denver.

Address: 1475 Lawrence Street  
Year of Construction: 1982  
GSF: 104,179  
Stories: 6  
Purchase Date: June 2008  
Purchase Price: $24.55 Million

Relevant Current Physical Master Plans

There are many concurrent physical planning processes that will have a major affect on the development of the UC Denver Neighborhood. The most significant processes are discussed below:

AURARIA MASTER PLAN UPDATE (June 2007)

AHEC has undergone a significant revision to the Campus Master Plan. This was completed by Sasaki and Studio InSite and adopted by the Board in June of 2007. This Master Plan Update proposes a significant new direction for the campus. The campus is meant to now have continuity with the surrounding areas. It is no longer intended to be an isolated campus but instead create linkages to the adjoining neighborhoods. This is particularly true for downtown Denver. The new Science Building was constructed close to Speer as the first step of his new approach.

Another significant change is that each of the three institutions will be conceived as ‘neighborhoods’ within the context of the larger campus. There will still be many shared resources such as the library, classrooms, performing arts center, student enter, and the recreation center but there will be a specific area of the campus dedicated to each institution with a unique identity and sense of place. The area designated for UC Denver neighborhood is surrounding the North Classroom Building and is the focus of this study.

There are a number of other important changes that are central to the Master Plan Update. Larimer St. is proposed as a second campus spine in addition to Lawrence Way. To achieve this, it is proposed that the large parking garage (the Auraria Transportation Center) be modified to ultimately allow the street to pass through it. This street is planned to link downtown Denver all the way to the new emerging Auraria West District and light rail station on the west edge of campus, perhaps with a streetcar. This will create a new parallel pedestrian connection through campus. Another notable change put forward by the Master Plan Update is to relocate the ballfields and create a significant mixed use district at the corner of Speer and Auraria to the east of the Tivoli. This would be achieved through a public-private partnership between AHEC and a private developer to be selected through an RFP. This new development will cause a significant change to the perception and use of the campus as well as the connection from Auraria to the downtown. The site at the corner of Speer and Auraria Parkway is currently being proposed for a new hotel sponsored by the hotel school at Metro State.

Additionally, legislation was adopted, SB 08-180 — Authority of Auraria Boards, which allows for the implementation of AHEC Master Plan elements including institutional neighborhoods and the use of revenue from public/private development. A memorandum of understanding was approved by the AHEC governing board in January 2008, which
discusses the relationship of AHEC and the constituent institutions regarding implementation of the AHEC Master Plan.

There have been profound changes to the vision for the Auraria Campus in the past few years. Both the AHEC Master Plan Update and the Downtown Area Plan have called for a stronger integration between the campus and downtown. This is a fundamentally different approach than the previous master plan in which the campus was conceived as an isolated island from its surroundings. A profound change that is offered in the AHEC Master Plan (June 2007) is the concept of ‘neighborhoods’ for each of the institutions on the Auraria Campus.

The Campus Design Guidelines have recently been modified to reflect this new direction in the Master Plan update. These are scheduled to be completed by fall of 2009.

**UC DENVER MICROMASTER PLAN (MARCH 2009)**

To address these changes, the University of Colorado Denver completed a micro master plan to give definition to its concept of the neighborhood. The physical micro master plan study was completed in March 2009 for the following purposes:

- Validate the AHEC Master Plan (June 2007) assumptions relative to the UC Denver neighborhood;
- Establish a physical framework for the UC Denver area and neighborhood development on AHEC;
- Develop a physical development concept to relate to the institutional strategic planning initiatives/priorities.

The UC Denver Area incorporates land both on the AHEC Campus and in the city of Denver. On AHEC, there is a distinct UC Denver Neighborhood as one of the discrete institutional neighborhoods, defined in the Master Plan Update. It has edges around a proposed central quad and unique gateway elements. However, the UC Denver Area extends beyond the campus to include the buildings in the city. The concept plan creates an overall vision to define both the entire area and UC Denver Neighborhood at AHEC. The plan has been developed to create a clear identity for the UC Denver ‘Neighborhood’. This will provide a context for growth to 2020 and beyond. It is assumed that about 1.3 million sf of space would be added in this timeframe. In establishing an urban design approach, the plan identified a number of unique attributes of the UC Denver campus that contribute to the identity, quality and character of the place. The following have been identified as the campus attributes and values to be retained and enhanced:

1. UC Denver is a major research university and a part of the University of Colorado system. It attracts students nationally and internationally.
2. UC Denver has research, professional and graduate programs.
3. UC Denver is embedded in the city and should capitalize on its vibrant metropolitan location.
4. UC Denver has direct access to Cherry Creek as an amenity.

The plan created an overall vision to define both the entire UC Denver area and Neighborhood at AHEC. The plan also created a clear identity for the UC Denver ‘Neighborhood’ and provided a context for growth to 2020 and beyond. It is assumed that approximately 0.75 million square feet will be developed on eight tentative sites within the area defined as the UC Denver Neighborhood.

DENVER DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN (July 2007)
The Downtown Denver Partnership and the City and County of Denver recently completed an update of the Downtown Denver Area Plan. This had concepts that have an important impact on the Auraria campus. Specifically, the plan calls for strengthening the connection between downtown and the campus. This should be done by intensifying campus development near downtown, linking Auraria and downtown by a streetcar on Larimer and transforming Speer to a boulevard that will create a more pedestrian-friendly environment and include improving the pedestrian crossings of Speer Boulevard. The Downtown Denver Partnership plans on further studying the urban design of Speer Blvd as it goes through downtown to arrive at a comprehensive approach to the transformation of Speer Boulevard and its relation to downtown and the Auraria Campus. The City and County of Denver is currently studying the entire length of Speer Blvd to better understand its potential from a neighborhood and transportation perspective. These studies will affect how Speer is ultimately transformed and how it is configured in the area near the campus and downtown.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER STRATEGIC PLAN (Feb. 2008)
The Strategic Plan of UC Denver (approved March, 2008) has outlined an overall vision of what the university could look like in 2020 and expressed the values that will guide future development. The Micro Master Plan sought to embody this vision in its work.