

# PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2





Every university is unique. Understanding the mission, vision, physical context and the people that comprise the university is the critical first step in the planning process. As a policy document, this plan supports the university's long-standing mission, history and future trajectory as a campus rooted in downtown Denver.

# 2.1 PURPOSE

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The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) guidelines for long-range facilities master planning recommends that institutions prepare a new plan every ten years, with a five-year update. It has the authority to prescribe uniform policies, procedures and standards of space utilization and to review master plans and program plans for all higher education capital construction projects in Colorado. The ability to review master plans for state institutions of higher education allows CDHE and state-elected officials to attain a better understanding of educational facilities' needs and priorities.

The University of Colorado System (CU System) has a clear review and adoption process for all facility master plans that includes approvals by the campus chancellor, system president, and the CU Board of Regents (BOR). Also, plans should be consistent with CDHE guidelines. The CU BOR is charged constitutionally with the general supervision of all four CU campuses and the exclusive control and direction of all funds of and appropriations to the university unless otherwise provided by law. The CU BOR Finance Committee reviews all building and master planning projects before they go to the full board for formal approval. The CU BOR Finance Committee must approve CU Denver's 2017 Facilities Master Plan before it can be submitted for approval to the full board, which is necessary for university adoption of the plan.

The 2017 Facilities Master Plan (FMP) is the first comprehensive plan to address the specific needs of CU Denver. Previously, space needs of the university were identified within the context of planning efforts led by the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC), which is a state entity created to operate the tri-institutional Auraria Campus for the Community College

of Denver (CCD), Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver), and CU Denver.

This plan further builds upon the concepts first proposed in the 2007 Auraria Campus Master Plan and refined in the 2012 AHEC Master Plan Update. Also, the 2017 Facilities Master Plan will inform the 2017 Auraria Campus Master Plan so that AHEC can continue to provide the shared resources that support CU Denver and the other Auraria institutions.

This plan outlines the facilities that CU Denver will need to remain a leading public urban research university and to fulfill its promise as one of the city's most valued assets. The framework of land uses, building forms and open spaces described in this plan are intended to be flexible and adaptable.

The Facilities Master Plan will not only guide the planning and design of campus facilities, but it will also influence academic programming, existing and future space scheduling and appropriate building and open space uses. The Facilities Master Plan should serve as a guide, not as a set of binding prescriptive actions, and the specific recommendations should be modified as additional requirements and needs arise. However, such revisions should follow and support the plan's guiding principles.

Therefore, this Facilities Master Plan is a living document that will be periodically re-examined and updated as the campus continues to evolve.

## 2.2 INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

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CU Denver is Colorado's only public urban research university. It combines academic rigor with immersive real-world experiences to educate students through quality academics, relevant research, creative work and civic engagement in the heart of Denver. Today more than 19,000 on- and off-campus students thrive in a diverse cultural, professional and experiential setting, benefitting from CU Denver's unparalleled internship, career and networking opportunities. All of these opportunities are within easy reach of the central business district, lower downtown (LoDo), the state capitol, and the global and regional headquarters of major companies, high-tech start ups, non-profits and cultural organizations.

CU Denver now extends into the heart of the city, reaching from the Auraria Campus into downtown Denver's thriving theatre and business districts. CU Denver's ongoing efforts to build bridges between industry and academia have resulted in a unique "learning laboratory" for students, faculty, researchers and partners.

Part of the state's largest public university system, CU Denver is also a major contributor to the Colorado economy, with a direct impact of more than \$800 million annually.

The CU System has four academic campuses – CU Denver, the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus (CU Anschutz), the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) and the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS). The new CU South Denver facility located in Lone Tree, Colorado, managed by the University of Colorado Denver, offers courses and programs from all four campuses.

Of these four, CU Denver and CU Anschutz, located approximately nine miles to the east, are legally a consolidated university. However, each campus operates independently, though several functions—such as facilities, information technology, academic and student affairs, administration and finance, and human resources—are provided through consolidated units. This plan will focus exclusively on the space needs of the academic, research, administration, staff, student, and support functions of CU Denver.

## 2.3 STRATEGIC PLAN, MISSION AND VISION

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The 2008 University of Colorado Denver Strategic Plan established a 15-year Mission and Vision for the university that is still relevant and, as such, informed decision-making throughout the master planning process. The appointment of Chancellor Dorothy Horrell in 2016 led to a series of initiatives to engage the campus community, its partners and its affiliates in provocative and inspiring conversations about CU Denver. Chancellor Horrell's "Reach Out and Listen Tour," and the subsequent Strategic Plan Statement of 2017 helped establish: 1) five campus priorities; 2) the reclaiming of the much beloved "CU in the City" brand; and, 3) embracing and celebrating CU Denver's singular role as the state's only public urban research university.

The tour launched a dialogue around the university's potential and impact. Five priorities emerged from the listening tour:

1. Elevate student success;
2. Advance excellence and innovation in teaching, research, and creative work;
3. Strengthen the university's position as a vital community asset;
4. Create a more cohesive, collaborative and inclusive CU Denver culture; and,
5. Achieve long-term financial stability and sustainability.

The tour demonstrated that the CU Denver community was and is ready to lift the university to the next level. The "CU in the City" rebranding will help further define CU Denver and propel the university toward its goals of being a valued knowledge partner, vital contributor to the civic, cultural, and economic future of Denver and the metropolitan region, and be acknowledged as one of the top assets of the city and state by CU Denver's 50th anniversary in 2023.

The Mission and Vision of the University of Colorado Denver, as defined in the 2008 Strategic Plan, are:

### MISSION

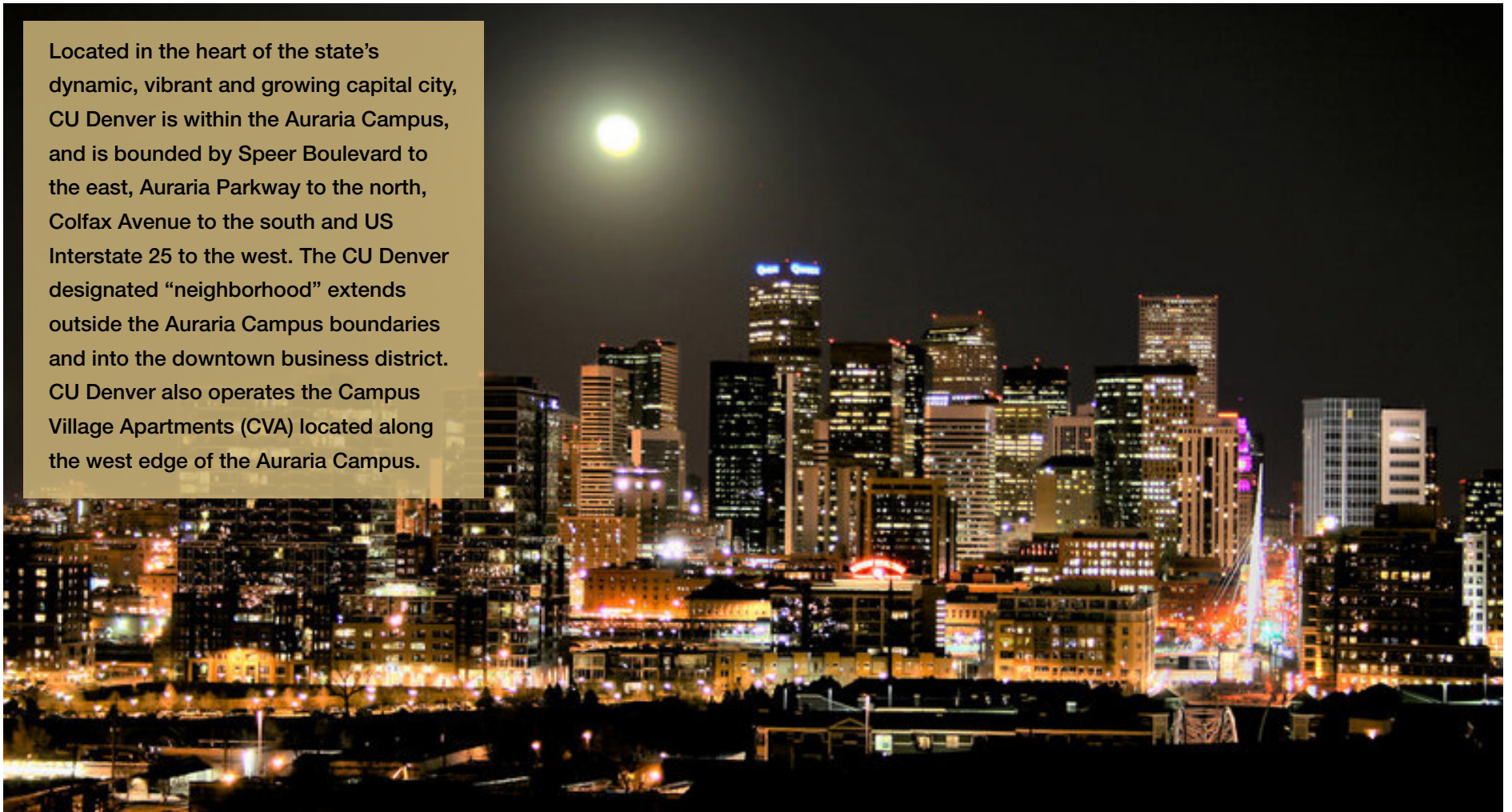
The University of Colorado Denver is a diverse teaching and learning community that creates, discovers and applies knowledge to improve the health and well-being of Colorado and the world.

### VISION

By 2020, the University of Colorado Denver will be a leading public university with a global reputation for excellence in learning, research and creativity, community engagement and clinical care.

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Located in the heart of the state's dynamic, vibrant and growing capital city, CU Denver is within the Auraria Campus, and is bounded by Speer Boulevard to the east, Auraria Parkway to the north, Colfax Avenue to the south and US Interstate 25 to the west. The CU Denver designated "neighborhood" extends outside the Auraria Campus boundaries and into the downtown business district. CU Denver also operates the Campus Village Apartments (CVA) located along the west edge of the Auraria Campus.



## 2.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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Three guiding principles for this plan emerged from the initial master planning meetings, interviews and surveys, and align with the university's mission and vision.

### **GROWTH IN ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH**

The primary areas of focus for any university are teaching, and research and creative activities. Campus facilities must support these activities and adapt and expand to meet growth needs and changing trends. Within the context of a growing Colorado economy, the need for an educated and skilled workforce will continue to increase, and enrollment growth is anticipated to accelerate over the next decade. CU Denver's research and creative activities will also increase and broaden as researchers continue to develop insightful solutions to society's challenges. In particular, CU Denver will strive to strengthen and expand industry and civic partnerships to tackle issues of particular concern in the greater Denver area.

### **EMPHASIS ON STUDENT LIFE**

Historically, CU Denver has attracted and served non-traditional students base, most of who don't live on or near the campus. Many CU Denver students work, are older than traditional undergraduate students, and some have families. Recently, several ideas emerged regarding the role of student life spaces and the way those spaces can better meet the needs of CU Denver's diverse student population.

The first is the recognition that while students might be commuting to attend classes, they are no less in need of on-campus student life

space. Commuting students often arrive before class, have significant time between classes, and many stay after class to study or interact with instructors or classmates.

Secondly, students have expressed a strong desire to create a specific CU Denver culture. Students voted to create the university's first mascot in 2011 and to fund, through increased fees, their own Wellness Center in 2015. Students also encouraged the university to accept and promote club sports. CU Denver now boasts over 15 club teams that compete against other colleges and universities.

Lastly, CU Denver has strengthened its commitment to improving student success. A student's connection to their institution, campus, peers and instructors has a strong effect on whether they graduate in a timely fashion, or even at all. The university seeks to provide additional student life offerings and on-campus housing opportunities to meet these growing demands.

### **IMPROVE PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS**

As Colorado's only public urban research university, CU Denver is committed to strengthening its integration into the City's urban environment, with increased development density and scale, signature facilities, and improved, safe multi-modal access within the urban grid.

**LEGEND**

- CU DENVER NEIGHBORHOOD
- CU DENVER OWNED BUILDING
- AURARIA BUILDING WITH CU USE
- BUILDING WITH NO CU USE
- AURARIA SHARED CAMPUS
- MSU DENVER NEIGHBORHOOD
- CCD NEIGHBORHOOD
- CAMPUS VILLAGE – CUPCO

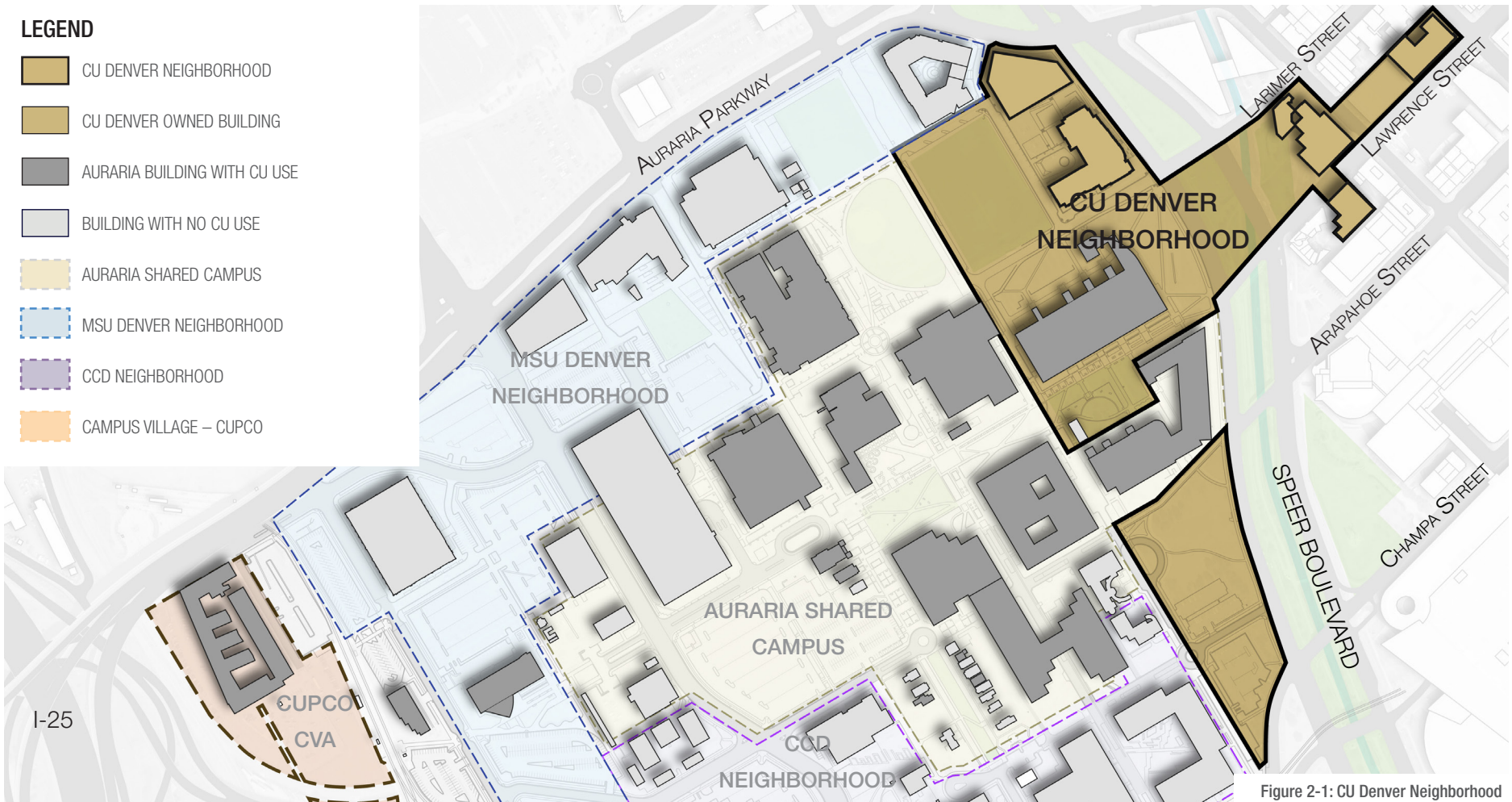


Figure 2-1: CU Denver Neighborhood



## 2.5 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

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CU Denver shares the Auraria Campus with two other public higher education institutions, MSU Denver and CCD. The CU Denver designated “neighborhood” (see Figure 2-1) extends outside the Auraria Campus boundaries and into the downtown business district, east of Speer Boulevard. Also, CU Denver operates the Campus Village Apartments (CVA) located along the west edge of the Auraria Campus. The University of Colorado Property Corporation (CUPCO) owns CVA and several adjacent vacant properties.

### CAMPUS SUB-AREAS

CU Denver and CUPCO facilities are located within three distinct areas:

- **CU Denver Neighborhood on Auraria:** This area, located between 11th Street and Speer Boulevard, is comprised of mid-rise facilities of four- to five-stories interspersed by green spaces and campus streets. The recently opened Student Commons and soon-to-open Student Wellness Center are the first buildings specifically constructed for CU Denver on the Auraria Campus and differ architecturally from the older North Classroom Building. The neighborhood provides a transition from the low-rise suburban character of the larger Auraria Campus to its west and the denser high-rise development downtown to the east.

Although some of the Auraria Campus functions and buildings continue to be shared by all three institutions, the 2007 Auraria Master Plan introduced the concept of campus “neighborhoods,” or areas within which each institution could develop their facilities and

create a distinct institutional culture. The CU Denver Neighborhood aligns with Speer Boulevard as shown in Figure 2-1.

- **CU Denver Neighborhood in Downtown:** The area east of Speer Boulevard and within downtown Denver includes three buildings that CU Denver purchased and repurposed for academic use – the Business School, the Lawrence Street Center and the CU Denver Building. These 8- to 14-story buildings contain a mixture of learning spaces and school, college and administrative offices.
- **Campus Village Apartments – CUPCO:** The area west of 5th Street includes CVA and several vacant parcels of land totaling 3.16 acres, all of which is owned by CUPCO. CVA includes 685 beds (of which 570 beds are currently occupied by CU Denver), 220 parking spaces, dining facilities and other residential amenities.

## CAMPUS CHARACTERISTICS

CU Denver's neighborhood is compact and quite varied. Below are some of its defining characteristics:

- The campus lies on both sides of Speer Boulevard and the Cherry Creek.
- It consists of buildings owned and operated by CU Denver and space occupied in buildings owned and operated by AHEC.
- Some of its buildings are low-rise, purpose-built academic buildings, while others are repurposed downtown office towers.
- Most CU Denver facilities are within 1,000 feet of the corner of Larimer Street and Speer Boulevard.
- However, the CU Denver Campus stretches nearly a mile between its two most distant facilities – CVA and the Business School.
- Clustered around the Tivoli Quad and the CU Denver Recreation Field are student services in the Tivoli Student Union, Student Commons Building, and the in-development Student Wellness Center.
- The distance between CVA and most student amenities and services is much greater than the half-mile distance would indicate, due to the existing circuitous pedestrian circulation routes through or around parking lots, parking structures, and the Tivoli Student Union.



- Downtown Denver provides additional food, entertainment and lodging options for those on the Auraria Campus. CU Denver also serves as a gateway to Larimer Square, an historic and renowned urban shopping and dining district.
- Schools and colleges located in the downtown section of CU Denver’s neighborhood are typically housed as a unit in a single building. Conversely, each school and college located in the university’s neighborhood on the Auraria Campus has departments and functions scattered across the campus in multiple facilities.

### CU DENVER NEIGHBORHOOD ON AURARIA

COLLEGES/SCHOOLS	BUILDINGS
College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS)	North Classroom Building, 5th Street Hub, Administration Building, Boulder Creek, Lawrence Street Center
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS)	Science Building, North Classroom Building, Plaza Building, 9th Street Park, Student Commons Building, Lawrence Street Center
College of Arts and Media (CAM)	Arts Building, King Center, Emmanuel Gallery, Tivoli Student Union, Boulder Creek, CU Denver Building



### CU DENVER NEIGHBORHOOD IN DOWNTOWN

COLLEGES/SCHOOLS	BUILDINGS
College of Architecture and Planning (CAP)	CU Denver Building
Business School	Business School
School of Education and Human Development (SEHD)	Lawrence Street Center
School of Public Affairs (SPA)	Lawrence Street Center

- Open spaces within and adjacent to the CU Denver sub-areas vary in purpose and quality.
  - The CU Denver Recreation Field is a space that welcomes student play but lacks trees and seating.
  - The Tivoli Quad project, completed in late 2016, created a signature landscaped area in front of the Tivoli Student Union that serves as the heart of the campus. Before completion, it was an underutilized, unprogrammed turf area.
  - Speer Boulevard Open Spaces. These include the areas in front of the Science and North Classroom buildings and a city-owned triangular park parcel in the Speer Boulevard median. The lack of a designed visual and noise buffer at Speer Boulevard makes the green spaces largely unusable.
  - Cherry Creek/CU Denver Building. The open space that lies between the CU Denver Building and the Cherry Creek is not well maintained and feels unsafe due to limited site distances and multiple levels. This open space is on land owned by the City and County of Denver.



Speer Boulevard Open Spaces



Tivoli Quad

Intentionally Blank

