



Experience Downtown Plan Progress, 2016-2024

The Experience Downtown Plan was approved by Colorado Springs City Council in November 2016, intended to last for up to 20 years. It contains 8 Goals and 36 Action Steps, as well as guidance on improvements to the public realm, streets, parks, connectivity and more. In less than eight years, 10 Action Steps have been completed; 23 saw substantial progress and are best categorized as work that will always be ongoing; and only three Action Steps are relatively untouched. Here are highlights of what has been achieved in the less than eight years since plan adoption.

In every one of these instances, the Downtown family of organizations has played roles as lead operator, partner, funder or advocate.

- The Downtown pipeline of completed, in-progress and announced investment has grown from about \$600 million to close to \$2.5 billion.
- Three new anchor attractions as part of the City for Champions initiative were completed and now draw more than half a million visits annually. They are: Weidner Field, home of the Switchbacks; Ed Robson Arena at Colorado College, home to CC Tiger Hockey; and the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum.
- After decades of scant new living options, the Downtown residential pipeline has grown tenfold from roughly 500 units in progress or completed to more than 5,000 – including a current wave of 2,000 units opening in 2024 to 2025. Nearly half of the units in this multifamily surge were catalyzed through TIF or grants from the Downtown Development Authority.
- New amenities have been created to serve residents and visitors, such as the wildly popular Acacia Park playground and Antlers Dog Park – features that are called for in the Historic Downtown Parks Master Plan of 2021.
- Downtown has more than doubled its number of hotel rooms – now sitting at over 1,100 thanks to four new properties: Hilton Garden Inn, Hyatt Place, SpringHill Suites/Element and Kinship Landing; Kinship was assisted through a DDA TIF reimbursement agreement.
- New retail and restaurant offerings in this time have included Ladyfingers Letterpress, Jax Fish House, Red Gravy, Loyal Coffee, Oskar Blues, IV by Brother Luck, LuLu’s Downtown, Hunt & Gather, Local Honey Co., Sushi Row, Trainwreck, Illegal Pete’s and many, many more.
- The Trolley Block transformation – assisted through DDA TIF – boasts hot spots such as COATI food hall, Cork & Cask, Dos Santos and the new Louie Louie’s dueling piano bar – making this one of the most bustling blocks in of all of Downtown with over 600,000 annual visits.
- Catalyst Campus added new tenants, expanded with new properties, and laid out its plans for a robust mixed-use center serving the city’s growing aerospace and defense economy.

- PikeRide launched through Downtown Ventures, the charitable nonprofit arm of Downtown Partnership, becoming the first year-round, all-electric bike share fleet in the country and now operating as its own independent nonprofit.
- In 2021, scooters began serving the city center, and in 2022 Mountain Metro Transit launched ZEB, the free Downtown shuttle with service seven days a week.
- The DDA continued to expand its ability to serve businesses, with new targeted grant options such as retail incentive, tree canopy, energy efficiency and emergency relief. New in 2024 was the Loan Program for Tenant Ownership, offering low-interest loans to small businesses for property acquisition, ensuring longevity and stability for small businesses while building equity.
- Six shops that began as holiday pop-ups – places such as Eclectic Co. and Mountain Standard Goods – have made long-term commitments to Downtown and join the ranks of other former pop-ups now representing more than 14,000 square feet of commercial leasing and nearly 40 years of collective lease activity.
- Safer connectivity was prioritized through the addition of bike lanes on Weber, Cascade, Pikes Peak Avenue and elsewhere. Vermijo Street in the Park Union area was notable for its award-winning design as well as the new pedestrian bridge connecting America the Beautiful Park and key trails to the Downtown core.
- The Gateways Initiative brought signage, landscaping, hardscaping, lighting and public art to several identified entryways into the heart of the city. The project was one of just nine nationwide to receive an International Downtown Association Pinnacle Award.
- Speaking of awards, AdAmAn Alley – a transformative project helmed by Partnership staff – has received four local and statewide awards recognizing its innovative placemaking approach involving multiple partners and stakeholders.
- UCCS Downtown opened in 2018, now providing more than 250 hours of programming monthly and serving hundreds of students, alumni and community members.
- Supplemental security services provided through the Downtown Business Improvement District have grown from a beta test year in 2017 of about 2,200 hours to now close to 20,000 hours of service annually.
- Springs Rescue Mission expanded from a few dozen makeshift beds to a robust campus of services including a day shelter, meal services, laundry, case management support, storage lockers, culinary workforce training, as well as the adjacent 65-unit Greenway Flats permanent supportive housing complex.
- New programs such as the Pikes Peak Avenue Cultural Corridor and the addition of murals to the Art on the Streets program conveyed a sense of welcome to all and illuminated a wider array of voices and perspectives through public art.
- The Legacy Loop made substantive progress – most notably the Uintah Street western underpass and new pathways and connections along the Rock Island Trail portion to the north.
- Colorado Springs Utilities accelerated the pace of decommissioning the Drake Power Plant by nearly a decade, with demolition on track for completion by end of 2024.