

# CAPITOL COMPLEX MASTER PLAN

DENVER,  
COLORADO



NOVEMBER 2014



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MASTERPLAN

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COLORADO

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- b) Multimodal Transportation Assessment
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- a) Comprehensive Facility Assessments



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## FOREWORD

This Capitol Complex Master Plan (CCMP) was authorized by Senate Bill 13 - 263 (C.R.S. 24-82-101(3)). The scope of the master plan includes the eleven buildings and grounds in the Capitol Buildings Group at the Capitol Complex as well as additional buildings and sites owned by the Department of Administration & Personnel (DPA) and managed by Capitol Complex Facilities (CCF) in the Denver metropolitan area and one DPA/CCF building located in Grand Junction. The Colorado History Museum and

the Ralph L. Carr Judicial Center are not included in the CCMP because these were recently planned and occupied facilities. Furthermore, no institutions of higher education are included as well as the five executive branch departments that are not housed in DPA owned/CCF managed buildings or adjacent downtown Denver lease space: Department of Agriculture, Department of Corrections, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Department of Public Health and Environment and Department of Transportation.

This Capitol Complex Master Plan evaluates agency needs, building conditions, Capitol Complex urban design issues and organizational structure relative to decision-making and funding and facilities planning and maintenance. This master planning effort seeks to address the recommendation of the Performance Evaluation of State Capital Asset Management and Lease Administration Practices audit dated November 2012 that states: "The State generally lacks a comprehensive mechanism for long-term planning

(such as a master plan) for its real estate assets. Such a mechanism could assist the State in its efforts to maximize the value of its real estate assets, reduce facility costs and support funding decisions."



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From the State Capitol to the Legislative Services Building, the state of Colorado has a rich inventory of buildings located in the heart of downtown Denver that enable thousands of workers to deliver services to the citizens of Colorado. It has been more than 25 years since a Facilities Master Plan has been completed and this undertaking therefore has tremendous potential to positively impact the efficiency with which these services are being delivered.

The State Capitol and adjacent grounds are a treasure visited by numerous citizens and tourists and, while the building has received a significant investment in recent years to maintain and restore its grandeur, there remains much to be done. Adjacent state buildings have received much less attention over the past decades. Strategic investment in those facilities is required to address code deficiencies, and will result in a substantial reduction of operating costs. Upgrades and reorganization would increase the efficiency of the buildings, reduce energy use and also improve the effectiveness of the state workforce.

The year-long study analyzed the optimum organization of agency personnel within the Capitol Complex in order to provide the most cost-effective facilities possible. Staffing projections reflect modest adjustments over the coming years to respond to projected service needs, and space standards have been proposed that are comparable to those found in highly efficient public and private entities.

A central question of the Facilities Master Plan and a strategic question that all states confront is: what is the right mix of leased vs owned facilities to accommodate state functions? The State currently leases approximately 700,000 SF of space in the downtown core which represents 39% of total occupied space. This is a significant amount of space and has a large impact on the State's annual budget. While a short term analysis would lead one to extend leases due to relatively low rental rates for Class B office space, a deeper analysis suggests an alternate strategy.

The planning team carefully evaluated the purchase of all viable existing office buildings in, and adjacent to, the Capitol Complex. These were compared to the extension of existing leases and also to the construction of a new office building at Lincoln and Colfax. The recommended strategy is to build a new State office building to house up to 500,000 SF of state agencies currently in leased space. This approach offers the following benefits:

- Agencies can be co-located in higher efficiency space, reducing travel time between multiple facilities
- The options are cost neutral over a 30 year horizon from a cash perspective and the State would realize cost savings thereafter rather than being obligated to make lease payments in perpetuity
- The state would not be impacted by large fluctuations in the lease rate market and would ultimately own the asset
- This development provides a unique opportunity to transform two key blocks of the Capitol Complex through the integration of street-grade retail (restaurant, café, convenience shops) that would improve the pedestrian experience in the region.

Transforming the character of the area is also one of the primary objectives of this master planning effort. The Capitol Complex is primarily a single-use district, populated mostly by state agencies and as such, has limited activity beyond the normal workweek. It possesses very little of the civic identity that such a prominent district should exhibit. Given the high number of employees in the region, the natural amenities including the State Capitol, civic lawns, proximity to the Civic Center, views, adjacency to the arts district and Civic Center Station, and proximity to the Central Business District, there is tremendous potential for the area to become a vibrant neighborhood with a civic jewel at its core.

The keys to transforming the district include the following:

- Increased residential development that adds 24/7 activity
- A cohesive signage and streetscape program that improves wayfinding, civic identity and the pedestrian experience
- A new building at Lincoln and Colfax that adds worker activity and improves the street edge
- Development of a 'Capitol Mall' along Sherman Street that stimulates pedestrian and bicycle activity through the zone and dramatically changes the character of the neighborhood.
- Improvement of Civic Center Station as currently planned by RTD to enliven Colfax between Lincoln and Broadway and improve the view of the State Capitol from the 16th Street Mall
- Improvements to the west lawn of the Capitol to improve public access and civic presence
- Renovation of 1375 Sherman and 1313 Sherman
- Development of the State Land Board site for residential and retail uses with a possible future office component

Several of these improvements can be implemented by the State while others will require participation of the private sector as well as other agencies such as the City and County of Denver and RTD. There is interest and motivation from these other entities to help transform this area and we strongly recommend that the State takes a lead role in establishing a task force that can move this agenda forward. It will require a cohesive effort and will have significant benefit for all parties.

In order to drive greater value into the master planning process, the team conducted an extensive analysis of best practices from other states. Ten states were surveyed to understand how they manage and operate their facilities portfolio, as well as how they prioritize capital construction, building renewal and controlled maintenance needs. Additionally, approach to long range planning, facilities management structure and funding strategies were benchmarked and insights that best apply to Colorado have been detailed in the report.

One of the key observations is that much of the deteriorated condition of state office buildings can be attributed in large part to the lack of an annual allocation to address deferred maintenance and regular building upgrades. It is recommended that an amount equal to 1.5 to 2% of the replacement value of existing assets be budgeted for such purposes in the future. This report also recommends several organizational changes, detailed in section 6, that we believe will result in a more streamlined and effective decision making process.



In summary, it is the intent of this master plan that State facilities in the Capitol Complex are upgraded, agency personnel relocated, and leases consolidated in such a manner that State services will be provided in a more efficient and cost effective manner. The master plan also lays out a visionary and achievable strategy to transform the Capitol Complex District into a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood that has a cohesive civic identity and offers a memorable pedestrian experience.

These goals can be achieved through implementation of the strategies outlined in Section 7.0. The state's ability to complete the recommendations depends on its annual funding capacity. Results can be accelerated through the use of public private partnerships, an increasingly common strategy for civic entities to deliver projects. Through the use of Certificates of Participation (COPs), or a 6320 non-profit entity, capital and expertise can be accessed to generate the desired results.

The district surrounding the State Capitol represents one of the most under-appreciated assets in Colorado. It has the potential to be a great place to live and work, as well as a remarkable destination for visitors. With appropriate levels of investment, State buildings can increase employee efficiencies and improve public access, while significantly reducing operating costs. Ultimately this master plan needs to be flexible to respond to changing legislative and executive branch priorities as well as evolving economic conditions.

The enclosed road map should be updated on a regular basis, and as many of the top priorities implemented as there are resources to accomplish. The planning team stands ready to assist, provide further clarification as needed and modify as necessary to enable the State to achieve as many of its stated goals as possible.

