

# Adaptive Reuse in Denver

## WHAT IS ADAPTIVE REUSE?

**Adaptive Reuse is the modification of an existing building for a new use or purpose.**

The City and County of Denver is committed to encouraging the reuse of older and historic buildings in Denver. Buildings can go through many different uses in their life cycle. Instead of demolishing a building when its use is no longer desirable or feasible, adaptive reuse allows a building to achieve a new, productive life.

Examples of adaptive reuse include converting an office space into residential units or a mechanic's shop into a restaurant. Adaptive Reuse projects are found throughout Denver, including the REI in Confluence Park, The Source in RiNo, Cerebral Brewing on East Colfax Avenue and Pankratia Hall on the former Loretto Heights College campus.

## WHY DO WE NEED AN ADAPTIVE REUSE PROGRAM?

**Adaptive reuse of older existing buildings and designated historic buildings face unique procedural and financial barriers that are not present in new construction.**

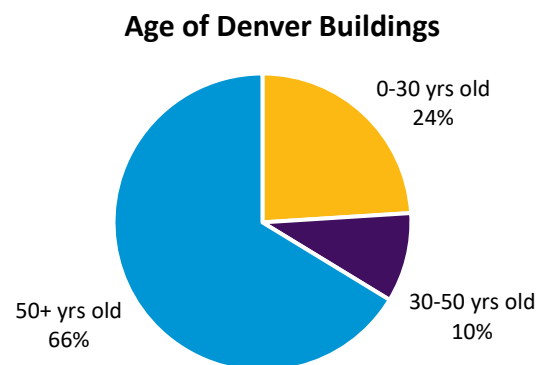
Denver has approximately 175,000 buildings. Of these, 66% (116,000) are over 50 years old and 76% (133,000) of Denver buildings are over 30 years old.

Most design, construction, permit review and inspection teams are more familiar with the code requirements pertaining to new construction.

The zoning, building and infrastructure regulations for existing buildings are different and typically require a more nuanced interpretation to address difficult or unprecedented project conditions and constraints.

These factors can contribute to a more complicated, expensive, and slower design, review, permitting and construction process.

Denver's Adaptive Reuse Pilot Program will provide the individual assistance required to make it easier and quicker for these important projects to move through City processes, especially for the less experienced small developer and business owner and design, construction, and management teams.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR DENVER?

**Adaptive reuse extends the life of an existing building and helps Denver to preserve its built heritage, sense of place and small businesses. It can help Denver meet its housing and environmental sustainability goals.**

### Adaptive Reuse:

- ✓ Preserves neighborhood identity by reinvigorating, not replacing, existing structures
- ✓ Strengthens local economies by preserving and updating spaces for small businesses
- ✓ Increases housing options and the opportunity for missing-middle and affordable housing
- ✓ Fights climate change by reducing the need for new materials, energy and infrastructure items that are already in place within the existing building

Adaptive Reuse is being used as a tool to assist with Downtown revitalization efforts following the COVID-19 pandemic. Downtown office building vacancies have only increased since the pandemic. Adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial office buildings to mixed-use residential in downtown Denver will create a vibrant, diversified neighborhood and provide much needed housing.

## HOW WILL IT WORK?

**The Adaptive Reuse Program will support projects undergoing conversion to a new use or purpose by providing direct assistance to business owners, developers, and property owners as they navigate the City and County of Denver's review and permitting system.**

### The Pilot Programs provide:

- ✓ A dedicated Project Coordinator to assist adaptive reuse project applicants through the review and permitting process with high level multi-agency collaboration and on-time review
- ✓ Guidance on the most common regulatory roadblocks experienced by adaptive reuse projects
- ✓ Potential additional incentives to lessen project time and cost

## WHAT'S NEXT?

**The city has launched two Adaptive Reuse Pilot Programs focused on Upper Downtown and East Colfax Avenue project locations.**

Project eligibility, regulatory changes and incentives are currently being determined through the pilot program projects and collaborative research. Visit the adaptive reuse webpage for more information on the Adaptive Reuse program and the Pilot Program application requirements. Please contact the Adaptive Reuse Senior Development Project Administrator Jennifer Ramsey at [jennifer.ramsey@denvergov.org](mailto:jennifer.ramsey@denvergov.org) with any questions about the program.

Visit the Adaptive Reuse webpage at [denvergov.org/adaptivereuse](https://denvergov.org/adaptivereuse)

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