

Blue Dot Place

Colorado Springs, Colorado

BLUE DOT PLACE, the first multiunit residential building constructed in downtown Colorado Springs since 1960, includes 33 one- and two-bedroom apartments above retail space that houses a local coffee shop and entrepreneurial center.

QUICK FACTS

LOCATION

412 S. Nevada Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

STATUS

Completed in 2016

TYPE OF PROJECT

Mixed-use, multifamily residential

SITE SIZE

8,000 square feet (2,601 sq m)

BUILDING SIZE

33 residential units, 13,077 square feet (1,215 sq m); 2,505 square feet (233 sq m) of commercial space

RENTAL RATES

\$1,300 to \$1,865

PROJECT COST

\$6.5 million

DEVELOPERS

Darsey Nicklasson, DHN Development; Katherine Loo, High Valley Group

DESIGN

HB&A (architect)

EQUITY PARTNERS

Central Bancorp; Katherine Loo, High Valley Group

BIKE AMENITIES

Bike parking, bicycle workroom, and bike washing station

NEARBY BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Adjacent to a growing network of bike lanes (including first protected bike lane in Colorado Springs), recreational trails

HEALTH FEATURES

Walkable/bike-friendly location, focus on community social interaction



“Our walkable, bike-friendly downtown location is our best asset. Our residents want to be able to walk to local restaurants and shops and to have easy access to area destinations without having to drive.” >> Darsey Nicklasson, Principal, DHN Planning & Development LLC

Blue Dot Place was the first multiunit residential building constructed in downtown Colorado Springs since 1960. *(Jana Bussanich)*



Completed in 2016, Blue Dot features several amenities that support active lifestyles, including secure indoor bike storage and a bike maintenance workroom. The project's central location allows residents to access shops, restaurants, workplaces, parks, and nearby outdoor recreation destinations on foot or by bicycle.

Context for Development

When developer Darsey Nicklasson, principal of DHN Planning & Development LLC, initially conceived of the project that became Blue Dot Place, she was firmly convinced that unmet demand existed for downtown residential development due to the growing popularity of downtown Colorado Springs as a retail, restaurant, and employment destination.

The expanding network of downtown bicycle facilities, including protected bike lanes installed in 2016 on Weber Street (one block from Blue Dot Place), has created new connections for residents to access other parts of the city and has added to the appeal of the area.

"Our walkable, bike-friendly downtown location is our best asset. Our residents want to be able to walk to local restaurants and shops and to have easy access to area destinations without having to drive," says Nicklasson.

"Providing features to accommodate bike ownership at Blue Dot helps to make an active lifestyle possible for our residents and ultimately supports the success of our project. Many of our residents have even reduced the number of cars they own."

Blue Dot Place also focuses on energy efficiency. Solar panels cover the building's roof and provide power for common areas. The energy produced has led to a 30 percent reduction in energy costs, with average monthly electric bills of \$23 a month for common areas from June to November.

Active Transportation-Friendly Features

Blue Dot Place offers a variety of amenities to seamlessly integrate walking and bicycling into the residential experience, including the following:

- >> **Bicycle storage.** A total of 65 secure, indoor bike parking spaces for residents are accessible in the building's parking garage. An additional 12 spaces are provided by the on-site coffee shop and the city of Colorado Springs.
- >> **Bicycle workroom.** Residents have access to an air pump, work stands, and tools to repair and maintain bikes.
- >> **Bicycle wash station.** An indoor bicycle washing station allows residents to clean their bikes after riding on the nearby mountain trails.



The success of Blue Dot Place has proven that demand exists for downtown living in Colorado Springs, especially for those seeking active lifestyles and opportunities to engage socially with the community. *(Jana Bussanich)*

Development Lessons

Since opening in 2016, Blue Dot Place has surpassed expectations in terms of financial performance. The project was fully leased within four months and, as of December 2017, there was a waiting list for potential renters. The return on investment for the project was more than twice what was projected before it opened.

The success of Blue Dot Place has proven that demand exists for downtown living in Colorado Springs, especially for those seeking active lifestyles and opportunities to engage socially with the community. Nicklasson notes, "Monthly rents range from \$1,300 to \$1,865, well above the Colorado Springs area's market average of \$1,133. Our residents are willing to pay a premium for walkability and easy access to bike paths."

Blue Dot Place's success set off a boom in nearby downtown residential development, including a 172-unit project that broke ground in 2017 within the block of Blue Dot Place. In addition, Nicklasson is developing a nearby mixed-use project called Casa Mundi Lofts, which will include amenities to accommodate bike ownership and use.

"We are thrilled with the success of Blue Dot Place and take great pride in working with city leaders and area businesses to continue to improve the quality of life in downtown Colorado Springs," says Nicklasson. "Our continued aim is to create places where people can get around in healthy ways while also meeting their neighbors."

Nicklasson also notes that creating downtown housing has increased accessibility to area destinations for those with physical disabilities. "I have one resident who was in a wheelchair due to an accident. Because she lived downtown, she could get coffee, visit restaurants, and participate in community activities. Our location meant that she wasn't isolated. It's gratifying to be able to create a place for everybody."