

CASE STUDY

The Denver Technological Center, Denver, Colorado, USA: a business campus for the automobile age, a 'downtown' in a park (1964 to the present)

The DTC is one of the first and largest suburban office parks in the United States. George M. Wallace, a property developer, initiated the project on I-25, the major highway along Colorado's Front Range, where it intersects with I-225 south of the city of Denver (see Figure 8.65). The site also has convenient access to Denver International Airport. Originally a 40-acre (16-hectare) site bought by Wallace for \$80,000 in 1964 in order to relocate his office from central Denver, it is now 884 acres (355 hectares) in extent. It expanded in a piecemeal way over the years. Wallace, marketing aggressively, attracted key companies (e.g. Honeywell and Control Data) to locate in the park in 1965. He also heavily promoted the development of nearby Arapahoe County Airport. By 1981, 5 million square feet (460,000 square metres) of buildings had been completed. Much development occurred subsequently. By 1997, DTC had over 600 companies, large and small, located there and an employment figure approaching 20,000 people. The density is thus low by urban standards.

The DTC has had much more thought put into its design than most such parks. It has been and is an all-of-a-piece development rather than a *laissez faire* one. The original designer was Carl A. Worthington, an architect whose offices were located in Boulder, but after 1990 many other consultants have been involved. Five major parkways with landscaped medians provide the armature for the design. The site was then divided into 12 superblocks of mixed-use development. The highest density

of development is at the centre of each superblock around a pedestrian open space. Each building has its own parking lot under it or in a surface lot surrounded by landscaped berms. The purpose was to make vehicles easily accessible but also unobtrusive. No on-street parking is allowed.

Each superblock is about 30 acres (12 hectares) in size – the equivalent of 16 to 20 city blocks. The development of each has started from the periphery and worked towards the centre which becomes a pedestrian square surrounded by buildings. The areas between the superblocks are parks with ponds and pedestrian tracks. In total, the open space comprises about 40% of the land area of the development. Most of the buildings are office buildings but hotels, retail shops and residential buildings are concentrated at important locations.

Each site is sold by the developers to private organizations that build their own buildings using their own architects. The site infrastructure is built and maintained by DTC Development Properties from taxes raised through a Special Taxing District whose boundaries are coterminous with those of the DTC. Sub-developers are required to build the internal infrastructure of their sites as well as the sidewalks and streetscape. The ease of access and strict design guidelines ensuring environmental quality appear to have been major attractions for corporations to locate in the DTC. All construction proposals have to be reviewed by an Architectural Control Committee that has six regular members all of