



**CITY OF BOULDER
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: September 19, 2024

AGENDA TITLE

Commercial Areas Update: Connections and Analysis

PRESENTER(S)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and the Citywide Strategic Plan acknowledge the importance of healthy and vibrant commercial areas in Boulder’s outstanding quality of life. While many sectors of the local economy have recovered from pandemic-related impacts, there continues to be lingering impacts in key commercial areas that need focused attention. Additionally, with upcoming updates to the Economic Vitality Strategy and the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP), it is timely to review current commercial area connections and tools (e.g. improvement districts) and determine additional tools, ideal conditions, and new investments to support long-term health and vibrancy.

In acknowledgement of the recent challenges and the potential opportunities within and between commercial areas, City Council established a new council priority for 2024-2025 of “Commercial Area Connections and Quality of Life Improvements”.

The 2024-2026 Citywide Strategic Plan and new council priority provide an opportunity to focus collective efforts in addressing overall beautification, quality of life, investment, and long-term viability of both existing General Improvement Districts (GIDs) and other commercial areas. Three main areas are currently in development or underway in support of this work:

1. **Commercial District Revitalization and Investment Efforts:** Much focus of this work area is related to University Hill Revitalization efforts (which was the subject of discussion at the [City Council meeting on August 10, 2023](#)) and projects like the temporary wayfinding signs between University Hill (The Hill) and downtown, placemaking icons at Boulder Junction, and the crosswalk mural at 17th and Pearl downtown. There are also projects underway which rely on strong collaboration with other departments such as the work of the Parks and Recreation Forestry Division on improvements to the tree canopy in downtown and on The Hill, and the partnership with Transportation & Mobility on the proposed Streetscape Improvements project on University Hill. The Commercial District Revitalization and Investment program is a first step, representing work underway or starting in the next year based on existing strategy and community priorities and under current structure of our GIDs.
2. **Improvement District Analysis:** As we work on more immediate improvements in and between our commercial areas, we need to also fully understand existing conditions of Boulder's improvement districts and explore options for advancing the efficiency of governance and financial tools. This analysis will address several important issues, including, but not limited to: the sufficiency and appropriateness of current and funding mechanisms based on current and future capital and programmatic needs; the effectiveness of the GID model in addressing access and other key goals within commercial areas; and, other potential funding mechanisms to best meet the current and future needs of our commercial districts.
3. **Boulder Commercial Areas Blueprint:** Building on the Improvement District Analysis, this work area will look into the future: reviewing and revising community priorities for the future of our commercial districts. The project will rely on the Sustainability, Equity, and Resilience (SER) Framework for vision and goals, and the update of the BVCP and Citywide Strategic Plan for policy and strategy direction. Upon this foundation, the project will produce recommendations on the use of district-based resources over the long term, as well as specific policies and work plans items pertinent to the GIDs and the approach across departments to commercial areas. The establishment of community priorities for each district will be formed in tandem with the BVCP update, with some supplementary research and engagement projects if needed. The result of the Blueprint project will be a set of recommendations on options for commercial area connections and quality of life improvements over a longer time horizon.

Details about the projects and initiatives across departments are provided in the Analysis section, below.

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL:

1. Does Council have feedback on the vision and scope for the three work areas of the current Commercial Areas effort?
 - Commercial District Revitalization and Investment Efforts
 - Improvement District Analysis
 - Boulder Commercial Areas Blueprint

BACKGROUND

The city has a long history of supporting commercial areas. Before the 1970s, when the city established its first General Improvement Districts (GIDs), local and regional access and connectivity were prioritized in the form of the Boulder Street Railway (operated by Public Service Company of Colorado in 1900 followed by the Denver & Interurban Railroad in 1908), city managed on-street parking beginning in 1943, and the completion of the Boulder Denver Turnpike in 1952. Early initiatives laid the groundwork for enhancing the vibrancy and accessibility of Boulder's key commercial areas, a commitment that has continued to evolve over many decades. In the 1970s, the city began to use General Improvement Districts in support of enhancing employee and visitor access in Downtown and University Hill. The city's current General Improvement Districts are:

- Central Area General Improvement District (CAGID or Downtown)
- University Hill General Improvement District (UHGID or The Hill)
- Boulder Junction General Improvement District – Parking and Boulder Junction General Improvement District – Transportation Demand Management (collectively: BJAD)

Please refer to Attachment A for maps of Boulder's GIDs.

History of Boulder's General Improvement Districts

The City of Boulder's four General Improvement Districts are managed by the Community Vitality Department. These GIDs were established to support the infrastructure and services needed to enhance their respective areas within Boulder.

The Central Area General Improvement District was established in 1970 driven by the need to revitalize the downtown area and provide parking infrastructure and related services. The creation of CAGID was a strategic response to business challenges in downtown Boulder, allowing the city to levy taxes within the district to fund public improvements that would enhance the downtown area and support economic vitality and growth.

The district priority during the creation of CAGID was the protection of downtown from the loss of historic buildings and blight that might be caused by the parking requirements of the time. Boulder sought to avoid what was witnessed in other communities, with historic buildings bought up and leveled by their neighbors in order to build surface parking lots that accommodated the new requirements. To accomplish this goal, the district was responsible for building and managing parking structures to eliminate the need for each downtown building to have its own parking lot, improving streetscapes, and enhancing other infrastructures to benefit the downtown area. The initial focus was on parking, which remains a significant part of the district's responsibilities. Over time, CAGID's role expanded to broader management responsibilities for the downtown, contributing to the area's vibrancy and economic health including the provision of EcoPasses for downtown employees since 1989, and supporting the creation of the city contracted HOP high frequency circulator in 1994.

Similar to CAGID, the University Hill General Improvement District was established in 1970 at the request of property owners who wanted to tax themselves to purchase land that could provide customers with additional public parking spaces and maintenance services.

In 2010, building off the successes of CAGID and UHGID, City Council created two overlaying GIDs in the Boulder Junction area: one for parking and the other for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs. The two overlaying districts are known as Boulder Junction Access District – Parking (BJAD-P) and Boulder Junction Access District – Transportation Demand Management (BJAD-TDM). These two districts allow for the construction, operation and maintenance of public improvements, parking management, and programs that support multi-modal transportation options for both employees and residents within the districts.

With the founding of the first GID, a department was established to coordinate activity and decision making, that would eventually become the Community Vitality Department. Over the years, the addition of new districts and functions have evolved the department’s mission. Today focused on three strategic pillars:

- Cultural Vibrancy
- District Vitality
- Access for All

With these strategic pillars in mind, Community Vitality (CV) provides programs and services to manage the districts including a capital improvement program, maintenance and asset management, district operations and programming, transportation options programs, facilitation of the four GID advisory commissions (Downtown Management Commission, University Hill Commercial Area Management Commission, Boulder Junction Access District Commission – Parking, and Transportation Demand Management), as well as the Arts Commission, and support for City Council when serving as the board of directors for each district.

An overview of the Community Vitality Department can be found in Appendix B.

Council Priority

In acknowledgement of the recent challenges and the potential opportunities within and between commercial areas, City Council established a new council priority for 2024-2025 of “Commercial Area Connections and Quality of Life Improvements”:

“Council established a priority to improve connections within and between commercial areas to help residents, workers, students, and visitors move around the town more easily, safely, and joyfully. Given the new hotels on University Hill, connections between the Hill and Downtown are one area of focus, as is making sure the areas around our commercial centers (e.g. shopping areas around town) are vibrant, safe, and easy to access. As part of this workplan priority, staff will be working to create more signs to help people navigate bike and walkways, enhancing landscaping, improving transportation access, and identifying ways to fund this work.”

Council indicated a particular interest in short-term improvements on the Hill and surrounding area and the connections between the Hill and Downtown. At the time of the establishment of the council priority, staff included the citywide work plan which identified many existing and ongoing program and projects that are complementary of this work. The following section provides detailed information on the main focus areas of the Commercial Areas Update efforts.

ANALYSIS

Community Vitality is collaborating with several departments to advance projects that contribute to City Council's priority to enhance the quality of life and strengthen connections between Boulder's commercial areas. The three work areas described below reflect current and planned activities across the city. These initiatives together are designed to foster a more integrated, vibrant, and accessible city, ensuring that our commercial districts not only thrive independently but also contribute to a cohesive urban experience for all residents and visitors.

Commercial District Revitalization and Investment Program

A foundational element of the city's annual work plan is the ongoing improvements to the infrastructure, visual environment, and programming for each GID, primarily managed by the Community Vitality Department. Downtown, this work is largely reflected through investments to maintain existing CAGID assets. This includes six mixed use parking garages, various downtown amenities on and around the Pearl Street Mall, and the provision of EcoPasses for all employees within the district.

Managing our districts is at the core of the Community Vitality department; work that directly advances the City Council priority for commercial area connections and quality of life. This work is only possible in partnership with other departments and organizations: Boulder's GIDs function and thrive thanks to the collaboration and investments of Planning & Development Services, Parks & Recreation, Transportation & Mobility, Facilities & Fleet, and other departments as well as the Business Improvement District/Downtown Boulder Partnership, The Hill Boulder merchants association and the University of Colorado.

One on-going work effort of note addresses the current challenges and new opportunities to transform UHGID. This set of programs and capital projects on The Hill was the subject of previous conversations with City Council. Since that last check-in with Council, an emerging priority capital project proposed for the 2025 budget would enhance the streetscape in and around UHGID, described in the 2025 City Manager's Proposed Budget. This proposed project will help revitalize and enhance the urban environment through improvements to the area's infrastructure. The investment aims to create a more inviting and aesthetically pleasing streetscape, fostering community pride and encouraging economic activity. Enhancements could include transformation of medians with drought-resistant plants and artistic elements, upgraded alleys, installation of larger and well-designed tree wells with sustainable irrigation systems, and diverse landscaping solutions that incorporate native plants. The project budget is proposed for \$1.4MM and is estimated to be completed in the next few years.

Work Area Vision: Contribute to the priorities of each GID through direct investments, capital projects, and associated programming for the outcome of more vibrant, economically vital, and culturally active districts. Key to this vision is the principle of collaboration with the community: to enhance and expand on the work of strategic partners at every opportunity.

Work Area Scope: Below are summaries of some of the enhancement and revitalization programs that have recently been completed across departments. Following that is a full list of Community Vitality programs and projects in progress or planned that support the work area vision:

1. Arboretum Beds Repaired, Replanted: completed Q3 2024
The entrance area to the Arboretum Path off Broadway was part of a minor maintenance project to repair stone walls, fix irrigation lines, and refresh planting beds. As part of this project fencing along the path was also repaired.

2. **Building Freeze Recovery at 1500 Pearl: completed Q2 2024 (\$200k)**
Following the freezing of pipes at the parking garage, offices, and retail at 1500 Pearl, an extensive repair project was executed with particular attention to the impacts on retail tenants along Pearl Street including rent subsidies for days they were not able to operate.
3. **Facility Assessment of the Spruce Garage: completed Q3 2024 (\$66k)**
This project aims to create a prioritized report of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) in the Spruce Garage that will be used to create a multi-year CIP and maintenance plan to achieve and maintain a state of good repair.
4. **Gateless Parking in Garages: completed Q4 2023 (\$243k)**
Replace the outdated gated systems to eliminate high-maintenance gates, reduce entry and exit wait times, and accept mobile payments.
5. **Parking Garage Capacity Display Signs: completed Q4 2023 (\$300k)**
Improve parking garage wayfinding by providing capacity signage outside of city owned downtown garages.
6. **Stormwater System Repairs: completed Q2 2023 (\$545k)**
Replaced stormwater pipes behind the 1500 Pearl garage to ensure water is properly routed away from buildings.
7. **Stump Removal and Weed Control on Broadway Medians: completed Q2 2024**
Dead trees and stumps were removed and new mulch installed.
8. **Temporary Wayfinding Signs: completed Q2 2024 (\$6k)**
A series of signs were installed between downtown and The Hill to encourage pedestrian and bicycle connections between the two commercial centers, and includes directions to a few destinations with travel times.
9. **Major Crossings Painting Refreshed: completed Q2 2024 (\$5.5k)**
Refreshed crosswalk, stop bar, centerline, lane line, and bike lane markings along Broadway, University Ave, College Ave, 13th St, Pleasant St, and Pennsylvania Ave.
10. **New Planters: completed Q2 2023 (\$200k)**
Upgraded the irrigation and concrete planters on University Hill to promote a healthy urban canopy.
11. **Waterproof Traffic Coating: completed Q3 2024 (\$1.24MM)**
To protect the extensive concrete work done in the parking garages, traffic coats have been installed in the St. Julien, RTD, and Randolph Center Parking Garages.
12. **Mill and Pave Public Parking Lots Q3 2024 (\$100k)**
Resurfaced and restriped the parking lots located at Spruce Street and Broadway in CAGID, and the lot located on 14th and College on the Hill.
13. **Restripe parking General Improvement Districts Q3 2024: (\$22k)**
Restriped lots in the Civic Area, Library, Penfield Tate, Spruce Lot, 14th Street Lot, as well as all diagonal paid and managed parking throughout CAGID, UHGID, and BJAD to improve the look and feel of downtown, as well as improve wayfinding for parkers.

Community Vitality projects in progress, ongoing, or planned:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Est. Budget</u>
14. Bike Corral Murals	CAGID	\$15k
15. Boulder Clean Commute	BJAD, CAGID	\$50k
16. Boulder Junction Branding/Wayfinding	BJAD	\$400k
17. Concrete Repair at Downtown Garages	CAGID	\$1.6MM
18. District Activations	All GIDs	\$100k
19. Downtown / Hill Ambassador Program	CAGID, UHGID	\$500k
20. GID Asset Management Plan	All GIDs	\$250k
21. HVAC Replacement at 1500 Pearl	CAGID	\$1.4MM
22. Outdoor Dining Pilot Program	Citywide	\$150k
23. Painted Crosswalk at 13 th and College	UHGID	\$40k
24. Special Events Sponsorships	All GIDs	\$125k
25. Spruce Garage Rehabilitation	CAGID	\$5MM
26. TDM Investments	All GIDs	\$100k
27. Cultural Corridor Planning & Design	CAGID, UHGID	TBD
28. Undergrounding Downtown Powerlines	CAGID	\$3MM
29. University Hill Reinvestment Strategy	UHGID	\$1.4MM

Work Area Policy Guidance: City Council provided specific policy direction about the University Hill Revitalization Program at the meeting on August 10, 2023. The program is also informed by the BVCP and a recent Urban Land Institute Technical Advisory Panel (ULI TAP) report of The Hill, included as Attachment D. Broadly, the District Revitalization and Investments rely on policy direction from the BVCP, the Racial Equity Plan, the Climate Commitment, the CAN study, and the Economic Vitality Strategy. Policy direction is also provided by district specific documents such as the Civic Area Plan (including the phase 2 study that is underway), the East Boulder Subcommunity Plan, and more. The primary SER Framework goals impacting this project are "Economically Vital", "Accessible and Connected", and "Healthy and Socially Thriving."

Improvement District Analysis

This area of work will focus on the development of options for financial and governance tools to achieve the best near and long-term outcomes for districts. This "toolkit" of commercial area options will be developed for existing GIDs as well as potential future districts. And the results will be used to support complementary work across all departments that contribute to commercial area matters.

Work Area Vision: The city will have a toolbox of governance and financial tools that can be deployed to achieve the community's current priorities for safe, vibrant, thriving and well-connected districts.

Work Area Scope: The District Analysis project will examine near-term conditions with recommendations for the next few years. Each current and potential district will be examined in three steps:

Analysis: develop a summary of data, district financial information (e.g. taxing mechanism, sources and uses, capital improvement program), review of existing strategies and plans, benchmarking of districts in other communities, and other inputs describing economic and social conditions.

Tools: provide options for economic and governance models will best achieve the district priorities and how they can be structured and operated. This includes the current GID systems as well as options for Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs), Urban Renewal Authorities (URAs), Special Improvement Districts (SIDs), Metro Districts, and other relevant governance options.

Early Action Items: based on the Analysis, the BVCP, area plans, and other studies, describe the community's near-term vision for the districts including funding tools, programming, operations, maintenance, and capital projects.

In Attachment C please find a chart with details about various possible improvement district models to be explored further in this work area.

All aspects of the Analysis will consider racial equity, climate adaptation, and impacts on property owners, commercial tenants, and residents. The project will leverage existing studies and planning efforts, including the BVCP update, to maximize efficiency and minimize the burden on staff and the community. Some supplementary research and engagement projects may be necessary to complete the picture.

The Analysis will study these and other questions in current and potential districts. Special attention will be paid to the research and engagement phases of this analysis to maximize the use of past studies and to take advantage of the overlap with current planning work such as the Comprehensive Plan update and Civic Area Phase 2 so as not to overburdening the community with engagement.

Additionally, the scope of work will include governance and financial tools for potential new districts, as recommended in policy documents, such as the Civic Area, Alpine Balsam, and the East Boulder Subcommunity.

Work Area Policy Guidance: The BVCP will provide primary policy direction for the project. Area plans and formative ordinances for each district, and the Citywide Strategic Plan will provide further guidance. Vision and outcomes for the project will align with the SER Framework goals of “Good Governance,” “Accessible and Connected,” and “Healthy and Social Thriving”.

Boulder Commercial Areas Blueprint

Staff is in the beginning stages of planning for a guidance document focused on the long-term outlook for commercial areas. The Boulder Commercial Areas Blueprint will build on the Improvement District Analysis, this time with a longer horizon: studying the future of the districts, setting priorities, and recommending tools and steps to achieve those district priorities.

This work will be led by Community Vitality but includes contributions from many departments and connects to many projects across the city. Conversations across departments are planned to build out the program; particularly with Planning & Development Services to integrate the analysis and priority-setting steps of this work with the update of the BVCP. A work plan item of note will be an internal charrette: a series of meetings with department leadership and subject matter experts designed to align all staff to a common set of principles and criteria for safe, vibrant, thriving, and well-connected commercial areas. These principles and criteria can then be deployed for use by all departments.

Work Area Vision: Contribute to the effective development of BVCP strategy on subjects of commercial area connections and quality of life improvements and, with the BVCP, SER Framework and other documents as foundations, develop recommendations for to inform the annual work plans of involved city departments.

Work Area Scope: This project will have three phases:

Phase One: Support for the BVCP

The first phase of the project will support the BVCP update team, led by Planning & Development Services, by providing support for data, research, engagement, and analysis in the areas of the Comprehensive Plan related to commercial areas and the GIDs. During this step, the Community Vitality and Planning & Development Services will convene subject matter experts from across departments in a charrette with the goal of establishing a set of common principles and criteria for all commercial center planning and policy efforts.

Phase Two: Setting Community Priorities

In its next phase, the Blueprint will research the future of each commercial area, looking forward a few years to new challenges and opportunities. Some research and engagement with district stakeholders may be necessary to compliment the updated BVCP in setting new community priorities: visions for what we might build, and new programs that might support the community, to make lasting and substantial progress on SER Framework goals in our commercial areas.

Phase Three: Strategic Recommendations

As in the Improvement District Analysis, the Blueprint will provide options for financial and governance tools that will be needed to achieve the community's priority for each commercial area over the long term. This will go on to propose policy actions and work plan items for Community Vitality as guidance for department staff.

Each current GID will be studied, as will the other commercial areas examined in the Improvement District Analysis. Also, like the analysis, the Blueprint will consider implications around racial equity, climate adaptation, and impacts to property owners, commercial tenants, and residents, and will rely on existing projects (especially the BVCP update) first before considering any work on research, data, or engagement.

Please note that staff is in the beginning phases of creating a project charter and scope of work. This project may evolve as preparations continue.

Work Area Pertinent City Policy: The effort will also be informed by the SER Framework Goals of “Accessible and Connected”, “Economically Vital”, “Healthy and Socially Thriving”, and “Good Governance.” In addition to the practical alignment with the BVCP, the Racial Equity Instrument, and Climate Commitment will be useful in the second and third phases.

Projects Across Departments Related to Commercial Areas

In addition to details about the three projects above, there are a set of initiatives across departments that demonstrate a comprehensive approach to the City Council priority. With the One Boulder approach, SER Framework, and Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, Citywide Strategic Plan, and department plans in mind, all these projects will be evaluated for their contribution to the priority. Many of the projects are under discussion with department leadership as part of the “All Things Downtown” collaboration.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Lead Department</u>	<u>Est. Completion</u>
1. Affordable Commercial Pilot	Entire City	CV	Q4 2026
2. Boulder Junction Phase 2 Implementation	East Boulder	P&DS	2025
3. BVCP Update	Entire City	P&DS	Q3 2026
4. Civic Area Phase 2	Central	Parks & Recreation	2027
5. Boulder Arts Blueprint	Entire City	CV	Q3 2026
6. E. Boulder Subcommunity Plan Impl.	East Boulder	P&DS	ongoing
7. Facilities Master Plan Implementation	Entire City	Facilities & Fleet	ongoing
8. Family Friendly Vibrant Neighborhoods	Entire City	P&DS	Q2 2026
9. Pearl Street Improvements	Downtown	tbd	2027
10. Special Events Pgm. Recommendations	Entire City	CV	ongoing

This collaborative approach to planning for the future of our commercial areas will be at the heart of the Improvement District Analysis and the Commercial Areas Blueprint, resulting in priorities and recommendations that represent and help achieve citywide objectives.

NEXT STEPS

Projects under the heading of Commercial District Revitalization and Investment that will be completed soon include the painted crosswalk on The Hill (anticipated completion in Q4 2024), the downtown bike rack murals (Q4 2024), the Boulder Junction branding and wayfinding project (currently all signs are installed except one, expected to be complete in Q1 2025) and the Outdoor Dining Pilot Program evaluation and enhancement (Q1 2025).

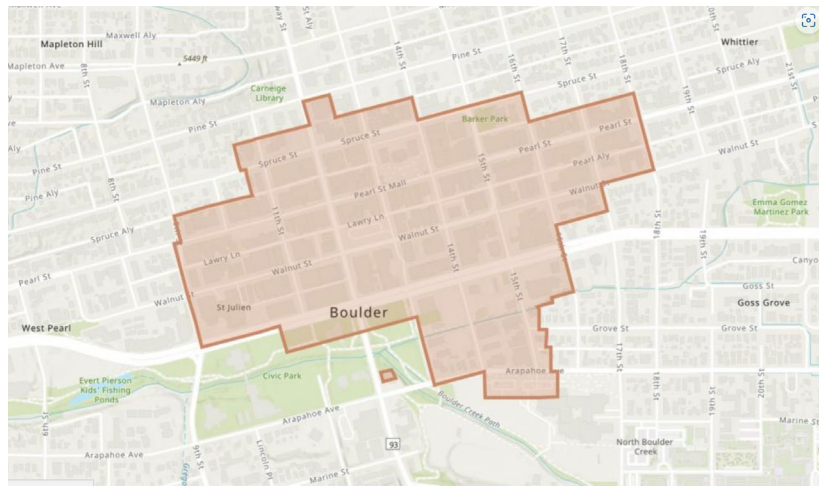
The District Analysis project will begin data collection and research in Q4 2024, with regular council check-ins to be scheduled. The project will begin with financial analysis, benchmarking, and review of existing plans and strategies. Several phases of the project, especially in data collection and engagement, will be associated with other efforts across departments, especially the update of the BVCP. The next council touchpoint on the analysis is anticipated in Q2 2025.

Next steps on the Boulder Commercial Areas Blueprint will be to scope the project and collaborate across city departments on a charter, particularly with Planning & Development Services to best integrate with the BVCP update.

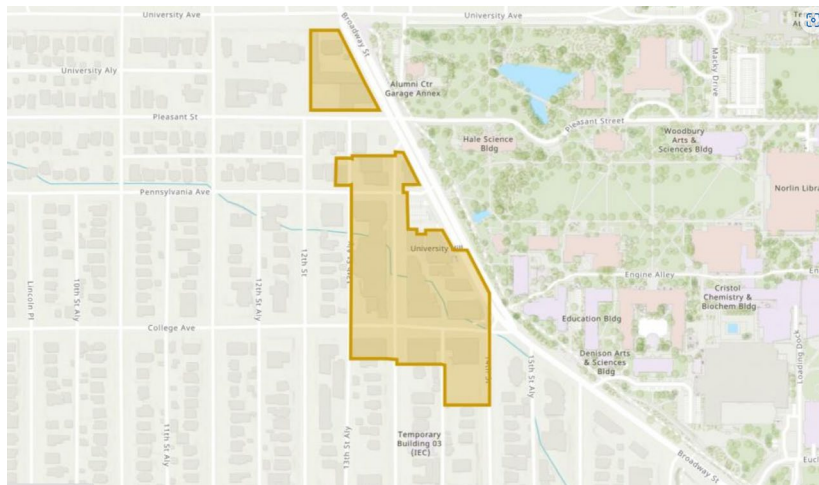
ATTACHMENT(S)

- A – Map of General Improvement Districts
- B – Community Vitality Department Overview and Organizational Chart
- C – Types of Improvement Districts
- D – ULI TAP Report on Hill Revitalization Efforts

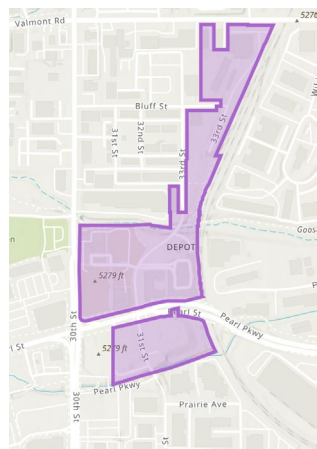
Attachment A
Map of Boulder's GIDs



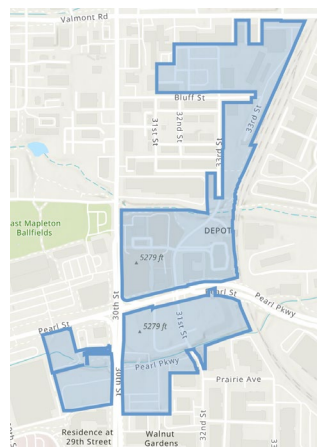
CAGID



UHGD



BJAD-P



BJAD-TDM

Attachment B

Community Vitality Department Overview and Organizational Chart

Overview of the Community Vitality Department

The Community Vitality Department (CV) named as such in October 2015 as part of a reorganization of the Downtown and University Hill Management Division and Parking Services to account for new department responsibilities including of the management of the Boulder Junction GIDs and the city's Economic Vitality program. In 2021, the Offices of Special Events and Arts and Culture were moved to Community Vitality while the citywide Economic Vitality functions returned to the City Manager's Office. All of this change within a short amount of time led to a lack of role clarity and strategic vision and understanding for the members of the department, the broader city organization, and the community in general. Much work has been done since to establish a clear departmental strategic vision for its unique role within the city organization.

Today, the department's work is structured around three interrelated strategic pillars:

- Cultural Vibrancy,
- District Vitality, and
- Access for All.

Cultural Vibrancy ensures that the city managed improvement districts, and the city as a whole, are enriched with exciting special events, public art, and cultural opportunities that contribute to social cohesion and well-being. This means supporting a wide range of artistic expressions, celebrating the city's cultural diversity, and ensuring that arts and cultural programs are dynamic, innovative, and widely accessible. District Vitality focuses on the economic and social health of the improvement districts, ensuring they are vibrant, attractive, and thriving. This involves supporting local businesses, enhancing public spaces, and encouraging activities that draw people in, creating lively, engaging districts that contribute to the overall well-being of the city. Access for All is dedicated to ensuring that all community members, regardless of background, income, or location within the city and beyond, can participate in and benefit from the city's improvement districts, cultural programs, and special events. This includes making spaces physically accessible regardless of ability or chosen transportation mode, offering affordable or free programs, and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome.

At the core of the Community Vitality Department's mission is the commitment to advancing Boulder's Sustainability, Equity, and Resilience Framework goals. This is achieved through the department's distinct focus on district vitality, arts and culture, special events, and parking and access, all of which aim to ensure that key community assets remain vibrant, welcoming, inclusive, and safe.

Community Vitality serves the community by facilitating an alignment between city services and community activity for access to, and vitality in, Boulder's activity centers and GIDs. The GIDs play a critical role in maintaining and enhancing the vibrancy of Boulder's commercial districts. By ensuring that these areas are well-maintained, accessible, and attractive to businesses and visitors, GIDs help bolster the local economy.

Attachment B: Community Vitality Department Overview and Organizational Chart

Within Community Vitality, several specialized divisions collaborate to fulfill these goals:

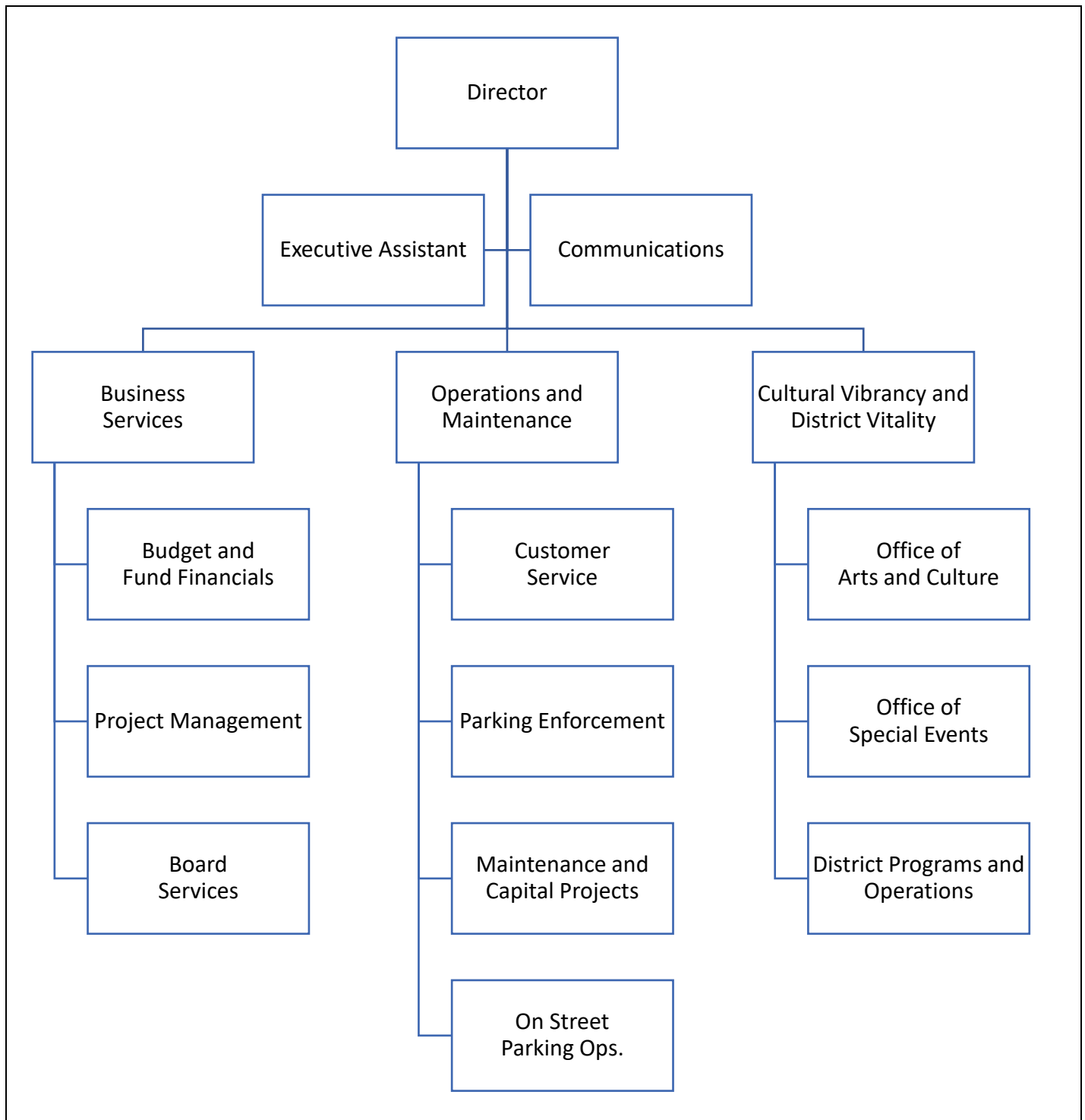
- District Management
 - Programs & Operations
 - Maintenance (Off-Street Parking Facilities)
 - Capital Improvements
- Office of Arts and Culture,
- Office of Special Events,
- Parking & Access Services (On-Street Parking)
 - Customer Service
 - Maintenance
 - Enforcement

Please refer to the department organizational chart in Attachment B.

These divisions are supported by a Business Services team that oversees the financial health of the districts, manages the Arts, Culture and Heritage Tax, drives equity and diversity initiatives, and provides support to the department's five commissions: CAGID, UHCAMC, BJAD-P, BJAD-TDM, and the Boulder Arts Commission.

Community Vitality's Capital Improvement and Maintenance efforts are largely focused on the management of the seven district-owned, mixed-use parking garages and on-street managed parking assets throughout the city, however efforts also include installation and maintenance of public art, streetscape improvements and special events infrastructure.

Attachment B: Community Vitality Department Overview and Organizational Chart



Attachment C

Types of Improvement Districts

Includes information from the [fact sheet on Colorado Improvement Districts](#) developed by Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.)

	Summary	Focus	Assessment	Governance	CRS	Used in Boulder?
Business Improvement District (BID)	Quasi-municipal corporation as a subdivision of the state. Commercial only.	Management, marketing, advocacy, and economic development.	Mill levy on commercial property.	Independent Board	31-25-1201	Yes
Downtown Development Authority (DDA)	Quasi-municipal corporation. Halts or prevent deterioration of property values.	Real estate development, infrastructure, operations.	TIF on property and/or sales and 5 mill property tax for operations.	5- to 11-member board appointed by City Council	31-25-801	No
Urban Renewal Authority (URA)	Eliminate blighted areas by purchasing, rehabilitating and selling land.	Real estate development, rehab financing, infrastructure.	TIF on property and/or sales tax.	5- to 11-member board appointed by City Council	31-25-101	Yes
General Improvement District (GID)	Quasi-municipal corporation as a subdivision of the state. Can provide a wide range of services.	Capital improvements, public facilities, maintenance.	Property tax and income from improvements.	City Council as the Board of Directors	31-25-601	Yes
Special Improvement District (SID)	An assessment district is not a subdivision of the state, nor is it separate from the city.	Capital improvements, Infrastructure.	Assessments on property.	City Council	31-25-501	No
Metropolitan District	Quasi-municipal corporation as a subdivision of the state. Not required to be contiguous.	Infrastructure financing, construction and operation.	Property tax and/or fees and charges for services and facilities.	5- or 7-member board elected by district voters.	32-1-101	No



14TH STREET LOT UNIVERSITY HILL GENERAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (UHGID) CITY OF BOULDER



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL | JUNE 21 & 22, 2023

About the Urban Land Institute (ULI)

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. Established in 1936, ULI has more than 46,000 members worldwide representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. Since 2003, ULI Colorado has completed more than 60 TAPs, leading to positive policy changes and built projects across the state.

What are Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs)?

The Technical Advisory Panel program is an advisory service available to a community, nonprofit, public entity or private enterprise that is facing real estate or land-use issues. Typically, a two-day session, the TAP program brings together a cross-section of experts who do not have a vested interest in the project to examine the issues from multiple angles and produce recommendations and implementation strategies based on market conditions, sound information, community realities, and best practices.

The District Council assembles a panel of ULI members chosen for their knowledge of the issues facing the client. The interdisciplinary team may include land planners, architects, market and financial analysts, developers, engineers, appraisers, attorneys and/or brokers who are well qualified to provide unbiased, pragmatic advice on complex real estate and land-use issues.

To ensure objectivity, panel members cannot be involved in matters pending before the client, currently work for the client or solicit work from the client during the six months following the TAP program. In addition, they are not compensated for their time, but they are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, such as overnight lodging and transportation to attend the TAP.

How Does the Program Work?

TAP members are briefed on the issues facing the client and receive detailed information relevant to the assignment including project history, detailed maps of the study area, relevant demographics and other relevant data necessary for an understanding of the task at hand. During the two-day program, TAP members tour the study area, interview stakeholders (business owners, city council members, etc.), and work collaboratively to produce preliminary findings and recommendations which are presented at the end of Day 2 to the client. A complete report follows within about six to eight weeks with detailed recommendations.

ULI Advisory Services identify creative, practical solutions for complex land use and development challenges.

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IMAGE: 14th Street Lot



IMAGE: TAP Panelists touring University Hill

Sponsor and ULI Participants

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TAP SCOPE

The Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) was asked to examine the University Hill district (“The Hill”) and specifically the 14th Street lot, in an effort to create tools and strategies to enhance the sense of place, economic vibrancy, and cultural legacy the district historically celebrates. Leveraging new developments including The Hill Hotel and the Limelight Conference Center and Hotel, the 14th Street lot could serve as a catalyst for knitting the neighborhood back together with new amenities and a shared vision. Specifically, the TAP was asked to consider the following key issues:

- In consideration of contextual challenges and regulatory barriers in the University Hill district, what is the current highest and best use of the 14th Street lot?
- How are current regulatory barriers impacting the vitality of the University Hill district and the development potential of the 14th Street lot and which barriers should the city reconsider in its effort to empower positive transformation within the district as a whole?
- For successful redevelopment to occur on the 14th Street lot, what funding sources and mechanisms should the city be considering?
- What is the optimal partnership structure for successful redevelopment of the 14th Street lot?
- How might a 14th Street lot development be configured to best mitigate some of the multimodal connectivity challenges to the site and throughout the University Hill district?
- How can future use and design of a 14th Street lot development complement the anticipated anchor developments taking place on the Hill?
- What is the most efficient path to implementation and redevelopment?



PANEL PROCESS

ULI Colorado assembled a group of accomplished ULI members with expertise in urban design and landscape architecture, real estate development, land planning and zoning, and place-making for an intensive two-day workshop to address the challenges facing the city of Boulder.

Prior to convening, TAP members received information on the University Hill district, including demographics, neighborhood characteristics, retail and market trends, area plans, and the most recent market report specifically for repositioning the 14th Street lot.

Day 1 included a kick-off with The City of Boulder Community Vitality staff, led by their Director, Cris Jones and Senior Project Manager, Reegan Brown. The panel was provided greater context and background regarding the history of the Hill, its character, and the underlying causes of its decline and current state.

The panelists spent the first day engaged in candid stakeholder interviews which comprised of perspectives from city officials including Andrew Shoemaker, UHCAMC Commissioner; Trent Bush, UHCAMC Commissioner; Tara Winer, Councilmember; Aaron Brockett, Mayor; business owners including Cheryl Liguori, CEO of Z2 Entertainment; Mark Heinritz, Owner of The Sink; residents of the University Hill neighborhood including Nancy Blackwood, President of University Hill Neighborhood Association; representatives from CU Boulder including Ted Rockwell, Representing as a UHCAMC Commissioner with connections to CU; Tom McGann, CU Director of Parking and Transportation Services; d'Andre Willis, CU

Campus Architect and Director of Planning; and local developers including Jean Coulter, Limelight Hotels; Kevin Eronymous, Principal at SAR Architects.

The interview process allowed for an in-depth discussion of the real challenges on the Hill, the origins of the neighborhood divide between the nature of the activities in the retail district and the desires of the surrounding residents. The panelists probed each stakeholder guided by the questions from the city while allowing each to share their own ideas, goals, and unique prospective. Most importantly, the panel sought consensus and ownership for implementation on any specific recommendations to ensure buy-in.

The panelists regrouped after each interview to discuss what they heard. Recurring themes noted from the first cohort of stakeholders acknowledged the challenge of creating a year-round commercial basis of activity on the Hill that balanced the student-centric activities with the needs of the broader neighborhood. The sub-culture that made the Hill an attractive and unique destination had been lost. The principal cause, as told from this group, was the failure to effectively solve the balancing act. The regulatory barriers imposed on the district have proved to be too heavy-handed. Moreover, the center of gravity has shifted away from the Hill and to other areas of the city making opportunities for adaptation and growth even more challenging. The panelists also unveiled the irony that the Hill is the most studied area but least prioritized in terms of resources. Parking was also a central theme and one that was consistently brought up in each of the stakeholder interviews.

The second cohort consisted of business owners and property owners with long ties to the cultural and economic vitality of the Hill. Common themes arising from this cohort included parking both for customers and for staff, public safety, the lack of capacity for investment through the GID, and overall fatigue given the grind related to the issues on the Hill. While the group was generally optimistic, the panelists could sense a profound feeling of exhaustion. The remaining stakeholders included Hill residents, representatives from CU-Boulder, and the leadership of the Downtown Boulder Partnership and the Director of Policy Programs at Boulder's Chamber of Commerce.

By the end of Day 2, the ULI panel synthesized the background information provided, insights from the tour, stakeholder interviews, and intense internal deliberation to create a cohesive presentation of their recommendations.

What We Heard

- 1. Once the hotels are complete, people will choose to go right or left...**
- 2. Funding for the district is limited and capacity for general improvements like lighting, cleanliness, and safety patrols impacts The Hill's overall viability**
- 3. The Hill's challenges have been a political grinder and run good people out of the district**
- 4. The Hill should be at the center of up-coming elections**
- 5. Parking is a necessary evil**
- 6. There's a real desire for neighborhood-centric retail and commercial options**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University Hill commercial district has been a challenge for the city of Boulder for several decades. Despite its prime location and adjacency to the vibrance of the University of Colorado's main campus, the area has not seemed able to balance the needs of the surrounding neighborhood with the dominant student-centric energy. Over time, this push-n-pull has prompted the surrounding neighbors to create barriers and regulations to curb the excesses of student night-life. The consequence has been to push that energy into the residential sections of the neighborhood and away from the commercial district.

With new investments tailored to a broader audience, the Hill has an opportunity to restore the balance and provide a mix of activities and amenities that appeal to students, non-student residents, and regional visitors. This approach must be intentional and the recommendations from the ULI Colorado panel reflect several action steps that speak to immediate activation of the 14th Street Lot along with longer-term uses that restore the sense of place and unique character that is the Hill.

In addressing the core questions posed by the city of Boulder, the panel distilled several desired outcomes that shape their proposed strategies and tools. These include:

- Enhance connection to the broader community
- Celebrate the Hill's uniqueness and history
- Bring a diverse range of people back to the Hill
- Serve as a complementary use to the two new hotels and conference center
- Generate new revenue for UHGID
- Spark change

Immediate Action Plan

Priority areas identified by the ULI Panel:

1. Choose and implement short-term lot activation opportunity(s)

- **Micro-mobility Hub**
- **Food Trucks**
- **Pop-up Market**
- **Music Festival**

2. Deregulate moratorium and current liquor and cannabis license rules

3. Initiate neighborhood rebranding campaign

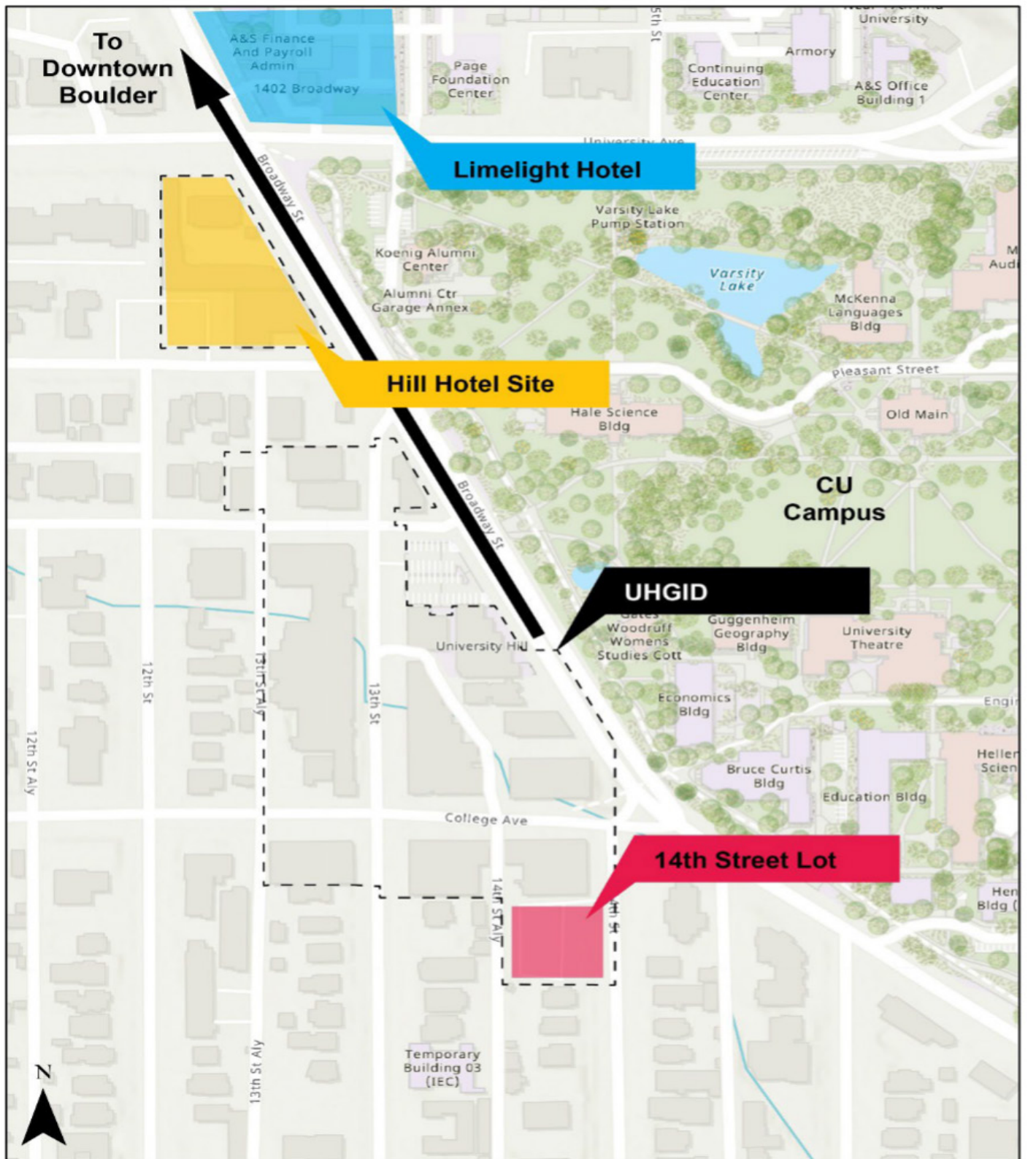
4. Explore TIF(URA/DDA) funding mechanism to improve district security, facade improvements, site specific public improvements

5. Initiate long-term lot redevelopment

- **Parking Facilities**
- **Grocery/Bodega**
- **Faculty Housing**
- **Boutique Hotel**
- **Artists in Residence/Music Studios**
- **Food & Community Hub**

6. Improve/enhance entrances & gateways; explore greater connectivity along 13th Street corridor

Urban Context



BACKGROUND

Study Area General Description

University Hill is a quintessential college adjacent district that combines the energy and activity of the CU student population with the richness of an established neighborhood and commercial corridor. The University Hill General Improvement District (UHGD) was established in 1970 at the request of property owners who wanted to tax themselves to purchase land that could provide customers with additional public parking spaces.

The 14th Street lot (see map right) represents the last remaining parking asset of the GID and therefore serves as a prime opportunity to leverage the new Hill Hotel and conference center and revitalize the district through intentional programming and activation.



IMAGE: Street into the Hill commercial district

Study Area Demographics 2017 - 2021

MEASURE	UHGD	UNIVERSITY HILL SUBCOMMUNITY	CITY OF BOULDER
POPULATION	66	10,938	108,995
HOUSEHOLDS	29	4,133	43,989
MEDIAN AGE	22.1	23.7	30.3
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$5,648	\$39,621	\$53,866
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$14,500	\$42,201	\$82,407
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$15,767	\$103,111	\$131,623
HOUSING UNITS	45	4,421	46,868
OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS	0%	27.9%	45.2%
RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS	64.4%	65.6%	48.7%
VACANT HOUSING UNITS	35.6%	6.5%	6.1%



“The Hill is the most studied area in the state of Colorado!”

– Anonymous

Summary of Previous Planning Efforts

The Hill’s importance as a distinct place within the city of Boulder is not only evident in its legacy and lore but perhaps more in the intensity of focus on its improvement through the many studies, plans, and recommendations over the past several decades. The list below is not exhaustive but highlights several efforts that contributed to the current ULI TAP and ensured the panelist recommendations were informed and respected past efforts. Moreover, while the 2-day process included specific stakeholder interviews, it did not undertake a full community engagement effort. Full consideration of the recommendations and implementation will include community engagement lead by the City. The ULI TAP takes into consideration previous public engagement in the section to follow.

ULI City of Boulder TAP, 2011 – Key Recommendation(s)

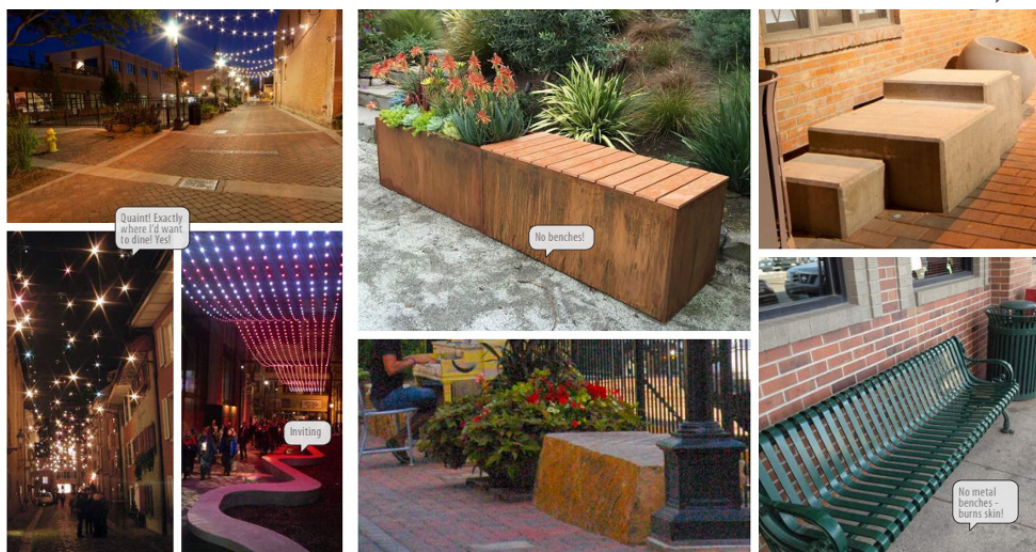
Recommendations fell into three areas: **Governance, Programming, and Bricks & Mortar.** Generally the panel urged “Revitalize, Don’t Reinvent.” The Hill is not completely broken and does not need a sweeping fix. The panel also stated the concept of a Creative Innovation District is promising but needs more thought and clearer definition. “This needs to be a strategy, not just a name,” said one panelist.

University Hill Alley Enhancements Plan, 2018 – Russell Mills

Goals & Objectives:

1. Create a safe pedestrian/bike network of alleys that complements circulation between key destinations in University Hill
2. Develop concepts for activated, engaging alleys that help stimulate business activity
3. Integrate operational needs of alleys including service, waste disposal, parking/vehicular access and emergency vehicles
4. Build upon and continue to establish the unique “Hill” identity

Example Images



Traditional (top) and arful (bottom) Tivoli lighting

Benches, clockwise from top left: wood/Corten steel, concrete, steel, and stone

UHGID 14th Street Lot Asset Strategies, 2022

A detailed summary of previous planning efforts related to the 14th Street Lot can be found on page 9 of the Asset Strategies study.

Summary of Findings:

1. Two components of any strategy that are most impactful on the primary goals for UHGID are being able to significantly increase the amount of parking spaces provided and being able to monetize the value of the land the 14th Street Lot is located on.
2. The Market Rate Housing P3 Strategy is only strategy that was both financially feasible and addresses the primary goals of UHGID.
3. The Office P3, Self Develop, and CU Partnership strategies are also potential options to considered further despite the fact they do not achieve multiple goals.

Regulatory Background

At the cutting edge of Boulder's music and outdoor scene, the Hill was a critical place for innovation, spontaneity, and convergence. This legacy is embedded in the remaining businesses fighting to weather what has been a difficult economic environment. Like many commercial districts fueled primarily by university students, the Hill has experienced the fallout out from the excesses of nightlife activities and all of its accompanying outcomes. In response, the community placed several restrictions and regulations targeted at both the commercial and residential activities within the district that have severely impacted the overall economic vitality of the Hill.

Per B.R.C. 9-6-5 (B): Within UHGID and applied to restaurants, brewpubs, and taverns, no less than fifty percent of the gross income from sales of food and drink of the establishment over any thirty-day period must be from sales of food. Additionally, restaurants, brewpubs, and taverns within the District shall close no later than 11:00pm.

Per B.R.C. 9-6-3 (B): Use standards for residential uses, attached dwelling units located in the Business Main Street (BMS) zoning district within UHGID must be entirely permanently affordable units.

For greater context and comparison, there are no requirements regarding minimum level of food sales outside of UHGID within Boulder. It has been stated by businesses and other community members in UHGID that the requirement specific to the district is difficult for businesses to achieve and ultimately impacts their sales and growth. See B.R.C. 9-6-5 (B).

Note:

Since the convening of the TAP, great progress has been made on The Hill. On the November 16, 2023, City Council held a Public Hearing related to the second reading and consideration of a motion to approve Ordinance 8590 amending Title 9, "Land Use Code", B.R.C. 1981, to update the use table and use standards related to walkable neighborhood centers, including changes to the standards for restaurants, brewpubs, and taverns within the Business Main Street (BMS) district and UHGID. Council voted unanimously to approve Ordinance 8590. The adoption of Ordinance 8590 went into effect in December 2023 and will have impacts on The Hill commercial district. The code change eliminates the unique standards for restaurants, brewpubs, and taverns on The Hill and instead consolidates standards for the BMS district with other similar commercial or mixed-use districts that interface closely with residential areas. These uses will be allowed by right if they are under 4,000 square feet and close by 11pm; alternatively, larger sites and/or later operating hours could be considered and allowed through the Use Review process. Additionally, the requirement for restaurants that "no less than fifty percent of the gross income from sales of food and drink of the establishment over any thirty-day period must be from the sales of food" has been removed. Per liquor licensing rules and like other commercial districts in the city, the new requirement for restaurants on The Hill is that no less than twenty five percent of their sales come from food.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations reflect what the panelists heard, the history and culture of the Hill, and the market realities of revitalization given the barriers previously noted. Focusing holistically from a place-making and keeping perspective, the panelist address activation of the 14th Street Lot with the goal of leveraging both short and longer-term strategies that recapture the Hill's significance as an active annual destination. The first recommendation is for the City to reconsider the regulatory barriers and therefore send a strong market signal that the district is in fact open for business.

14th Street Lot Activation Opportunities

The panel recommends engaging in short-term opportunities before committing to the long-term in order to generate community excitement and engagement and to create test cases for revenue streams.

1. Implement more from the Alley Plan
 - Create a safe pedestrian/bike network of alleys that complements circulation between key destinations in University Hill
2. Pedestrianize or partially pedestrianize 13th Street Corridor
 - Develop concepts for activated, engaging alleys that help stimulate business activity
 - Integrate operational needs of alleys including service, waste disposal, parking/vehicular access and emergency vehicles
 - Build upon and continue to establish the unique "Hill" identity



IMAGE: Olde Town Arvada



Micro-Mobility Hub

Short Term (1-3 years)

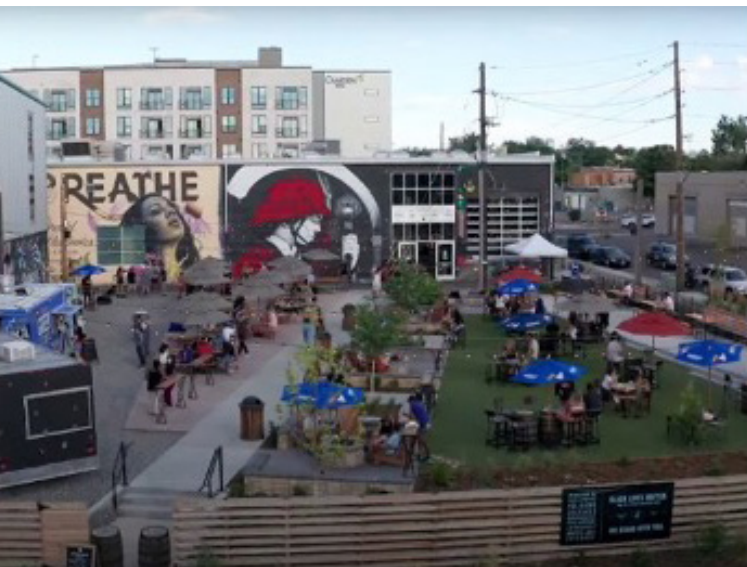
1. Utilize the parking lot as a mobility destination taking advantage of its connectivity to Chautauqua Park. Constructing light bike and other multi-modal infrastructure to create a place where people can connect to multiple modes of transportation.
2. Mobility hubs promote economic development, improve pedestrian experiences, and enhance public spaces.



Pop-up Activation

Short Term (1-3 years)

1. Utilize the lot for recurring pop-up activities to generate energy, place-making, and year-round revenue.
2. Activities could include weekly farmers markets, food trucks, retail and/or art markets, and music festivals.
3. Pop-up activities could create opportunities for small business exposure, incubator spaces, and a pipeline for entrepreneurs to occupy longer-term retail spaces on Hill.



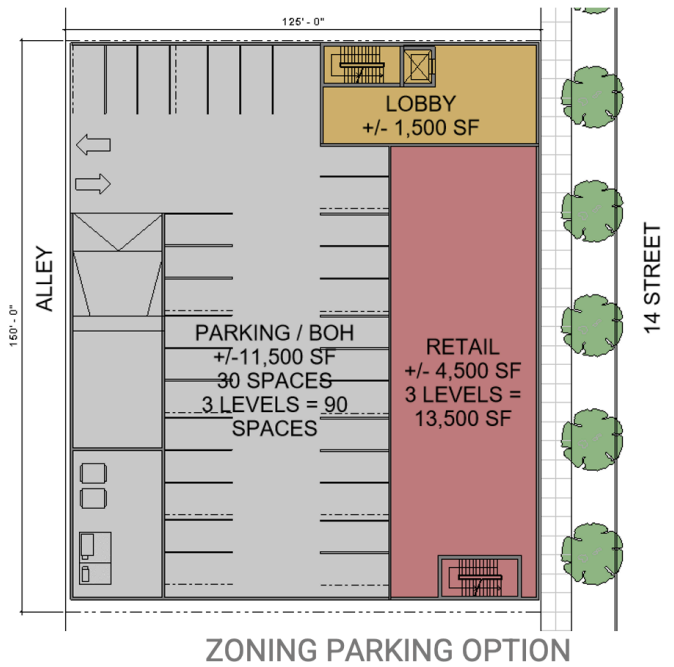
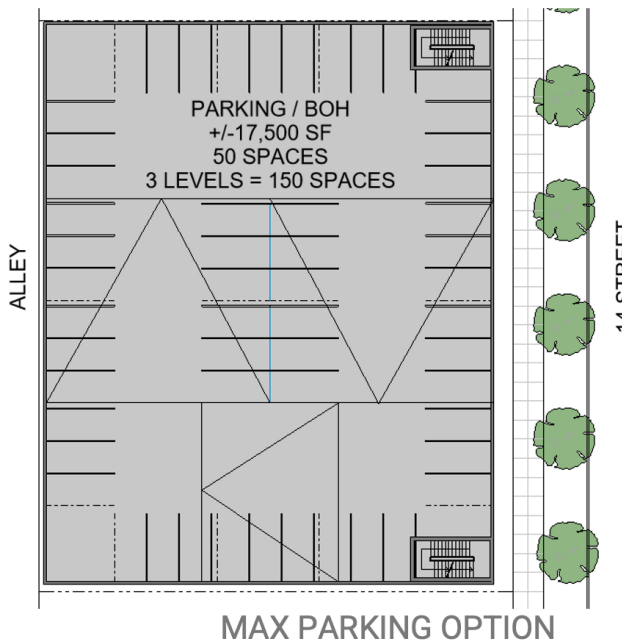
14th Street Lot Redevelopment – Parking Facility

Long Term (3-5 years)

Parking remains a critical need and the panel heard several stakeholders emphasize the desire for more parking options. On the next page are illustrations of parking options that either maximize parking, incorporate retail opportunities within the parking structure, or explore combinations of residential, retail, and business incubator spaces.

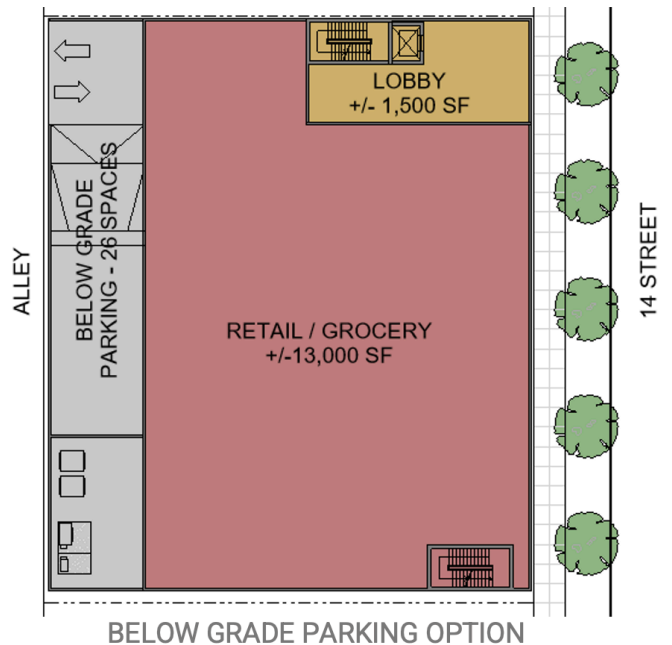
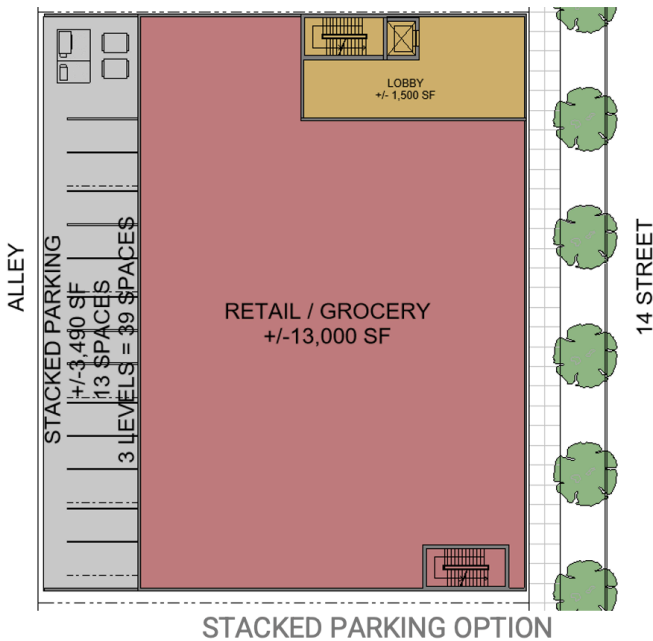
Long-Term on the 14th Street Lot

Parking Garage Options: Increased Revenue



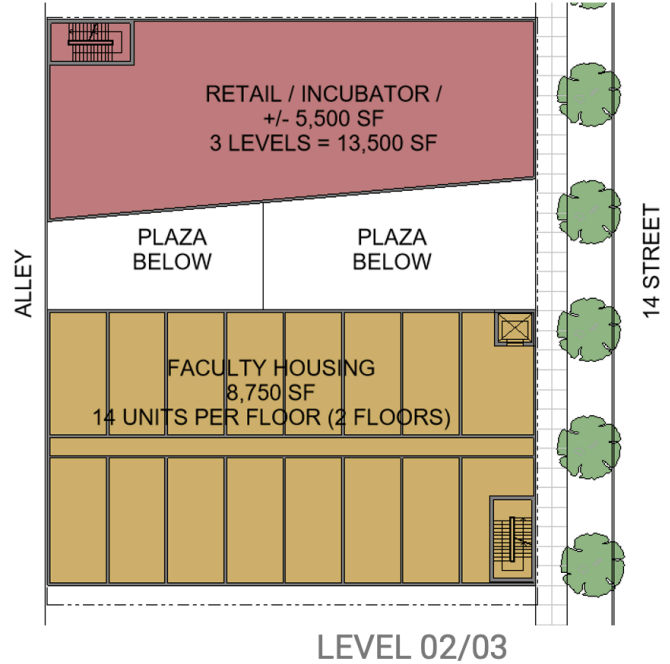
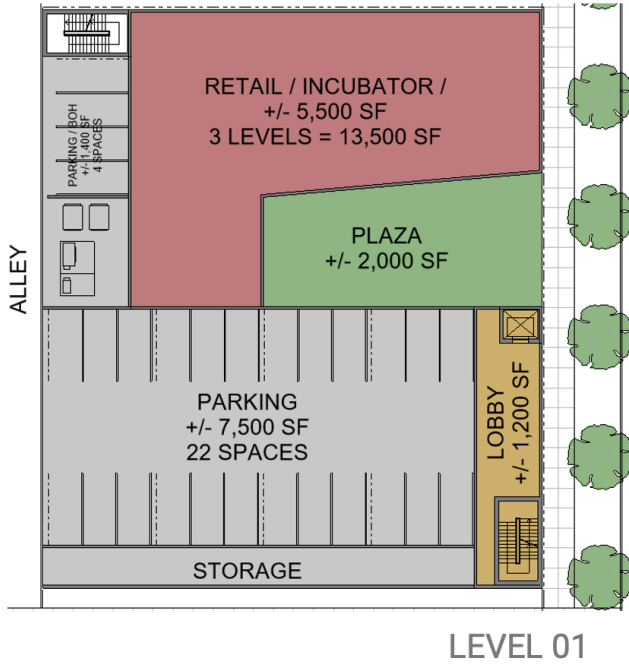
Long-Term on the 14th Street Lot

Grocery / Bodega: 15-minute Neighborhoods



Long-Term on the 14th Street Lot

Faculty Housing: CU Collaboration



14th Street Lot – Faculty Housing/Artist in Residence

Long Term (3-5 years)

Below are illustrations of parking options incorporate residential options, specifically, collaborations with the CU for faculty housing or housing for artists/ musicians, retail, and business incubator spaces.

14th Street Lot – Boutique Hotel

Long Term (3-5 years)

Given the footprint of the 14th Street Lot, the panel recommends exploring a boutique hotel with unique programming similar to other social clubs such as the Edison House, Catbird in Lower Downtown Denver, or Gravity Haus in Breckenridge and Aspen.



IMAGES: Boutique hotels and social clubs

Financing needed improvements and expanding opportunities for reinvestment were prominent themes emerging from the panelist's engagement. Both impact public safety and the overall aesthetic of the Hill. The following provides some detail on existing tools that should be explored further and in tandem with the preceding activation strategies.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Long Term (5+ years)

Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, is a financial tool primarily used to encourage development and address blight. TIF is a mechanism for capturing the future tax benefits of new development in order to pay for the present cost of that development. Tax increment financing can be requested for property tax, sales tax, or both. Each taxing entity (county, library, school district, etc.) must approve or deny the use of TIF.

Urban Renewal Authority (URA)

Urban Renewal is a tool that is designed to drive private sector investment to blighted areas and revitalize local economies. Through the use of tax increment finance (TIF) the UHGID could attract the private sector to the site while capturing net new tax generation to fund broad area improvements over 25 years. Additionally, the URA approach naturally has a broad community outreach component built in since all of the taxing entities would need to vote on if they would support the pledge of all (or a portion) of TIF to the area.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

Downtown Development Authorities are the only other entity that is allowed to use TIF as a tool. They also have the added ability of taxing themselves (up to 5 mills) for the funding of area public improvements. It should be noted that the current DDA expressed an interest in further exploring the possibility of extending boundaries to cover the Hill.

Either of the options should be strongly considered as they have the ability to capture new development that otherwise wouldn't occur to fund future improvements that can have needed catalytic affects.

CONCLUSION

The city of Boulder has a unique opportunity to recapture the vibrancy and cultural importance of The Hill through thoughtful implementation of the aforementioned recommendations. Balancing student and neighborhood amenities requires acknowledging the impact of the regulatory barriers imposed on The Hill while respecting the original rationale.

The 14th Street Lot's ability to serve as a catalyst for an activation strategy for The Hill will depend in large part on the market signal the removal of the regulatory barriers will most certainly send. As the recommendations suggest, a phased and multi-pronged approach that involves all stakeholders will be critical to The Hill's success.

It is our hope that this process will advance an already focused and informed effort for revitalizing The Hill. The recommendations put forth by the panelists reflect a genuine desire to respect the needs of each stakeholder group while placing emphasis on implementation and the market realities that are present for the district.



IMAGES: Character of the Hill Commercial District

ABOUT THE PANEL

Jariah Walker, Executive Director, Colorado Springs, Urban Renewal Authority, ULI TAP Committee Chair



Jariah Walker is the CSURA Executive Director where he leads the Urban Renewal Authority focused on revitalizing communities and driving economic growth with the use of TIF and districts. Before serving as acting director of CSURA, Walker worked as senior economic development analyst for the city. Prior to going to work for the city, Walker was a senior partner with Walker Asset Management Realty Inc. He served in that position for seven years.

Jariah stays involved in the community and sits on many boards and committees. He currently serves as co-chair of ULI Southern Colorado.

Keith Borsheim, Transportation Planner, HDR



Keith Borsheim, HDR, is a multimodal planner with two decades of broad-based experience. He is a life-long learner, striving to be current with the state of the practice in all aspects of transportation planning, from travel demand modeling where he started his career to complete street design, where he has recently helped the cities of Littleton and Denver update their guidelines and standards for designing streets.

Keith has the ability to speak the language of planners, engineers, developers, and stakeholders and works on all phases of project development. As one of HDR's Denver Office municipal complete streets practice leaders, Keith has helped many cities along the front range plan and design better streets for people of all backgrounds.

CarloMaria Ciampoli, Assoc., AIA, LEED Studio Director, Experience Design, RIOS



CarloMaria is an expert at creating unique and memorable environments. CarloMaria leads teams to elegant design solutions, working beyond boundaries to exceed the aspirations and expectations of clients globally. His ideas are driven by his passion to create meaningful human interactions and authentic experiences that span cultures, markets, and geographies.

Trained in architecture, he's adept at thinking across a spectrum of design disciplines and scales to devise solutions that inspire people to connect with their surroundings. His invaluable perspective and wisdom have been instrumental in a variety of mixed-use, retail, entertainment, and public spaces, as well as projects in China, India, and Mexico.

CarloMaria has lectured at the Center for Architecture in New York, industry events, and at universities across the US, Europe, and Asia. He's based in Boulder, Colorado, where he cultivates his passion for board sports and the great outdoors.

Matt Chiodini, Associate Principal, OZ Architecture



Matt is an Associate Principal at OZ Architecture, a 150-person firm based in Denver that serves clients around the globe. Matt is a leader in the firm's Multi-family practice area. He has been with OZ and in the industry for over 23 years. Matt has found that pursuing advanced delivery, including volumetric modular and prefabricated panelized work, is his passion and where he can deliver the most significant impact.

His work strives to balance social, environmental, and economic sustainability while creating beautiful, creative spaces that are lasting assets to their neighborhoods. He recognizes that housing development affects the entire community, providing affordable and attainable housing in dense urban environments. He also prioritizes sustainable design in his work and is helping to lead OZ in the 2030 Commitment.

As Matt leads his projects, he facilitates a truly integrated design process by enabling an open exchange among designers, engineers, consultants, and clients.

Amy McCann, LEED, Architect, Associate, SAR+



Amy McCann is a Denver native with a passion for cities and the urban environment. During her career, she has worked with large, multi-office architecture firms on diverse project types within both the private and public sector. Most recently, Amy has focused on hospitality, student housing, and higher-education projects, playing a key role in community outreach and entitlements. Amy is a licensed architect in Colorado, has a strong graphic design eye, and is an advocate for historic context and preservation within architecture.



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