



**CITY OF BOULDER  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

**MEETING DATE: April 19, 2022**

**AGENDA TITLE:** Study Session Summary regarding review of the 90% draft of the East Boulder Subcommunity Plan.

**PRESENTERS:**

Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager  
David Gehr, Interim Director, Planning and Development Services  
Charles Ferro, Development Review Manager & Interim Comprehensive Planning Manager  
Kathleen King, City Principal Planner, Comprehensive Planning

Transportation and Mobility

Erika Vandenbrande, Director of Transportation and Mobility  
Natalie Stiffler, Deputy Director of Transportation and Mobility  
Jean Sanson, Transportation Principal Planner  
Chris Hagelin, Transportation Principal Planner

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This item provides a summary of the April 12<sup>th</sup> Study Session agenda item East Boulder Subcommunity Plan 90% Draft for Review and Feedback. The study session item served as both an opportunity to present updates to the draft plan and discuss the following questions with council:

1. Does the Draft East Boulder Subcommunity Plan adequately and appropriately address the key feedback themes from the 60% Draft plan engagement window?
2. What are the revisions to the Draft East Boulder Subcommunity Plan or the 55<sup>th</sup> and Arapahoe Station Area Plan that City Council would like to suggest to finalize the plan for adoption?

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Suggested Motion Language:

Staff requests council consideration of this matter and action in the form of the following motion:

**Consideration of a motion to accept the April 12, 2022, Study Session Summary regarding review of the 90% draft of the East Boulder Subcommunity Plan.**

## PRESENT

City Council: Aaron Brockett, Matt Benjamin, Lauren Folkerts, Rachel Friend, Junie Joseph, Nicole Speer, Mark Wallach, Tara Winer, Bob Yates

Staff: Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, David Gehr, Charles Ferro, Kathleen King, Jean Sanson, Holly Opansky, Kalani Paho, Jay Sugnet,

**Staff and consultants provided an overview presentation of key components of the draft plan.**

Councilmembers asked questions about:

- How did the process reach out to community members living south of Arapahoe? *All community meetings for this project have been publicly noticed via the Daily Camera, the project webpage and city website calendar and the planning and development services public calendar. Additionally, engagement events for the process use the following media outlets to communicate opportunities for engagement: Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, the Planning E-Newsletter, a MyEmma stakeholder email, press releases and Channel 8. Five thousand five hundred addresses in or near the project received two hard-copy mailings about the project. Information about the project and opportunities to engage were included in two utility bill inserts and mailed citywide. All 30 East Boulder Working Group meetings and all 28 boards and council meetings related to the project are publicly noticed. Five members of the East Boulder Working Group are Boulder residents living south of Arapahoe.*
- How does the plan address middle income housing? *The subcommunity plan provides for significantly more housing opportunities that implement the BVCP goal of providing a diversity of housing types. Implementation of the plan will include code updates and the creation of Form Based Code to help the city produce the types of housing formats that are needed in Boulder. Affordable Housing programs and policies will continue to work to address the affordability challenges in the community.*
- How can we ensure transit will be available at 55<sup>th</sup> and Arapahoe, knowing that RTD's future is uncertain? *The city is working with local partners, including CDOT, Via Mobility and other neighboring communities to develop creative options to provide transit service*
- What is the schedule to change the BVCP land use map? *Staff workplan anticipates BVCP land use updates to take place immediately following adoption*

*and could be completed this summer. Land Use Map changes related to subcommunity plans can take place any time and could be voted on at the same time as plan adoption.*

- *What considerations led to the designation of 5150 Valmont as Community Business? The location of the parcel surrounded by park space was considered as a good opportunity for park-serving businesses/retail. The isolation of the parcel from other areas with existing or planned density did not appear to create an opportunity for fostering 15-minute neighborhoods and concentrating density in areas of change identified by the working group.*
- *What portion of East Boulder is located in the Opportunity Zone? In the East Boulder subcommunity, the opportunity zone is located north of Arapahoe, west of 55<sup>th</sup> and south of Valmont. See page 61 of [the East Boulder Inventory and Analysis Report](#) for a map.*
- *Is there an opportunity to get more than 25% of the total housing in East Boulder to be permanently affordable? The plan conservatively anticipates 25% of new housing will be affordable, however, for redevelopment seeking building heights greater than the 40' limit in industrial zones, our community benefit program would create opportunities for a higher portion of affordable units.*
- *How can we get more middle income housing in the current market? Middle income is the most challenging housing to provide in the current market since there is no dedicated source of funding (federal, state or local). Place Types in the plan describe desired outcomes for middle income housing and future work will help create form based code to regulate the format of housing that may be created.*
- *Will the 100% draft plan include a similar level of detail provided for the Station Area to the other areas of change? No. The 55<sup>th</sup> and Arapahoe Station Area Plan was funded by a DRCOG grant program and included a large team of consultants.*
- *How were the Place Types applied to the Valmont Park West neighborhood? Place types were created for East Boulder with the intention of context-sensitive redevelopment, considering adjacencies, access and community feedback about what types of redevelopment would be appropriate for various areas of the subcommunity. Modeling for the Park West neighborhood in particular considered adaptive reuse of potentially viable structures to maintain some of the existing business space.*
- *Do the planned street cross-sections in the Station Area Plan consider best practices for stormwater management? The sections are intended to describe the desired transportation facilities that should be accommodated in new and enhanced streets. The city does have a Green Infrastructure Plan for Transportation Landscapes, which highlights the potential of city rights-of-way to accommodate green infrastructure to manage stormwater. 55<sup>th</sup> Street is identified as one of the priority projects for this type of intervention.*
- *How will implementation of the POPS (Privately Owned Public Spaces) program holistically consider public space needs across the subcommunity. Creation and implementation of the program will be a future work plan item.*

- Do the projections for new housing convey maximum build out potential? *The numbers included in the presentation represent a concept for how the place types might ideally create new housing over 20 years. We could anticipate more housing, if the unit sizes are smaller than used in our model or less if the units are larger.*
- How does the OS-O land use designation apply and what rules govern this land use? *There are 3 types of Open Space land use designations (1) Open Space – Acquired (OS-A) applies to land already acquired by the City or Boulder County for Open Space purposes; (2) Open Space Development Rights (OS-DR) applies to privately owned land with existing conservation easements or other development restrictions; and (3) Open Space Other (OS-O) which applies to public or privately owned land that was designated prior to 1981 and identifies space that the city and county would like to preserve through various methods. As the pre-1981 hand-drawn maps were later digitized, mapping errors created confusion around the intention of OS-O designations. During the East Boulder Subcommunity planning process, staff from P&DS and OSMF worked together with the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) to clean up mapping errors and redesignate OS-O lands to more appropriate Open Space designation. The OSBT has reviewed and recommended approval of the Open Space land uses included in the East Boulder Subcommunity Plan land use plan.*
- What inspired using Minimum FARs for place types in the station area? *This language was flagged by the working group as needing further examination. Team is meeting with consultant team to review.*
- Can we legislate a saturation for job growth? *This would be challenging to track as redevelopment occurs over time, since the area is so large and there are many property owners. Two ways to limit job growth are rezoning to prohibit uses that would allow for jobs or limit FARs.*
- Would incorporating roof top gardens in this area require code changes? *Rooftop open spaces are permitted by the code, but as elevated spaces not at ground level, are limited to no more than 25% of the required open space on a site. Access to rooftop open spaces can be challenging primarily for any buildings that are at or near the 55 foot city charter height limit, because the city charter does not permit habitable space above 55 feet. An elevator or stairwell opening necessary to access the space above 55 feet is not permitted and therefore, rooftop spaces at that height are rare. Below 55 feet, it is not a problem as long as a building receives approval through a height modification to build above the zoning district height (typically 35-40 feet).*
- How can the plan adapt in response to changes in technology and transportation? *The BVCP identifies a process for amending the subcommunity plan, including a two-body approval (Planning Board and City Council). Major revisions to the plan would require a community engagement process.*

## KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

1. Does the Draft East Boulder Subcommunity Plan adequately and appropriately address the key feedback themes from the 60% Draft plan engagement window?
2. What are the revisions to the Draft East Boulder Subcommunity Plan or the 55<sup>th</sup> and Arapahoe Station Area Plan that City Council would like to suggest to finalize the plan for adoption?

## FEEDBACK ON KEY ISSUES AND DRAFT PLAN

Councilmembers provided feedback on the draft plan and accompanying materials, which were included in the memorandum and attachments. A link to the memo and materials can be found [here](#).

- Councilmembers expressed strong overall support for the process, plan recommendations and direction of the draft plan. Several mentioned support for the specific programs and projects described in the plan's implementation chapter.
- Councilmembers expressed support for the plan's inclusion of community feedback in the latest version of the draft
- Some members questioned whether the plan is recommending enough housing and whether there are opportunities to incorporate more
- Councilmembers emphasized the long-term implementation of the process and the anticipation that change will happen in this area over time
- Some members expressed an interest in limiting job growth while another member questioned whether limiting jobs will limit the services that may be incorporated into the redevelopment of these neighborhoods
- Some members would like to see additional detail about methods for ensuring redevelopment includes middle income housing
- Some members expressed support for inclusion of arts opportunities in the plan
- Some members would like to see how the Opportunity Zone may impact incentives
- Councilmembers expressed an interest in adopting the plan and making land use updates to the BVCP at the same time
- A council member expressed interest in the development of a privately-owned public space plan for the subcommunity to highlight where public space needs could most benefit the area and create cohesion between those needs and redevelopment projects
- Other specific feedback for plan revisions include:
  - Incorporate strategies for increasing the urban canopy in East Boulder and reflect that vision in the renderings
  - Make sure place types can offer a variety of rooflines
  - Consider a mixed use designation for 5150 Valmont
  - Support for minimum FARs
  - Consider tweaking Place Types to allow for additional housing, including allowing ground-floor residential uses

- Prioritize the East Side Eats program for near-term implementation
- Consider whether there are streets in the STAMP that can be designed to prioritize other modes of travel over cars
- Update the plan amendment section to describe engagement process requirements
- Update the plan amendment section to allow for flexibility in street sections that will respond to changes in transportation technology
- Describe the types of incentives for redevelopment that may be considered
- Describe role of RTD going forward