



STUDY SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Members of City Council

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SUBJECT: Boulder Airport Community Conversation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Boulder (city) will conduct community conversations with both on and off airport stakeholders and develop a range of alternatives for the future of Boulder Municipal Airport (BDU). This engagement process and resulting alternatives analysis will provide a better understanding of the desired future for BDU.

This study is expected to achieve the following:

- Understand community goals and aspirations for the airport
- Identify key issues and opportunities for consideration
- Identify a range of alternatives
- Identify preferred alternative
- Determine the next steps

Building on the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, and in preparation for a future Airport Master Plan Update, the city has contracted with Kimley-Horn and their subconsultants to facilitate a series of community conversations with the Boulder community to understand their aspirational goals and desired outcomes for the future operation and/or development of BDU.

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL

Transportation & Mobility Department staff request that Boulder City Council offer general feedback on the proposed Boulder Airport Community Conversation process. Specific questions include:

1. Are there any additional stakeholder groups not already identified that should be included in the process?
2. Does Council have additional feedback about the process defined here for the Airport Community Conversation?
3. Are there additional considerations that the project team should be aware of?

BACKGROUND

The city owns BDU, which is a general aviation airport that offers business, private, recreational, and emerging aviation services to the city and surrounding communities. It has two published runways and supports heavy glider operations.

The city has expressed interest in holding in-depth community conversations to better understand the aspirations of directly impacted stakeholders, residents, and traditionally underserved communities.

This memo provides the Boulder City Council an overview of the purpose of the project, initial themes from stakeholder interviews, and next steps. The project team plans to present the range of alternatives and the preferred alternative at the conclusion of the community conversations effort in June 2023.

CONSULTANT SCOPE OF WORK

Overview

The scope of this project is to carry out a community engagement process that identifies community goals and desired outcomes, a range of alternatives and the selection of a preferred alternative. The city is working to develop a deeper understanding of the desired future for BDU by engaging directly with the greater Boulder community, while being mindful of current obligations and commitments to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Kimley-Horn and their subconsultants have begun connecting with various community members to understand common interests, challenges, opportunities, and potential alternatives through facilitating community conversations. Each conversation will aim to understand the stakeholders' points of view about the benefits of the airport, airport operations, how the airport affects community members, and determine what alternatives might be preferred. Following the in-depth interviews, the project team will form a Community Working Group (CWG) comprised of both on and off airport stakeholders which will meet three times over the course of the project. The project team will host two public open houses to engage the broader public in the community conversation about the future of the airport.

These community conversations and the CWG will help shape the development of a preferred alternative for the future of the airport and guide a future FAA Airport Master Plan Update should the City Council decide to pursue. Using the information gathered in these conversations, the project team will develop a range of up to four alternatives. The analysis of these alternatives will include goals, objectives, evaluation criteria and a high-level estimated cost of implementation. From these alternatives, the team will optimally identify a preferred alternative.

The preferred alternative presented may not be representative of all comments and concerns gathered during the community conversation process. There will likely be elements outside the alternatives that warrant additional quantification or discussion (including conversations with regulatory agencies) which will be addressed through a separate process complimentary to the alternatives. While mindful of the community recommendations, the project team will work with federal partners to understand how the recommendations will stand up to the continuing FAA obligations. The outcome of this additional study will be shared with the City Council for review, input, and further staff direction and guidance.

Community Conversation Strategy

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to facilitate community conversations about aspirations and desired outcomes for the future of the airport. These conversations will help the project team understand and

contextualize the relationship between directly impacted communities and airport operations.

By speaking directly to stakeholders, the city will foster relationships between city and airport leadership and key stakeholder groups to meaningfully apply community input and desires into the future of the airport. Consistent with the City's Racial Equity Plan, the project team will engage directly with underserved community members and will collaborate with the city's Community Connectors to solicit feedback on the engagement strategy, process, and issues at hand. Staff and the project team will employ the city's Racial Equity Instrument to further refine the community engagement activities for this effort, with a focus on underrepresented communities including the San Lazaro Mobile Home Community and the Vista Village Mobile Home Community. Outreach to these communities will be used to inform the decisions for the future of the airport that prioritize community experiences and allow for diverse representation.

The desired outcome for this effort is for the city to gain a better understanding of the community's desires for the future operations and development of the airport and how it integrates into the community. Additionally, the city aims to identify common understanding among impacted stakeholders about the information gathering process and ensure that all parties and the broader community feel that their input was accurately and equitably considered.

Stakeholder Interviews

The community conversations kick off with one-on-one stakeholder interviews. These interviews provide key stakeholders who are directly impacted or have direct involvement with the airport an opportunity to discuss topics of primary interest and concern.

The project team received initial interview participant recommendations from airport and city staff. During the stakeholder interviews conducted so far, the project team asked participants if they had additional recommendations about other stakeholders to contact for this effort. In addition to this stakeholder list, city staff recommended names and groups to ensure this effort includes traditionally underserved communities. To facilitate broader participation, the project team is providing interpretation services for the interviews upon request.

Aviation safety is of the highest priority for the city and the FAA, both in air and on ground. As the regulatory agency, the FAA has vested interest in what occurs at the airport. There are some comments that occurred in which additional context is available:

- Several times it was requested that the city remove leaded fuel from BDU
 - On September 2, 2022, General Aviation Modifications, Inc. (GAMI) received a functional fleet wide approval through FAA's Supplemental Type Certificate process for an unleaded 100 octane fuel. While this fuel is compatible with all existing infrastructure (airplane engines, fuel tanks, fuel pumps, fuel trucks, etc.) it will take some time to ramp up production of the G100UL fuel for distribution to all general aviation airports.
- Airport repurposing, alternative uses of airport land, and/or access restrictions:
 - A separate process quantified by legal reviews consistent with existing Grant Obligations with the FAA with cost benefit analysis is suggested
 - Land purchased with FAA grant monies in the past may preclude reuse of the airport land as anything other than an airport as a viable alternative
 - The FAA will require the airport sponsor to maintain compliance with all 39 grant assurances until federal obligations expire
 - Future development and the character of the airport will be part of the future Airport Master Plan

- As a federally obligated airport, the city must “...make the airport available as an airport for public use on reasonable terms and without unjust discrimination to all types, kinds and classes of aeronautical activities...” (FAA Grant Assurance 22).

The common comments, aspirations and desired outcomes heard during the initial stakeholder interviews can be categorized as follows:

- Further restrictions beyond today’s voluntary noise procedures:
 - Engage congressional delegations given similar themed proposed legislation
 - Enhance flight tracking software capabilities
 - Update rules, regulations, and leasing policies to incentivize compliance with the noise program
- Greater citizen involvement and accountability through restructured governance
 - Citizen board with biannual updates to City Council
 - Airport expenses better delineated in the transportation budget
 - Provide web-based real time flight data
- Remove leaded fuel from BDU
- Enhance safety, reduce risks, implement a Traffic Management Program for use of runways:
 - Introduce traffic pattern modifications
 - Evaluate touch and go activity
 - Enforcement for individuals/companies who deactivate collision avoidance systems
- Landing fees for non-based aircraft to recoup facility operation and maintenance expenses:
 - Implement technology solutions
- Implement rules, regulations, and leasing policies for tenant accountability
- Airport repurposing or alternative uses, or access restrictions:
 - Economic benefit and cost of having an airport versus other potential uses requires additional study, outside of the scope of this process.
- Reduce from two to one runways:
 - Only allow FAA compliant runways

Community Working Group (CWG)

After the initial interviews, the project team will convene a CWG which will consist of key stakeholders who will remain engaged throughout the project. The project team will use their input to create a series of three meetings, which will further refine stakeholder input, identify alternatives, and establish a setting for discourse between all impacted stakeholders. A key element of discussion will be education of all stakeholders as to what elements are allowed or precluded from implementing by the FAA and or the City of Boulder as the airport sponsor.

Members of the CWG are expected to include (but are not limited to):

1. Interview participants
2. Other key stakeholders to represent the broader community including residents geographically located near the airport
3. Aviation community members such as pilots and tenants
4. Underserved community members who may be directly impacted by the current operations and future alternatives and may include Community Connectors

The CWG will meet three times throughout the course of the project to collaborate with city to develop a range of alternatives for the future of the BDU. The first meeting will be a vision workshop in February 2023 where members will talk about the future of the airport, their role as a CWG and determine what a successful project will look like. In April 2023, the CWG will meet to establish community priorities and

begin to outline a range of alternatives for consideration. The third and final CWG meeting will establish the preferred alternative to be shared with the project team.

Public Open House Meetings

One-on-one interviews and establishing the CWG will help identify a range of alternatives and define the Preferred Alternative. In order to allow the wider community to participate in the process, the project team will plan and execute two public open house meetings.

Immediately following the first CWG meeting, the project team will host the first public open house meeting to inform the community about the history of the airport and provide a snapshot about what the city has heard from the interviews and CWG group so far. A community survey will coincide with this meeting to solicit initial feedback from the community to aid in the development of the range of alternatives.

The second public open house meeting will coincide with the second CWG. This will allow the public to learn about the alternatives identified for evaluation, solicit initial feedback on the alternatives and encourage continued engagement throughout the project and beyond.

The consultant will prepare informational content for the city to execute. These materials will include: one community survey to gather initial community feedback, one community survey to gather community feedback on the range of alternatives, two informational fliers (English and Spanish) and a digital resource package (website text, images and social media graphics with supporting text).

Alternatives Analysis

Using the information gathered through this process the project team will develop up to four alternatives. The analysis of these alternatives will include goals, objectives, evaluation criteria and estimated cost of implementation. From these four alternatives, the team will identify a single preferred alternative.

The evaluation criteria developed to assess alternatives will be based on applicable city and project requirements; State, Division of Aeronautics, and FAA considerations; and community and stakeholder perspectives garnered through the robust outreach previously described. The evaluation criteria are a lens to consider the alternatives for BDU.

Tasks and Schedule

Engagement/Outreach	
Develop Engagement Plan	Within two weeks of notice to proceed (NTP)
Develop Stakeholder List to be used for interviews and Community Working Group (CWG)	Within two weeks of NTP
Conduct a Situation Analysis/Community Conversations	NTP through February 2023
Conduct up to 10 total meetings with airport stakeholders and community at-large to develop goals, objectives, evaluation criteria, and resulting alternatives	Ongoing throughout project
Prepare for and present an initial report to the City Council	NTP through January 12, 2023
Prepare for and conduct CWG #1 to discuss the community vision for BDU.	January/February 2023

Prepare for and conduct a Public Open House #2	Immediately following CWG #1
Prepare for and conduct CWG #2 to develop community priorities and present the range of alternatives	April 2023
Prepare for and conduct a Public Open House #2	Immediately following CWG #2
Prepare for and conduct CWG #3 to develop the community recommendations	May 2023
Prepare for and present range of alternatives considered, evaluation criteria and the preferred alternative to the City Council	June 2023
Develop communication materials for City to execute	Ongoing throughout the project
Develop the Range of Alternatives	NTP –through April 2023
Develop goals, objectives, evaluation criteria, and a range of alternatives (up to four), recommendations going forward and estimated cost of implementation	
Identify a Preferred Alternative	
Determine and prepare presentation of the Preferred Alternative integrating CWG, broader community, city and project team recommendations	May 2023
Prepare for and present range of alternatives and preferred alternative to the City Council	June 2023
Report Preparation	Ongoing throughout project – completed June 30, 2023
Prepare Draft Report and Executive Summary	
Prepare Final Report and Executive Summary	

NEXT STEPS

- Continue stakeholder interviews and refine CWG member list – January 2023
- Conduct CGW meetings
 - Vision workshop – February 2023
 - Community priorities and range of alternatives – April 2023
 - Community recommendations – May 2023
- Hold Public Open House #1 – February 2023
- Hold Public Open House #2 – April 2023
- Develop range of alternatives and optimally identify a preferred alternative – ongoing – May 2023
- City Council presentation – June 2023
- Final report – June 2023

Optimally, a preferred alternative will be presented at the conclusion of this study for the City Council's review, consideration, and potential budgetary impacts.