



**CITY OF BOULDER
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: May 22, 2025

AGENDA TITLE

Special Meeting: Joint Planning Board and City Council Meeting
Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP)

PRESENTERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this special meeting is to confirm the proposed vision, values, and focus areas identified through community engagement. This is a working session for City Council and Planning Board to provide guidance on recommended policy and land use concepts to explore as part of the major update to the [Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan](#). Input received during the meeting will guide staff research, analysis, and community engagement over the summer. Planning Board and City Council will receive the next update on the project process in late August 2025.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. Do Planning Board and City Council support the proposed vision and values?
2. Do Planning Board and City Council support the recommended focus areas for community conversations?
3. Do Planning Board and City Council support the recommended concepts to explore?
4. Do Planning Board and City Council have additional concepts to explore?

BACKGROUND

The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan

[The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan \(“Plan”\)](#) is a document that identifies the Boulder Valley’s long-term vision and sets policy intended to move the community toward that vision. The Plan also guides land management and community change within the Boulder Valley by setting expectations through policies and the [Future Land Use Map](#).

The city and county are currently engaged in a major update to the Plan. This is the eighth major update of the Plan since it was adopted around 50 years ago. Major updates provide the community with an opportunity to adjust the Plan to reflect changing community values and needs, address current challenges and proactively plan for the future.

Other Ongoing Projects Informing the Comprehensive Plan Major Update

During this major update process, the city and county project team is collaborating with other ongoing projects:

Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative Innovation Track

The Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative Innovation Track is a year-long intensive leadership and management program hosted by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Harvard University, Center for Public Impact, and the Bloomberg Center for Public

Innovations. Mayors are invited to apply to the program and then choose a key priority for their city to tackle. The goal of this program is twofold. First and foremost, to design and prototype innovative solutions for a key city priority identified by city leadership. Second, city staff will learn a human-centered innovation methodology called the *Path to Public Innovation* to design solutions for other core community problems.

The first phase of this program was to create an “Ambitious Impactful Mission” or AIM statement. In October 2024, city staff and leadership identified the following AIM statement for this Innovation Track: *By 2035, we will expand and sustain innovative, attainable housing options so that Boulder becomes a more vibrant and inclusive community reflecting people from all backgrounds.*

Since January, a cross departmental team of city staff has been led through an intentional and thorough research process that involved developing key research questions, conducting interviews with a broad cross section of community members, condensing research findings into key themes and insights, and conducting several ideation sessions to generate hundreds of innovative ideas. The city team is now entering the “Activate” phase of the Path to Public Innovation which will involve developing a portfolio of ideas to gather additional feedback from residents and affected parties.

The final portfolio of ideas and implementation plan will be completed by the end of summer. Members of this Innovation Team are already closely connected with the Comprehensive Plan update and will continue to help shape policies in the Plan to align with outcomes and lessons learned from this *Path to Public Innovation*.

Arts Blueprint

Informed by extensive research, community voices, stakeholder input, and expert insights in creative sector development, the Arts Blueprint will outline goals, strategies, and funding priorities to guide the Office of Arts and Culture’s work starting in 2026. The Arts Blueprint will also provide a citywide vision for supporting arts and culture, helping inform and shape policies and priorities in the Comprehensive Plan to advance the community’s cultural goals.

Economic Vitality Strategy

An updated Economic Vitality Strategy (EVS), presented to city council at their April 24 meeting, seeks to address commercial vacancies, promote innovation, advance workforce development, encourage sustainable growth, and broaden support for small businesses, including microbusinesses and historically excluded businesses. The strategy is designed to align with the Plan and will be used to help inform the update while guiding economic vitality-related work plan items in the shorter term. The EVS has been informed by economic and market data, business surveys and input from community members and other stakeholders. The EVS is expected to be finalized in June 2025 and will outline goals, strategies, and programming to support a healthy, accessible, resilient and sustainable economy that can be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

Improvement Districts Analysis and Commercial Areas Blueprint

Building off council's priority of "Commercial Area Connections and Quality of Life Improvements", the Improvement Districts Analysis offers strategic insights into how financial and governance tools can address current emerging challenges within Boulder General Improvement Districts (GIDs) and other areas that could benefit from district management tools. Conducted by Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA), the analysis provides a set of actionable recommendations for improving the financial and governance structures of Boulder's GIDs. Following support from council during the April 24th Study Session, staff will be exploring key recommendations that emerged from the analysis, including the exploration of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

The Commercial Areas Blueprint builds on the Improvement District Analysis, providing a strategic visioning document for all commercial areas across the city, including our existing GIDs, for the next 10 to 20 years. The Commercial Areas Blueprint will be closely connected with the Comprehensive Plan update, both informing new or modified policies and then translating the Plan into tactics and work plans to address our commercial centers.

Comprehensive Planning Process Completed to Date

The update process has been divided into four phases of work:

- **A Boulder** Today – Phase 1: Existing Conditions Analysis
- **A Boulder** Tomorrow – Phase 2: Vision & Focus Areas
- **A Boulder** Direction – Phase 3: Policy & Land Use Analysis
- **A Boulder** Future – Phase 4: Documentation & Adoption

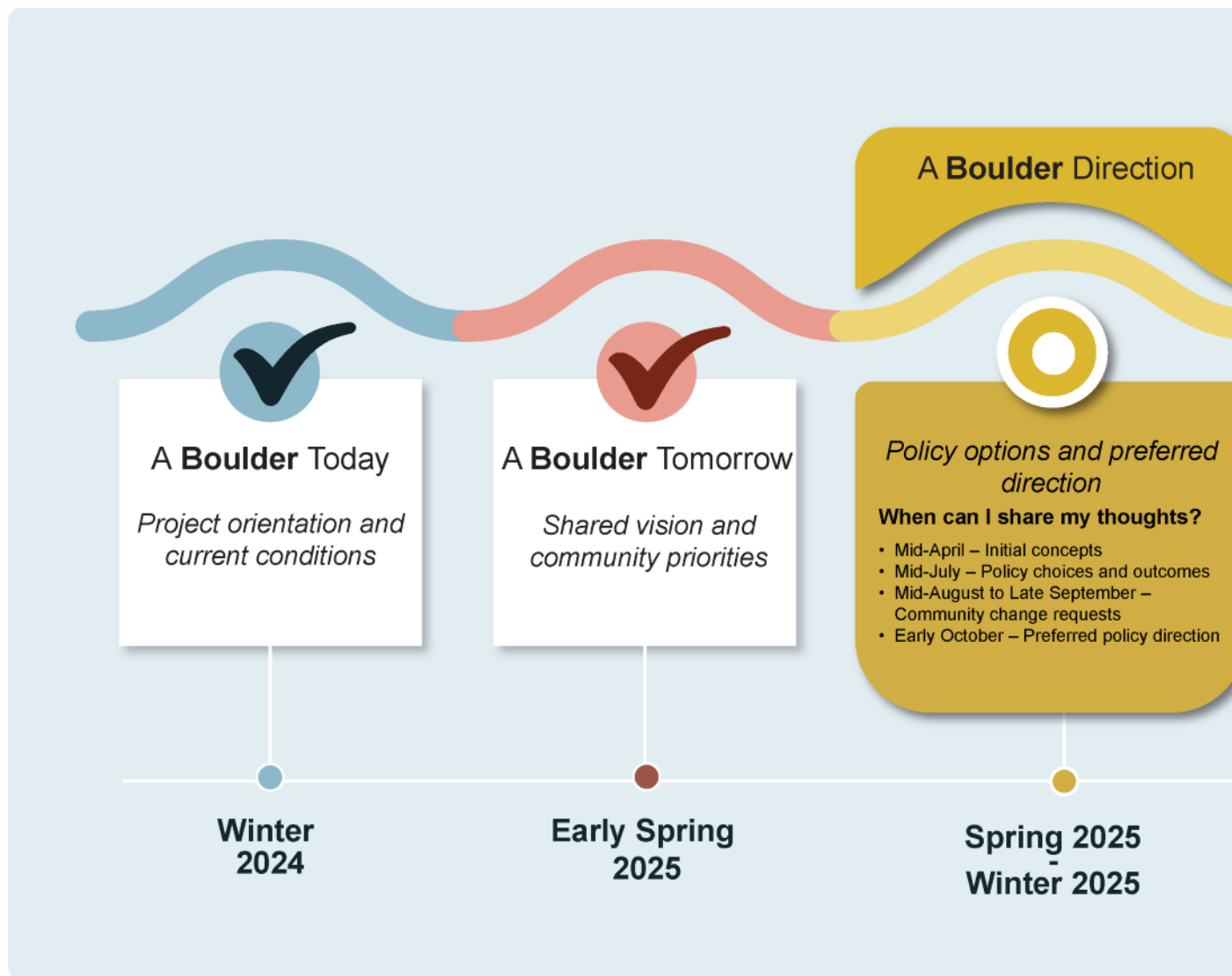


Figure 1. Comprehensive Plan Update Project Schedule

The project team completed Phase 1: Existing Conditions in January 2025. The purpose of the first phase of work was to build common understanding about the state of the Boulder Valley today. The project team built a picture of how well conditions in the Boulder Valley currently align with the goals identified in the SER Framework. This information has been compiled for the community at [A Boulder Today](#). This foundational information provides a common understanding of the community as it currently exists and was the launching point for the second phase of work.

The second phase of work is reaching completion. The purpose of this phase of work is to understand the community’s needs, create a shared vision for the future and identify the most pressing topics, or “Focus Areas,” that the community wants to address during this update to the plan. The vision and focus areas will guide community discussions in Phase

3, which includes analysis of existing policies, potential policy changes, and considers land use strategies to achieve the community vision.

Engagement Completed to Date

The project team has collected over 3,000 comments through a broad and inclusive range of engagement activities. Engagement for this project is designed to ensure diverse perspectives are reflected in the creation of all materials of the plan. Activities included a community launch event in October, multiple community-led conversations, eight pop-up appearances at local events, and five longer-term community feedback stations held at numerous public facilities throughout the valley. Engagement also included a University of Colorado (CU) student workshop, office hours for informal discussions with city and county planning staff, and several other in-person and online events such as Community Roundtable discussions in April. Additionally, there were online feedback opportunities, and multiple consultations with the city's Community Connectors-in-Residence and Growing Up Boulder. The project team continues to leverage youth input provided through the [Child Friendly Cities Initiative](#). Feedback collected through other ongoing projects, such as those described in the previous section are also informing the work.

The project team used a variety of communication and outreach methods to promote engagement activities, including city newsletters, a regular project newsletter, press releases, paid and regular social media, paid bi-lingual advertising with KGNU, a Spanish language KGNU show, Somos Boulder podcast, advertisements on the HOP bus, several paid advertisements, direct outreach to community partners, the networks of our city's outreach Community Connectors, county channels and more.

Highlighted Engagement Tactics

The following tactics for community engagement represent some of the new engagement methods the team has pursued to reach the goal of making this process the most inclusive Plan update to date.

Experiments in Public Art

This series engages local artists to involve the public in the planning process and creatively communicate progress and goals. As part of this initiative, MOTUS Theater hosted Playback Theater performances during the visioning phase, and illustrator Cal Bracken was commissioned to support accessible information sharing. A children's book was developed from his designs. Forthcoming, a local artist team is being commissioned to create an interactive, reflective artwork to engage the Community Assembly members and help interpret the process to the broader community.

Community Assembly

The planning process includes a Community Assembly as the most collaborative engagement tactic informing this plan update. A Community Assembly is a group of randomly selected participants who come together to examine a specific issue, reach consensus and develop recommendations for the government to consider and implement. The application process for the [Community Assembly](#) was launched on February 21 and closed on March 21. Ten thousand invitations were randomly mailed to Boulder Valley

community members with several spaces reserved for commuters. An online, informational webinar was held on February 24 to create greater awareness and understanding about the Community Assembly.

Our extensive outreach and promotion of the Community Assembly saw a return of over 230 applications and was successful in ensuring broad representation amongst the 48 members. The work of learning and deliberating about 15-minute neighborhoods kicked off May 3 and will continue for six more Saturdays in May, August, September and October. Assembly meetings are not open to the public or media to create a safe, comfortable environment where participants can engage in open and honest dialogue. Protecting participants' privacy and removing external pressures helps foster a safe space where everyone can speak freely, share their lived experiences and explore new ideas without fear of judgment or scrutiny. This design choice is key to making the assembly as inclusive and equitable as possible. Learning materials and summaries of Assembly activities can be accessed on the [project website](#).

Independent evaluation will be carried out by the Federation for Innovation in Democracy-North America with local partner Center for Education, Engagement and Evaluation at CU Boulder to evaluate the process design and measure changes in participants' attitudes about civic and political engagement. CU Boulder's Center for Communication and Democratic Engagement is co-facilitating the meetings and will undertake original research on inclusive engagement.

Engagement Outcomes

Since October, the project team has been gathering community input to make this the most inclusive update of the comprehensive plan so far. Between October and April, the city and county engaged with over 1,100 people in person or virtually, and 636 people provided input through the online portal. Although it has been difficult to collect optional demographic data at every event, the team is confident it has heard a wide range of perspectives, including from commuters and people living in the Boulder Valley, all of different ages, income levels, races, ethnicities, housing situations, sexual orientations, and abilities.

To help reach underrepresented groups and center equity, the project team organized ten (10) intentional events reaching at least 250 people, including by or with the support of these local organizations:

- Center for People with Disabilities,
- CU's Environmental Design Program,
- Growing Up Boulder,
- MOTUS Playback Theater (3 events) and
- Once & Future Green (2 events).

These tactics have been highly valuable to the process. This approach has enabled the project team to:

- listen to new voices, hopes and ideas;

- shape the draft vision statement and refine the Focus Areas; and
- identify key opportunities, barriers, and issues that generate the most interest and debate.

These findings will guide the next phase of engagement focusing on preferred concepts for an update to the Plan.

An ongoing challenge of all public engagement processes is bringing together people from different backgrounds to the same events to have collective conversations. Through the first phases of work, the project team has focused on bringing historically excluded communities to the conversation, creating brave spaces with our partners that have yielded impactful storytelling and futurist thinking. We have also hosted more traditional tabling, roundtable, open house, and office hours opportunities to engage the broader community and those who more traditionally participate in planning processes. Through the next phase of work, teams will focus on bringing a wide diversity of community members together to learn from one another's perspectives while grappling with prioritizing policy directions.

Feedback from Historically Excluded Community Members

The project team has intentionally engaged with historically excluded communities¹ including through a focus group with Spanish speakers and three consultations with Community Connectors-in-Residence in addition to the consultations listed above. The team has heard a desire for the Boulder Valley community to talk more openly and honestly about how its policy history has intentionally excluded lower income communities and communities of color.

There are several other recurring themes the project team has heard from historically excluded communities. These include:

- Cultural diversity is a community asset, and needs to be treated as such so it is retained, cultivated, celebrated and supported;
- Housing policy determines who gets to be part of our community's future;
- The need for more equitable economic and wealth building opportunities;
- The need for stronger infrastructure to support wellness and social connection for people of all ages;
- Rethinking our food system for socio-economic, health and resilience reasons
- A safe Boulder is one where everyone belongs and feels safe, valued and protected;
- Attention to expansion of the public transportation system; and
- More meaningful collaboration to co-develop solutions to our Valley's challenges.

Similar to themes we have heard from broader engagement, historically excluded communities also want to center environmental protection as we think about managing

change, but while centering climate justice approaches. The team also heard that the city and county need to work with the school district to better integrate antiracist teachings into the school system, or it will be difficult for people of all identities to truly belong and thrive in Boulder long-term. The project team will continue to assess policy options to understand who will benefit and who is burdened and in what ways.

For more detailed summaries of engagement events and activities, see [Attachment A](#). To read the report from community partner, Once and Future Green, please see [Attachment B](#). MOTUS Playback Theater event summary videos are available [here](#) and reports are available [here](#).

ANALYSIS

Vision, Values and Focus Areas

Community Vision Statement

The Plan includes a Vision Statement to express what the community aspires to be in the future. This one-sentence statement is intended to offer a common and consistent reference to manage change and make decisions in the future. Based on community feedback collected as part of the comprehensive planning process as well as other recent citywide planning efforts, the project team initially proposed the following statement for community review in April:

Our Boulder Valley community embraces vibrant and diverse neighborhoods balanced with thriving open space and rural lands, fosters equitable opportunities accessible to all, and strengthens connections that build resilience and wellbeing for generations to come.

During recent engagement, over 230 community participants provided feedback on the vision statement. Feedback ranges from supportive to highly critical. Many respondents value the intentions of the vision but believe it lacks specificity, omits essential topics, or feels out of touch with current conditions. Concerns reflect a deep attachment to Boulder's natural beauty, historical character, and quality of life, alongside fears of overdevelopment, unaffordability, and vague or buzzword-heavy language. Below is a sample of some representative comments from community members:

"the draft Vision statement is centered on human needs without recognizing the needs of the diverse ecosystems and flora and fauna of the Boulder Valley."

"The words vibrant and thriving are getting tired. Please replace with the word sustainable and biodiverse."

"How can we incorporate our climate goals into the statement? Alternatives to cars are super important for our future."

"I would like our vision to include "welcoming" and "walkable"."

"There needs to be a priority placed on Boulder's unique history, before we essentially build an unrecognizable city. PLEASE think about how history of place gives people a sense of belonging!!"

With consideration for the valuable feedback provided by community members, the team proposes the following updated version of the Vision Statement:

Our community is welcoming, diverse, and committed to the Boulder Valley. We balance economic and housing opportunities with respect for nature and open lands, serve as a model to others as we face a changing climate, and leverage our community assets and innovative spirit for the benefit of future generations.

Comprehensive Plan Values

The community's shared values help prioritize choices about the city's future. Decisions should be made that are in line with community values. In the Plan process, values will be used to evaluate policy choices. In alignment with the city's Sustainability Equity and Resilience Framework, the following represent the Comprehensive Plan Values:

Accessible and Connected – A safe, accessible and sustainable transportation system that connects people and destinations, along with providing community members open access to digital and in-person information to encourage social connection and community engagement.

Economically Vital – A healthy, resilient and sustainable economy based on innovation, diversity and collaboration that benefits all community members, businesses, and visitors.

Environmentally Sustainable – A sustainable and thriving community that uses clean energy, protects our natural resources and cares for ecosystems.

Healthy and Socially Thriving – A community where all members can meet their needs, thrive in physical and mental well-being and enjoy diverse opportunities for connection that value and respect human rights.

Responsibly Governed – A local government that delivers great service, manages assets responsibly, uses data-driven decisions and engages all community members, including historically excluded groups.

Livable – A place with safe, reliable, well-maintained and affordable buildings and infrastructure that support diverse community needs for working, learning, recreating and living.

Safe – A welcoming community that supports positive relationships, keeps community members safe during emergencies and in day-to-day life, and maintains reliable infrastructure to keep our air, water, and land clean.

Focus Areas

Focus Areas are topics that the community and local policymakers have identified as priorities for review with this Comprehensive Plan update that are then used to organize community conversations around these priorities. The project team will collaborate with the community to identify ways that the Plan update can impact these community areas of interest. The areas of focus for review are not intended to be all-inclusive. The Plan update will still be comprehensive and address other topics; however, particular attention will be given to these priorities during the update process.

As described in the [March 20 Information Item](#) to council, the community and policymakers identified the following six focus areas: Affordable Living; Safety & Wellness; Climate Action; Transportation & Mobility Options; Housing Diversity & Density; and Social Connection. As the process continued to collaborate with community members and identify key issues and concerns of the Boulder community, the team identified a need to shift some of the areas. Multiple engagement touchpoints, including the work of Once and Future Green, consultations with Community Connectors, as well as the in-person and online Roundtable events led to the following revised set of Focus Areas:

1. [Climate Action](#)
2. [Inclusive Local Economy \(New\)](#)
3. [Food Systems \(New\)](#)
4. [Housing Choice and Opportunity](#)
5. [Multicultural, Multigenerational Community \(New\)](#)
6. [Safety](#)
7. [Travel Options](#)

The project team recommends these seven Focus Areas guide community conversations in the next phase of engagement work. The following section provides additional context and preliminary analysis of these recommended focus areas. This analysis includes three sections:

1. [Community Feedback](#): a brief summary of community feedback
2. [Summary of Current Policy](#): description of how current policy in the Comprehensive Plan addresses the topic.
3. [Equity Scan](#): The City of Boulder developed an [Equity Index](#) in 2022 that ranks census block groups in the city by their populations' racial diversity and economic status. To detect possible relationships with other indicators of living conditions in Boulder, the equity scan compares this index to available spatial data. See [Attachment C](#) for more detail and findings related to this effort.

Climate Action

[Community Feedback](#): Throughout the process, community members have provided a great deal of feedback on the desire for the Comprehensive Plan to address our changing climate. It is consistently identified as a top priority in engagement work. Comments collected represent interests in climate change mitigation and adaptation, natural resource protection, and building resilience into many aspects of planning for the future. Some

considerations include the need to reduce fossil fuel dependence, improve water and natural resource management, and prepare for the effects of a changing climate, particularly increasing frequencies of wildfire. Many emphasize environmental justice as a critical lens for guiding all government efforts. They also call for cross-sector solutions spanning transportation, agriculture, energy, and urban development.

Summary of Current Policy: There is extensive support for advancing climate action in current policy. Of the Plan's 210 policies, 72 are relevant to climate action. Strong and direct policies are spread across Section 2: Built Environment, Section 3: Natural Environment, Section 4: Energy, Climate and Waste and Section 6: Transportation. These policies promote emissions reductions, climate resilience, compact development, sustainable transportation, ecosystem preservation, renewable energy and waste reduction. Some gaps or conflicts exist where other policies could limit opportunities for climate innovation. For example, land use and transportation approaches that preserve large areas of lower-density, auto-dependent development can inhibit shifts toward more compact, climate efficient urban forms.

Equity Scan: Spatial analysis related to climate conditions and neighborhoods that score high on the racial equity index considered two data sources: canopy coverage and prevalence of impervious surfaces. On average, residential parcels in the city have 35% tree canopy cover. Block groups of greater concern have disproportionately lower tree canopy cover overall. In the city's Public Tree Planting program, there are fewer requests for new street trees coming from lower income neighborhoods and areas with more rental properties, which tend to have less than average canopy. Implications of these findings are that residents in these areas may experience higher urban heat exposure, lower air quality, and fewer mental and physical health benefits associated with urban canopy coverage. Policy considerations may include prioritization of areas of greatest concern on the equity index and with the least canopy coverage for tree planting and other urban greening initiatives.

Related to impervious surfaces, the proportion of impervious surface coverage in residential parcels is disproportionately greater in block groups of highest concern. This signals that these areas could experience more stormwater runoff, localized flooding, and heat island effects.

Inclusive Local Economy

Community Feedback: Two major themes within this focus area have emerged in community feedback. The first is that many participants want to see more local and community-minded businesses integrated into Boulder's economic ecosystem. Second is a desire to improve community members' ability to build wealth and create opportunities for entrepreneurship. Community members recognize Boulder as an expensive place to be and want to find ways to build their own wealth to afford a quality life in the community. Additionally, there is some feedback indicating that though Boulder has world-class business and education networks, not everyone has been able to benefit from them. They called for more support to help all residents grow, innovate, and succeed in the community.

Summary of Current Policy: Key themes in current policy related to an inclusive economy include preserving and creating affordable commercial spaces (5.04, 5.06), encouraging mixed-use development to integrate business opportunities across neighborhoods (2.14, 2.16, 6.19) and supporting economic resilience through innovation, entrepreneurship and regional collaboration (5.07, 5.14, 5.18). Current policy also affirms a commitment to economic diversity, equity and inclusion in both employment and business ownership (5.05, 5.16, 5.19, 8.05, 10.02). While the policies are comprehensive, many are high-level and could be strengthened with more explicit strategies to reduce systemic barriers for BIPOC entrepreneurs, immigrants and other underrepresented groups. As aligned with the recently updated [Economic Vitality Strategy](#), there are opportunities to expand and bolster programs and policies that support culturally relevant business support, improve business mix and resilience, and support entrepreneurship and workforce opportunities that could help build a more inclusive local economy.

Equity Scan:

No spatial analysis was completed on this topic due to data and time limitations, however, there is some relevant local information to consider.

The quality and availability of data to better understand the racial and ethnic makeup and broader diversity of our business community is limited. This limits our ability to fully understand the scope of disparities and challenges related to programming, resources and engagement. However, through various engagements with community, small and micro-businesses, and economic vitality partners, barriers to a more inclusive economy were identified, including the overall cost of doing business in Boulder (e.g. rent levels, interest rates, wages, etc.), housing, transportation, and other living costs, and a lack of knowledge or availability of business resources. These barriers led to several recommendations within the draft Economic Vitality Strategy to develop and implement inclusive strategies to increase financial security, economic opportunity, and social mobility; improve the affordability and ease of doing business; and provide more options for meeting business and community needs.

In 2023-24, Boulder County and the City of Boulder completed a disparity study to identify whether there is a level playing field for small and diverse businesses in public contracts and in the local marketplace. This research examined participation of small, minority- and women-owned firms in county and city contracts. Interviews with business owners revealed recurring barriers to securing government contracts. To address these disparities, the study offers recommendations with the goal of increasing minority and woman-owned participation in purchasing. Work is underway to create an equitable purchasing policy, increase outreach, and set overall aspirational goals for utilization of minority and women-owned businesses in city purchasing.

Food Systems

Community Feedback: The concepts of local food systems, food access and agriculture have consistently been topics of community interest throughout the process of this project. Community members describe a need to strengthen local agriculture and support sustainable agriculture practices. There is interest in a connection between regenerative

farming and climate resilience. Community members describe challenges with growing food in the city and accessing nutritious food as well as culturally relevant foods. A range of strategies has been proposed by interested community members, including supporting smaller farms, expanding equitable access to farming opportunities, and enabling a food system where food production, storage and distribution is available and affordable. Noting connections to housing issues, the agricultural community also notes challenges with the availability and affordability of local housing for agricultural workforce.

Summary of Current Policy: Twenty-eight of the 210 Plan policies either directly or indirectly support food systems. Section 9: Agriculture & Food is dedicated to the topic with support for agriculture on public and private lands. Other key policy themes include preservation of agricultural lands (Policies 1.16, 2.04, 2.06, 2.07, 3.08, 9.01) and indirect support through promotion of mixed-use development and neighborhood centers that could support food retail (2.14–2.19, 2.34). Opportunities exist to explicitly connect mixed-use and 15-minute neighborhood planning to food systems, and enhancing policy language around food justice, distribution and culturally relevant foods.

Equity Scan: No spatial analysis was completed on this topic due to data and time limitations; however, there is some relevant local data to consider. The US Department of Agriculture describes food insecure households as those who *at times during the year, are uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food*. Food insecurity is related to multiple adverse health outcomes. Feeding America estimates that in 2022, 34,460 people in Boulder County experienced food insecurity, including one in ten children. Forty-two percent of the county’s food insecure population is above the eligibility threshold for access to major federal nutrition assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The 2024 “[Map the Meal Gap](#)” study, conducted by Feeding America, found that food insecurity among Black or Latino individuals is higher than white individuals in more than 9 out of 10 counties with comparable data.

Housing Choice & Opportunity

Community Feedback: A top area of interest, many community comments have identified local housing challenges as a priority to address in this major update. Concern for housing affordability is a driving force behind this Focus Area, with community members describing concern for lack of housing opportunities through an individual’s lifetime, including those who would like to remain in Boulder as they grow older. Many comments describe a need for a diverse and multi-faceted strategy to provide local housing. Community members proposed a range of strategies to address this focus area, including expanding the types of allowed residential uses throughout the city, increasing the amount of subsidized housing, and raising the city’s height limit. Many community members also voiced concerns about managing population growth, large residential buildings, change in quality of life, and change in established residential neighborhoods and rural areas.

Summary of Current Policy: The strongest support for housing choice and opportunity is concentrated in Section 7 of the Plan: Housing. This section includes comprehensive policies promoting affordability, diversity of housing types and equitable access for residents of all backgrounds. Additional supportive policies appear in Growth Management, Built Environment and Economy policy sections. These policies promote infill, redevelopment and regional cooperation.

There are policies in Built Environment and Growth Management that may limit options towards goals of greater housing opportunities by limiting land availability which requires new housing units to be derived primarily from redevelopment and infill efforts, reinforcing height or density constraints or preserving existing character in ways that can resist housing diversity. Exploring greater land use flexibility, thoughtfully planning infrastructure enhancements, and coordinating with regional partners are options to move towards the vision of accessible, varied housing opportunities.

Equity Scan: The city's Equity Index weighs the percentage of black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) population, median income, percentage living below the poverty line and percentage receiving financial assistance through the city's Housing and Human Services aid programs to produce an equity score for each census block group. The team evaluated the number and types of housing units in census blocks with more vulnerable populations (rating higher on the equity index) versus least vulnerable populations (rating low on the equity index) and the city overall. More vulnerable areas have overall fewer housing units than less vulnerable blocks. Those blocks that are least vulnerable are dominated by detached dwelling units, while successively more vulnerable block groups see increasing shares of multi-unit dwellings. This means that a similar number of people are living in more a more condensed number of units in our most vulnerable block groups. One hundred percent of manufactured housing is within the most vulnerable block groups.

Multicultural, Multigenerational Community

Community Feedback: Community members have described needs to support a more diverse community, including finding ways to foster belonging, support health and wellness, and strengthen social connections. Written and recorded feedback frequently touched on related themes, including the protection of diverse communities, the need for more gathering places other than work or home often referred to as "third spaces," family-friendly housing, and broader efforts to increase affordability. The focus area is supported by [The State of the Child Report](#), part of the UNICEF Child-Friendly Cities Initiative, which identified bullying and safety as priority topics for a youth action plan. Historically marginalized groups have voiced a strong need to be heard by the government, noting that past engagement efforts often ignored their perspectives. This feedback reinforced the importance of including this focus area, underscoring the need for a community where everyone feels welcome and supported.

Summary of Current Policy: There are 64 current policies that are supportive of a multicultural and multigenerational community through themes of social connection, inclusive public spaces and overall community wellbeing. Policies also directly support

cultural preservation and representation (1.06, 2.27, 8.22), intergenerational housing (2.11) and public infrastructure such as libraries and parks that serve diverse needs (8.15, 8.19). Most policies focus broadly on community wellness or inclusion and do not explicitly address multicultural or multigenerational goals. There is an opportunity to strengthen language around cultural representation, age inclusivity in public spaces and programs and the needs of youth, older adults and immigrant communities.

Equity Scan: The equity scan considered residential proximity to cultural assets and the relationship to the racial equity index. Distances to cultural assets tend to be shorter for residential addresses in more vulnerable block groups. These results likely emerge because housing density is higher, and more cultural assets tend to be located in more urban settings.

Safety

Community Feedback: Community members identified safety as a key focus area, sharing concerns about feeling unsafe in public spaces and worrying about natural disasters, especially wildfires. Many community members support more help for people who are unhoused, but also said the issue is complex and needs many different solutions. When talking about emergency management, participants focused on solutions for better wildfire planning, enforcement of regulations, and more education about what to do in emergencies. In addition to these safety concerns, many community members also express a need for more safety measures for pedestrians and bicyclists, overlapping with the Travel Options focus area.

Summary of Current Policy: There is existing policy support for advancing the topic of safety in Sections 3: Natural Environment, 6: Transportation and 8: Community Well-Being & Safety. These sections contain policies that directly address public safety through risk mitigation e.g., wildfire, flood, air and water quality, safer mobility networks for all users and neighborhood-level emergency response and design considerations. There is room to strengthen connections in areas such as food systems, civic spaces and governance to ensure comprehensive and equitable progress toward Boulder’s vision for a safe community.

Equity Scan: Related to safety and risks of natural disasters, the equity scan considered whether structures in more vulnerable block groups experienced a greater threat of flood and/or fire due to their location, than less vulnerable block groups or the city as a whole. There are proportionally more structures touching the 100-year floodplain in more vulnerable block groups. “Structure” in this instance does not mean “dwelling unit.” Within this analysis it is difficult to determine how many dwelling units are in the floodplain. In the context of wildfires, block groups with higher fire risk (located in areas where the city requires ignition resistant materials for new construction) are areas of lower concern on the Equity Index. This is likely because premium properties tend to be in less vulnerable block groups, which are in turn nearer to the Wildland Urban Interface where fire risk is heightened.

Also related to safety, the equity scan analyzed 911 calls for service per dwelling unit across census block groups. After removing outliers, findings indicate higher call rates per dwelling unit for areas of greater concern on the index. This analysis was done using all 911 calls for service; further investigation would be needed to determine if/how this data could be used to determine how safe different neighborhoods are in the city.

Travel Options

Community Feedback: Community members identified Travel Options as a key focus area, emphasizing the need for safe, accessible, and reliable ways to move around the city. Participants in the project consistently call for a more effective and trustworthy public transit system, along with expanded pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Many shared concerns about feeling unsafe while walking, biking, or using public transit. They also highlighted the environmental benefits of reducing car dependency. Through their feedback, community members clearly called for transportation solutions that promote safety, sustainability, and equitable access.

Summary of Current Policy: Current policy provides broad support for advancing travel options. There is a particularly strong alignment in Section 6: Transportation as well as Section 2: Built Environment. These areas contain policies that directly promote seamless, safe and sustainable car-free mobility through support for compact, mixed-use development, a multimodal transportation network and housing near transit. Existing policy overall forms a solid foundation and emphasizes cross-sector collaboration and inclusive access to mobility. Opportunities remain to further enhance connectivity across separated communities and increase flexibility in land use patterns to enable car-optional living citywide.

Equity Scan: The equity scan considered proximity to bus stops and B-Cycle stations as well as the presence of sidewalks in census block groups across the city. Findings indicate that distances to bus stops and B-Cycle stations tend to be shorter for residential addresses in more vulnerable block groups. These results emerge because housing density is higher in those more vulnerable block groups and these options for travel tend to be located in more developed areas.

The scan also compared the completeness of sidewalks in block groups and found that the proportions of missing sidewalk were highest in block groups with index scores of 1 and 5, though both categories were missing less than 20%. Further investigation is recommended to identify the impact of the missing sidewalk on residents by length missing and street type.

Concepts to Explore in the Comprehensive Plan Update

The Plan sets policies applicable citywide and to areas of unincorporated Boulder County, located within the Boulder Valley. These policies describe a course or principle of action and are intended to guide decision-making consistent with the vision and values of the Plan. Comprehensive Plan policies inform the citywide strategic plan, city department work plans, budgets, city and county capital improvement programs as well as development standards and zoning. These policies are also used to determine whether

proposals for land development meet the community's vision for their neighborhoods in the future.

The following represents an initial set of concepts for potential updates to current BVCP policy that warrant further investigation. This initial set of concepts are based on ideas suggested by community members, preliminary research and consultation with subject matter experts across city and county departments.

Pending City Council and Planning Board feedback, the project team will study these concepts in more detail during the next phase of work, including:

- Land use scenario modeling (where applicable)
- Data-based study of possible impacts
- Case study research
- Application of the racial equity instrument
- Community engagement

Recommended Concepts to Explore

1. Revisions to the BVCP Future Land Use Map and Land Use Map Designations

The project team recommends exploring if and how revisions to the [BVCP Future Land Use Map](#) and the associated Land Use Map Designations (Chapter 4 of [the Plan](#)) could support the Plan's Vision and Values. Additionally, revisions could include rethinking the current map's fine-grained approach to be more goal-oriented and flexible. The BVCP Future Land Use Map depicts a plan of the desired land use pattern in the Boulder Valley. Land Use Designations are meant to accompany and interpret the Map and can be used to guide future zoning decisions. This concept would influence the following Focus Areas most directly: Housing Choice & Opportunity, Inclusive Local Economy and Travel Options.

2. Reconsider Physical Composition

The project team recommends exploring if and how revisions to policies that define the physical limits of the city could support the Plan's Vision and Values. This concept could include:

- Revisions to Comprehensive Planning Areas I, II, III to test the potential of the Area III-Planning Reserve and understand potential changes for Area II, such as whether allowing ADUs in Area II might support regional housing goals;
- Potential revisions to the building height limit (either citywide or in specific locations).

This concept would influence the following Focus Areas most directly: Housing Choice & Opportunity, Inclusive Local Economy, Food Systems and Travel Options.

3. Consider a Targeted Universalism Approach to Comprehensive Plan Policies

“Targeted Universalism” is an approach to policy that moves all groups in a community towards a universal policy. The intention of this approach is to move policies from a one-size-fits-all formula to those that are more outcome-oriented. As the policies are implemented, data-based decision-making would support a targeted solution to achieve the universal outcome.

Here is a hypothetical example of how Targeted Universalism could apply to the Plan: The project team works with the community to identify a universal policy that *all community members in the Boulder Valley have access to shared mobility options*. In the Travel Options section above, the project team’s REI analysis identified that neighborhoods who rate lower on the city’s Equity Index have less access to B-Cycle stations. As that policy is implemented over time, a targeted universalism approach might suggest that the city and county consider installing new or additional B-Cycle stations in blocks with a lower rating on the equity index to deliver more equitable access to this resource and help achieve the universal goal that all community members have access to shared mobility options.

This approach would address policymaker feedback calling for policies that are action-oriented and offers a method to implement the purpose of the city’s [Sustainability, Equity and Resilience \(SER\) Framework](#), *creating a future with equitable access* and works towards *ensuring that the root causes of inequities are eliminated*. This exploration would influence all Focus Areas.

4. *Collaborate with regional partners to consider future community investment*

Over time, significant choices and investments made through regional collaboration have contributed to the health, wellness and safety experienced by Boulder community members today. This recommended concept would work with regional partners to identify a future project or multiple projects that could protect the health, wellness and safety of future generations who will face a climate different than that of the past. Examples of such projects, suggested by community members, include new regional transit options, new infrastructure projects to manage the spread of wildfire, collaborative water management approaches, or collaborative alternative energy systems. This concept would influence the following Focus Areas most directly: Climate Action and Safety.

5. *Consider Options for Enhancing Boulder’s ‘Night Economy’*

In the community’s post-pandemic era, the rhythm of daily life has shifted significantly as “work-from-home” and hybrid options for the valley’s workforce have changed who, what, where and when community members spend time in Boulder. Many cities around the world are reconsidering how public life during the evening and night-time hours could and should shift to support more and different activities, local spending, local tourism, local arts and culture and engagement of Boulder’s multigenerational population. Pursuit of this concept might influence Future Land Use Map revisions as well as multiple existing and potential new comprehensive plan policies. This concept would influence the following Focus Areas most directly: Inclusive Local Economy, Safety, Travel Options and Multigenerational Multicultural Community.

6. *Rethink Boulder Valley's Natural Infrastructure Systems*

The Boulder Valley's systems of landforms, soil, water, plants and wildlife work together to help manage water, deliver clean water and air, sustain lands that grow food, provide habitat and support community recreation. As the community looks to the future of the changing climate this update process offers the opportunity to rethink local policies that impact the health and longevity of these resources. Issues to be considered could include stormwater management, future of urban greenways, expectations for greenspace in redevelopment, balancing recreation and natural landscapes, and urban wildlife management among others. This concept would influence the following Focus Areas most directly: Climate Action, Safety, and Food Systems.

7. *Consider Options to Reawaken Boulder's Funkiness*

Boulder is a beautiful and unique community whose historic assets and local oddities make it memorable for community members and visitors. As the Valley has evolved as a place, multiple forces have shifted the outcomes of local aesthetics/architecture, commercial choices, social infrastructure and local institutions. Recognizing strength that comes from diversity, this concept will explore options to rediscover Boulder's "funkiness," and create more opportunities for innovation, creativity and ingenuity in local design. This concept would influence the following Focus Areas most directly: Housing Choice & Opportunity, Multicultural Multigenerational Community and Inclusive Local Economy.

These recommended concepts for exploration represent larger shifts in policy approaches and require more significant study and testing with community. There are many additional concepts for updates to Plan policies that have been suggested by community members, subject matter experts, policymakers and the project team. Planning Board and City Council will review recommended modifications to current policy at future sessions.

NEXT STEPS

Feedback from this meeting will inform which policy concepts the project team will research further and discuss with the community through the next phase of engagement over the summer of 2025. The team will share preliminary information from this analysis with community members in July and meet with policy makers in late August to gauge support for various options to be considered for the Comprehensive Plan update.

Upcoming summer milestones:

- Mid-June: Partner Agency Conversations – check-in with groups such as RTD, BVSD, CU, and other collaborators to understand future plans and share policy concepts
- Mid-July: Community Conversations – preliminary conversations related to various policy options, land use strategies and balancing needs
- Early August to late September: Community Change Request application window

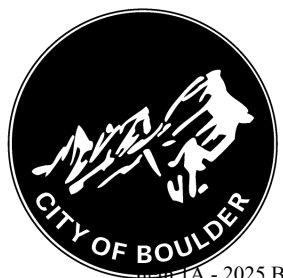
- Mid-August to early September: Statistically Valid Survey & online companion questions window
- Late August through September: Policy Maker Check-ins – overview of summer engagement, alternatives analysis, and direction to guide further study of preferred options
 - August 26: Planning Board Matters Item
 - August 28: City Council Study Session
 - September: Advisory Board Conversations

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Community Engagement Summary
- B. *Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley* (Once & Future Green engagement report)
- C. Preliminary Equity Analysis of existing conditions for the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan

Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Community Engagement Summary

Last Updated: May 2025



A BOULDER FUTURE

BOULDER VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Item 1A - 2025 BVCP Major Update Joint
Working Session With Planning Board

Page 22

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p. 4	Phase 3A Engagement Summary	<i>February – April 2025</i>
p. 20	Phase 2 Engagement Summary	<i>January – February 2025</i>
p. 31	Phase 1 Engagement Summary	<i>August – December 2024</i>



A BOULDER FUTURE

BOULDER VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Snapshot of all engagement opportunities

Oct. 2024-April 2025 (Phases 1 - 3A)

4300+
responses

31 engagement opportunities:

2 open houses

9 pop-ups

1 roundtable

3 online feedback forms

5 community led conversations

1 feedback station (5 locations)

3 consultations with Growing Up Boulder

7 small group consultations

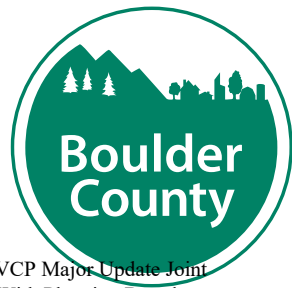
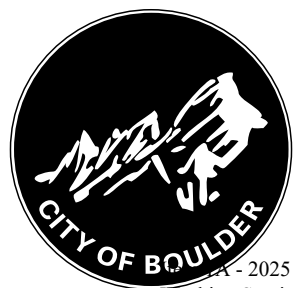


A BOULDER FUTURE

BOULDER VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Phase 3A Engagement Summary

February – April 2025



BOULDER FUTURE

BOULDER VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

How was Phase 3A feedback used?

Feedback received during Phase 3A was used to refine the vision and list of Focus Areas; better understand our community’s excitement and concerns about potential policy ideas; and identify equity considerations.

Purpose of Phase 3A

In Phase 3A, community members:

- Reviewed the vision
- Reviewed the Focus Areas
- Assessed different policy ideas
- Identified opportunities and barriers for each Focus Area.

Each phase is also an opportunity to bring new people into the process.

Communication & Engagement Tactics

Engagement tactics in Phase 3A emphasized the following:

- Collaboration with community partners to contact harder-to-reach populations
- Roundtable discussions on Focus Areas
- Focused consultations to narrow demographic gaps

Communication tactics used in Phase 3A included:

- Social media
- Newsletters
- Inside Boulder News
- Outreach through Community Connectors
- Outreach through county
- Press Release
- Bus ads
- Paid advertisements

What we collected in Phase 3A:

1750+ responses

12 engagement opportunities:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1 open house | 1 pop-up |
| 4 small group consultations | 1 roundtable |
| 2 community led conversations | 1 online feedback form |
| 2 consultations with Growing Up Boulder | |



The City and County are in the process of making all websites and applications more accessible. While much progress has been made, some features in this document may be inaccessible for certain people. If you would like assistance accessing this document, please contact the project email address: future@bouldercolorado.gov or call (303) 441-2424



Community Roundtable & Open House & Online Feedback Form



April 12 (in person)

East Boulder

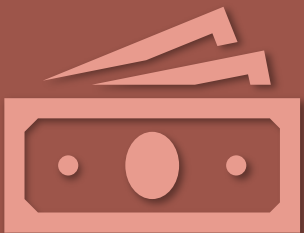


Community Center

~85 participants

April 11-23 (online)

232 respondents



Affordable Living – What we heard

Opportunities: Broad support for innovative housing, expanded local food systems and partnerships with non-profits and the private sector for service delivery, with a call to include healthcare and childcare in affordability efforts.

- **Housing ideas:** community land trusts, workforce housing, rent-to-own, limited-equity co-ops, tiny homes, protecting smaller, older homes from demolition, more city-led efforts and collaboration with CU
- **Food ideas:** emphasis on affordable, fresh and local through community gardens, food rescue and nutrition education;
- **Healthcare ideas:** pop-up clinics, mental health services
- **Childcare ideas:** essential for a livable city and increasingly scarce and expensive; need a community solution

Barriers: Limited city funding capacity; rising commercial lease costs; insufficient shelter capacity for our unhoused; gaps in early childcare services; healthcare is not provided by the city; declining state/federal funding; macroeconomic pressures; and a local culture that undervalues diversity

Divergent views: Community divided on if it's a realistic goal; and whether and how to sustainably fund ideas.

event summary

Each participant at the in-person event could choose three Focus Areas for roundtable discussions; and provide input on the remaining Focus Areas through activities in the Open House area or online.

The questions on the online form mirrored the activity at the in-person event on April 12.

This summary focuses on **Affordable Living**.

Equity considerations: The responses reveal a deep and widespread concern about the rising cost of living and growing economic inequality.

- Community members shared that less affordable living is linked to racial and economic inclusion and the ability to retain or attract a diverse population.
- Local economic interventions that prioritize inclusion and fair wages.





Community Roundtable & Open House & Online Feedback Form (Cont. 2/6)

Climate Action – What we heard

Opportunities:

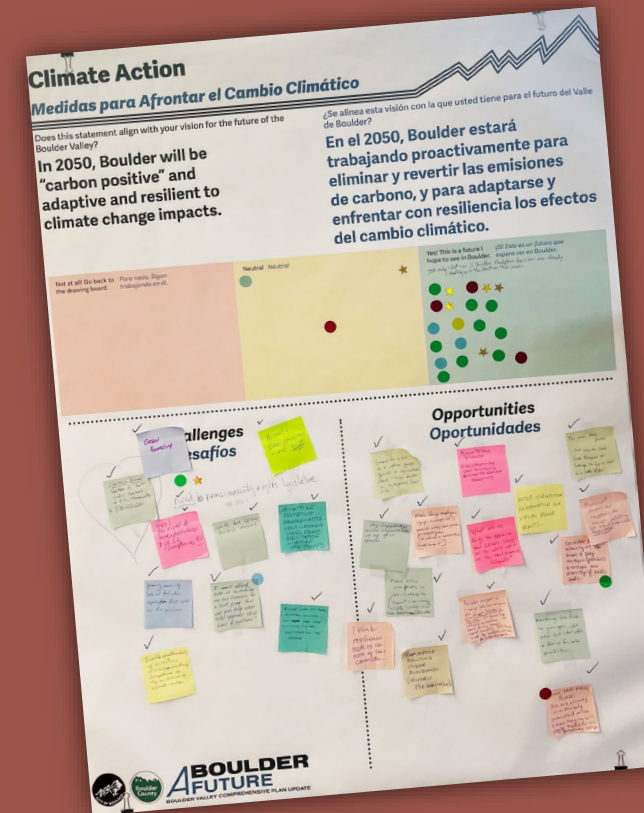
- Local control over and innovation in renewable energy
- Strengthening our wildfire and flood resilience
- Enhancing our local food system
- Building retrofits
- Better transit and integration with land use
- Biodiversity/species protection
- Preserving green space

Barriers:

- Growing population; high upfront cost of some solutions; cross-jurisdictional coordination

Main divergent view:

- Whether to strictly limit population growth or focus on more compact development for accelerated climate action



Example notes taken during discussions on April 12



A planner leading discussion on April 12

Equity considerations:

- Demand for greater involvement of vulnerable communities in climate action planning
- Focusing adaptation and support resources for our most vulnerable community members.
- Concerns about the affordability of 'green' solutions.



Community Roundtable & Open House & Online Feedback Form (Cont. 3/6)

Housing Choice & Opportunity – What we heard

Opportunities:

- Less restrictions on “missing middle” housing types
- Preserve smaller, older houses
- Community land trusts
- Workforce housing
- Adaptive reuse
- Vacancy taxes
- Strategic transit-oriented growth
- Partnership with CU



Barriers: Cost of land; weak transit system

Divergent views on:

- How to define ‘affordable’
- How much and where to grow
- Height increases
- Using some open space for housing
- Whether a more compact urban form is a sustainable development approach for boulder



Community members discussing on April 12

Equity considerations:

- Housing is out of reach for middle-income families, young professionals, essential workers and older adults on fixed incomes.
- We need measures to stabilize and increase our demographic diversity.



Community Roundtable & Open House & Online Feedback Form (Cont. 4/6)

Safety – What we heard

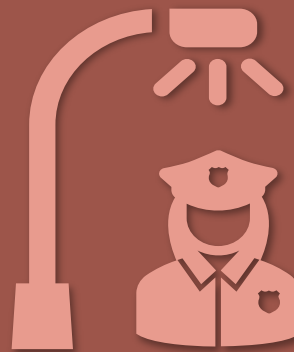
Opportunities:

- Expand The Vision To Include Psychosocial & Emotional Safety
- Better Lighting
- Safer Bike And Pedestrian Infrastructure, Especially Near Schools (& More Walkable Neighborhoods)
- Expanded Emergency Preparedness
- Neighborhood Level Resilience Hubs

Barriers: Increasing wildfire risk; large unhoused population in shared spaces; reckless drivers; lack of effective enforcement

Divergent views on:

- Strategies for the unhoused population
- Policing approaches
- How safety should be defined and measured



Community members wrote their ideas down during discussions on April 12

Equity considerations:

- Ensuring compassionate, non police approaches to support unhoused population
- Mental health support
- Child-friendly spaces



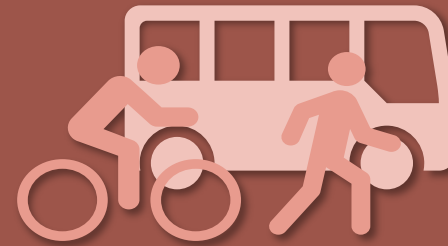


Community Roundtable & Open House & Online Feedback Form (Cont. 5/6)

Travel Options – What we heard

Opportunities:

- Improve regional connectivity
- Expand multimodal choices (bike, rail, bus), especially along existing corridors
- Small, frequent electric buses
- More EV charging stations
- Reduce car dependency for live, work, recreation
- Address accessibility for all



Barriers: Our low density impacts the viability of transit; car-free or car-light is unrealistic for many; dependence on regional institutions

Divergent views:

- Feasibility of a car-free lifestyle
- The future of parking
- Funding priorities



“Subject matter experts” from the City of Boulder and Boulder County helped lead some of the discussion tables to be available as an information resource for the topic at hand.

Equity considerations:

- Affordability
- Solutions must be inclusive of older adults, people with disabilities and workers who rely on vehicles.





Community Roundtable & Open House & Online Feedback Form (Cont. 6/6)



Wellness & Social Connection – What we heard

Opportunities:

- Create neighborhood gathering spaces and “third places” to encourage connection
- Offer activities and spaces that bring together people of all ages, cultures and incomes
- Expanding nature-based wellness efforts focused on health, food access, open space, and social resilience
- Make it easier to walk about bike instead of using car
- Preserve beloved places like Iris Fields

Barriers:

- Technology and housing costs driving social isolation, especially among seniors, people with disabilities, youth, neurodiverse population
- Loss of gathering spaces
- Civic engagement is often inequitable – based on availability of time, transportation and cultural relevance



There was a table dedicated to Spanish-speakers to allow everyone to be able to engage in meaningful discussion in-person on April 12

Divergent views:

- On the city/county's role in delivering solutions vs. community-led solutions
- Mixed views on density's impact on wellness

Equity considerations:

- Low-income people often have the least time for wellness and civic engagement– how to ensure this group benefits from policies?





Focused Consultation: Spanish speakers



April 16

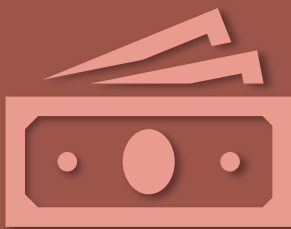


Virtual meeting
5 participants

On income & costs

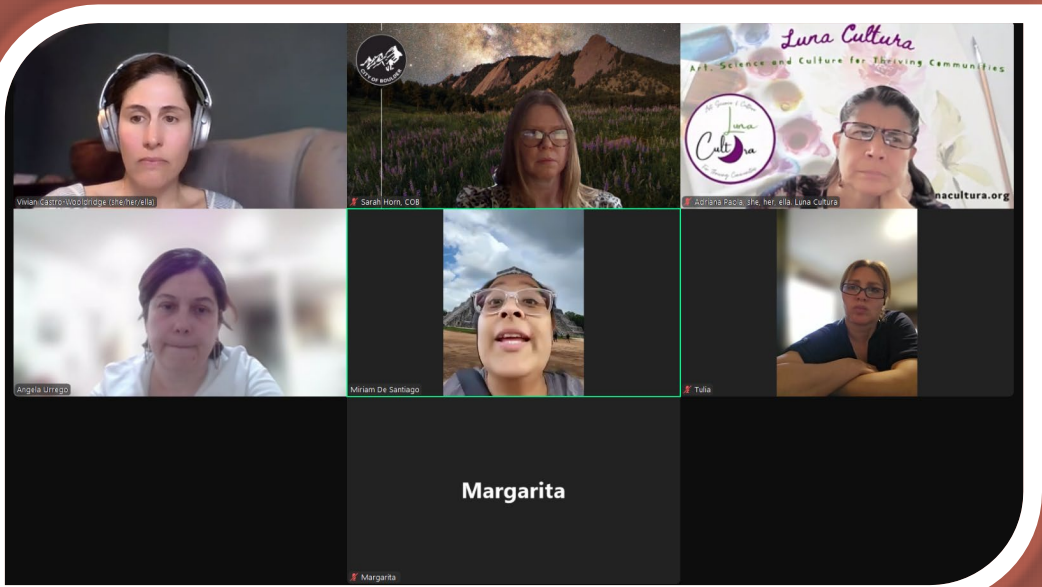
Participants highlighted that **the ECONOMY** should be added to the list of Focus Areas. Economic opportunities are central to the wellbeing of our historically excluded communities.

...and we cannot lose sight of affordability as a community – even if it’s challenging we must keep working together to ensure basic needs can be met and all people can thrive.



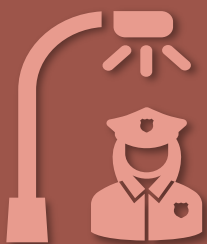
On climate

Participants highlighted that **climate impacts are felt disproportionately on the most vulnerable** – *what can we do to reduce harm?*



On safety

Safety is not only physical – it is also socio-psychological. We want everyone to feel safe and welcome in Boulder.



On wellness

Our dysfunctional healthcare system causes high levels of stress. While the city is not a healthcare provider – ***what can we do more of and better as preventive wellness measures*** to prevent illness?



event summary

Five community members participated in the online consultation in Spanish.

The activity and questions mirrored the in-person event on April 12.

Participants chose to discuss: Affordable Living, Climate Action, Housing Choice & Opportunity and Safety (4 out of the 6 Focus Areas).



Community Led Conversations Once & Future Green



Feb. 22 & March 8



Junkyard Social Club
85 participants

event summary

Once & Future Green designed two events to provide community members with inspiration and community-based learning before asking them to brainstorm in small groups.

85 frontline community members participated in total with interpretation into Spanish (and Nepali for one event).

88% of participants on March 8 self-reported never having participated in a government process previously.

*frontline communities suffer the most from intended and unintended impacts of government policy and have benefited the least.

Themes from both events:

Horizon: We should be planning much farther than 20 years into the future

Community: Cultural diversity is an asset – *how to ensure this is part of our fabric and supported?*

Economic: Poverty is a policy choice. Need more equitable economic opportunities for Frontline communities.

Housing & quality of life: Beyond *adequate, affordable or attainable* - instead aim for *thriving, wellness, spectacular, aligned with local ecosystem*

Community mindset: Embrace and systematically support communal vs. individualistic approaches

Engagement & collaboration: Trust in the community more for knowledge and to partner in developing solutions



An artist wrote down and illustrated prominent themes discussed on large posters during both sessions

Participants were encouraged to present what they discussed with everyone attending



event summary

Presentation topics:

1. Food as a utility
2. Biotecture
3. Inclusive economy
4. Inspired community planning: *Spectacular dreams and visioning*
5. Regenerative food systems; barriers for farmers of color

Community Led Conversations Once & Future Green (Cont. 2/3)

Barriers and opportunities we heard by topic:

- Affordability is important – BUT we need more **entrepreneurship** and **wealth building** to sustainably thrive in this high-cost environment.
 - preserving locally owned businesses through worker owned cooperative models
 - supporting local businesses by:
 - anchor institutions (city, CU, large companies etc.) proactively contracting with BIPOC-owned businesses for catering and more
- **Food systems are linked to** wellness, the local economy and climate resilience.
 - *ensuring greater equity in farming (e.g. land access)*
 - *creating holistic local food system infrastructure*
 - *promoting more regenerative ag practices*
 - *supporting incubators at farms*

“Boulder has long been a leader in sustainability and our food system should be no exception”



Pictured are attendees at the March 8 session.



Community Led Conversations Once & Future Green (Cont. 3/3)

“Education sets you free”

Barriers and opportunities we heard by topic:



- **Buildings that support life** – through site-specific natural principles like harvesting heat, energy, water, and providing shelter and food



- **Multicultural community** – a desire for a more inclusive, welcoming, socio-economically and racially diverse community



- **Youth voice** – education as a major theme
 - *Provide spaces to learn about local government, music, food, identity and culture, leadership skills*

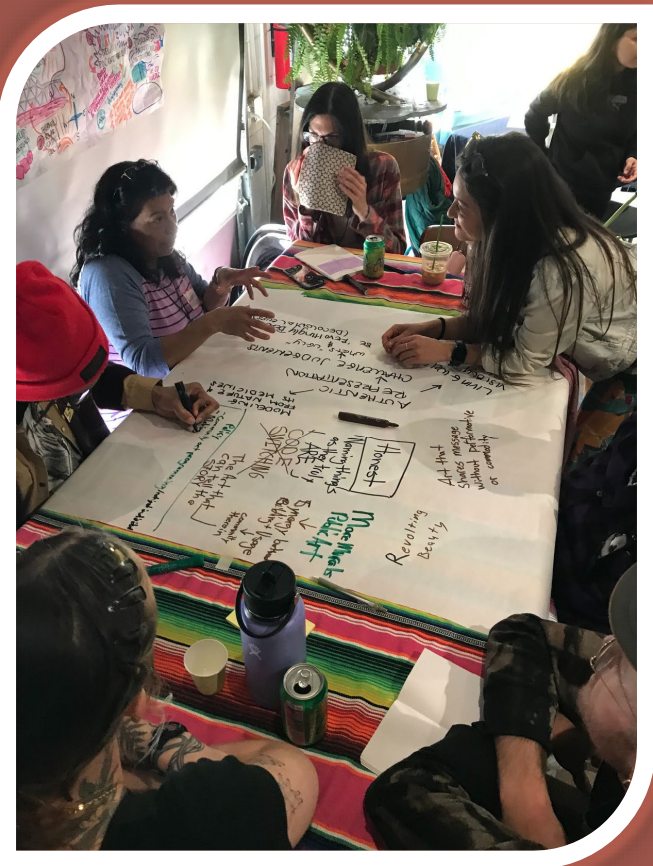


- **Public transportation system improvements**

“Public transportation is painfully inefficient and takes up all our time”



Presenters attended who discussed some of the discussion themes with the entire group before the small group discussions



“frustration about the lack of retention of people of color in the community, especially Black people”

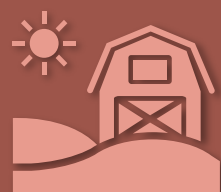
Participants had an opportunity to discuss a theme of their choice in small groups



Community Connectors-in-Residence consultation

Key takeaways:

- 1. **Yes...and. Support for the draft vision** statement and updated list of Focus Areas– but requesting that ensuing **policies be transformational and equitable - and not the status quo.**
- 2. **Our environment sustains us.** Always center the protection of our water, air and land.
- 3. **Belonging starts with antiracism socialization in schools.** Work with BVSD to better integrate impactful, antiracist teachings into the curriculum to shift the culture, which helps meet other goals—like helping people of color feel safe and even to succeed as local business owners.
- 4. **Need more holistic support for our youth.** Other forms of cooperation with BVSD are desired for youth well-being, such as for emotional regulation, taking care of our open space, job skills and more.
- 5. **More equitable access to farmlands.** More leasing opportunities for farmers from historically excluded communities.

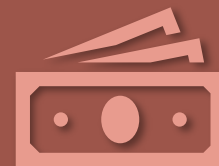


April 25



Hybrid – Penfield Tate Municipal Building/online

7 participants



event summary

Community Connectors-in-Residence (CC-in-R) advise project staff at key intervals. Staff share what they've heard from our community and ask for additional perspectives. Connectors also help staff identify barriers and opportunities to advance equity.

On April 25 staff consulted with CC-in-R on the draft vision and list of Focus Areas; and took a deeper dive on these newly introduced Focus Areas: Food Systems; Inclusive Local Economy; and Multicultural & Multigenerational Community.

6. **Still need more equitable engagement:** Smaller populations facing highest impacts should be centered in decision making.

7. **Scale up nature-based solutions for wildfire resilience:** Lean into solutions such as rain basins, tree tending and land restoration.



8. **We need an economy that works for all.** Desire for interventions that prioritize inclusion in the local economy and help lower income community members build financial savvy, wealth and economic resilience.





Consultation - Center for People with Disabilities



April 19



Office of Center for People with Disabilities

9 participants

event summary

The city has begun regularly meeting with the Center for People with Disabilities and its membership. The April 19 meeting focused on the comprehensive plan update.

Staff asked the nine participants with disabilities for input on the policy directions, barriers and opportunities of a few Focus Areas.



Affordable Living

Affordable housing is not affordable. Many leave Boulder to purchase basics because of high costs here. Participants expressed that in general *affordability* is an unrealistic goal.



Housing Choice & Opportunities

Living solo is difficult; strong demand for more options to live in community.

Strong demand for adoption of accessibility standards for housing.

Travel Options & 15-min Neighborhoods

“Quality of life would be greatly improved if I could meet most of my needs in a 6-8 block area” [due to logistical challenges people with disabilities face].

More mixed-use neighborhoods with less parking would help with safely accessing needs.

Participants called for transit to be fixed if we increase our population.



Wellness & Social Connection

Requests:

- more adult day programs for people with disabilities
- more cultural events designed for communities with specific needs
- for city/county staff to be better equipped to interact with people with disabilities.

Concerns about Sundance being an ableist event.





Growing Up Boulder – Consultation with 6th Graders



Feb. 11-12



Boulder Country Day



For Boulder’s future, participating youth were most passionate about:

Recreation & Active Space: all season access; nighttime lighting; age-specific playgrounds/activity areas

Mental Health & Wellness: Therapeutic gardens and sensory play areas; dedicated quiet spaces

Social Services: community gardens with shared produce; facilities for the unhoused; mental health & substance use support



Environmental Integration: Protecting wildlife habitats; natural landscaping; sustainable power

Community Gathering: More flexible and family-friendly gathering spaces; cafes for kids; arts and cultural spaces

Accessibility: Strong transportation links; pedestrian-friendly, universal access design



Attachment A - Community Engagement Summary

event summary

Growing Up Boulder met with 26 sixth graders at the Boulder Country Day school in Gunbarrel to talk about the comprehensive plan update. Students were asked to build and share their ideal Boulder community through *the City as Play* activity.

Growing Up Boulder is also collaborating with the project team to align the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (over 900 youth and 500 adults engaged) with the comprehensive plan.

The youth emphasized the need for **multi-functional spaces** that serve diverse community needs simultaneously.

All recommendations reflect an integrated approach **prioritizing both physical and mental well-being** while addressing crucial **social services and environmental sustainability**.



event summary**Pop-up -
One Book One Boulder**

April 24



Boulder Main Library

What do you want your policymakers to know?

"I want more transparency within the city and with community."

"Boulder is a haven"

"Free buses regularly"

"Placemaking at distributed neighborhood hubs"

"Build more low-income housing please!"

"It's not that there are less children – there are less children HERE"

"I used to live here but now I don't because it's too expensive"



The Boulder Library hosted a community event with author of See No Stranger, Valarie Kaur.

There were over 500 participants. The project team had a table to talk to attendees about the plan update, sign people up for our newsletters and gather input on two questions.

What questions should we be asking so that you feel heard in this process?

Where in Boulder do you feel safe and happy and like you belong?

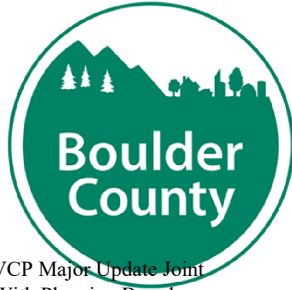
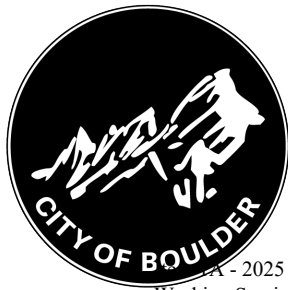
How can we include both renters and homeowners in plans for the future direction of Boulder?

What is the right balance between natural space and parking/living space?

What are the best ways to share information?

Phase 2 Engagement Summary

January – February 2025



How was Phase 1 feedback used?

Feedback received during Phase 1 identified topics that the community wants to discuss during this Comprehensive Plan update.

Purpose of Phase 2

Phase 2 engagement collected community feedback on a vision for Boulder's future and took a deeper dive into topics that the community wants the Plan to address.

Communication & Engagement Tactics

Engagement tactics in Phase 2 emphasized the following:

- Getting out into the community and meeting people where they are;
- Multiple smaller efforts, but in more locations;
- Working with community partners (including artists) to reach our historically excluded communities through culturally relatable and meaningful ways.

Communication tactics used in Phase 2 included:

- Social media
- Newsletters
- Inside Boulder News
- KGNU Radio – Pasa La Voz
- Outreach through Community Connectors
- Outreach through county
- Press Release

What we collected in Phase 2:

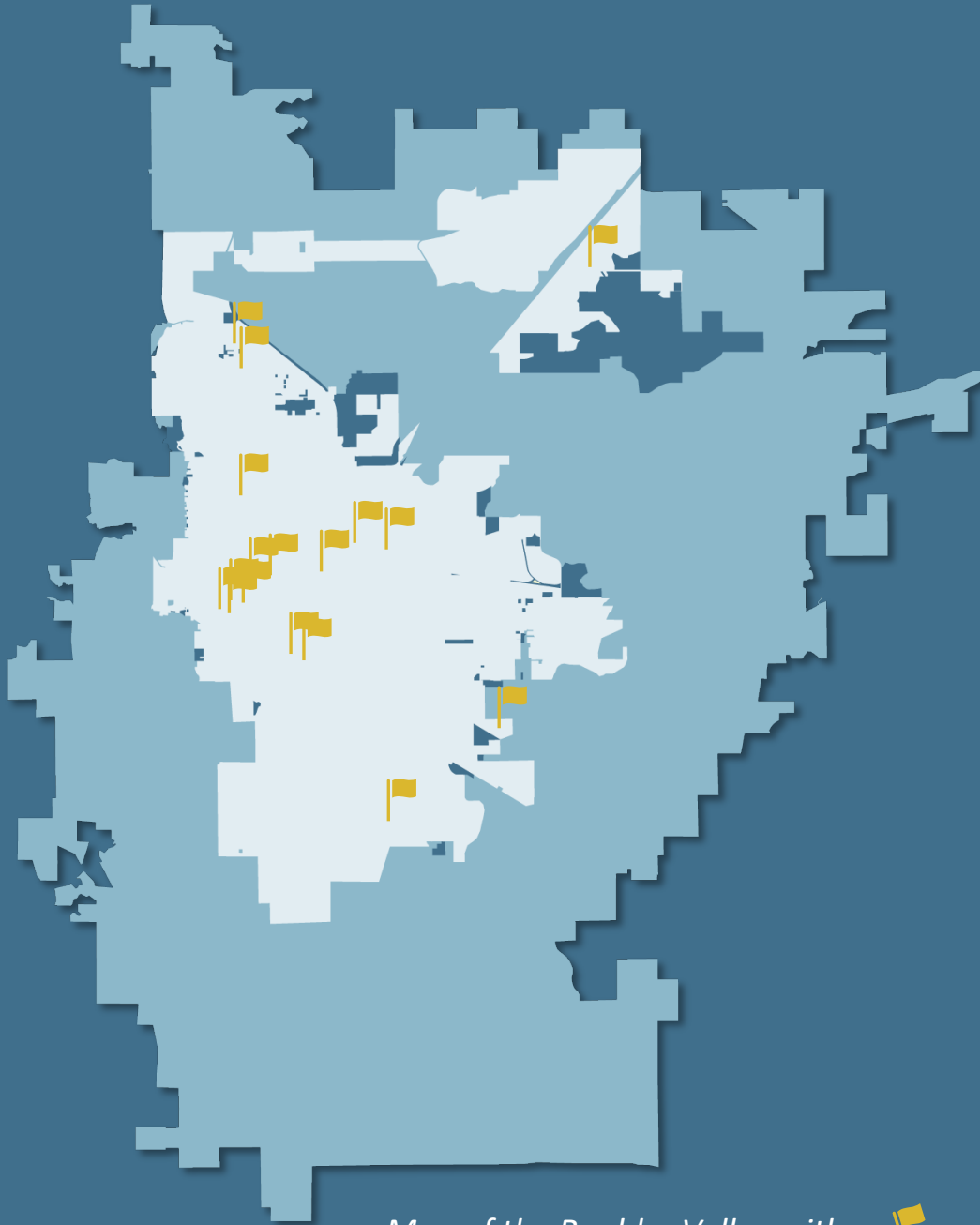
2,000+ responses

7 in-person pop-ups

6 standing pop-ups

1 online feedback form

3 community led conversations



Map of the Boulder Valley with Phase 2 engagement locations

How was Phase 2 feedback used?

The project team has updated the Community Vision Statement and identified a preliminary set of focus areas based on Phase 1 and 2 community feedback.

The City and County are in the process of making all websites and applications more accessible. While much progress has been made, some features in this document may be inaccessible for certain people. If you would like assistance accessing this document, please contact the project email address:

future@bouldercounty.gov or call (303) 441-4124



Community Pop-Ups (standing)



Jan. 24 to Feb. 14, 2025



Various locations

Several “pop- up” boards were left at strategic locations around the Boulder Valley to provide community members the opportunity to provide their feedback. When asked to consider what the Boulder Valley needs to focus on the most over the next 20 years, respondents emphasized the following topics:



Affordable Living



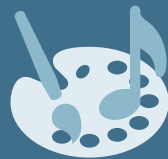
Climate Action



Pedestrian and
Bicycle Safety



Walkable 15-minute
Neighborhoods



Arts and Culture

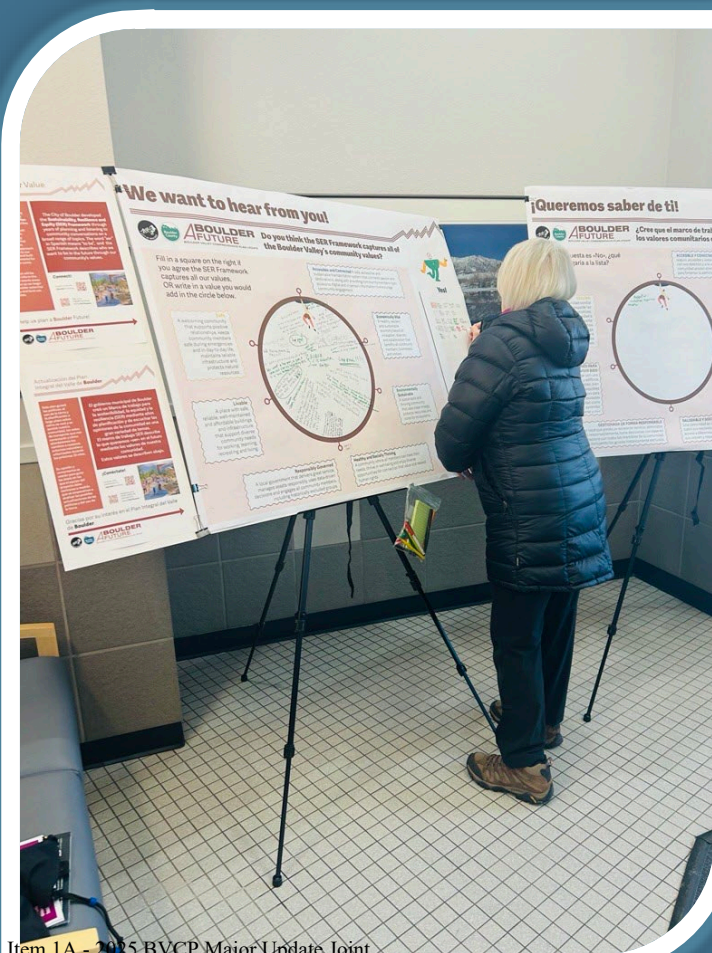


Crime and Public Safety

event summary

A series of pop-up boards were left for three weeks at the following locations:

- Age Well Center – West
- Boulder County Community Planning and Permitting
- East Boulder Community Center
- Main Library
- North Boulder Recreation Center
- South Boulder Recreation Center



A standing pop-up board at South Boulder Rec Center





Community Pop-Ups (events)



Jan. 24 to Feb. 14, 2025



Various locations

The project team also attended several community events to provide information about the process and gather feedback. At these events, the community indicated a preference to focus on the following topics:



Affordable Living



Climate Action



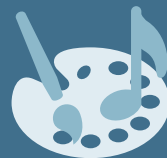
Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety



Walkable 15-minute Neighborhoods

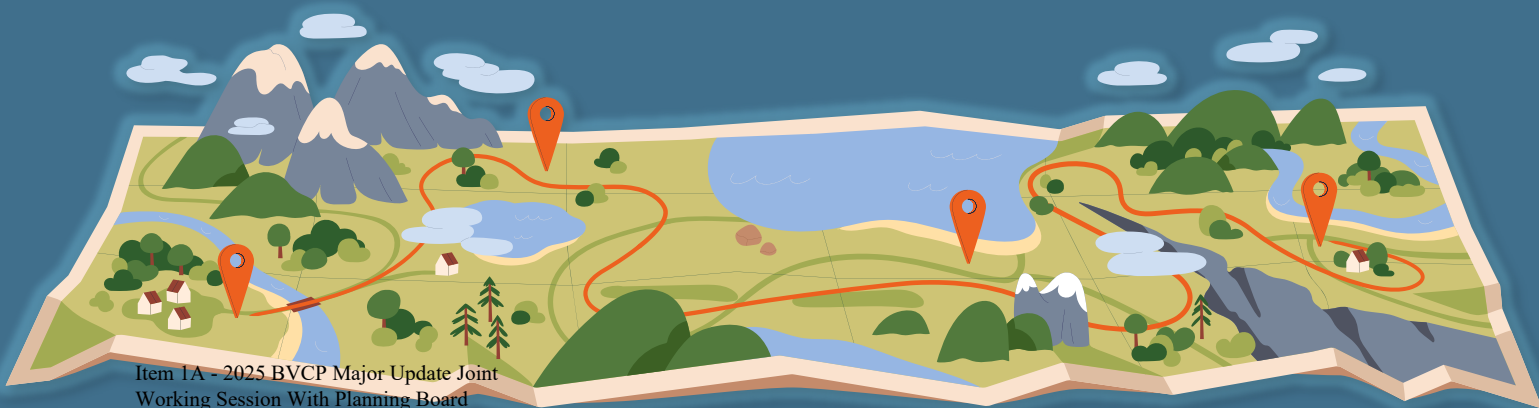


Housing Density & Diversity



Arts and Culture

Feedback received also points to a revised vision statement that reflects LOCAL COMMITMENT to CLIMATE ACTION, HEALTHY and ACTIVE LIFESTYLES, DIVERSITY of HOUSING CHOICES, a DIVERSE and ENGAGED COMMUNITY and CONVENIENT MOBILITY OPTIONS.



Item 1A - 2025 BVCP Major Update Joint Working Session With Planning Board

event summary

The project team attended several community led events during Phase 2 to solicit feedback.

They included:

- Age Well West
- Bike to Work Day (morning)
- Bike to Work Happy Hour
- CU Boulder - UMC
- E-Town Hall “Talk of the Town” Lecture Series
- Gunbarrel Ampersand Coffee Shop
- NoBo First Fridays



A pop-up event during Winter Bike to Work Day



Community Pop-Ups



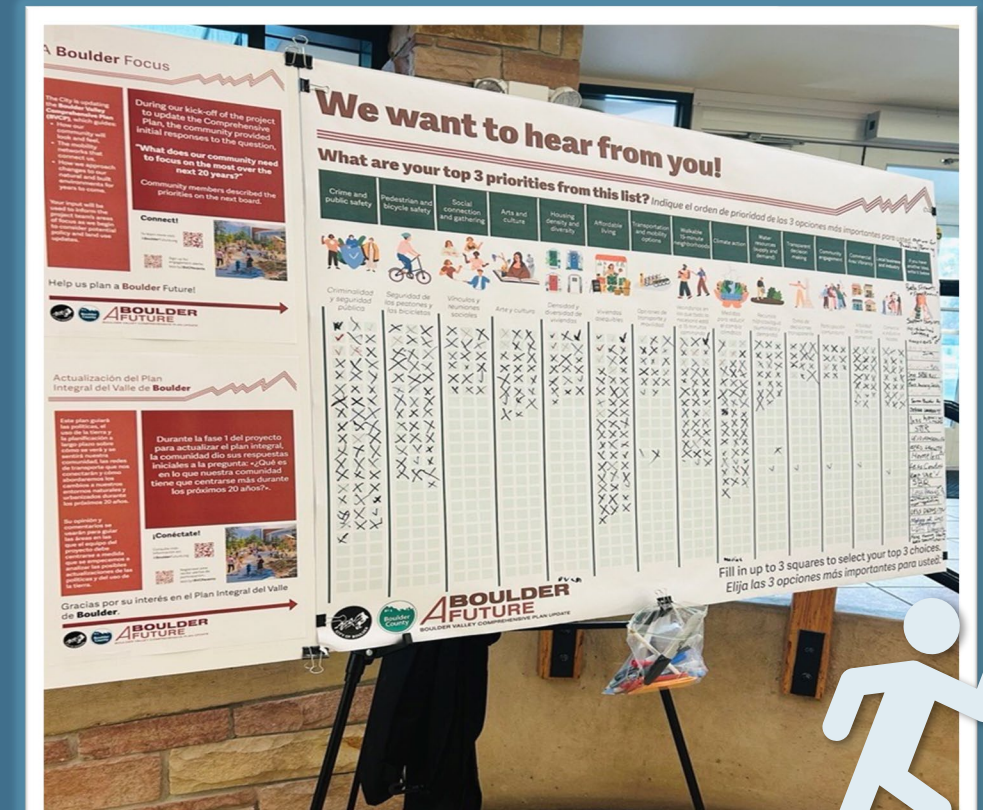
A tabling pop-up event at NoBo First Fridays art walk



Boards being filled out at a standing pop-up at the East Boulder Community Center



A pop-up event during Winter Bike to Work Day



Boards being filled out at the North Boulder Recreation Center



Online Feedback



Jan. 24 to Feb. 14, 2025



Project website

event summary

Community members could also provide their feedback online.

The online forum included the same questions that were shared on the pop-up boards.

156 responses

ONLINE RESPONDENTS indicated a preference to prioritize the following topics:



Affordable Living



Climate Action



Transportation & Mobility Options



Walkable 15-minute Neighborhoods



Crime and Public Safety



Water Resources

Feedback received online also points to a revised vision statement and is in alignment with feedback received in-person at various pop-ups and community led events. However, online responses indicate a higher preference for elements of ENVIRONMENTAL and AGRICULTURAL STEWARDSHIP to be included in the revised vision statement.

“Prioritize clean air, ecological diversity, and public transit”





Motus Theater Playback Series



Jan. 11 & 25, 2025

Feb. 8, 2025



Three locations

~250 participants

Community members expressed hope for meaningful change but also frustration with barriers to action. Priorities centered on AFFORDABLE LIVING, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, CULTURAL REPRESENTATION & PRESERVATION and urgent needs ranging from FOOD ACCESS to CHILDCARE and CLIMATE ACTION



“Aprecio los esfuerzos y recursos de la ciudad para la traducción y la interpretación.... ya no me siento invisible.”

“I appreciate the city's efforts and resources for translation and interpretation,,, I no longer feel invisible” – translated from Spanish

event summary

Motus Theater led three community conversations highlighting the voices of historically marginalized communities and other community members attending the events.

Participants shared personal reflections and visions, which were enacted live by professional actors using movement, music and spoken word.

It was an opportunity to hear each others' stories and have a community conversation about a 20-year vision and priorities for the plan update.



Working Session With Planning Board



Left: Motus performers during the first Motus playback event

Right: A community member participating in the first MOTUS playback event





Motus Theater Playback Series

continued

A community member participating in the final MOTUS Playback event



Some common themes that came out of these conversations included:

EQUITY & INCLUSION: Calls for systemic changes to address racial, economic and cultural disparities, emphasizing community-led decision-making and belonging.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Strong demand for policies that prevent displacement, support homeownership and foster long-term economic stability.



A community member participating in the final MOTUS Playback event

CLIMATE RESILIENCE: Concerns over climate change, with a focus on disaster preparedness, clean energy, and resource preservation.

CULTURAL & COMMUNITY ASSETS: Recognition of underutilized cultural diversity, ancestral knowledge and youth leadership in community building and policy-making.

"Boulder's success is interconnected with the thriving of other communities."

A community member participating in the final MOTUS Playback event

"[Our community should] emphasize ancestral knowledge, cultural diversity, and the creative arts to foster inclusivity and strengthen the community."





Community Connectors-in-Residence



Feb. 21, 2025



Virtual
6 participants

The group discussed issues of AFFORDABLE LIVING, missing SOCIAL CONNECTION, HOUSING & SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT and RACIAL EQUITY, emphasizing a focus on naming and dismantling systemic racism and promoting inclusivity.

Participants called for a shift towards more human centered SAFETY and WELLNESS, a more SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM and CONCRETE POLICY CHANGES that go beyond high-level visions. There was also a push for the city to coordinate more with the Boulder Valley School District, particularly on issues around systemic racism and teaching about race.

event summary

The project team met with Community Connectors-in-Residence to provide project updates, share what we have heard from the community so far, and to seek feedback on narrowing the list of potential focus areas.

Connectors shared important feedback related to the identities and communities they area part of.



“The greatest resource we have
is each other.”

“When we gather together, we
make richer communities,
right?! ”



University of Colorado Boulder – Program in Environmental Design



Feb. 12, 2025
CU- Boulder
~30 participants

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS who participated in the workshop would like the community to focus on the following topics:



Housing Density & Diversity



Climate Action



Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety



Walkable 15-minute Neighborhoods

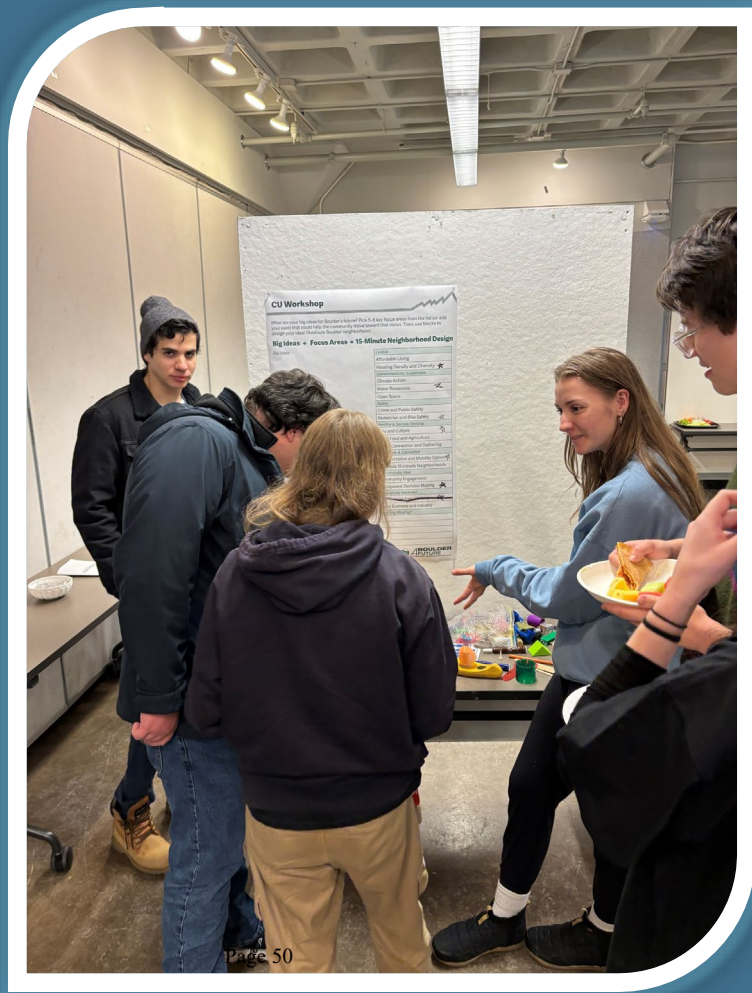


Transportation & Mobility Options



Local Food and Agriculture

“[Density is important]: student housing, multi-use buildings, commercial with local business”



event summary

The project team hosted a workshop with students at the CU – Boulder Program in Environmental Design to solicit their feedback on which topic areas they think we should focus on most as a community over the next 20 years.

“Sustainable materials and infrastructure [need to be used more often in the future]”

CU Students discussing during a workshop



University of Colorado Boulder – Program in Environmental Design *continued*

Some common themes that came out of these conversations included:



HOUSING & DENSITY: Students emphasized the need for diverse, affordable, and sustainable housing, including student housing, ADUs and missing middle housing.



MOBILITY & TRANSIT: Walkability, multi-modal mobility and improved public transit (trains, buses and transit-oriented development) were strong priorities.



SUSTAINABILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE: Suggestions included water management strategies, eco-friendly transit and energy-efficient building materials.



CU students used found objects to represent elements of a neighborhood



Item 1A - 2025 BVCP Major Update Joint Working Session With Planning Board



PUBLIC SPACE & THE ENVIRONMENT: Green spaces near housing, fire mitigation, open space access and climate-conscious urban planning (zero emissions, sustainable infrastructure) were commonly highlighted.

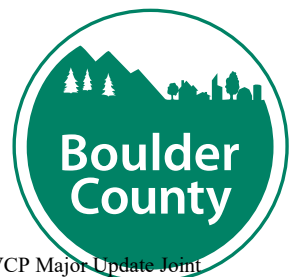


ECONOMIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY: Students valued lively commercial areas supporting small and large businesses, street life and spaces for community gathering, arts and entertainment.

CU students discussing in groups at a workshop

Phase 1 Engagement Summary

August – December 2024



BOULDER
FUTURE
BOULDER VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Phase 1 Purpose

The purpose of Phase 1 was to orient the community to the Comprehensive Plan update process, build excitement, communicate the importance of participating and set expectations for future engagement

Phase 1 was launched by sharing information about the process and asking questions about community priorities, social connection, big ideas, hopes and dreams for the Boulder Valley, and what our community wants to learn more about

Communication & Engagement Tactics

Two tactics were used during this phase, including:

- City-wide What’s Up Boulder open house
- Community Kickoff open house and feedback form

These events were communicated via:

- Social media
- Outreach through Community Connectors-in-Residence
- Newsletters
- Inside Boulder News
- Utility bill inserts
- Posters (at city rec centers and several trailheads throughout the Boulder Valley)
- Press release
- Media Kits

Who we heard from

550

People were engaged in-person and online



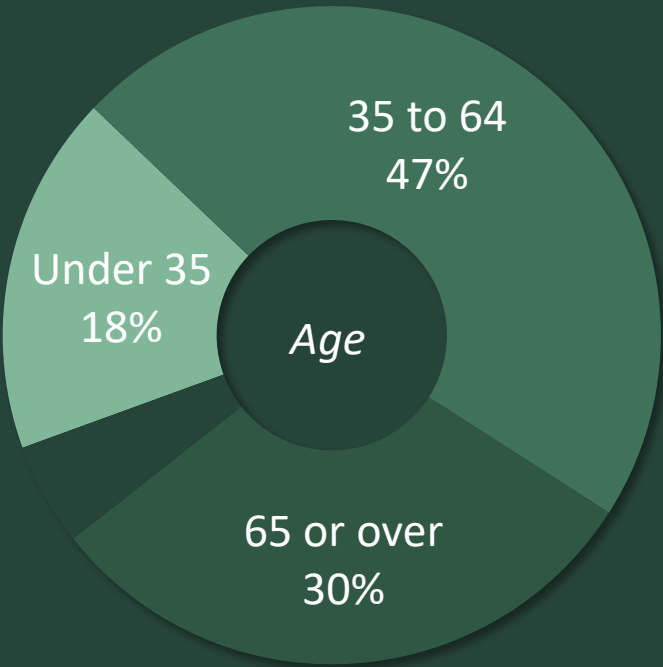
78%

Identified as White

5%

Identified as Hispanic or Latino

3% Identified as Asian
2% Identified as Two or more Races
1% Identified as Black or African American



How will this feedback be used?

Feedback received during Phase 1 helped identify what community members were interested in learning more about. The comments also provided early indicators to inform a revised community vision and set of focus areas for the Comprehensive Plan update

What about past recent engagement?

The project team is also considering feedback received during previous recent engagement efforts. These include several recent department plans, Community Connectors-in-Residence, the 2024 and 2025 Annual Budget, Lifelong Boulder and Growing Up Boulder’s efforts across many different youth led projects over the last 10 years, including its most recent effort around the Child Friendly City Initiative (CFCI)

The City and County are in the process of making all websites and applications more accessible. While much progress has been made, some features in this document may be inaccessible for certain people. If you would like assistance accessing this document, please contact the project email address:

future@boulder.colorado.gov or call (303) 441-4124



What's Up Boulder



Sept. 8, 2024



East Boulder
Community Center

~100 Participants

Attachment A - Community Engagement Summary

event summary

Community members described Boulder in three words - and learned about the BVCP and how to stay involved in the process

what we heard – 5 key takeaways

The most used words to describe Boulder Today were:

Community

Beauty

Fun

Accessible

Kind

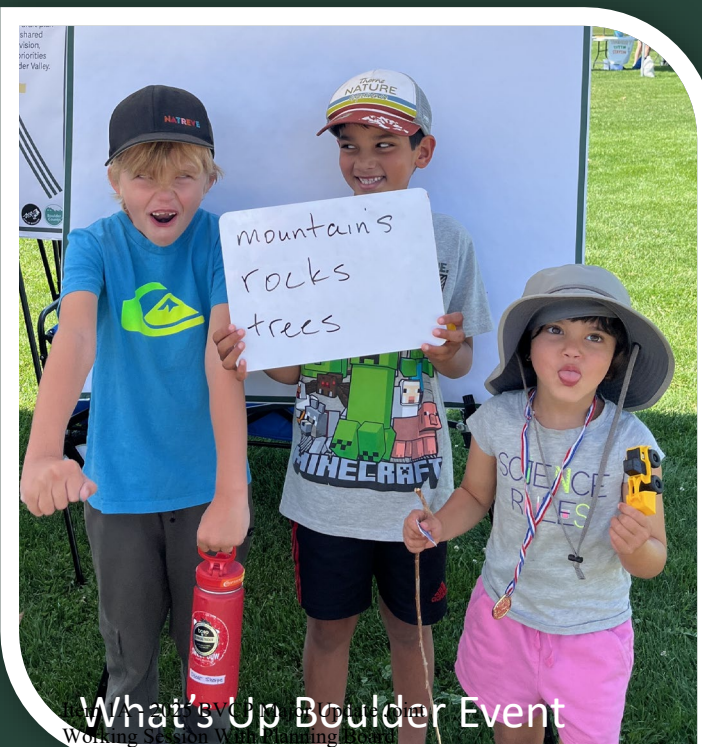
Nature

Exciting

Fitness

Safe

Energetic





Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Community Kick-Off & Online Feedback Form



October 19, 2024



Dairy Arts Center

~210 Attendees

248 online responses

what we heard – 5 key takeaways

1. Community members are prioritizing the advancement of Boulder's LIVABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY and SAFETY goals

Within these goal areas, community members feel the following topics need the most attention:

- Affordable living, including housing density and diversity
- Environmental sustainability, including climate action and water resources (supply and demand) planning
- Safety, including crime and public safety, and pedestrian and bicycle safety

event summary

The Community Kick-off Event was an open house for all community members. The event included a presentation of local demographic trends by the State Demographer and an interactive performance by Motus, a local theater group

Community members also had the opportunity to meet with project team members and provide feedback at seven stations, each focused on a different topic



Community Kickoff

Item 1A - 2025 BVCP Major Update Joint
Working Session With Planning Board



Community Kickoff

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Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Community Kick-Off & Online Questionnaire



Oct.19, 2024

Dairy Arts Center

Attachment A - Community Engagement Summary

event summary

The Community Kick-off Event was an open house for all community members. The event included a presentation of local demographic trends by the State Demographer and an interactive performance by MOTUS, a local theater group

Community members also had the opportunity to meet with project team members and provide feedback at seven stations, each focused on a different topic

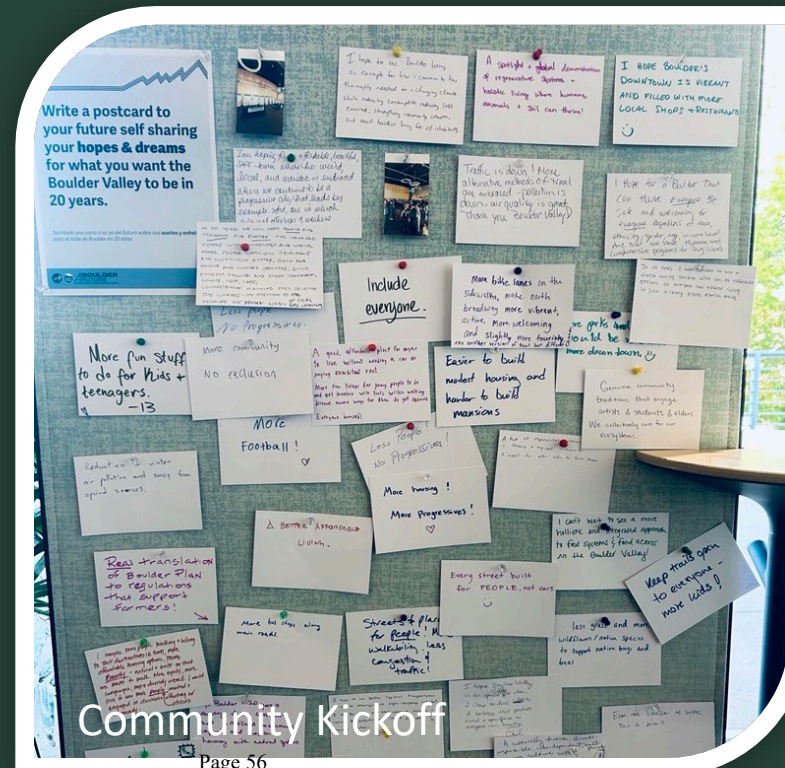
2. When envisioning the future of Boulder, community members have described a place that acts as a model for ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, and a DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE who have ACCESS TO HOMES, SERVICES and opportunities to make SOCIAL CONNECTION with others

The community wrote passionately about Boulder serving the greater nation (and world!) as a place that demonstrates adaptation to a changing climate and care for the natural world. Additionally, many described a future where they were part of a diverse community; could live affordably no matter their age, with access to quality homes, food and transportation; and have the opportunity make friendly connections with neighbors



Community Kickoff

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Working Session With Planning Board



Community Kickoff

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Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Community Kick-Off & Online Questionnaire

Oct. 19, 2024
Dairy Arts Center

what we heard – 5 key takeaways

3. When community members were asked to offer a “Big Idea” for Boulder’s future, participants dug in on some of Boulder’s greatest challenges – particularly AFFORDABLE HOUSING, DIVERSITY and INCLUSIVITY, COMMUNITY CONNECTION and CLIMATE CHANGE

Here are a few interesting ideas from community members:



Community Kickoff

“Add an “information environment” element to the BVCP alongside built and natural environments. Emphasize importance of technology for emergency management and comms. Open data for transparency.”

“Work with older adults who would like to work. Small single senior housing.”

“Connect CU, the Hill and Downtown by moving Broadway underground and creating a walkable and bikeable space on the surface.”

“Programs to help young single mothers navigate and exit poverty. I would love to help in creating this effort to create a community where we pair mentors with families in need.”



Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Community Kick-Off & Online Questionnaire

Oct. 19, 2024
Dairy Arts Center

what we heard – 5 key takeaways

- 4. Community open spaces and trails remain highly valued assets as community space

When asked about ‘finding community’ within Boulder, community members indicated that OPEN SPACE and TRAILS were the top location to connect with others. Other important places for experiencing connection include FOOD & DRINK establishments, PARKS and HEALTH and FITNESS CENTERS

- 5. Many community members would like to understand more about Boulder’s potential for growth

When community members were asked “What else would you like to know about Boulder Today?” many of the responses described interest in understanding if and how the Boulder Valley could and/ or should grow in the future. Community members want a greater understanding of the capacity of infrastructure to support growing populations and how change in policy surrounding growth could impact the community and its valued quality of life





Community Connectors-in-Residence (CC-in-R)



Dec. 6, 2024



Virtual meeting

5 Participants

what we heard – 5 key takeaways

CC-in-R shared great ideas for promoting engagement opportunities – e.g. through BVSD communication channels, Clinica Family Health and more

CC-in-R suggested that the BVCP team collect data from our local organizations serving under resourced communities for a more complete picture of our community today

CC-in-R expressed a desire to have ongoing, in-depth consultations throughout the process with the BVCP team

event summary

BVCP team had a first consultation with Community Connectors-in-Residence (CC-in-R) with these goals:

- provide an overview of the BVCP update process,
- gather ideas on how best to promote engagement events to diverse communities
- seek CC-in-R feedback on how they want to be engaged in this process



Attachment B

Attachment B - Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley (Once & Future Green engagement report)

Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley

Frontline Community Findings for the BVCP

Contents- Bookmarked:

1. [Introduction](#)- pg. 1-4
2. [Note on Targeted Universalism and Key Questions for Planners](#) pg. 4-5
3. [Findings](#)- pg. 5-16
 1. [Equitable Regenerative Food Systems](#) pg. 6-9
 2. [Strengthening Frontline Entrepreneurship to Build an Economy that Works for All](#) pg. 9-11
 3. [Beyond Affordable: Spectacular, Living Buildings & Homes](#) pg. 11-12
 4. [Building an Inclusive Multicultural Community](#) pg. 12-13
 5. [Supporting Community Health & Wellness](#) pg. 13-14
 6. [Additional Emergent and Community-Led Topics](#) pg. 14-18
3. [Conclusion](#)- pg. 18-20
4. [Appendix:](#) - pgs. 21-26
 - a. [Graphic Recording from Events](#) pg. 21
 - b. [1 Page Overview Summary](#) pg. 22
 - c. [Community Expert Bios](#) pg. 23-24
 - d. [Participant Feedback](#) pg. 24-25
 - e. [Additional Resources](#) pg. 25
 - f. [Credits & Acknowledgements](#) pg. 25-26

Introduction & Events Overview:

Once and Future Green is excited and honored to support the City of Boulder and Boulder County Government take on a new expanded approach to community engagement and input for the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) in alignment with our work for a “People’s Plan”. It was deeply meaningful and an effective start for bringing “new voices” into the planning process update. This and other substantive input from “new” and “underrepresented” voices will make for a more holistic and successful BVCP. We provided a “Recent Community Engagement Findings Report for the BVCP” first which serves as a prequel to this one. This report outlines both an overview of the events and the important input we heard from residents and community experts that could inform the plan.

Attachment B - Community Dreaming: Towards a More
Spectacular Valley (Once & Future Green engagement report)

Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley

Frontline Community Findings for the BVCP



We curated and hosted 2 community events designed to provide Frontline¹ community participants with inspiration and tangible ideas for innovative solutions and approaches to issues we have previously heard them name, and then provided space for them to articulate their ideas and approaches. We worked with our close partner FLOWS (Foundations for Leaders Organizing for Water and Sustainability) who supported outreach and helped produce the events. Our team did a couple of rounds of community ecosystem mapping to identify Frontline community members and groups we wanted to specifically invite, and to identify Frontline community speakers. We pinpointed and brought in multiple community experts who come from the communities we are engaging and bring years of inspiration, dedication, and expertise that seem especially relevant to both the community and the BVCP. Our community leaders and their presentation themes were:

1. **Candi CdeBaca**- “Food as a utility” and supporting sustainable equitable local food systems
2. **Mike Wird**- Biotecture (Biology+Architecture) and principles beyond green building
3. **Yessica Holguin**- Strengthening Frontline entrepreneurship and building an economy that works for all
4. **Andre Houssney**- Supporting regenerative food systems and economics & examining barriers for farmers of color
5. **Stephen Brackett**- Inspired community planning: Spectacular dreams and visioning

Brief bios for presenters are found in the [appendix](#).

Once and Future Green leads, Michelle and Ramon Gabrieloff-Parish MC'd both events. Native leader and advocate Joseph Lamb offered prayer and song for the March event opening and close.

Event outline: The events were designed to provide community members with inspiration and community-based learning before asking them to brainstorm for the BVCP and the People's Plan. The agenda outline was generally:

1. Time for getting food and gathering
2. Land acknowledgements/contemplative moment & welcome
3. Reviewing the BVCP & Peoples Plan (including previous findings)
4. Asking about who is present, why, and community/government efforts they are already engaged in
5. Mini-presentations from community experts
6. Brainstorming groups

¹ We borrow this term from the Environmental Justice movement to indicate “communities that have suffered most from intended and unintended impacts of government policy, and have benefited the least... Locally and nationally these groups include communities of color, low income communities, disabled community members, immigrant and English as a second language communities, members of LGBTQIA+, single parent and multigenerational households, the unhoused, youth, and the elderly.”- From a previous OFG report. Note: We use the term “people of color” to include Indigenous, Black, Latin@, Asian, Pacific Island, and Middle Eastern (SWANA) people and descendants.

Attachment B - Community Dreaming: Towards a More
Spectacular Valley (Once & Future Green engagement report)

Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley

Frontline Community Findings for the BVCP

- Topics included community expert themes and emergent themes from participants
 - We provided sets of 3-4 questions for participants to consider to guide their conversations if needed/wanted. For example: What barriers does this solution/need face? What policies could support it? Where could this happen? How does this impact the most vulnerable in the community?
7. Report back- Harvesting
 8. Closing

Both events had full RSVP lists of over 50 people, but not all who RSVP'd attended.

Feb 22, 2025- 48 people total- 33 community members, plus 3 community presenters and team support/participants.

- An additional 2 interpreters (Spanish) and 2 childcare providers (children in childcare not included in the count).

March- 59 people total. 52 community members, plus 2 community presenters and team support/participants.

- An additional 4 interpreters (Spanish & Nepali) and 2 childcare providers (children in childcare not included in the count).


In Feb, community participants self-reported they are already engaged in and working on community improvements including:

- Food access
- Affordable Housing
- Water issues
- Fighting Structural Racism
- Youth programming
- Community events and cultural events
- Polarization
- Environment

The vast majority of March participants self-reported never having participated in a government process previously (including planning processes, speaking at city council, etc.). Only 6 participants reported they had with one of them, a government staff person, being unsure if they had. This speaks to the disenfranchisement from government processes community members experience, even once they enter the system.

Feedback and Media: We received powerful positive feedback and came across additional positive feedback online (see Appendix for testimonials). We were invited to do an interview in Feb on [KGNU's "Pasa la Voz" show](#) covering information about the process and upcoming events. There was also reporting done on the process from the [Boulder Reporting Lab](#). Councilwoman Nicole Speer,

Attachment B - Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley (Once & Future Green engagement report)



Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley

Frontline Community Findings for the BVCP

who participated in the March 8th event had powerful positive feedback for us and included it in her “Community Kudos” newsletter.

As with the previous report, “this document is far from exhaustive. It should act as a strong starting point to help guide the City of Boulder and Boulder County in further and deeper community engagement efforts to hear from and understand disinvested communities wants, needs, and visions for a stronger Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and other plans into the future.”² Here we focused on innovative solutions and unique feedback and ideas. We are excited to keep meeting with planners and city and county staff to identify ways to incorporate this feedback into the BVCP and other government plans, and policies for a more spectacular quality of life for everyone in the Boulder Valley community.

Note on Targeted Universalism and Key Questions for Planners:

Targeted universalism is a paradigm and practice that helps us better understand the critical importance of gathering Frontline community feedback, utilizing and implementing this feedback to achieve broader policy goals and implementation. Designing and implementing solutions for those most impacted or vulnerablized ultimately supports everyone³. Conversely and more conventionally, attempts to design for “everyone” often leaves out or burdens communities most vulnerabilized and disenfranchised, especially if they are not a part of the decision-making process. This underscores the importance of and need to prioritize this feedback.

In design terms, there are several often used examples. An essential one is the curb cuts and ramps that disability activists called for to make communities, buildings, and cities accessible. These improvements support disabled community members, but ultimately have helped almost everyone– people who are temporarily disabled (after surgery, etc.), people transporting things in carts, dollies, or luggage, bikers, children and elders, etc. It is therefore beneficial to all to design for (and with) the people most burdened within a system. If it works for them, it is more likely to work for everyone. Bringing Frontline voices and needs into the BVCP planning process can create the conditions for improvements for those most struggling in the county, which will ultimately end up benefiting all. This is clear in many of the innovative ideas below.

As with any respected partner, community leaders and groups should be given credit for their work and ideas, as well as compensation and continued meaningful involvement. Community members have expressed frustration that sometimes rather than ignoring their ideas, governments have taken them

² From Once and Future Green’s “Recent Community Engagement Findings Report for the BVCP”

³ [See john powell and the Othering & Belonging Institute](#)

Attachment B - Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley (Once & Future Green engagement report)

Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley

Frontline Community Findings for the BVCP



and run with them, but without the involved community members or groups. There is an important sweet spot of engagement between ignoring community ideas and efforts and co-opting them.

We also urge staff and leadership to use the following guiding questions in all of their decision-making processes, including the BVCP. These are inspired by the Environmental Justice movement and the calls for tangible action we have heard from Frontline community members to support needs that are too often invisibilized in the halls of power. Sometimes questions are stronger than statements or principles, and these can help guide all policymaking towards a more just, sustainable, and resilient community.

- ❖ Who benefits? How?
- ❖ Who is burdened? In what ways?
- ❖ Does this move us towards eliminating poverty?
- ❖ Does this build sustainability and resilience?

Findings:

The following is an overview of findings from our events– what we heard from our community experts and community feedback– and some from our experience and expertise. There is a lot of overlap between themes with a purposeful alignment with our values of social and economic equity, and environmental stewardship, longevity, and sustainability. We organized them here for ease of understanding, but they could easily be reorganized depending on need or urgency. Note that key, big or transformative ideas are marked with an “⊕”.

Much of the feedback is aligned with what Frontline communities have been calling for many years and throughout the country. Community expert Stephen Bracket, for example, compared 50 DEI community engagement initiatives across cities and found that Frontline communities across the country consistently call for 1) affordable housing, 2) equitable development and 3) economic inclusion & digital equity. Our intention is that the following feedback helps us dig deeper to think about how we can start accomplishing these priorities and tangible yet innovative solutions to the pressing and consistent issues they address.

A few recurrent patterns in the feedback:

1. Move from exploitation to cooperation
 - a. Move away from commodities frameworks
2. From individualistic to communal approaches
3. Cultural diversity as an asset

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4. Beyond adequate, affordable, or attainable to thriving, wellness, dreaming, & spectacular living
5. Trusting the community more- to know, have solutions, enact, partner

Incorporating these ideas and visions for a more equitable, prosperous, healthy community into the BVCP is a monumental task. This contract has been designed for us to do so collectively, with the city, county, and Once and Future Green partnering through the rest of the year to ensure these ideas and issues are incorporated into the BVCP in the most effective ways possible and for the benefit of everyone impacted.

We are profoundly excited and inspired by the heavy dose of innovation and practical solutions offered by community experts and participants. There is enough here in just these first findings– our small piece of community input for the BVCP and other government plans and processes– for powerful inspirational change and to co-create an even more spectacular valley with regeneration for people, our environment, and economy.

Community Experts Solutions/Proposals

1. Equitable Sustainable and Regenerative Food Systems:

We have always heard from Frontline communities that food access is a critical issue. Especially during and after the Covid pandemic, it rose to an even higher top concern. Once and Future Green has decades of experience working on food justice issues, and training students, community members, and organizations locally and nationally on the topic. Equitable food access means everything from the most basic types of access, like food pantries and food rescue, to food justice which more often includes access to *healthy* food grown in healthy ways, culturally relevant food, and access to land to steward, grow and harvest food. It can include access to economic opportunities and cottage food industries and shared commercial kitchens. It also means fair and equitable treatment of farm and agricultural workers. We found that this topic resonated with people at our events and there were several community members attending who work on Frontline food issues. The following is an overview of some of the findings from both our community experts and community feedback. Adding these ideas to the BVCP and other local plans would make powerful transformations in our local food systems towards equity, environmental health, economics, and build resilience for years to come.

- ➔ **Reframe food and food systems as utilities-** Candi CdeBaca's key theme: Governments already recognize the crucial importance of other essential services as utilities: water, energy, roads, trash and recycling, sewage, telephone, and internet. These services are so essential that they "are regulated, subsidized, and made accessible to all."⁴ What if another critical,

⁴ Candi CdeBaca. Presentation Feb 22, 2025

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life-serving need— food —was included? Candi said, “Food is just as essential, yet we treat it as a commodity, subject to the whims of the market.” What if we approached food the way we approach other critical infrastructure? Candi offered multiple recommendations and policy considerations that would support this innovation, building resilience and equity in our community and several tables were dedicated to this, education, and regenerative agricultural systems. Here is some of what we heard:

- Supporting sustainable and regenerative practices: “Boulder has long been a leader in sustainability and our food system should be no exception.”⁵ A few critical aspects include reducing food, waste, water, conservation, and reducing car use.
- Resilience: Food infrastructure is a cornerstone of municipal or regional resilience. Can a city keep its people fed and healthy? What about during tough times?
- We will need urban farms, gardens, and food forests
- Thinking through transportation considerations:
 - How to get healthy and affordable food options without traversing a city in cars to get your basic food needs?
- Land and space access: borrowing from the concept of Food Sovereignty, one of the biggest challenges that arises consistently is access to land and space— for cultivating, for decision-making over what is grown and how, and also for storage, preservation, processing, etc. Candi had several recommendations and key ideas for this too:
 - “We want control over our own food from seed to table.”⁶
 - This allows utilization of cultural and ancestral practices, regenerative and beyond organic practices, permaculture, and water stewardship
 - We could utilize city and government owned real estate to support land access (for free or through affordable or subsidized rentals, etc.) including:
 - Local food production (reducing reliance on distant supply chains)
 - Food hubs and distribution sites-
 - Centralized locations for processing and distribution
 - Corner stores
 - Cold dry storage
 - Store, delivery vehicles (bikes, vans, etc.)
 - Public access to commercial kitchens
 - Decentralizing food & reducing reliance on supermarkets

⁵ Candi CdeBaca. Presentation Feb 22, 2025

⁶ Candi CdeBaca. Presentation Feb 22, 2025

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- From a community table we heard the need to support community orgs and nonprofits in doing some of this. There are already aligned interests and efforts. The cost of land is the most prohibitive factor in making these orgs successful.
- Governments can also provide incentives for residents/residential properties/public spaces (library, etc.) to be nodes (production/distributions/composting) on a food web
- Policy Changes: Dedicate a portion of local budgets, engage the community, and partner with local organizations, nonprofits, and businesses. Change/create policies that prioritize local food systems, such as:
 - Zoning laws that support urban agriculture & micro-production
 - Incentives for local farmers
 - Subsidies for low-income residents
 - Establish or enable community-run distribution points (for example community-owned grocery stores).
- Policy and zoning to support the creation of local food hubs and food systems
- ⊕ **Paradigm Shift: Farming Like a Village & Creating the Conditions for Equitable, Regenerative Food Systems-** Community expert André Houssney of Jacob Springs Farm asked: “what would it look like if our farms functioned less as rugged individualistic endeavors and more like communities or villages?”. This paradigm shift could change everything from land access and ownership, to housing and labor, and economic models, as is done in other parts of the world. City of Boulder and Boulder County staff have both expressed that though they have tried, supporting new or budding farmers proves to be almost impossibly difficult.
 - What if farms functioned more like villages and less as a “ruggedly individualistic frontier” endeavor
 - There are ~16,000 acres owned by Boulder open space leased to farmers. Instead of 10 1,600-acre farmers, what if we had 1,000 16-acre farms?
 - Or a mix: We are “missing a middle in our food system”. We have big industrial farms and small organic initiatives, and not much in between.
 - Right now, the barrier to entry in farming in Boulder is really high. André’s the first POC farmer to have this land access in 80 years. What if we had a farmer cultivation system and with community farming where people can gain experience and organize?
 - We have properties that could be farm incubators (André is modeling)
 - We heard about the need for local composting and a strong aversion to pesticides.
 - Education: We heard this multiple times and with various emphasis. Invest in programs that teach residents about sustainable farming practices, food preservation, production, nutrition, co-op development and employee-owned businesses.

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- FLOWS leader Elizabeth Achulo spoke about the tragedy of children growing up not knowing where food comes from, how, or without ever getting their hands dirty growing food. This would be unthinkable in her home country of South Sudan.
- Farms that could be small farm/small business incubators
- Farms that could serve as the seed of post-industrial villages
- The importance of thinking within and beyond current systems (and including actors beyond the system)

2. ➔ **Strengthening Frontline Entrepreneurship to Build an Economy that Works for All:**

Beneath the need for affordable housing is an often less articulated need: economic development and opportunities that support residents in living in this high cost of living area. As community expert and director of the Center for Community Wealth Building, Yessica Holguin put it, “we are taught that economic inequality is normal”. She says we have all mostly gotten used to the idea and reality of massive wealth disparities, which are too often racialized (see the racial wealth gap). She offered practical practices that could lift up those who have been bearing the brunt of wealth inequality, support the workers that make our economy run, and build a local economy that works for all. She shared ideas to build local economic resilience and community cohesion. Inclusion of these ideas into the BVCP could help us imagine and build towards a new reality and stronger local economy.


Support Business Cooperatives- Yessica and her organization support the development of worker-owned cooperatives. Yessica had us imagine a Boulder where people are cared for. Where investment circles and public banking build community wealth. She invited us to imagine that workers’ cooperatives have been created and businesses can easily and ethically secure contracts from the city. Worker owned cooperatives:

- Democratize ownership and control over surplus, business practices, managerial structures, and work conditions.
- Have smaller pay gaps (between leadership & workers, between races, and between genders).
- More resilient during recessions.
- Strengthen Frontline and POC entrepreneurship: majority women and BIPOC owned.

Therefore:

- Create zoning and/or policy initiatives that support, incentivize, or mandate the creation of community wealth building systems (incentivizing work owned cooperatives, small community banks and mirco-lending, cottage industries, and support for new/1st entrepreneurs, etc.)

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- Local business preservation through cooperatives: Yessica reminded us that there are many aging local businesses that can keep their businesses locally owned by selling to the workers as a cooperative. They are the ones that know best how to run it and keep it from closing or from being sold to outside corporations or investors.

⊕ **Anchor Institutions as Assets:** Once and Future Green participated in the Motus Theater BVCP event Jan 11th. One of the key ideas we brought to that space was that our larger institutions, such as CU, Naropa, Google, and government institutions, should be fully integrated community assets, but are often very separated from the community. We are segregated and disconnected even where integration and collaboration could strengthen both. Our larger, locally-based institutions and their leadership, staff, clients and/or students, should and could be more integrated into the community and be community assets. How can we make them so?

Procurement requirements and practices: Yessica Holguin's presentation showcased the local economic strength that could be unleashed if anchor organizations such as CU, local governments (municipal, NREL, NOAA, NIST and NTIA, etc.), and corporations (Google, Ball, etc.) shifted their procurement practices to support local communities. Sourcing from local businesses, incorporating a living wage into all RFP's (Requests for Proposals) and contracts would make significant local impacts, especially if purposely supporting entrepreneurs of color as well as other Frontline businesses. How much do the aforementioned organizations spend on food alone each year? Imagine if local businesses were supplying them versus other large corporations such as Sodexo or national chains. If we don't, Yessica warns, our own resources are "used to subsidize the profits." In fact, we should uncover and assess those current subsidies to external institutions. Let's leverage and build new relationships with anchor institutions in our community.

Additional ways anchor institutions could become more integrated and become community assets from a community table:

- Students and professors change, but the city is the ever-present backbone.
- We have lots of students at CU, and we could mobilize students to be out in the community and helping vulnerable members.
- Imagine if we had a public-private partnership where the government partners with institutions to provide infrastructure.

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Office of Nighttime Economy- Stephen Bracket mentioned his work advocating for and developing an Office of Nighttime Economy with a “Night Mayor” in Denver and elsewhere. In the US, there are 20 people who are appointed to run night economies. They run the city activities between 5pm-5am.

- The way to make your nights safe is to have lots of people participating
- In other cities around the world, people aged 9-90 spend time in community at night
- Night economies improve safety intergenerationally
- Cultural and entertainment value
- Safety and support for those who live and work at night and keep the community, including essential functions going

Even if an office or staff positions are not created, there are key considerations from this idea to incorporate into the BVCP and other plans. To ask, assess, and implement interventions to support the needs of our nighttime economies and the safety of the community and workers that keep essential services going- from bartenders and service industry staff to ER and hospital staff to grocery stockers, to waste management and delivery drivers.

3. ➦ **Beyond Affordable: Spectacular, Living Buildings Aligned with our Front Range**

Environment:

We have always heard from Frontline (and pretty much all local) communities that affordable housing is a top priority- essentially an emergency for our area. Stephen Bracket reminded us, “You have to give people a sense of the possible. Give them options. You can’t just ask them what they want when they’ve never been asked before. Show them and inspire and then from that place of inspiration, then ask them to dream” In terms of housing and buildings, he said it’s important not to start out shortchanging ourselves with parameters like “affordable” or “attainable” but to envision what we really want– thriving, beautiful, sustainable, resilient, spectacular homes! – and build from there.

Mike Wird challenged us to see that most of our buildings and homes are essentially “on life support”. They are so unsustainable they must be plugged into the grid at all times and are dependent on external infrastructure for basic functioning. Why not harness our local elements and environment for more comfortable, resilient, life sustaining and beautiful homes? He inspired us to think beyond conventional architecture and building codes to “Artitecture” (from art + architecture) or “Biotecture” (from biology + architecture). We provided and heard input on affordability at the Motus event and are confident it is being explored in other input for the BVCP, so we will focus here on the sustainable, comfortable, and beautiful aspects of housing and buildings. Here are some of the principles and ideas

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Mike shared with us that we could incorporate into the BVCP for buildings and housing which could also support long term affordability. The elements of Biotope:

1. Building with natural and recycled materials– from waste to resource
2. Solar and thermal heating and cooling
3. Solar and wind power & electricity
4. Water harvesting
5. Water recycling & contained sewage treatment
6. Food production

From him, the community, and based on our experience, here are additional opportunities and responses:

- Zoning and policy initiatives that reward, incentivize and or mandate the incorporation of Biotope principles into new construction and existing built environment.
- Water catchment localized to housing, neighborhoods, schools and municipal building etc.
- “Passive” solar and geothermal design initiatives, for example south facing windows to harvest winter sun and heat
- Food/soil generation incorporated into building/landscaping designs
- Creation of an “experimental designation in zoning where new building techniques could be piloted for limited periods to test for scalability

Community responses and additions:

- Restrictive code came up, with one great comment from Carl E Lawrence via the [Boulder Reporting Lab](#) article comments section: "With respect to passive solar building, a possible starting point is the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), which has been adopted by Boulder. The IECC ignores passive solar construction methods, forcing the architect to start from scratch and scientifically prove that the passive solar design meets the heating and cooling requirements for the occupant. This is an expensive and time-consuming process. The City needs to incorporate passive solar methods into its energy conservation code.
- Multiple pathways and types of housing opportunities: (ownership & wealth development, etc.)
- Changing language from minimal to optimal

4. ➡ **Building an Inclusive Multicultural Community**

A more inclusive multicultural community is another constant heard from many communities across the valley. People said they want more spaces like the ones we created as part of the BVCP process– with diverse speakers, many voices, and lots of interaction in juicy and fun environments. Including events with a civic focus (like these) as well as cultural celebrations, etc.

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- **Language:** We worked to ensure the events were at least bilingual (if not trilingual or more) – from outreach, to slides, to interpretation. We had great feedback about the trilingual March event– English, Spanish and Nepali with people wanting more multilingual opportunities. We heard several times that more opportunities for multilingual spaces between immigrant and communities of color would be an innovation. Interpretation, translation, and language learning opportunities are usually not deployed between varied ESL communities, but rather to engage with English speaking communities and efforts. They suggested more gatherings like the March event where Nepali community members could meet with English and Spanish speakers (not just hub and spoke connections, but more networked).
- From Invisibilization to Retention: As mentioned in our previous report and as it came up again at the January Motus event, there is a recurring “frustration about the lack of retention of people of color in the community, especially Black people.”
- Supporting more events like the Feb. and March events as well as more cultural events.
- Addressing structural inequalities and barriers- Many of the previously mentioned key ideas could support people of color being more included as part of the larger community. As expected, persistent issues of structural inequalities with the police and judicial system also arose.
- Lack of representation in city and county staff, elected officials, and government and institutions continues to be both a barrier and a reflection of barriers. It is the result of and a cause of continued inequality. This is brought up repeatedly and on multiple levels. It is part of why deeper, more meaningful engagement is so important.
 - And not just along identity lines, but approaches and perspectives as well (nice vs angry for example)
- In a conversation with a partner at the Motus event, we discussed why People of Color would not want to stay in the area, and importantly why they would not want their children or youth to stay in the area. We have heard many discussions about the narratives about Boulder’s overall character– those that are right and wrong. Many would like to see Boulder’s character become more inclusive, welcoming, socio-economically and racially diverse.
- Education- again this was named repeatedly. Here we heard about the deep disconnection to and need for education about civics- how government functions, its timelines, departments, committees, commissions, elected positions, jurisdictions, legislation, how decisions are made, and how to engage.
- Honoring ancient wisdom and other cultural knowing

6. Supporting Community Health & Wellness

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A culture of wellness is already central to the character of Boulder. This table challenged us to think of planning in terms of mental wellbeing as well as expanding our understanding of what constitutes mental and health and how we cultivate it.

Mental Health

- Including decolonial & alternative, culturally rooted practices
- Places to gather
- Arts and culture
- Nature, outdoors, animals, and gardening for mental health

⊕ City as a Wellness Hub

- Integrating recreation with farming, building activities around harvesting and managing the food supply.
- Having a culture of being able to put time into farming even if farming isn't your vocation.
- Time in the dirt is huge for mental health.
- "Everyone who engages in the city can become well"

7. Additional Emergent & Community-led Topics

This section contains themes, proposals and questions unanticipated by us, or articulated by the community experts. Alternatively they presented novel approaches or deeper concentration on topics that were covered in this and previous sessions. Each of these tables and topics represented bright sparks that we present here as possibilities for greater equity and sustainability. If not immediately applicable they can become part of a database of possibilities for future planning.

Youth:

- Education was a major theme. "It lets you be free".
 - Educating youth/involving them in planning and community futures from the high school level
 - Education about identity and culture
 - Centers for youth to learn about and produce music, take or offer classes, and a variety of activity
 - Learning about food
 - Free education from pre-school to PhD level
 - How to have a healthy relationship

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- Leadership development and opportunities
- No more ageism
- Age limits on government leaders and incorporating more youth voices
- Mental health support (another often repeated theme)
- Transportation support

Food Systems:

- Everything is sacred
- Center and educate kids
- Equipment libraries
- Support organizations doing this work
- Mental health programs that incorporate “time in the dirt”
- Less grass, more food
- No monocultures- grow different types of food for a stronger system
- Shared responsibilities
- Green roofs
- Food forests
- Food is a right, not a commodity
 - Sufficient and safe
- Transparency
- Animal welfare
- Chickens
- Community- people talking
- Use what we have
- Knowledge of what we put in our bodies
 - No pesticides or artificial preservatives
- People learn to cook
- Eating together (another often repeated theme)

Cooperatives and Economic Development

- Guaranteed income and Universal Basic Income- and other programs to support marginalized folks.
 - Barriers include corporate greed, racism, capitalism in society, lack of legislative know-how
 - Potential policies include using public education to test out pilot programs with good KPIs.
 - Promoting studies positive of UBI.

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- Could be funded in a variety of ways including petitioning to tax billionaires, explaining how the wealthy and capital leach off of our institutions and services.
- Some percentage should go to most vulnerable communities
- Not letting corporations buy up residential properties

Sustainability & Environmental Justice

- Clean water for San Lazaro Mobile Home Community!
- Rights of nature, including for local rivers and waterways
- Waterways that are small and dispersed throughout the city and county.
- More greenery
- More parks
- Land distribution

Embedding equity in the BVCP:

- “More spaces like this!”
- More engagement that helps shape the future
- Resources need to be invested in community capacity building
- Center Joy
- Celebrate community leadership & power
- Incubate community leadership
- Dismantle structural racism
 - Redistribute power
 - Share power
- Take action
- Accountability: allow people to participate and learn how to engage with money and power

Arts and Culture:

- Community arts programing
- More murals
- Training for youth
- Incentives for artists to stay with new imperatives and models of success
- Support existing arts and cultural spaces- like Fresh Mode Fest & Mi Chantli
- Village mindset
- Community social health
- Create community gathering space that can serve multiple community needs

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Time Equity:

- Time is our number one resource in life
- What if we built time equity into everything we did?
- What if the city had two hours of childcare inclusive date nights?
- What if we had free parking or had parking-relative vouchers?
- What would it look like for a culture to center the woman and the child?
- Reciprocity and compensation

Transportation:

- Overlap of high rents and transportation costs created difficulties accessing basic needs (groceries) or civic participation (events like the BVCP Community Dreaming)
- Public transportation is painfully inefficient and takes up all our time
 - Spend more time here than in other countries
- Accessible transportation that is more nimble than buses
- Free bussing
- Self-organized community transportation networks (via WhatsApp or Signal). We can cooperate and coordinate, solve this as a community, and not wait.
- Protect the environment

Women/Feminist Lens Table: How could Boulder in general and the BVCP in particular help create a culture that celebrates and prioritizes life? As one participant put it “women are the source of all life”, so making this shift would entail supporting women more and structurally. Right now there are barriers for those who are pregnant, recently gave birth, caregivers, families and elders, and even more so for women and caregivers of color. The conversation focused on recognition of the issues, health, caregiving, structural issues, and spirituality and contemplative practice.

- More support for people pre-and post-partum.
 - Support access to midwives and doula services for pre- and post- partum care, especially in culturally affirming ways
 - Nordic policies that support new parents⁷ were discussed, like state-issued care packages sent to new parents, allowances for grandparents to provide paid childcare, and caps on childcare costs.
- We discussed the burdens that the transportation system places on families and caregivers, especially for children, elders, and disabled family members.

⁷ See [World Economic Forum article](#)

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- Need for more spaces for spiritual practice throughout Boulder.

Borderless Boulder Table:

- Create more information resources and make existing ones more accessible
- Ensure people know about events like these and other resources and community-building opportunities
- Empower people to see their value beyond their immigration status
- Promote personal development
- Create more opportunities for various communities to connect and information can flow between them to reach more people
- Promote participation in communities
- Empathy
- Borderless Boulder– What if there were no “illegal” people?
- These are barriers around immigration and discrimination
- Connections to other communities– around the country and internationally, with authentic relationships where we can learn from each other
- While these resources might be obvious for some, it’s hard for people to even feel like they can ask for these systems or know how to access them
- Many people would have loved this space and to learn about this and other opportunities that probably don’t know about it. How do we spread the word so that everyone knows?

Conclusion:

Our community sessions revealed and illuminated. They seeded and they gathered. They educated and they challenged. We engaged Frontline community members, who because of systemic barriers and Boulder’s reputation for wealth and cultural homogeneity have been overlooked in Boulder’s governance and planning until recently. Yet these same communities hold a strategic position as revealers of the limitations, even the harm created by city planning efforts and policies. They are also often those who have the most urgent needs in our community (and therefore should be prioritized). Those on the margins often see systems in ways that those closer to the center cannot. Together with experts and visionaries from these communities we began the work of imaging and articulating not an existing Boulder, replicated into the future with a few tune ups, but a Boulder of possibility, able and agile to meet the changes of climate, culture, and technology.

Our futurist orientation gave a wide space for the collective imagination to picture the possible, but also a concrete time frame to engage the present. Through cultural brokering we brought together diverse attitudes toward decision- making and social life, creating an environment that made civic

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participation fun, enriching, and even ceremonial. Local community experts shared developments and work being done on the cutting edge of construction, design, economics, equity and food systems, stimulating us with concrete models of how design and planning can foster well-being in multiple sectors of our social lives and shared environment. Then we engaged in collective brainstorming with community members in themed break outs, placing the innovative ideas and brave imaginations in the context of the obstacles, needs, and potentials our community members experience navigating in the actual network of built environments, green spaces and institutions in our region.

Again, the chief patterns and values that emerged and seem to weave through all of our findings:

1. Move from exploitation to cooperation
 - a. Move away from commodities frameworks
2. From individualistic to communal approaches
3. Cultural diversity as an asset
4. Beyond adequate, affordable, or attainable to thriving, wellness, dreaming, & spectacular living
5. Trusting the community more- to know, have solutions, enact, partner

More concretely, our findings/takeaways synthesized from these sessions include:

- Planning and zoning for localized food systems treated as utilities rather than commodities
- Planning and zoning that incentivizes affordable housing and development integrated with our local ecosystems through Biotecture principles (potential expansion of LEED and existing certifications)
- Planning and zoning that incentivizes or mandates regenerative food systems with access for new farmers, smaller land plots, and leverages farms as incubators of cottage industries
- Planning and zoning that incentives or mandates cooperatively owned business ventures, economic alternatives and partnerships with anchor institutions
- Planning and zoning that including renewed focus on Night Economies or 24 hr. culture and economics
- Planning and zoning that incentivizes or mandates Boulder as Wellness Hub including, incentives for families
- Planning that fosters more inclusive and multicultural communities

The vision of Targeted Universalism is that participation, and even leadership from the most marginal members of the community as we collectively address the issues they face can be the decisive system interventions so that *all* stakeholders meet broadly agreed upon goals (for example “A Boulder Future’s” goals of being “economically viable and accessible and connected”). Targeted Universalism in conjunction with Environmental Justice principles help us to consult a values-based compass before

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making lasting decisions. It asks us to consider who is burdened by and who benefits from planning decisions. Does a given decision bring us closer to ending poverty, does it build our capacities for sustainability and resilience as a community? With these as a checklist we can examine any new policy proposal and see if it moves the needle toward shared equity.

With the evaluative yardsticks of targeted universalism, Environmental Justice and the goals articulated by Frontline community members and local visionaries, our intention is to continue to work with the planning team and strike a dynamic and progressive balance between the incrementalism that often characterizes land use decisions, public policy, and navigating multiple stakeholders, with the pressing need for radical innovation brought on by climate change, demographic cultural shifts and political, economic and social free falls. We are in “postnormal⁸” times, when many of the modelling practices that have been effective for the last century can no longer accurately chart where we need to go as we deepen into this century. We need a fusion of far-seeing yet practical leadership, fresh participation from previously excluded sectors of our civic environment, and visionary social entrepreneurship. To paraphrase Al Gore’s paraphrase of an African saying “we need to go far, fast”. This planning process and our continued work together can be a model for that. Our intention is to continue in collaboration with the city and county staff to make cracks in the system, using the system, to create the conditions for a new, more equitable and resilient Boulder to arise.

With appreciation,
Michelle and Ramon Gabrielloff-Parish
Once and Future Green

⁸ See [Postnormal Times](#)

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1 Page Overview Summary:

1. [Equitable Regenerative Food Systems](#)
 - a. ⊕ Reframe food and food systems as utilities
 - b. ⊕ Paradigm shift: farming like a village & creating the conditions for equitable, regenerative food systems
 - c. Creating the conditions for equitable, regenerative food systems
2. [Strengthening Frontline Entrepreneurship to Build an Economy that Works for All](#)
 - a. Support Business Cooperatives-
 - b. ⊕ Anchor Institutions as Assets:
 - c. Procurement requirements and practices
 - d. Office of Nighttime Economy
3. [Beyond Affordable: Spectacular, Living Buildings & Homes:](#)
Incorporate the elements from Biotecture-including:
 - a. Building with natural and recycled materials– from waste to resource
 - b. Solar and thermal heating and cooling
 - c. Solar and wind power & electricity
 - d. Water harvesting
 - e. Water recycling & contained sewage treatment
 - f. Food production
4. [Building an Inclusive Multicultural Community](#)
5. [Supporting Community Health & Wellness](#)
 - a. ⊕ City as a Wellness Hub
6. [Additional Emergent and Community-Led Topics](#)
 - a. Youth
 - b. Food Systems
 - c. Cooperatives and Economic Development
 - d. Sustainability & Environmental Justice
 - e. Equity in the BVCP
 - f. Time Equity
 - g. Transportation
 - h. Women/Feminist Lens
 - i. Immigration

Attachment B - Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley (Once & Future Green engagement report)

Community Dreaming: Towards a More Spectacular Valley

Frontline Community Findings for the BVCP

Community Expert Bios:

Candi CdeBaca- Candi is a policy expert, community organizer and social worker with over 25 years of experience with grassroots organizing, community power-building and mobilizing individuals and groups. With a vast array of experience in crafting and passing legislation, founding organizations, training, curriculum development, nonprofit management, organizational culture change management, federal oversight, municipal budgeting, strategic planning, public speaking, writing, marketing & communications, and therapeutic counseling and coaching, she leads through an empowerment-based approach that elevates the most affected populations as the experts and decision-makers.

Candi is a fierce advocate for justice and a solidarity economy where housing is a human right, food is a public utility, and all utilities are consumer-owned.

Mike Wird- Certified in Earthship Biotechnology, Mike Wird teaches natural building and permaculture design in Colorado & internationally. He's an advanced permaculture designer, consultant, and teacher. Mike is also a talented music artist and artist educator. For over two decades, Mike has acted as a cultural arts ambassador, using his platform to raise awareness about social, economic, and ecological issues. From regenerative practices to community-building Mike is a trailblazer and Hip-Hop renaissance man.

Yessica Holguin- Yessica is the executive director for the Center for Community Wealth Building. She leads the organization and carries out the vision of a people-owned, inclusive, and sustainable metro Denver economy that catalyzes prosperous and resilient communities free from racism and injustice.

Yessica grew up in the Swansea neighborhood in Denver and has done grassroots community organizing with immigrant groups and low-income communities across the Denver Metro area since 2000. She has dedicated her life to empowering disenfranchised communities to break the cycle of poverty through education and entrepreneurship.

André Houssney- André is the founder of Jacob Springs Farm, a diversified, beyond organic and regenerative farm in Boulder Colorado in 2010, and is the father of Elias, Silas and Ezra. André is a first-generation immigrant born in Beirut, Lebanon during that country's civil war which lasted from 1975 to 1992. As a child, the Houssney family, escaping war, moved several times within the Middle East and Europe before finally settling in Boulder, Colorado when André was in elementary school. Along with Jacob Springs and its local farm business incubators, André also works on agricultural and business projects in the US Africa and the Middle East. His Fair-Trade businesses and co-ops like Zambesi create income for over 2,000 families/farmers in Zambia & the DR of Congo. He is an expert in development agriculture, regenerative grazing, and water resources.

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Stephen Bracket- From his humble beginnings of tying sheets to his ankles to try and fly, to founding multiple organizations and performing around the world, Stephen's journey has been about breaking barriers and pushing the limits of what's possible. His diverse experiences have shaped him into a passionate advocate for change, and he's dedicated his life to finding innovative solutions to some of society's most pressing problems.

Stephen is well known as an emcee of the Flobots and was previously appointed the Music Ambassador for the state of Colorado, leveraging music as a catalyst for economic growth, community cohesion, and civic participation. He has worked with the city of Denver to create an Office of Nighttime Economy, which will focus on creating a vibrant, safe, and inclusive city for all. Stephen's unique experiences have taught him the importance of collaboration, creativity, and perseverance in the face of adversity. He believes that there's always a solution to be found if we're willing to think outside the box.

Participant Feedback: The following is generally unsolicited feedback we received or came across about the events.

- “This was incredible. I’ve never been to an event like this. I’ve never been asked to share what *I* think. It’s usually people speaking and you’re just supposed to absorb what they say.” -Young queer participant (early 20s)
- “I’m leaving here with hope. This gives me hope... which is saying a lot” - Native elder
- “You all are doing important work. I usually don’t come to things like this, but this is really important, and you are doing a really good job. Keep going” -Latino elder
- “Today was one of the most hopeful days ever! You know what, it was beyond hope. It was powerful” - Pedro via Facebook
- “The FLOWS event was great. Speakers raised frustrations and inspiration. A fragment of me started wondering what it would be like to stay in CO after licensure. I stayed for the Danza Azteca [sic]and Bboy contest too. Both had great energy...” - University student of color
- “That was the most nourishing event I have been to in a long time. As a community leader and facilitator who is always in the space of leading, to simply receive and participate was such a gift. I cried many times throughout, good cries. Thank you.”
- “They built community connections and created hope. If it seems unusual to operate at the scale of centuries, remember the many world-renowned projects built over centuries or millennia, such as the Great Wall of China, Cahokia Mounds and some European cathedrals.”- Nicole Speer via newsletter

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- “Thank you to FLOWS and Once and Future Green for co-hosting a much needed community gathering to vision our future... It’s not enough to ask people what they want when they don’t know all the options!...” Taishya Adams via Facebook
- “I think it was a great atmosphere for like-minded people to share ideas about connecting communities. This is good because most people probably want to get involved but don’t know how. So this is a good way to let people know to be engaged because their voices matter. The highlight for me was hearing from the speakers about their experiences advocating and fighting for access to resources.” “Keeping on the fight even if it gets tough. The round table discussions were great, many people shared ideas on what we need to do as a collective for a better community.” -FLOWS leader Elizabeth Achulo
- “This feels like we’re actually building towards something. It’s really good. And it feels really good.”
- “I stepped in the room and knew right away this was something different. Something Michelle and Ramon created. The type of space that so many talk about or give lip service to, with diversity, and so many walks of life, and with inspiration and possibility at its core– but you actually do it.”
- “That you were able to bring together people who care about change and with that much diversity and there was no animosity, no one cancelling anyone else, no one fought, and everyone left happy?! That alone is remarkable!”

Additional Resources:

- [*Slide deck with pictures of events and preliminary findings](#)
- [KGNU’s “Pasa la Voz” show](#) 2.16.25 (in Spanish)
- [Boulder Reporting Lab](#) article
- [*The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#)- This spectrum provides a useful map to equitable community engagement based on the premise that participation by impacted communities is “the key to closing equity gaps” and resolving various vulnerabilities.
- A Pattern Language ([Book](#))
- Imagination Manifesto ([Book](#))
- The Just Transition Framework- see our partners [Just Transition Collaborative](#) or the [Just Transition Alliance](#)

Credits & Acknowledgements:

Written by Michelle Gabrielloff-Parish & Ramon Gabrielloff-Parish of Once and Future Green.

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Frontline Community Findings for the BVCP



We owe a big THANK YOU to so many people for helping these events and report be a success! Thanks to each and every participant, aka community leader. We are because you are.

Thanks to our dear colleagues and friends Candi CdeBaca, Mike Wird, Yessica Holguin, André Houssney, and Stephen Bracket for helping us go beyond and bringing your expertise, commitment, and inspiration.

Thanks to FLOWS and all of the team members that helped support, set up, clean up, photograph, take notes, etc., especially to Rinchen Indya Love and Gabi Galindo for making it possible, and Dominique Rowell, Tucker Horsch, Evan Barrie-Kivel, SM, Taylor Johnson, and Nat Rake, our graphic recorder.

Thanks to our interpreters and translators: Rosabelle Rice, Leticia Perez, Leticia Abajo, Tika Khansakar, Priyanka Rani and to Diana and Danayire Rocha for childcare support.

Thanks to Elder Joseph Lam for blessing us with opening and closing prayers and reminding us of the many ways resilience can look.

Thanks to Fresh Mode Fest for partnership and support, especially Mike Wird and Rachel Josephs for your vision and action, and Jill Katzenberger of Junkyard Social Club for welcoming us.

Thanks to the City of Boulder and Boulder County governments for recognizing this need, supporting and resourcing this work, and being willing to engage the task of weaving in these recommendations and approaches.

Thank you to all of the activists and community members who came before us and work alongside us dedicated to a better world, too often without the celebration, recognition, and support you deserve.

www.onceandfuturegreen.com

Appendix: Recent Community Engagement Findings Report for the BVCP



Recent Community Engagement Findings Report for the BVCP

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Introduction:

Once and Future Green and FLOWS are excited and honored to support the City of Boulder and Boulder County Government take on a new expanded approach to community engagement and input for the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP). Bringing “new voices” into the planning process update, especially for Frontline communities that government has not consulted with as pointedly or frequently. Substantive input from these “new” or “underrepresented” voices including people of color, immigrants, multigenerational households, single-parent households, disabled communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, affordable housing residents, working class community members, and more, will make for a more holistic and successful plan. Many of these findings may align with findings and best practices of the city’s engagement team or of previous engagement efforts.

An important component of equitable community engagement is to review and listen to what Frontline communities have already identified, prioritized, and expressed. This document supports that by providing a brief overview of key themes we identify from recent community engagement with Frontline communities, as well as based on our years of experience, expertise. We also draw on best practices drawn from the fields of Environmental Justice, permaculture design and sustainability. Some of the findings here are from recent key projects, including: 1) three People’s Plan events with Foundations for Leaders Organizing for Water and Sustainability (FLOWS), 2) community outreach and community leader convenings for recent projects with Boulder County to inform their community engagement processes and 3) Frontline-focused engagement to inform the Boulder County’s Justice40 climate and infrastructure commitments. Parts of this document pull from reports for those projects and are noted as such. Many of



the challenges and possibilities have been heard before by decision makers and do not need re-explanation. However, there are a few major categories that need elaboration. Therefore, the following includes brief bulleted items as well as more in-depth explorations of themes. *This document is far from exhaustive.* It should act as a strong starting point to help guide the City of Boulder and Boulder County in further and deeper community engagement efforts to hear from and understand disinvested communities wants, needs, and visions for a stronger Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and other plans into the future.

Findings:

Positive Building Blocks:

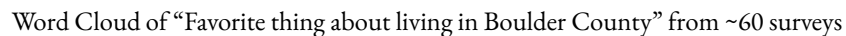
Strengths & Deep Community Commitment:

First and foremost, what we have found is that Frontline communities often have unseen strengths and help make the larger community better in a myriad of ways. We found that Frontline community leaders have a deep commitment to their communities, often providing critical community resources, needs, organization, coordination, connection, and direction. They articulate that these skills may or may not come from formal education, but need to be recognized even in more formal spaces, like government. We found that these leaders seem to persist in and balance personal needs with structural challenges and barriers. They can articulate these in ways that could support a wide variety of formal planning processes. It is important to consult with these leaders and learn more about those challenges to better design and co-design solutions.

Appreciation for the Boulder region:

We asked Frontline community members across the county what their favorite things are about living here. The most often repeated favorites are below. The first two were overwhelmingly reported:

- **Nature and access to nature including:** Views. Trails. Green space. Parks. Beauty.
- **Safety** & quiet
- Community that is generally: very aware, accepting, and progressive
- The feeling of a smaller community (vs a big city)
- Existing community diversity



Before sharing the priorities we heard from Frontline communities, it is important to mention a few of the challenges they name in working with local government. Knowing these challenges can help BVCP planners and policy makers better understand existing challenges, obstacles that may arise, and to ideate and design solutions.

Unfortunately, government policies and protections have been unequally enacted throughout US history. They have landed disparately across different communities, especially across racial lines. This is no different in the Boulder Valley. From our “Framework for Equitable Community Engagement for Boulder County”:

3



As the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) states in their Racial Equity Toolkit, “From the inception of our country, government at the local, regional, state, and federal level has played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequity. A wide range of laws and policies were passed, including everything from who could vote, who could be a citizen, who could own property, who was property, where one could live, whose land was whose and more.”¹ Through various laws, policies, enforcement, and representation, US governments have historically protected Whiter and wealthier communities and provided them advantages.

As GARE states in their Racial Equity Toolkit, “... Due to the historical reality of the role of government in creating and maintaining racial inequities, it is not surprising that communities of color do not always have much trust in government. In addition, there is a likelihood that other barriers exist...”²

On one hand, you have government bureaucracies, processes, and policies that have historically privileged Whiter and wealthier communities and have been firmly in place long enough to have multiple bureaucracies stacked atop one another. On the other hand, you have communities that mistrust or feel ignored, belittled, or betrayed by government. They remember past harms (which may be compounded by multiple government agencies) and feel excluded from decision-making processes... not to mention many face direct accessibility, time, and language barriers.

Though current departments or staff may not be personally or directly responsible for initiating the harms experienced by historically excluded and disenfranchised communities, their engagement efforts may be impacted by them. Government staff and offices can play a large part in shifting community perceptions of and interest in working with government agencies. Learning about and understanding those specific histories can go far in cultivating good faith and make current policymaking and engagement efforts more informed and successful.

The city’s intention to engage historically disinvested communities in the BVCP process is a powerful step in the right direction. Additional recommended steps include:

- Learning more about the specific inequitable histories of Boulder’s regional planning, zoning, land use (such as the Olmstead Plan), and the related impacts that shape how Boulder looks and operates today. Knowing more about these specific legacies as well as more recent

¹ <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/viewdocument/racial-equity-toolkit-an-opportuni-2>

² Ibid



community-named obstacles will help the work of today's planners in creating a more equitable region (already underway and always in need of deepening)

- Addressing language and access barriers (underway)
- Scaling investments for engaging the most vulnerabilized, impacted, and invisibilized communities. Reaching enfranchised community members and groups that are used to giving input is often easier and more affordable. Engaging communities that have more mistrust and have suffered neglect or abuse by government will take more investment in the short to medium term, both in terms of time and financial resources.

It is important to note that we are not suggesting that an immediate goal is to work to build trust, but to act on the priorities of Frontline communities. In the long run, that is what will build trust. Trust is not an initial step, but an *outcome* of equitable practices and policies.

2. Character, Cultural, and Power Differences:

The character or culture of Boulder was named as a barrier in multiple ways– from who is heard by decision makers to what it feels like to belong or not belong in the broader Boulder community. Some of these speak strongly to historical character, cultural, and power differences. Again from our Framework for Equitable Engagement:

Brian Schaffner, researcher and co-author of *Hometown Inequality: Race, Class, and Representation in American Local Politics* found that unequal racial representation is pervasive throughout the country, including local governments. His research finds that “[W]hite, wealthy people are more likely to serve as local officials... and they make decisions that more often align with the concerns and preferences of [W]hite, wealthier residents than with those of people of color and poorer residents.” They are also “more responsive to what [W]hites and wealthier residents in the community want.”³

Additionally White and wealthier communities tend to be more familiar with government bureaucracies, practices, procedures, jargon, and the people in positions of influence (or hire those who do). These voices can inundate government agendas even despite government intentions to hear all voices. Social and business connections, similar histories and cultural practices such as mannerisms and ways of speaking can lubricate those relationships and increase their efficiency and effectiveness. It may make those voices seem louder and clearer and make it easy for policy makers and staff to give those voices more attention. This pattern can worsen inequalities for historically marginalized communities that the government is also charged with serving.

³ See article & interview: <https://now.tufts.edu/2020/10/16/local-governments-favor-white-and-wealthy>



Watch for cultural differences that may inhibit your ability to hear from historically disinvested communities. The more you can grow your capacity to hear these different voices, histories, and approaches, the more holistic and effective local policies and designs can be. Along these same lines, we heard a wish for local government staff to better understand power dynamics and differentials and practice more trauma informed approaches, which could help build city staff capacity to hear Frontline community concerns, frustrations, and ideas and might all help heal these tensions.

3. Complicated and Confusing Jurisdictions:

One challenge consistently brought forth in our meetings with community members is that the differences between various city offices (with multiple seemingly overlapping departments) and jurisdictions between multiple local governments (Boulder County, school districts, RTD, etc.) make it difficult to identify and appeal to decision makers, access resources and know if they (community members) have already engaged in an issue or, addressed it in an effective way. Many community members experience these jurisdictional and departmental differences as labyrinthine, if not explicitly obstructionist. They even state that it feels like these many government silos are “weaponized” against under-represented communities, intentionally misleading, misdirecting, frustrating or prolonging community feedback, grievances, access to services and initiatives. These are compounded by the use of jargon and acronyms that amplify the murkiness of understanding jurisdictions and decision-making processes. Many residents say it’s difficult to know what’s going on in government and how to get involved. Whether this is intentional or not on the part of local government bodies, this is the reported impact.

More clarity is needed by community members on which kinds of issues are handled by which offices and at which level of government, depending upon the location of individuals and communities within Boulder City and County. The BVCP process is a good example of this, as it is confusing to understand which communities are or are not included in a plan called “comprehensive” and that names the “Boulder Valley” but does not include all communities or residences within the Boulder Valley.

4. Deepening Understanding of Community Resistance and Lack of Engagement

All the above challenges make equitable community engagement difficult. If communities are not engaging, it is important to ask why and dig a little deeper. Many community members hold a memory of past mistakes or dropped collaborations between Frontline community members and government. Sometimes it exceeds the institutional memory of the governing bodies. There is a stated sense that initiatives (like the BVCP) begin with excitement and promises, but too often end with disappointment and incompleteness. From general mistrust and disillusionment, to historical harms, to language, jargon, and cultural differences, to different understandings about the role of government or of engagement, to



misunderstandings on what work is or has already been done by what departments or agencies, engaging Frontline communities comes with inherited challenges.

Community members report that too often research or information is collected about a particular issue and feedback is gathered but little to no action is taken. They complain that communication goes one way, often seemingly into a vacuum. Community members are frustrated when they neither see the results of their input and efforts, or hear back from governing bodies about how their feedback is used or why it was not. The communication feels incomplete, much less the completed process of ideation, action, measured impact and success. A sense of “what’s the use?” develops– a sense that community efforts will not meet with an adequate response. Worse, a suspicion that the purpose of community engagement efforts from the government is to *look* as if it is doing the right thing, without the intent of taking action. That they are being engaged to simply check a government box. Sometimes when people say they are too busy to engage, what they are really saying is they don’t want to prioritise something that ends up being a waste of their time, energy, and hopes.

Note, it is not our intention to indict government, but to simply give voice to an attitude (born of experience) that exists, and highlight what happens when communication gaps are left untended.

Community Priorities:

The following is a starting list of community priorities voiced recently, but also perennially in the Boulder community. These can begin to be integrated into considerations for the BVCP, even before we conduct our upcoming community events. Structural shifts are needed to address most of these issues. What are the ways the Boulder Valley comprehensive plan could lay in place priorities, frameworks and policies to reduce poverty, increase affordability, and or build economic opportunities, and development for the immediate and long-term future? How can impacted communities and governments work together to implement solutions outside the box? Again, this list is not exhaustive, but is a solid informative place to start.



No community input review in Boulder County would be complete without a discussion of the lack of affordability, or of adequate economic opportunity for all. Ask most Frontline communities or community leaders about our region’s needs, and you’ll get a resounding almost deafening yell: “affordable housing!”. Affordable housing is one part of an equation of affordability for our region. Below is a brief exploration of types of affordable housing and some of the other key, connected pieces of affordability for the majority of community members that may be helpful for BVCP planning:

- Affordable housing- Multiple types of affordable housing needed. From affordable rentals to affordable home ownership. We heard there should be support for both and with a wider range of affordability. What is affordable for one family may not be for another, and what is affordable in one phase of life may not be affordable in another. For homeownership, there can be various forms of support and with a wider array of deed restrictions to allow for generational wealth building. We heard frustration that many affordable homeownership opportunities' deed restrictions make it difficult for people to move out of affordable homes and into the market or to build equity and wealth.
- Due to the high cost of living, people report working multiple jobs or sharing housing to make ends meet, which erodes health, mental health, ability to participate in community events or be there for their families and children. This affects the social cohesion and well-being of the entire community.



- Displacement and lack of resources to support long-time residents who moved in or purchased when housing was more affordable and now face challenges to maintaining their homes, or face pressure to leave.
- “Cliff effect” and similar barriers to jumping to any higher economic level. The cliff effect is the well-known phenomena where people are kicked off government benefits or affordable housing when they experience an increase in their income, but not enough of an increase to make ends meet. This can also mean displacement for people in affordable housing.
- Houselessness- Another, related issue we hear resounding from not only the Frontline communities we engage, but seemingly everywhere we go in Boulder and the region, is the crisis in the increase of people dealing with homelessness. While this is a national problem stemming from multiple sources, and thus one that the city and county cannot effectively address alone, more steps need to be taken to initiate collaboration to meet this severe and pervasive issue.
- Food security- Communities are concerned with the whole community having access to food, and especially to healthy foods and vegetables.
- Economic issues and livability
- Stronger safety nets and reduction of poverty are needed
 - Support for unexpected disability is also named as a recurrent hardship and risk
 - City and other local governments are undergoing minimum wage increase- we hear support for an increase to the minimum wage and to increased pay and economic opportunities. These must be tempered, of course, with the potential for this to inadvertently increase the costs across the board.
- *Public Transportation*

Transportation is an important part of the equation for affordability, climate, and community cohesion. Many community members experience transportation as a barrier to an affordable, healthy, equitable, high quality of life. For many it is a part of the consideration of and cost of where to live. It is an essential solution for commuting to work, school, health care access, and community resources and events. Research shows that access to accessible affordable public transportation supports a sense of freedom for youth and those with disabilities. Frontline communities want more access to existing public transportation as well as an expansion of the ease of use, including frequency and locations. Additionally accessible, protective, and safe bus stops are critical for those in intergenerational households or those with disabled community members.

Racial Justice:

Issues of racial justice and other forms of social justice have been raised by Frontline communities for decades under various names (diversity, multiculturalism, gentrification, desegregation, etc.), so again, this is not an exhaustive discussion. Note: we are focusing here on racial justice, and similar work and emphasis



could be done for/with other disenfranchised identities– ability, gender identity, sexuality, incarceration history, and socio-economic class understanding there is an overlap: there are people of color with all those identities. An orientation, understanding and active engagement with racial justice is needed as a foundational backbone of any work toward designing and creating a more equitable and just Boulder. Here a few specific points that community members voice as top-most of their concerns:

- Historic exclusion of meaningful involvement for people of color in local governance and policy making.
- Erasure or invisibilization of the presence, histories, and contributions of people of color in the valley, especially Black, Indigenous, and Latino communities. Asian communities as well
- Recognition of historical harms and reparations
- Frustrations that community calls for increased awareness and action to address racism are often understood only at the level of individuals or interpersonal relationships rather than the call for institutional, systemic, and infrastructural shifts that they actually are.
- Frustration about the lack of retention of people of color in the community, especially Black people
- Gaps in the intentions and narratives of the Boulder community and policies and practices. That despite stated aspirations to be a place of inclusion and diversity, Boulder's history of racial exclusion and segregation continue.
- Protection of immigrants, migrant support, & coordination of resources and opportunities has recently jumped in the priorities of local communities with the recent migration crisis in the region last year and the recent federal shifts with more hostile rhetoric, attitudes, and policies regarding immigration and immigrants, especially of people of color.
- Culture & belonging. Creating welcoming culture that reflects the makeup and history of the valley.
- We hear a strong wish for people of color to have the ability to engage and build on their own terms with their own cultural approaches– not having to do things the way the established and culturally dominant systems have already dictated.

Though many community members named their appreciation of the existing diversity in Boulder, many community leaders also spoke to a sense that Boulder's character feels overwhelmingly wealthy and White, sometimes with a habit of spiritually bypassing community issues with little understanding for what the community as a whole goes through with the challenges of living here.

Climate Justice:

At the intersection of affordability, racial justice, and sustainability lie Climate Justice issues. Many of these could be their own categories or fit with others. Again, a brief list:

- Food access & healthy food- as mentioned before



- Access to green job opportunities
- Air quality
- Resilience- we have faced many headline-grabbing disasters in the last few years. These crises come up repeatedly in speaking with Frontline community members.
 - The Marshall firestorm for example, does not seem so long ago for those who lost their home or are still dealing with the damage done to home or property. Many residents still don't have holes in their homes fixed from the damage of high winds and fallen trees, etc.
- Community health, including mental health
- Composting and recycling
- Fan drives (solutions for high heat days)
- Land access & regenerative agriculture
- Renewable energy
- Clean Water

Intergenerational Community:

Community members voiced a desire to care for and create a strong bond between generations and create a broader band of services and spaces accessible to youth and elders. Youth spoke of the need for more activities and spaces for gathering, recreation, and socializing and elders spoke of concern for younger generations.

- There was a marked concern expressed about the state of mental health of youth in the Boulder community, especially post-pandemic when many youth (and elders) were severely isolated and are still recovering.
- We heard a clear call for a community center, especially for youth not in City of Boulder proper (i.e. especially for those in unincorporated Boulder County)
 - With classes, sports, and resources for children
- Several children (and adults) named parks as both a favorite thing about the community and something they would like to see more of.

Conclusion:

This is an exciting time for an update to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, in part because of our community's commitment to sustainability and because of local government's wider call for community input with the new commitment to conscientiously hear from and engage Frontline communities. With the intention to include Frontline visions and ideas, hopefully this update is the most holistic, equitable, and innovative one yet.

This document reviews our recent findings from engagement with Frontline communities and leaders about what they would like to see in the Boulder community and beyond. Frontline communities reported a love for Boulder's natural spaces, its peace and safety, and its progressive social and political culture, even if



aspirational more than actualized. They reported sustained barriers to collaboration between Frontline communities and government including unaddressed historical harms, unrealized differentials in cultural power and practices, confusing jurisdictions and departmental responsibilities. Pressing issues included the high and ascending cost of living, lack of affordable housing and green economic opportunities, transportation needs, lack of response to racial justice issues, resilience, a need for community centers, and intergenerational support.

In addition to continuing and scaling community outreach initiatives like this one for the BVCP, there are several lessons and questions from the field of Environmental Justice we encourage planners and city staff use at this phase, throughout this process, and in their overall work. Here are a few foundational questions to keep asking to build towards more equitable decision making.⁴

- Who will benefit from planning decisions in what ways?
- Who is burdened and in what ways?
- How are environmental benefits and hazards distributed?
- Are impacted communities a meaningful part of the decision-making, especially for decisions impacting them?
- Do those with cultural, economic and social power have a disproportionate influence and representation at decision-making tables? How might their influence be brought into a balanced relationship with under-represented communities?

These foundational questions help identify and avoid harmful unintended consequences and better understand systems, practices, and policies that maintain or allow inequalities.

Frontline communities are carriers of valuable insights and initiative to address the coming changes and bring forth outlier and visionary perspectives. We must interrupt the status quo and current trends so that as we move into the future they will not continue to be negatively impacted or excluded from policy processes or community benefits. Supporting community-based organizations to design and implement the bulk of that engagement and provide input throughout the process goes above and beyond and hopefully becomes a best practice for local governments. This will make for a more holistic plan and support outside the box thinking and innovation.

We look forward to working together in partnership to support the BVCP update, engaging community members, and incorporating additional Frontline community needs and visions, protecting the environment and finding ways that the BVCP can support regional climate justice, and a healthier more vibrant local community.

⁴ Special recognition here for the work of Dr Robert Bullard. See <https://www.bullardcenter.org/> for more



Additional Resources:

- [The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#)- This spectrum provides a useful map to equitable community engagement based on the premise that participation by impacted communities is “the key to closing equity gaps” and resolving various vulnerabilities.
- Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design For Social Innovation by Ezio Manzini (Book)

To: Kathleen King, Planning and Development Services
From: Enterprise Data Team
Title: Preliminary equity analysis of existing conditions for the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan
Date: April 3, 2025

Context

The City of Boulder developed an Equity Index in 2022 that ranked census block groups in the city by their populations' racial diversity and economic status. To detect possible relationships with other indicators of living conditions in Boulder, we compared this index to the following spatial data layers:

- Floodplain and fire risk
- Police calls for service
- Temperature data
- Critical facilities locations (e.g., hospitals, schools, fire and police stations, government buildings, and shelters)
- Cultural asset locations (e.g. public art installations, venues, farmers markets, murals, etc.)
- Housing types (e.g., single-family units, multi-family units, manufactured housing)
- Mobility options (proximity to bus stops and B-Cycle stations, completeness of sidewalks)
- Tree canopy coverage
- Impervious surface coverage (e.g., paved surfaces, buildings, etc.)

These features were selected to represent five of the goal areas of the City's Sustainability, Equity, and Resilience ("SER") Framework. Throughout this document, block groups with index scores of "4" and "5" will be referenced as areas of "greatest concern" and index values of "1" will be referenced as areas of "least concern."

Findings

Findings are listed by SER goal. All referenced figures can be found in the appendix.

1. Safe
 - a. Though block groups of higher concern on the Equity Index have fewer distinct structures overall, a greater percentage of those structures exist within the 100-year floodplain (Figures 1 and 2).
 - b. Most block groups with higher fire risk (represented by construction requirements for fire resistant materials) are areas of lower concern on the Equity Index. We suggest this is due to higher values for properties along the wildland urban interface (WUI), where fire risk is higher (Figure 3).
 - c. We analyzed police calls for service per dwelling unit, and after removing outliers, found noticeably higher call rates for areas of greater concern on the index (Figure 4).
2. Healthy and Socially Thriving
 - a. Maximum temperatures were highest in block groups of greatest concern, but the median temperature values across all index levels only varied by 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Maximum temperatures in block groups of highest concern were also more tightly distributed, which suggests more consistent conditions within these areas (Figure 5).

- b. We compared the distance for each residential address to critical facilities across the City and found that block groups of higher concern had the shortest distances to critical facilities overall, likely due to the fact that these block groups tend to be more densely populated and more developed (Figure 6).
 - c. We saw a similar trend in residential proximity to cultural assets, as these are also mostly located in more urban parts of the city (Figure 7).
 3. Livable
 - a. The least vulnerable block groups are dominated by detached dwellings, and the proportion of multi-unit dwellings tends to increase with each index level. 95% of the city's manufactured housing exists within block groups of greatest concern (Figure 8).
 - b. We compared the distribution of housing by type across each index level using Jensen-Shannon Divergence scores¹, and found that block groups of index levels 1 and 5 deviated most from the City's overall distribution (Figure 9).
 4. Accessible and Connected
 - a. The typical distance from residential addresses to bus stops was lower overall and more consistent within block groups of higher concern on the index (Figure 10).
 - b. This was also true for distances to the nearest B-Cycle station.
 - c. We compared the completeness of sidewalks in block groups and found that the proportions of missing sidewalk were highest in block groups with index scores of 1 and 5, though both categories were missing less than 20% (Figure 11). We recommend further investigation into the impact of the missing sidewalk on residents by length missing and street type.
 5. Environmentally Sustainable
 - a. Residential parcels in the city have 35% tree canopy cover on average. Block groups of greater concern have disproportionately lower tree canopy cover overall.
 - b. The percentage of impervious surface coverage in residential parcels is disproportionately greater in block groups of highest concern.

Notes:

- The Racial Equity Index is an abstraction of demographic and economic data meant to act as a summary of systemic differences between populations. Where relationships between any given data set and the index occur, we recommend a more detailed look at the relationship using more detailed demographic and economic data sets.
- For this analysis, we restricted our comparisons to the extent of the Racial Equity Index, which does not account for the full Boulder Valley.
- Some of the data sets used did not have coverage for all block groups in the index. In those instances we removed index boundaries from the analysis.

¹ The Jensen-Shannon divergence is a statistical measure of the similarity between two distributions and ranges from 0-1, with distributions that are more similar receiving scores closer to zero.

Appendix

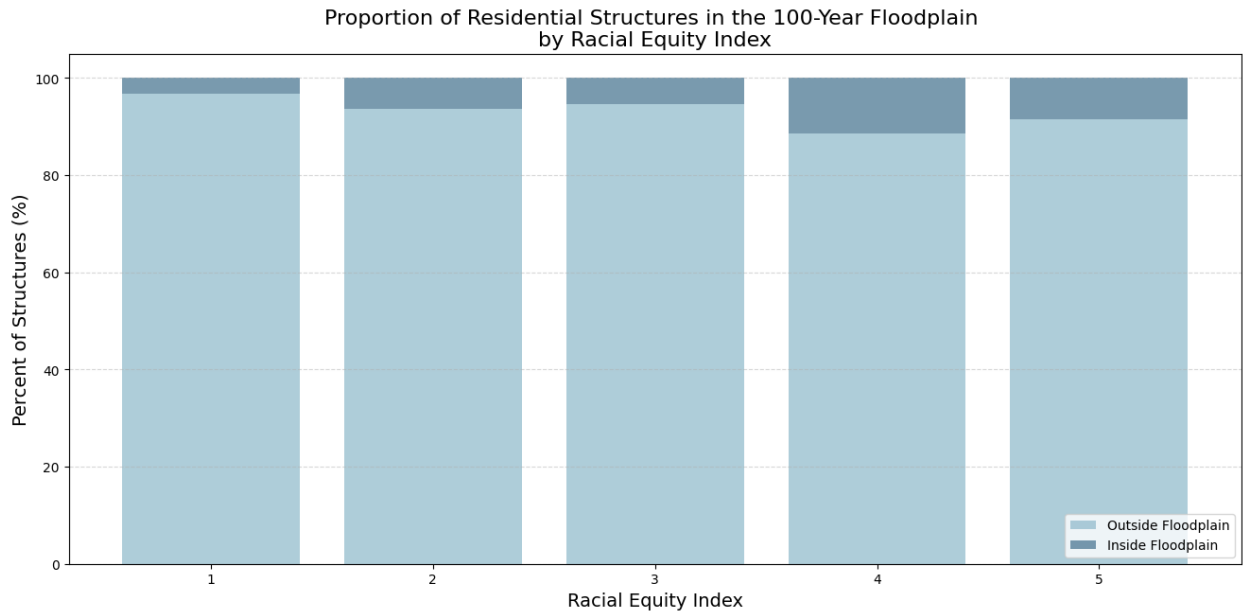


Figure 1. Proportion of residential structures in the 100-year floodplain by Racial Equity Index score.

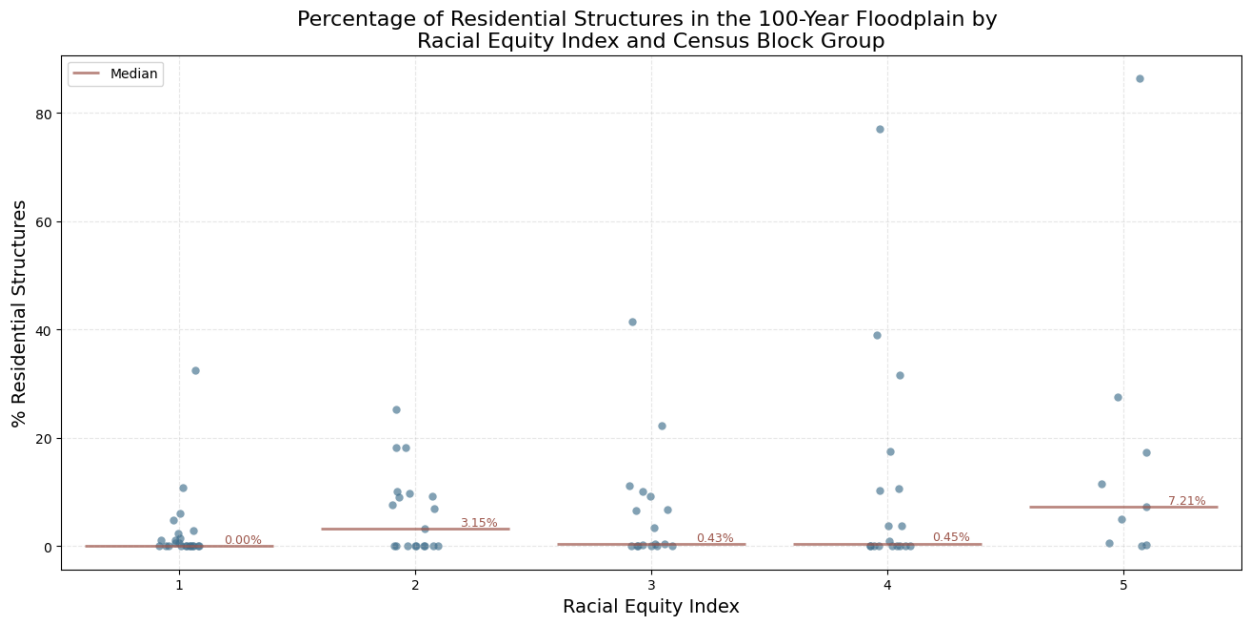


Figure 2. Percentage of residential structures in the 100-year floodplain by index score and block group.

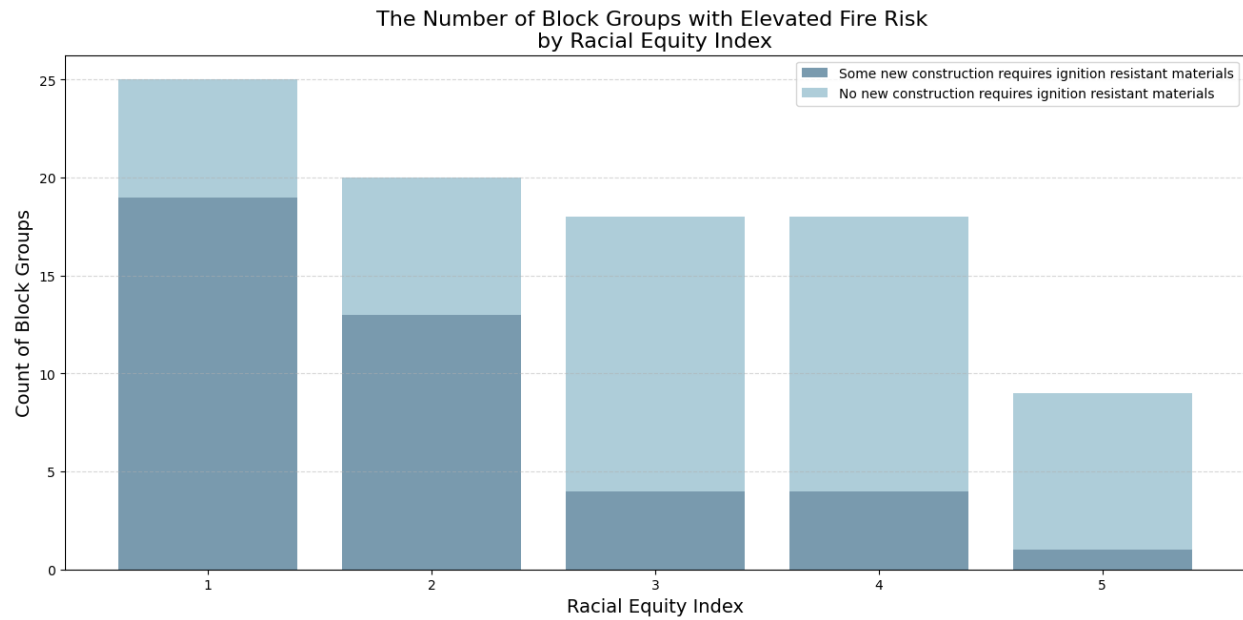


Figure 3. Elevated fire risk status by block group and equity index score.

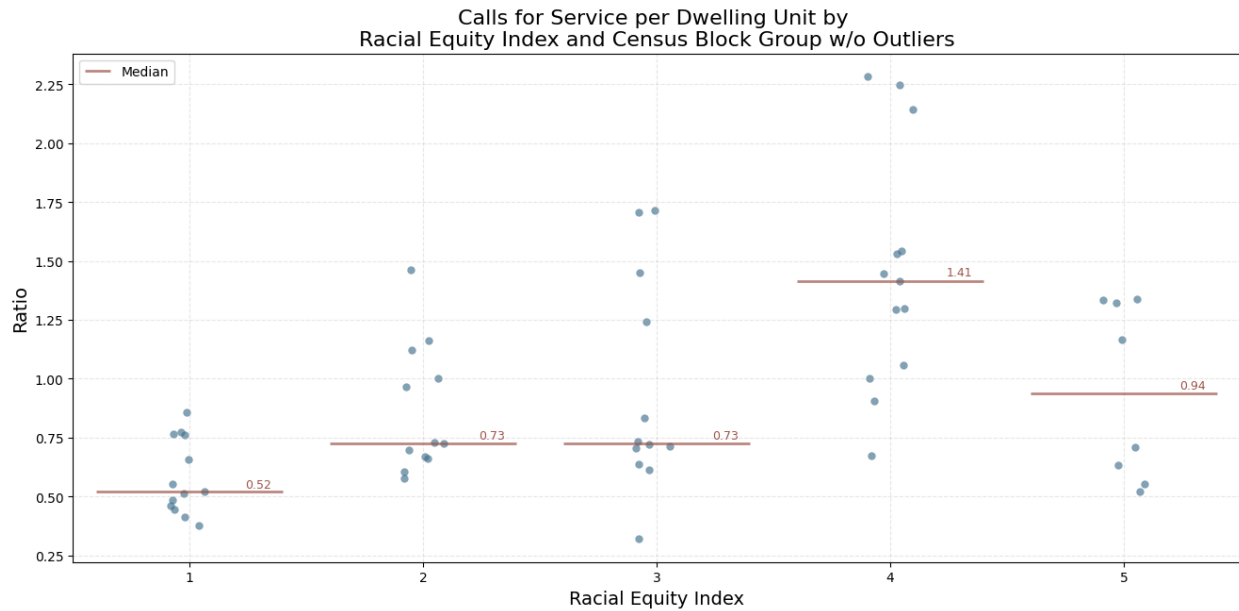


Figure 4. Police calls for service per dwelling unit by index score and block group. Outliers have been removed.

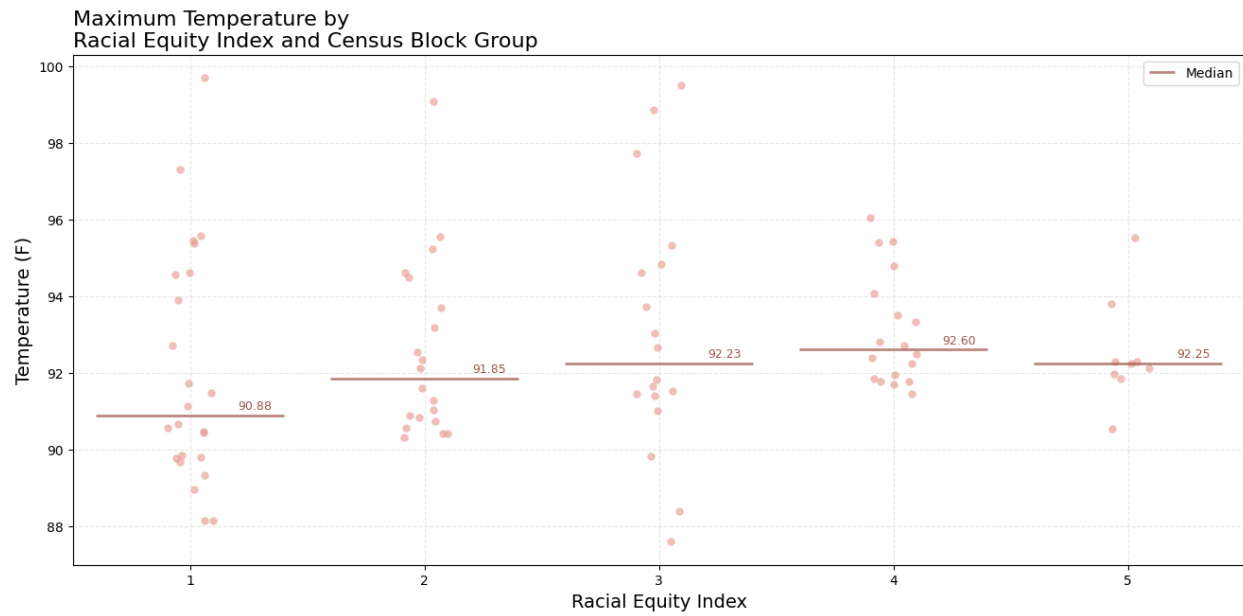


Figure 5. Maximum August temperature for each block group by equity index score.

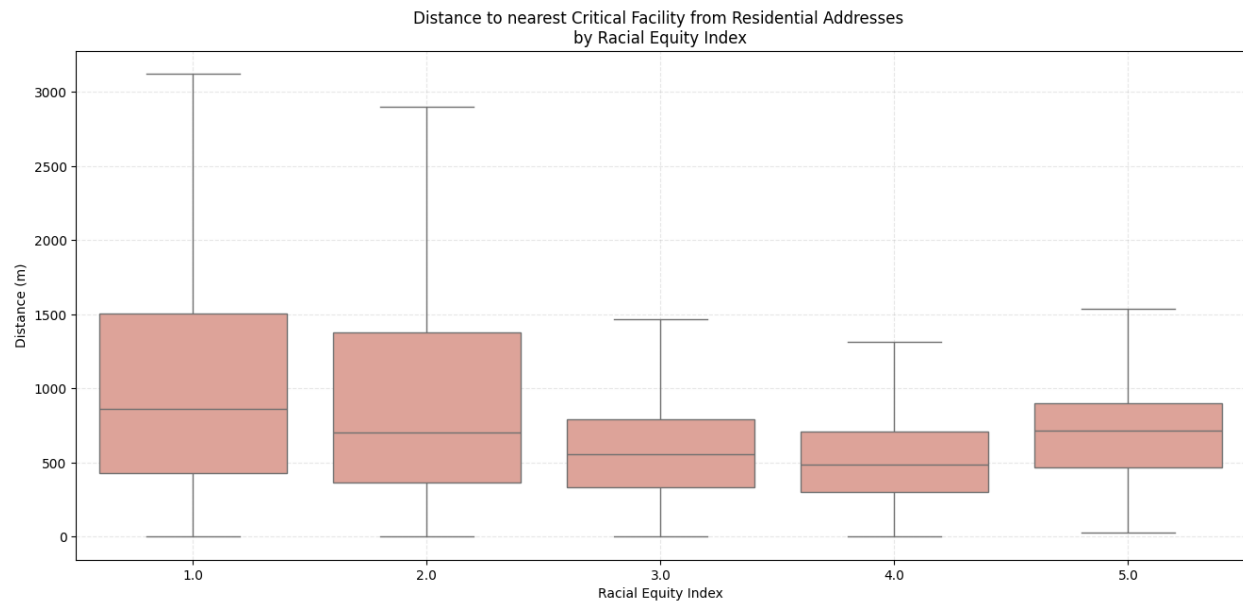


Figure 6. Distribution of travel distances from residential addresses to critical facilities by index score.

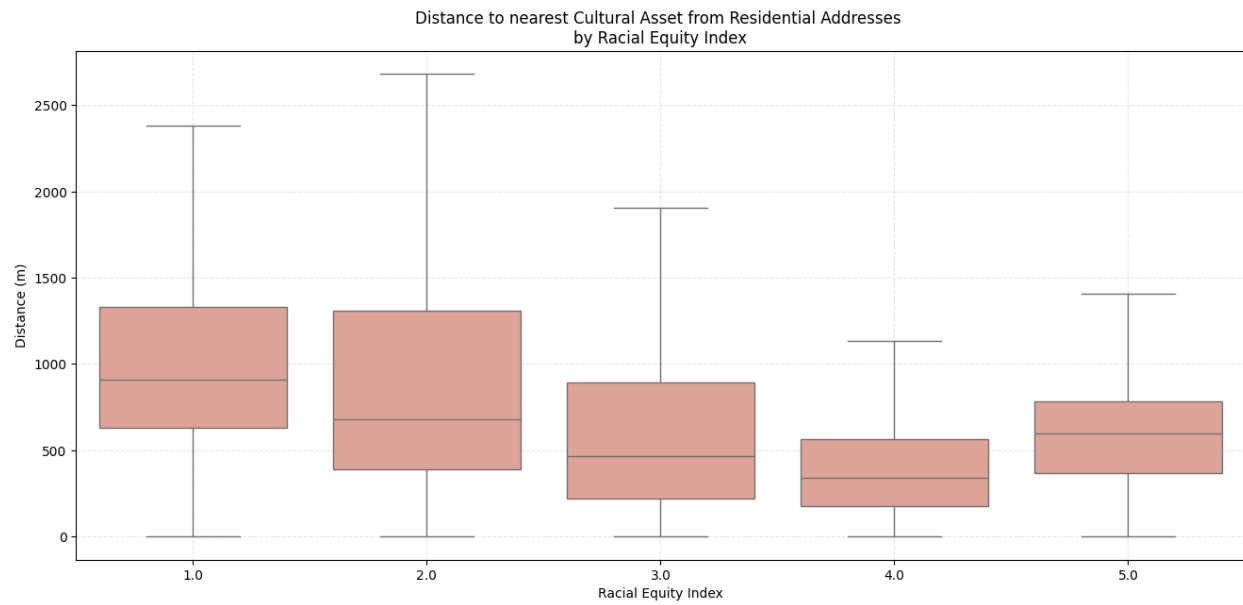


Figure 7. Distribution of travel distances from residential addresses to cultural facilities by index score.

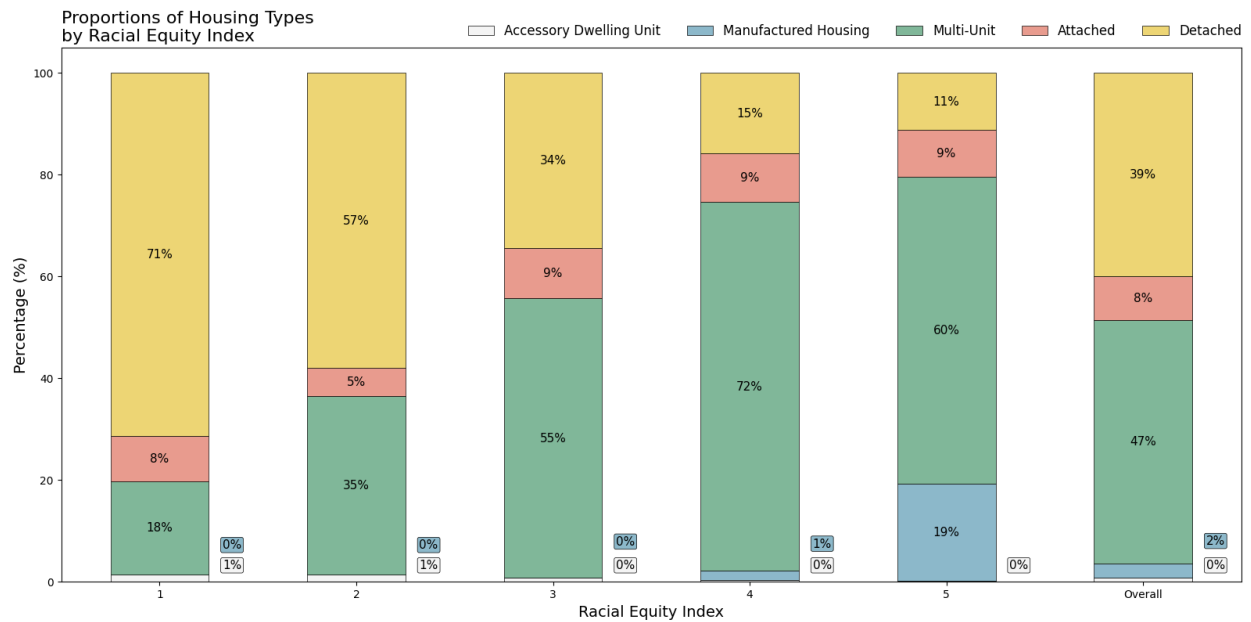


Figure 8. Housing type distribution by index score.

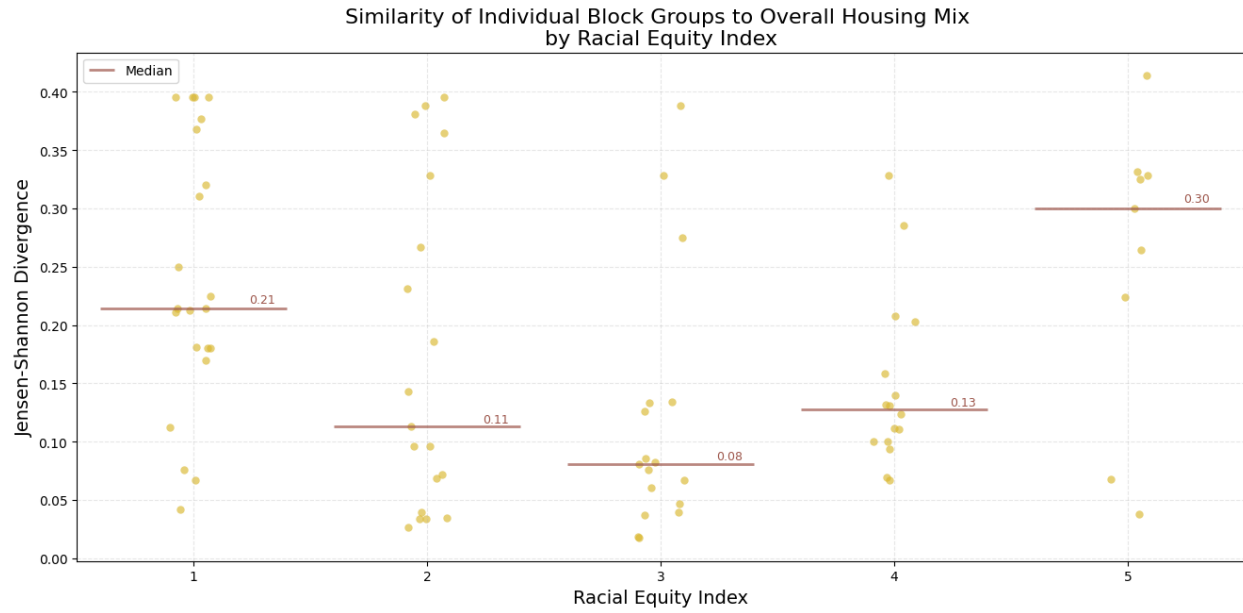


Figure 9. Jensen-Shannon Divergence scores for block groups by index score comparing housing composition to the overall distribution of Boulder.

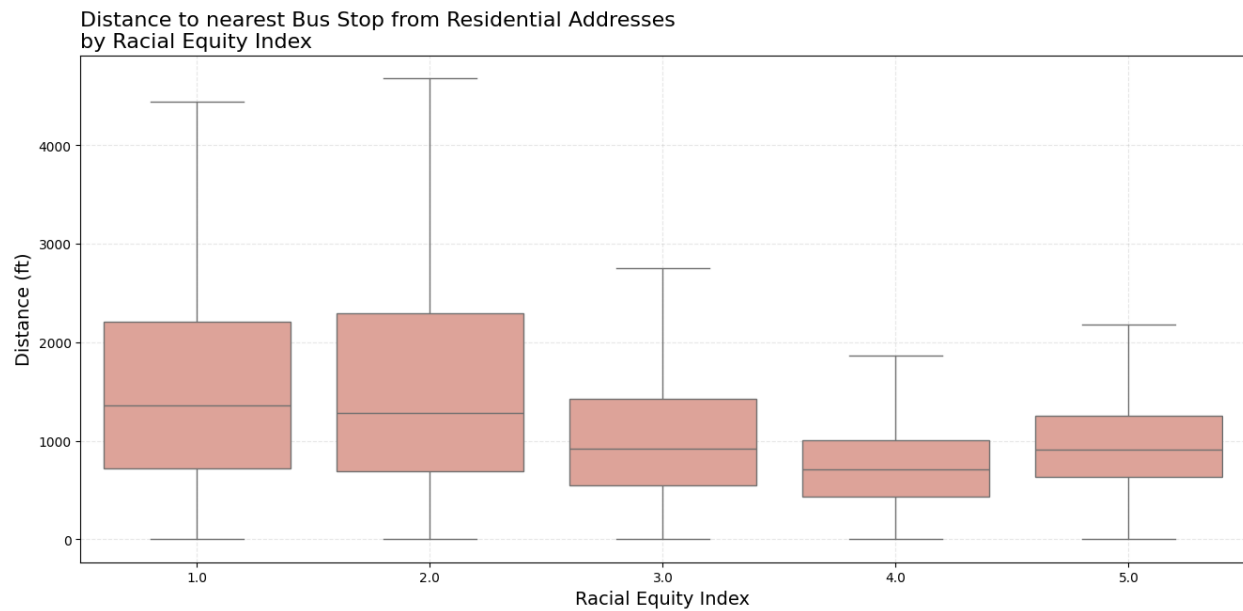


Figure 10. Distributions of bus stop proximity to residential addresses by index score.

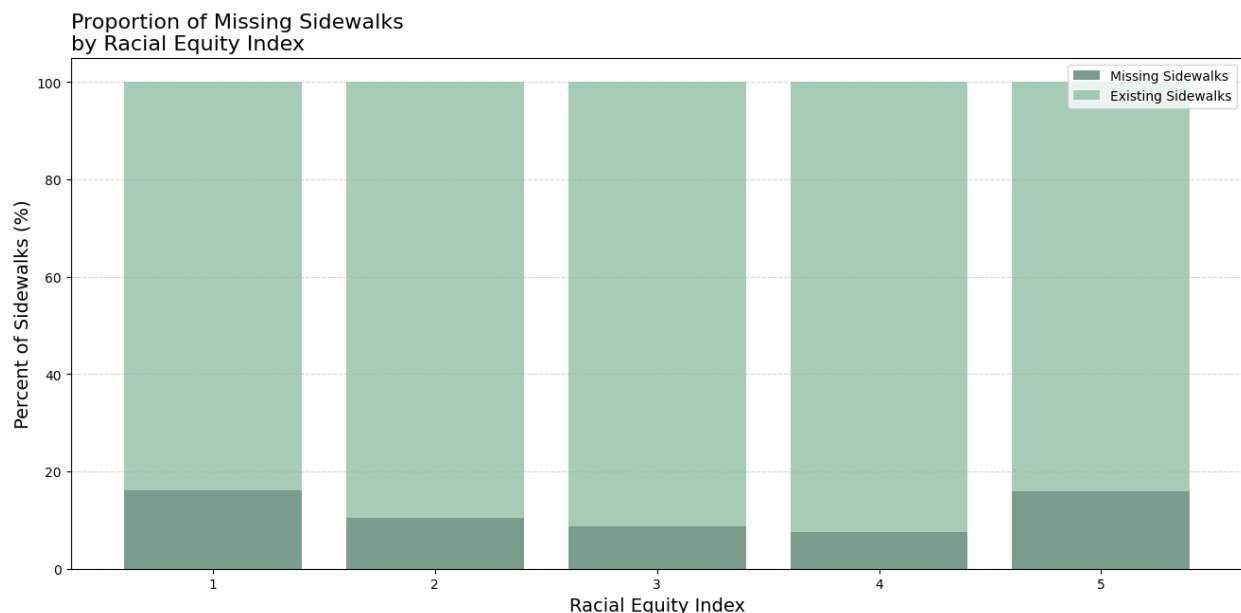


Figure 11. Percentage of block group sidewalks that are missing by index score.

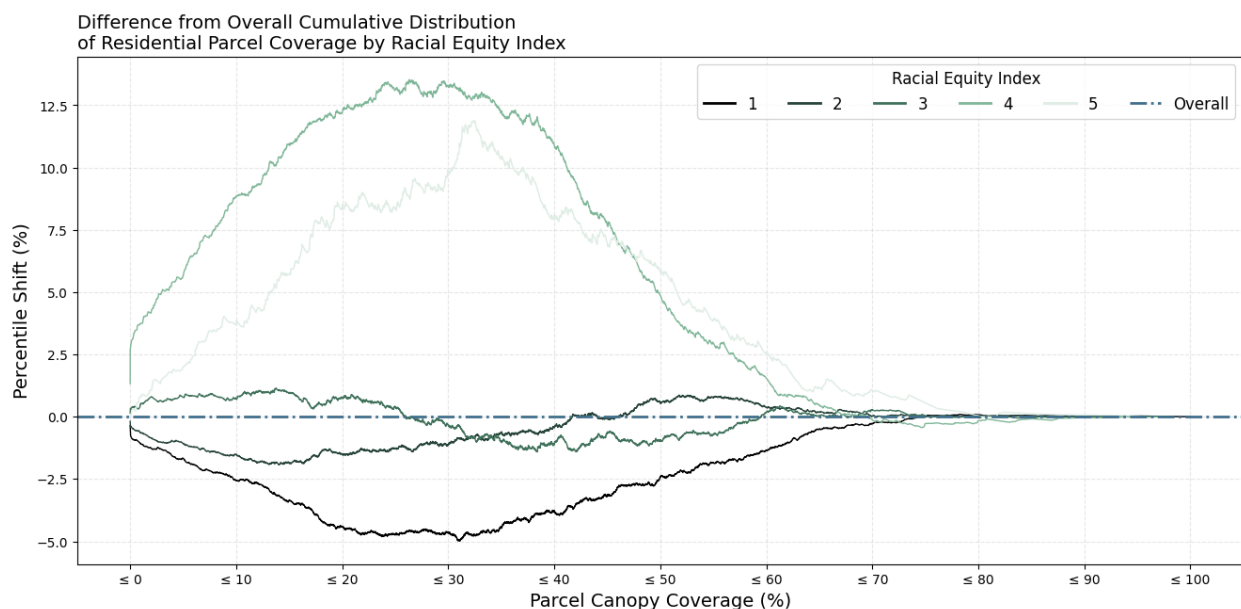


Figure 12. Difference of block groups by index score from the overall cumulative distribution curve for tree canopy coverage in Boulder.²

² A cumulative distribution function (“CDF”) curve shows the accumulated frequency of data points from low to high values of a measure. This plot shows by how much the CDF curves of tree canopy coverage within each index category differ from the City’s overall tree canopy distribution. When an index category has positive y-values for a given amount of canopy coverage, a greater share of residential parcels have canopy below that level compared to the city overall. This plot indicates that block groups of highest concern are more likely to have lower tree canopy coverage than block groups with lower index scores.

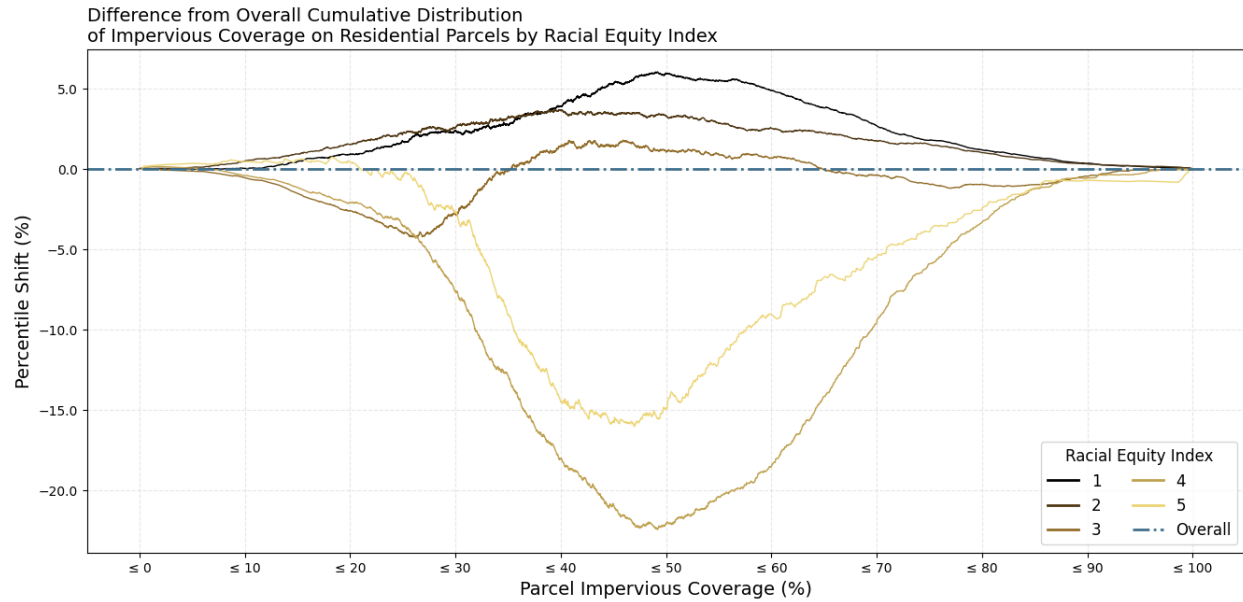


Figure 13. Difference of block groups by index score from the overall cumulative distribution curve for impervious surface coverage in Boulder.³

³ See footnote 2 for a description of this plot type. When an index category has positive y-values for a given amount of impervious coverage, a greater share of residential parcels have impervious coverage below that level compared to the city overall. This plot indicates that block groups with index scores of 4 and 5 are less likely to have lower percentages of impervious surface coverage.