

**Mayor**  
Aaron Brockett

**Council Members**  
Taishya Adams  
Matt Benjamin  
Lauren Folkerts  
Tina Marquis  
Ryan Schuchard  
Nicole Speer  
Mark Wallach  
Tara Winer



Council Chambers  
1777 Broadway  
Boulder, CO 80302  
November 14, 2024  
6:00 PM

**City Manager**  
Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde

**City Attorney**  
Teresa Taylor Tate

**City Clerk**  
Elesha Johnson

## AGENDA FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOULDER CITY COUNCIL

---

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
  2. **Consent Agenda**
  3. **Public Hearings**
    - A. **Joint public hearing with Planning Board to consider initiating an Area III - Planning Reserve Community Needs Study**

**Public Hearing ONLY – No deliberations.**

*90 min  
- 20 min  
presentation  
/ 70 min  
public hearing  
&  
council discussion*
  4. **Matters from the City Manager**
    - A. **Engagement Strategic Framework**

*60 min  
- 20 min  
presentation  
/ 40 min  
council discussion*
- Materials anticipated for final packet*
5. **Discussion Items**
  6. **Debrief**

## 7. Adjournment

*3:00 hrs*

---

City Council documents, including meeting agendas, study session agendas, meeting action summaries and information packets can be accessed at [www.bouldercolorado.gov/city-council](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/city-council).

This meeting can be viewed at [www.bouldercolorado.gov/city-council](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/city-council). Meetings are aired live on Municipal Channel 8 and the city's website and are re-cablecast at 6 p.m. Wednesdays and 11 a.m. Fridays in the two weeks following a regular council meeting.

Boulder 8 TV (Comcast channels 8 and 880) is now providing closed captioning for all live meetings that are aired on the channels. The closed captioning service operates in the same manner as similar services offered by broadcast channels, allowing viewers to turn the closed captioning on or off with the television remote control. Closed captioning also is available on the live HD stream on [BoulderChannel8.com](http://BoulderChannel8.com). To activate the captioning service for the live stream, the "CC" button (which is located at the bottom of the video player) will be illuminated and available whenever the channel is providing captioning services.

The council chambers is equipped with a T-Coil assisted listening loop and portable assisted listening devices. Individuals with hearing or speech loss may contact us using Relay Colorado at 711 or 1-800-659-3656.

Anyone requiring special packet preparation such as Braille, large print, or tape recorded versions may contact the City Clerk's Office at 303-441-4222, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please request special packet preparation no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting.

If you need Spanish interpretation or other language-related assistance for this meeting, please call (303) 441-1905 at least three business days prior to the meeting. Si usted necesita interpretacion o cualquier otra ayuda con relacion al idioma para esta junta, por favor comuniquese al (303) 441-1905 por lo menos 3 negocios dias antes de la junta.

Send electronic presentations to email address: [CityClerkStaff@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:CityClerkStaff@bouldercolorado.gov) no later than 2 p.m. the day of the meeting.



## **COVER SHEET**

**MEETING DATE**  
**November 14, 2024**

### **AGENDA ITEM**

Joint public hearing with Planning Board to consider initiating an Area III - Planning Reserve Community Needs Study

**Public Hearing ONLY – No deliberations.**

### **PRIMARY STAFF CONTACT**

Sarah Horn, City Planner Senior

### **REQUESTED ACTION OR MOTION LANGUAGE**

Motion to continue the November 14, 2024, public hearing to November 19, 2024, for Planning Board, and November 21, 2024, for City Council, to allow for independent deliberation and vote regarding authorizing city staff to conduct an Area III-Planning Reserve Community Needs Study; no additional testimony will be taken on this subject at the continued hearings

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

#### **Description**

- ▣ **Item 3A - Area III - Planning Reserve Service Area Expansion Community Needs Assessment**



**CITY OF BOULDER  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM  
PLANNING BOARD AGENDA ITEM  
JOINT HEARING**

**MEETING DATE: November 14, 2024**

**AGENDA TITLE**

City Council and Planning Board public hearing, for each body to consider:

- (1) A motion to find that there is interest in considering a Service Area expansion into the Area III-Planning Reserve as part of the 2025 major update to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan.

Following the public hearing on November 14, 2024, each body will consider a motion to continue their respective hearing to, November 19, 2024, for Planning Board, and November 21, 2024, for City Council. On November 19 and 21, the two bodies, respectively, will deliberate and consider a motion regarding its interest in considering a Service Area expansion into the Area III-Planning Reserve as part of the 2025 major update to the BVCP. No additional testimony will be taken on this subject at the continued hearings.

**PRESENTER(S)**

Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager  
Chris Meschuk, Deputy City Manager  
Mark Woulf, Assistant City Manager  
Brad Mueller, Planning & Development Services (P&DS) Director  
Kristofer Johnson, Comprehensive Planning Senior Manager, P&DS  
Sarah Horn, Senior City Planner, P&DS  
Chris Douville, Deputy Director of Operations, Utilities  
Chris Douglass, Utilities Engineering Senior Manager, Utilities  
Kim Hutton, Water Resources Senior Manager, Utilities  
Valerie Watson, Interim Director, Transportation & Mobility  
Gerrit Slatter, Civil Engineering Senior Manager, Transportation & Mobility  
Ali Rhodes, Director, Parks & Recreation  
Mark Davison, Planning Senior Manager, Parks & Recreation  
Joel Wagner, Deputy Director, Finance  
James Macdonald, Tax Manager, Finance  
Teresa Tate, City Attorney  
Laurel Witt, Assistant City Attorney II, City Attorney’s Office

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) establishes a clear process for consideration of a Service Area expansion into the Area III-Planning Reserve:

*“The city may consider a service area expansion into the Area III-Planning Reserve following acceptance of the baseline urban services study. Service Area expansion may occur at a mid-term or major update to the BVCP. At the beginning of each BVCP update, the Planning Board and City Council will hold a public hearing to determine if there is interest in considering a Service Area expansion as part of that update. If the city is interested in considering a Service Area expansion, a planning effort to solicit and identify priority community needs will begin.”*

The Urban Services Study (USS) was considered for acceptance on [November 7, 2024](#). If accepted, Step 1 of the Service Area expansion process will be complete. Per the procedures outlined in the BVCP, after acceptance of a USS and at the beginning of a BVCP update, Planning Board and City Council must hold a public hearing to determine whether a Service Area expansion should be considered during the BVCP update.

If Planning Board and City Council are interested in exploring Service Area expansion further, a community needs study (Step 2) will be incorporated into the BVCP Major Update project. Both bodies need to find there is an interest in considering a Service Area expansion as part of the 2025 BVCP update for the process to continue. If one or both

bodies do not approve such interest, the process will stop, and Service Area expansion cannot be considered until the next mid-term or major BVCP update.

If both bodies approve considering a Service Area expansion, a planning effort to conduct a community needs study is authorized (Step 2). The process for the community needs study within the BVCP Major Update is outlined below. The process would culminate with public hearings with City Council and Planning Board at the end of the community needs study to determine if the needs are of sufficient priority to warrant preparation of a Service Area Expansion Plan (Step 3).

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Suggested Motion Language:**

**For November 14:** Staff requests planning board and council action in the form of the following motion:

**Planning Board:** Motion to continue the November 14, 2024, public hearing to the planning board meeting on November 19, 2024, for deliberation and consideration of a motion.

**City Council:** Motion to continue the November 14, 2024, public hearing to the council meeting on November 21, 2024, for deliberation and consideration of a motion.

**For November 19 and 21, as applicable:**

Staff requests planning board and council consideration of this matter and action, by each body, in the form of the following motion:

A motion to find that there is interest in considering a Service Area expansion into the Area III-Planning Reserve as part of the 2025 major update to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Area III-Planning Reserve (Planning Reserve) is approximately 500 acres in size and was identified through the 1993 Area III Planning Project as the portion of Area III where the city maintains the option of expansion for future urban development in response to priority community needs that cannot be met within the existing Service Area (Areas I and II). Nearly 200 acres of the 500 acres was acquired by the city and is designated for parks and related uses. Most of the remaining acreage is held in private ownership.

A three-step process for Service Area expansion (i.e., changing of the Area III-Planning Reserve designation to Area II which allows for annexation) was set in place in 1995 and is defined in the BVCP to ensure a methodical approach to potential expansion of the city into the Planning Reserve. In 2015, the process was revised to incorporate the Urban Services Study as the first step in the expansion process. Per the BVCP, “the purpose of the study is to learn more about the feasibility and requirements to provide urban services to the area, and to understand potential phasing and logical areas of planning and potential expansion.”

Prioritized by the 2022 City Council, staff prepared an Urban Services Study (USS) over the last year (Step 1). The USS provided an objective technical analysis of the feasibility, phasing, and potential costs of extending urban services into the Area III-Planning Reserve and was considered for acceptance (“*was accepted*”) by City Council on November 7, 2024.

With the acceptance of the USS, Planning Board and City Council are now required to hold a public hearing to determine whether the Service Area Expansion process should be considered during the BVCP update.

If there is such interest from both bodies, a planning effort to solicit and identify priority community needs (Step 2 of the Service Area expansion process) will be incorporated into the BVCP Major Update process. If both bodies do not authorize a community needs study, Service Area expansion cannot be considered until the next BVCP update.

## **ANALYSIS**

If Planning Board and City Council both approve considering a Service Area expansion as part of the 2025 BVCP update, staff will move forward with Step 2 of the Service Area expansion process and a community needs study will be incorporated into the BVCP Major Update project. As defined in the current BVCP, the community needs study is intended to:

- Help identify and prioritize community needs.
- Assess underutilized capacity in existing service infrastructure or regulations (e.g., zoning) within the existing city Service Area in relation to identified needs.
- Determine if these needs can reasonably be met within the current Service Area boundary, which could include policy adjustments or enhanced infrastructure, or if there is sufficient community need to warrant a Service Area expansion.
- Determine if expansion will address long-term BVCP values and will benefit existing residents in the Boulder Valley as well as future generations.

City staff will be assessing a variety of needs across the entire community as part of the update process. Those needs will be evaluated within the context of existing policies and infrastructure capacity of the current Service Area, and the potential opportunities and constraints offered by the Area III-Planning Reserve. Multiple solutions may be possible

to address these community needs and expansion into the Planning Reserve will be considered alongside alternative options as part of the overall BVCP update.

A preliminary approach to continue exploring a Service Area expansion through the BVCP update is outlined below. The preliminary approach is designed to fully incorporate community engagement and policy considerations related to Area III- Planning Reserve into the BVCP update process to ensure a comprehensive review and analysis of community needs and potential solutions.

<p>Jan – Mar 2025</p>	<p>Community engagement related to Community Needs (aligned with BVCP Update Phase 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Existing Conditions data to identify preliminary unmet needs</li> <li>• Engage community through Vision, Values, and Focus Areas activities to discuss preliminary needs identified by staff, add new needs brought forward by community members, and prioritize most critical needs</li> </ul>
<p>Apr – May 2025</p>	<p>Preliminary Analysis of Needs (aligned with early BVCP Update Phase 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine if priority community needs could reasonably be addressed within the current Service Area through policy adjustments or enhanced infrastructure</li> <li>• If needs could be addressed through the Planning Reserve, include Service Area expansion in Draft Policy Framework to be further explored through detailed analysis in BVCP Update Phase 3.</li> </ul>
<p>Jun – Oct 2025</p>	<p>Analysis of Service Area Expansion (aligned with late BVCP Update Phase 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze Service Area expansion as a possible solution to priority community needs alongside alternative or additional options that maintain the existing Service Area</li> <li>• Engage with the community to explore various policies/tools to meet community needs, including Service Area expansion, and weigh possible tradeoffs of each alternative</li> </ul>
<p>Nov 2025 - Feb 2026</p>	<p>Determination on Step 3 Service Area Expansion Plan (aligned with early BVCP Update Phase 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Service Area expansion appears to be a viable alternative based on community feedback, prepare analysis of Service Area expansion per the criteria outlined in the BVCP (see below)</li> <li>• Refer unmet priority community needs to Boulder County</li> <li>• Host public hearings with Planning Board and City Council to determine if the unmet needs are of sufficient priority to</li> </ul>



	<p>warrant a Service Area Expansion Plan (likely Dec 2025 or Jan 2026)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If needs are of sufficient priority, develop policies to be incorporated into the draft of the BVCP update.</li> <li>• Service Area Expansion Plan process (Step 3) would occur after completion and adoption of the BVCP update.</li> </ul>
--	--

At the end of the Community Needs Assessment, public hearings with City Council and Planning Board will be held to determine if the needs are of sufficient priority to warrant preparation of a Service Area Expansion Plan. Prior to the public hearings, the identified needs will be referred to the county. Per the BVCP, to determine if there is sufficient need to expand, the city will consider the following factors:

- a. **Community Value:** Expansion will address a long-term community value as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan.
- b. **Capacity:** Expansion is needed because there is not suitable existing or potential land/service capacity within the existing Service Area.
- c. **Benefit:** Expansion will benefit the existing residents in the Boulder Valley and will have a lasting benefit for future generations.

**NEXT STEPS**

If both bodies find there is an interest in considering a Service Area expansion as part of the BVCP update, a planning effort to conduct a community needs study (Step 2) is authorized and will be incorporated into the update process. If it is determined that there is sufficient community need to warrant a Service Area expansion at the completion of Step 2, the final step (Step 3) of the process is to develop a Service Area Expansion Plan for a portion or all of the Area III-Planning Reserve.

The preparation of this plan would occur at some time after completion of the BVCP update (after 2026). A Service Area Expansion Plan is considered for approval through public hearings by four bodies including the City of Boulder Planning Board and City Council, along with Boulder County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. If approved, portion(s) or all of the Area III-Planning Reserve could then be reclassified from Area III-Planning Reserve to Area II during the next mid-term or major update to the BVCP, and properties within Area II will become eligible for annexation.



**COVER SHEET**

**MEETING DATE**  
**November 14, 2024**

**STUDY SESSION ITEM**

Engagement Strategic Framework

**PRIMARY STAFF CONTACT**

Ryan Hanschen, Community Engagement Manager

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Description**

- ▣ **Item 4A - Engagement Strategic Framework**
- ▣ **Community Connectors-in-Residence Update**



**CITY OF BOULDER  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

**MEETING DATE: November 14, 2024**

**AGENDA TITLE**

Update on the city's Engagement Strategic Framework

**PRESENTER(S)**

Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager  
Chris Meschuk, Deputy City Manager  
Sarah Huntley, Director of Communication & Engagement  
Ryan Hanschen, Community Engagement Manager  
Brenda Ritenour, Community Engagement Manager  
Angela Maria Ortiz Roa, Community Engagement Senior Program Manager

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this item is to share an update with council on the evolution of the city's culture of community engagement since the launch of our Engagement Strategic Framework (see Attachment A) in November 2017. Focusing on the city's commitment to meaningful and inclusive engagement, this update will include information about capacity-building and resourcing for this work, best practices and lessons learned to date, as well as the city's path forward, in commitment to continual learning and evolution.

**COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPACTS**

- **Economic** – The work the city does to engage community broadly, and the business community more specifically, supports the economic health and vitality of Boulder.
- **Environmental** – Engagement and empowerment, both individual and collective, have emerged as some of the most important actions the city can take in the face of climate change and support of the community’s environmental goals.
- **Social** – Continued advances in meaningful and inclusive engagement practices will help to ensure more thorough decision-making, increase the diversity of public participation, and build trust between community members and city government. This effort is directly tied to the following Sustainability, Equity and Resilience Framework goals:
  - Accessible and Connected: Open access to information is provided both physically and digitally to foster connectivity and promote community engagement.
  - Responsibly Governed: A local government that ... makes data-driven decisions informed by community engagement inclusive of those who have been historically excluded from government programs and services. Supports strategic decision-making with opportunities for accessible community engagement in multiple languages and timely and reliable data and analysis.

**OTHER IMPACTS**

- **Fiscal** –As recently as seven years ago, there was no centralized engagement budget (or team). In 2025, the city will allocate nearly \$1.3 million to this work. It’s also worth noting that this figure does not represent the totality of spending the city does to engage with community. In a centralized-decentralized model, individual departments also leverage resources – usually from specific project budgets – on engagement. No additional funding is requested at this time.
- **Staff time** – Continuing to evolve the city’s meaningful and inclusive engagement practices is already included in current staff work plans.

**PUBLIC FEEDBACK**

The city’s commitment to changing the culture of engagement, and the accompanying Engagement Strategic Framework, was borne out of community input. Since the framework’s adoption in 2017, the city has not conducted broad engagement specifically around engagement; however, city staff and council frequently receive feedback about its public participation work.

The two indicators the city chose to focus on in its first application of the Public Participation Working Group’s recommendations were creating processes and opportunities that were inclusive and meaningful for participants.

The feedback about the city's efforts to be more inclusive has largely been positive. Especially within the Latino and Nepali communities, where there has been considerable focus, there is growing awareness that the city is making progress in making materials more accessible; in creating culturally competent opportunities (usually with the guidance of Community Connectors); and seeking to ensure diverse voices are being heard by policy makers. As one bilingual participant wrote on a sticky note said after an engagement event: "I felt like I was a part of this community for the first time." This sentiment is reflective of feedback staff regularly receives. Notably, three former Community Connectors and two bilingual, bi-cultural partner engagement practitioners have since joined the city as full-time staff members – heartened by the work and the commitment to equity.

The city has also received valuable input about ways to improve inclusivity. Some of the community feedback has challenged the city to expand its reach, deepening trust and opportunities to collaborate more with Black and African-American, local Indigenous, Asian, people with disabilities and neurodiversity, and LGBTQ+ communities. Recent evaluation of the Community Connectors model (see Attachment B) surfaced several key recommendations, particularly around the importance of sustained funding and ways to help staff work most effectively with connectors. Many of these recommendations were included in a new Community Connectors Manual (see Attachment C), a critical resource for aligning connectors with city employees who collaborate with them

Feedback around the city's work to make engagement more meaningful has been more mixed. While there has been some positive input about particular processes or opportunities that individuals and council members appreciated, there remains a general skepticism that engagement is changing outcomes. Some community members – especially those who had already found some power in influencing their government – continue to express frustration that they are not brought in earlier in decision-making processes, that their feedback still feels limited to two- to three-minute testimony at council meetings, and that policymakers are not demonstrating how their decisions are or are not being influenced by their involvement. Some of this feedback is reflected in interviews conducted last year by the National Civic League Center for Democracy Innovation as part of a [Civic Infrastructure Scan and Recommendations report](#) associated with its Better Public Meetings project.

The concept of whether engagement is meaningful can be difficult to measure as there is often a tendency – recognized widely in the profession of public participation – for people to base their evaluation of effectiveness on whether they achieved the outcome they most desired. It is also common for individuals who have not participated in city-sponsored engagement to have strong opinions about it. While the city welcomes this feedback – it can be incredibly informative about why people are choosing to opt out – it has limited value as evaluation of what the city *is* doing.

Because of this, the city has started to be more specific in the question it asks when seeking feedback about engagement. In the 2023 community survey, for example, respondents were asked if they had participated in city-sponsored engagement in the previous 12 months (29% indicated they had) and if they so, whether they believed their input was heard, even if the outcome wasn't ultimately what they preferred. A little more than half of these active respondents indicated they believed their input was heard.

While this suggests some progress, it is important to note that this survey had limitations. The number of respondents from some less populated demographic groups in the city was very small. The limited sample size makes it difficult to evaluate nuances and draw conclusions about how representative the sentiments are of the whole community. Nonetheless, some effort was made to look for differences in perspective around this measurement. The survey analysis showed that respondents who identified as "not Hispanic" or as "unable to cover all of their essential expenses without accumulating debt" were less likely than their counterparts to believe their input was heard.

The city intends to continue to ask this question in subsequent evaluations of community satisfaction. In addition, the engagement program has committed to pre- and post-engagement surveys starting in 2025 for five priority projects associated with City Council priorities and/or citywide strategic plan items, as identified by the team at the beginning of each year. The outcome staff will strive to achieve is that city efforts for these projects align with best practices and approaches outlined in the city's Engagement Strategic Framework. The goal is that more than 50% of participants who respond report having a very high or high confidence in the integrity of the engagement process, regardless of whether they agree with the outcome.

## **BACKGROUND**

In January 2016, Boulder City Council recognized improvements were needed in how the city engages, informs, and includes the public. Council directed staff to involve the community in developing recommendations to enhance engagement. This led to the creation of a 14-member Public Participation Working Group (PPWG), with meetings supported by one council member and two city employees. This working group presented a comprehensive report to City Council in August 2017 (see Attachment D).

The PPWG report identified what the group called problem statements (e.g., some members of the public do not trust city decision-making processes, some members of the public do not understand how public engagement and decision-making processes work, constructive public conversations do not occur often enough and this can lead to frustration, anger and disruptive behavior), defined five core principles of "best in class" engagement, and made a series of recommendations for improvement. While the report provided additional details and strategic counsel, the group landed on two over-arching

recommendations: change the culture of public engagement and utilize a comprehensive decision-making process.

From these recommendations, city staff developed a plan to implement the recommendations and introduce a more comprehensive, consistent and strategic approach to community engagement in Boulder. This led to the creation of the city's Engagement Strategic Framework, approved by Boulder City Council in November 2017 (see Attachment A).

### **Renewed Commitment**

The Engagement Strategic Framework represented a new commitment to the community.

- *“The City of Boulder is continually strengthening our engagement culture and processes because we recognize that local government makes better decisions and creates more responsive programs and services when the community we serve has a meaningful voice. The best community engagement is appropriately scaled, consistent and reliable, transparent, equitable, and inclusive for all participants.”*

### **Foundational Tools**

In addition, it outlined new tools the city would use in engagement, consistent with international best practices. The most significant of these were:

- **The City of Boulder's Engagement Spectrum**  
The city follows a modified version of IAP2's (International Association of Public Participation) engagement spectrum to help identify the role of the community in project planning and decision-making processes. This tool encourages transparency and supports community, staff, and policymakers to be on the same page throughout an engagement process, especially with the 'Promise to the Public.' When designing engagement processes, staff strive for the public influence on a specific decision to be appropriately scaled to reflect and balance limitations of staff and community capacity, time-constraints, public interest in the topic, and the level of community impact on the decision that policymakers are comfortable with. Additional information about the spectrum will be included in the Analysis section later in this memo.
- **A Decision-making Wheel**  
The city leverages a nine-step Decision-making Wheel that is designed to be comprehensive, scalable, and easy to follow for city staff, council, and community members. This structure is designed to bring more consistency to engagement processes across the city. It also gives community members the ability to participate in a more informed and predictable way, and in closer partnership with city staff and decision-makers. While this tool is included in

engagement trainings for city staff, continued socialization and implementation – including with community and council – will help to further increase its effectiveness over time.



## Organizational Capacity

Because the city’s approach to engagement prior to 2017 was completely decentralized, it has been important to prioritize capacity-building and alignment across the organization. These efforts have included:

- Building Centralized Engagement Team capacity
  - In 2017-18, two newly created positions, consistent with a PPWG recommendation that the effort be directly resourced, and the pre-existing Neighborhood Liaison position, formed the city’s Engagement Team within the City Manager’s Office.
  - In June 2020, the city created a new Communication & Engagement department. In the years since then, the Engagement Team has grown. Currently, there are 8.5 FTE, including two Engagement Managers; two Project Manager positions embedded within Climate Initiatives and Planning & Development Services; a Community Engagement Senior



Program Manager; a Language Access Senior Program Manager, a Neighborhood Liaison, a Volunteer Cooperative Senior Program Manager, and a term-limited part-time Community Connectors Coordinator. An Assistant to City Council position in the City Manager's Office also coordinates opportunities for council to engage with community outside of council meetings.

- Training and resources to advance a citywide culture of meaningful and inclusive engagement
  - Gearing Up for Engagement training – This 3.5-hour long interactive workshop, offered twice per year for approximately 20-30 participants, dives into the principles and theory of community engagement. Participants develop a deeper understanding of the city's Engagement Strategic Framework, levels of engagement spectrum, and the preferred decision-making process. Hands-on activities give participants the skills necessary to integrate effective in-person and online engagement practices into project planning.
  - An Engagement Coordination Committee – The city's Engagement Coordination Committee (ECC) meets monthly and focuses on: supporting the City of Boulder's implementation of the Engagement Strategic Framework and its overall commitment to an improved culture of relationship building and public participation; enhancing the understanding and consistent application of citywide engagement policies, practices, and philosophies in departments throughout the organization; and continuing to develop and help to implement ideas that support innovation, coordinated, and strategic community engagement.
  - Templates, checklists and guidance – In 2018, staff updated tools, guidance, and resources that support staff across the city in moving toward consistent and transparent engagement practices. These tools (e.g., an Engagement Plan template, a Decision-making Wheel checklist, language access guidance for engagement sessions, and a guide to selecting engagement consultants who will follow city practices) are available for employees. Many of these tools are also discussed in the Gearing Up for Community Engagement training.
  - [Productive Atmospheres](#) – In partnership with more than 300 community members, the City of Boulder has embraced a vision for productive and inclusive civic conversations. This vision supports physical and emotional safety for everyone, as well as promoting democracy for people of all ages, identities, lived experiences, and political perspectives. The City of

Boulder is committed to upholding this during engagement events, whenever civic dialogue occurs, and during all city business meetings.

- Council Subcommittee on Engagement and a Welcoming Council Environment – At its January 2022 retreat, City Council identified a desire to establish a subcommittee focused on strengthening engagement between the council itself and community. Since early 2022, the council subcommittee has held community listening sessions (chats, walks and strolls) and proposed new or evolved practices for community members to engage with council members, including, most recently, a Council and Community Forum model.
- The city’s first-ever [Racial Equity Plan](#), approved by City Council in February 2021, also includes several strategies that illustrate how the city will build and maintain trust as well as expand the influence of community members of color through inclusive and responsive engagement.
- Language Access Plan – The city’s [Language Access Plan](#), adopted in April 2022, reflects the city’s understanding that accurate communication between city staff members and the community they serve is critical to ensuring community members leverage all the resources of, and participate fully in, their local government. The Language Access Plan is intended as a resource for City of Boulder departments, staff, elected officials, members of boards and commissions, and volunteers. It provides guidelines, recommendations, and processes to ensure that individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to information, services, programs, activities, and decision-making processes at the City of Boulder. This plan meets the federally mandated guidelines for Language Access and incorporates recommendations from the City of Boulder’s Racial Equity Plan. Implementation of the plan is led by the city’s Language Access Program Manager and is supported by Language Access Department Liaisons. Current work includes efforts to build out a library of resources and guidelines for city staff.

## Online Options

Another recommendation made by the Public Participation Working Group was that the city make engagement more accessible by offering online options. The city now offers the following online engagement resources:

- [Be Heard Boulder](#) is the City of Boulder's online engagement platform where community members can contribute ideas and ask questions about featured

projects, at times that work best for them.

- Virtual and hybrid engagement – Engagement processes, council meetings, and Board & Commission meetings swiftly transitioned to Zoom in March 2020 amid the new reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. Council returned to Council Chambers on Sept. 1, 2022, and has been hybrid (Council Chambers and Zoom) for all regular council meetings since. Council Study Sessions have remained virtual. Boards & Commissions have also transitioned to hybrid meetings. Hybrid meetings offer community members the accessibility to join a public meeting virtually, from wherever is most convenient for them. The city has received feedback, especially from parents of young children, that this enhancement has made it easier for them to participate.

### **Innovation in Inclusivity**

A significant focus of the past seven years has been to address a PPWG observation that matched staff's: while the city conducted public processes prior to 2017, they mostly involved the same participants and many of the community's more diverse populations weren't represented at all.

The city implemented two strategies to help change this:

- **Community Connectors**  
The Community Connectors model is the cornerstone of the city's inclusive engagement efforts. Community Connectors empower the City of Boulder to make better decisions by elevating the experiences and voices of historically excluded communities. Community Connectors build trust in city government by partnering to co-design culturally proficient community engagement that strengthens a thriving community and a responsibly governed city. Community Connectors play a crucial role in bridging the gap between community members and city government, sharing resources, facilitating two-way dialogue, and surfacing arising issues or community concerns. Community Connectors receive a stipend for their commitment, time, and expertise. Additional information about this program will be included in the Analysis section later in this memo.
- **Youth Engagement Partnerships**
  - **Growing Up Boulder**  
The city has leveraged a longstanding and thriving partnership with [Growing Up Boulder \(GUB\)](#), a local nonprofit that “centers young people's rights, voices, and agency to advance equitable and sustainable communities for all.” Over the past several years, GUB has partnered with the city to include youth voices throughout many engagement processes. GUB has also built capacity of staff through trainings for project leads and

teams that wish to engage effectively with young people.

- **Mayamotion Healing**  
In 2021, the city and GUB began to recognize that young people who are members of historically excluded communities in Boulder, might need additional, trauma-informed support to participate in government, especially around challenging topics. Starting with the Reimagine Policing Plan engagement and continuing in a different form today, GUB forged a partnership with Maya Sol Dansie, the founder of Mayamotion Healing. [Mayamotion Healing](#) offers cultural mental health therapy as well as transformative equity consulting.
  
- **Youth Opportunities Advisory Board**  
In the past few years in particular, the city's Youth Opportunities Advisory Board (YOAB), coordinated within the Housing and Human Services department, has stepped into an important engagement role. YOAB members frequently co-design and host opportunities to hear from their peers about issues that matter to them – as well as upcoming decisions by the city. This partnership has helped forge new ways of engaging with Boulder's young people. A notable recent example is an evolving [engagement and relationship-building initiative](#) started by YOAB leaders and members of the Boulder Police Department.

### **Complementary Sub-Programs**

Lastly, in addition to staff members who plan and support engagement processes, and build organizational capacity, the city's Engagement Team now also hosts two formal sub-programs:

- The Neighborhood Services program helps community members who live in Boulder find and utilize city resources; address place-based issues and ideas in partnership with city departments; achieve collective empowerment; and build community in the places individuals feel most at home. This program offers resource sharing and navigation in partnership with Community Connectors, capacity-building programming to help people feel welcome interacting with government and using their voices, and grant funding for neighborhood-based projects. An emphasis is placed on equity and access, with additional focus and prioritization given to communities that have fewer resources and have been historically excluded from local government services.
  
- The Volunteer Cooperative is a decentralized and collaborative approach to providing and supporting volunteer opportunities across the city. With a centralized staff position starting in 2023, the Cooperative has a renewed and enhanced strategic focus to create and support consistent practices, efficiencies

and levels of quality across the city’s community of practitioners. Six subcommittees support Training, Appreciation, Disaster Response & Recovery, One-day Projects, Impact Reporting, and Inclusion & Belonging. This sub-program recognizes that volunteerism is perhaps the deepest form of community engagement and strives to support the generous individuals who donate their skills, time and energy to local government.

**ANALYSIS**

The city has lived in to the engagement commitment it made to address the PPWG’s recommendations for seven years now. As is usually the case with new and innovative work, the journey has been iterative, with many lessons learned along the way.

A comprehensive analysis of the overall approach would result in a much longer memo and a significantly lengthier council presentation and discussion than time currently allows. Recognizing this, staff has chosen to focus on two strategies that seem especially timely to explore in this memo and at the Nov. 14, 2024 council special meeting.

The first – a closer look at the importance of utilizing the full engagement spectrum – represents a key lesson in ensuring that engagement is meaningful to participants. The second – a deeper exploration of the Community Connectors model and its impacts – is intended to demonstrate progress made to date in making engagement more inclusive.

**Key Finding: Engagement is most meaningful when the city uses the full spectrum**

As mentioned previously in this memo, the city uses an engagement spectrum as an important tool in planning public participation processes. While every engagement must begin with inform, strategic decisions can be made about whether to advance from there to consult, involve or collaborate. The idea behind the spectrum is that engagement, especially in contexts where participants are being invited to participate in many

**BOULDER’S ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM**

The city will follow a modified version of IAP2’s engagement spectrum to help identify the role of the community in project planning and decision-making processes.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding a problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on public analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout a process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of a preferred solution.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations, and share feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are reflected in any alternatives and share feedback on how the public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and to incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

ADAPTED FROM ©IAP2 INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION 2014.

different processes, should be scaled appropriately.

IAP2 created the spectrum because it recognized: 1) that not every decision warrants the same level of participation and 2) that there is an ethical obligation to ensure that both community members and decision-makers are clear about the potential for influence. Many city projects will remain at the same level throughout an engagement process; however, if multiple decisions are expected to be made along the way, with one building on the next, or a specific set of community members will be more impacted by a decision than others, it may be that a combination of levels is best. Either way, clear communication and alignment around the level(s) is important.

Staff has learned that while it can be tempting to choose the highest level of the spectrum (collaborate) every time, this is not considered best practice. This level of engagement takes significant time and resources; can lead to community fatigue, especially in smaller populations; and includes a clear promise from policymakers to implement the community recommendations “to the maximum extent possible.” There are certainly times in Boulder where Collaborate is needed, but good engagement is also possible at the other levels of the spectrum. Utilizing the full spectrum allows staff to be mindful of community capacity and fatigue.

Since the city’s Framework was adopted, successful engagement has occurred across each level of the spectrum. The following case studies demonstrate the different approaches:

#### Consult – Community Broadband Partnership

- In 2018, City Council outlined an objective to ensure that every home and business in the City of Boulder can access state-of-the-art fiber-based broadband internet services offered at an affordable price. In the years that followed, staff endeavored to learn more about the community’s needs and desires to help define necessary steps.
- The most recent engagement occurred in 2023. The purpose of the community engagement was to (1) provide information about the status of the Community Broadband project, (2) understand community and stakeholder priorities for internet quality, price and access, and (3) assess community perspective on the city’s role in providing internet service. Because the direction had already been provided by council and city leadership, the questions that were identified as most helpful had little to do with whether this work should be a priority; instead they centered on the “how.” As a result, staff recommended the engagement plan be modeled at a Consult level.
- This plan was supported by the city’s Racial Equity Instrument. It included a discussion with City of Boulder Community Connectors-in-Residence; a statistically valid community survey; business community focus groups; input received via Be Heard Boulder; discussions with owners, property managers, and resident representatives from the city’s five manufactured/mobile home

- communities; and discussions with the city's two incumbent residential wired internet providers, Comcast and Lumen.
- More [details about what the city learned through this phase of broadband engagement is available in the Oct. 26, 2023 City Council Memo.](#)

### Involve– Boulder Junction Phase 2

- In the fall of 2022, City Council identified the implementation of Boulder Junction Phase 2 as a priority. Specifically, council and later the Planning Board directed staff to evaluate proposed land uses, transportation connections and urban design and character in the Phase 2 area and propose any necessary amendments to ensure they would be aligned with the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, market trends and community needs.
- Especially in Boulder, where land use planning has been a key strategy in managing growth and achieving community outcomes, it is not uncommon for area planning processes to occur at the highest end of the spectrum. However, staff recognized that this workplan item was different because there was already an existing plan guiding the Phase 2 area. A decision was made to utilize an amendment process to update the most critical elements of the Transit Village Area Plan that no longer reflected the community's current and future needs since the plan's adoption 15 years ago. At council's request, staff proceeded with an appropriately swift schedule to accomplish a plan amendment by Fall 2023 and chose an Involve level on the spectrum.
- The city conducted several community engagement sessions, including open houses, that were open to anyone who was interested.
- The team also implemented engagement strategies identified as part of the project's Racial Equity Instrument (REI) and sought ongoing advice from the two project Community Connectors to ensure the engagement process was inclusive. Feedback received from the community was used to inform potential alternatives for land use, transportation connections, and urban design and character of the area.
- In keeping with the Involve level, which invites more recurring participation, four Focus Groups were established with about 15 participants each to provide a variety of viewpoints, expertise, and experience. These focus groups provided feedback throughout the duration of the project and were organized into specific topics: advocacy, daily users, design & development, and property & business owners.
- Ongoing analysis showed a gap in the perspective of property and business owners. The city explored this gap by partnering with a small business owner to conduct deeper, more focused, conversations.
- More details about what the city learned through this process is available at [LINK](#).

### Collaborate– Boulder Municipal Airport Community Conversation

- In 2023, the city’s Transportation & Mobility Department identified a need to update its strategic plan for Boulder Municipal Airport. As scoping got underway, it became clear there were emerging questions and differing perspectives on the airport. Council members indicated a desire to broaden the engagement to explore a variety of options.
- Based on this, staff chose the Collaborate level and developed an engagement plan that would be comprehensive, inclusive, equitable, and transparent. Racial equity and engaging underserved communities were prioritized throughout the process. The project team worked closely with nearby community members of San Lazaro and Vista Village Mobile Home Parks.
- Throughout the project, outreach was multi-pronged and included consultation with the broader Boulder community through one-on-one stakeholder interviews, online questionnaires, public open house meetings, bilingual community meetings, and a Community Working Group.
- The Community Conversations effort placed substantial emphasis on clarifying, organizing, and acting on the comments, concerns, and ideas of the Community Working Group (CWG). The CWG meetings were organized as design charrettes to envision potential futures for the airport and inform the city’s future Airport Master Planning effort. Typically, a timeline is placed on charrette exercises to establish collaborative urgency among selected participants. CWG participants were carefully selected to ensure that representation reflected as many community perspectives and lived experiences as possible.
- Over the course of five meetings, the CWG provided input and recommendations to the project team in support of the Community Conversation effort. The CWG worked in collaboration with the project team to develop a range of scenarios and the evaluation considerations for the future of the airport. While weighing scenarios, the group was mindful of FAA obligations, including preserving and enhancing safety.
- CWG members were selected through an application process that included over 120 submittals. Applications were evaluated based on stakeholder representation, geographic location, interest, capacity to attend and contribute to meetings, profession and/or lived experiences. There were five in-person, two-hour meetings, each held in the evenings.
- Two public open houses were held to inform a shared vision around the airport.
- Other outreach tools allowed for more flexible and broader community dialogue; including two questionnaires, and four bilingual meetings with two manufactured home communities, San Lazaro and Vista Village, that are located adjacent to the Boulder Municipal Airport.
- Additional detail about what the city learned through this process is available at [LINK](#).

These case studies demonstrate that community can have a voice and be an important part of important decisions at each level. They also show, however, that engagement at the



higher levels of Involve and especially, Collaborate, requires more time and resources. While this is not an insurmountable challenge, it is important that projects in Collaborate be chosen thoughtfully and given the appropriate attention, patience and support to be successful.

**Key Finding: Engagement is more inclusive when it is culturally relevant and co-designed by Community Connectors**

Reflecting the city’s commitment to making engagement more inclusive, the city, in partnership with historically excluded communities, began experimenting with the Community Connectors model in the spring of 2018. The program started with six Community Connectors, and has grown every year, now having engaged over three dozen Community Connectors on nearly 20 city projects.

The Community Connector Model is composed of several programs where Community Connectors participate in different capacities. Each program focuses on different aspects of local government work and services:

- Project Connectors are recruited from populations that will be impacted by a specific city project. They have valuable community knowledge, networks and life experiences that can shape engagement to be more inclusive and diverse. They collaborate with city staff to:
  - co-design inclusive engagement plans;
  - reach historically excluded communities; and
  - provide guidance on project impacts and opportunities for improvement.
- Emergency Response Connectors (ERC) are community leaders living in Boulder manufactured home communities and subsidized rental communities. This team was started in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will sunset at the end of 2024. Together this team helped the city reach an estimated 1,000 households in Boulder’s most diverse neighborhoods to:
  - engage in regular direct dialogue with staff to lift issues, concerns and questions from their neighborhoods;
  - help neighbors within their communities and networks find the resources they need; and
  - support disaster preparedness and response.
- Community Connectors-in-Residence (CCinR) are a team of demographically diverse community members who serve as a conduit between communities and the city organization and focus on more systems-based improvements. They elevate the voices and experiences of historically excluded communities for a better and more responsibly governed community. They do this by:
  - offering constructive and valuable feedback on specific programs, policies or services where city staff seeks guidance;
  - empowering communities through connector-led trainings to share information and education around how government works;

- facilitating and simplifying opportunities for community engagement & feedback of new policies, programs, or practices within the institution; and
- supporting and advancing equity work through amplifying community strengths and raising community concerns.

Examples of the impact Community Connector work has had can be found in the Community Connector-in-Residence November 2024 Update to Council (Attachment E) or their [February 2024 Update to Council](#), which includes an overview of their Building Power & Raising Voices sessions, as well as a case study of their Racial Equity Instrument Step Review & Feedback process, or the [Community Update from Community Connectors-in-Residence on 2024 City Budget Cycle Community Engagement](#).

At the highest level, what this innovation has shown is that it is critical to center historically excluded communities through engagement planning and implementation. Co-creating culturally proficient engagement opportunities, reducing barriers to engagement processes, and building community capacity must occur if decision-makers wish to be confident that the input received reflects the broad community. Often this involves meeting people where they are already comfortable (and sometimes in groups limited to individuals with similar identities and lived experiences); addressing basic needs like childcare and meals; and deep active listening from city staff.

Staff has also learned that over-reliance on traditional government methods of gathering information, like surveys and written feedback forms, can leave out important experiences. There is rich qualitative data in narrative and storytelling, and the Engagement Team is committed to including this data alongside any quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive view of community input.

Lastly, the city has also matured its practices in recognition that historically excluded communities are at significant risk of engagement fatigue. A lack of thoughtful coordination can cause frustration and harm. At the beginning of any “new” engagement process, the city now strives to share a summary of previous feedback related to the specific topic, or one that is related to it. By not beginning each engagement process from scratch, the subsequent engagement can go deeper, with a greater potential for clear and recognizable outcomes.

The following are perspectives shared by two Community Connectors about their experiences:

- *“As someone who has lived in Boulder their whole life in underrepresented communities, there are unheard voices that are blocked by fear, doubt, and feeling of being ignored. It takes experience, patience, and trust to empower those who have been overshadowed &/or interrupted. As community connectors, most of us already know our neighbors and through a program like CC-in-R, we can use tools to empower and build our communities that much more. Whether it is*

*workshop/event planning, giving feedback on projects, being present at city events, getting to know resources and other city departments, surfacing community ideas/ concerns, these have all led to community members feeling more acknowledged and empowered.” – Adela Aguirre*

- *“The possibility of building community and developing a sense of belonging in our community depends on the spaces in which we are recognized and valued in our experiences, histories and cultures, as people who contribute to the enrichment of our communities. It is then that we can speak of a diverse and equitable community that strives to close the historical gaps that have created oppression. CC-in-R, is an example of putting, will, resources, ideas and heart into moving towards equity and social justice. I am honored to be part of this group of beautiful people.” - Adriana Paola Palacios Luna*

## **NEXT STEPS**

As the city maintains its focus on meaningful and inclusive engagement, as well as the continued evolution of its practices, Boulder is no longer in the pilot space as described in the Engagement Strategic Framework. The way that the city engages community for input and feedback has shifted to reflect a more consistent and ingrained culture of engagement focused on meaningful and inclusive engagement.

The journey to date has allowed the city to demonstrate significant leadership in the field of engagement. In 2019, the city earned the distinction of being named IAP2’s International Organization of the Year. Other honors include: the Alliance for Innovation’s Outstanding Achievement in Local Government Innovation award in 2020, and more recently, the ICMA’s Local Government Excellence in Community Partnerships award in 2022. In addition, the Communications and Engagement Department receives nearly weekly requests from other municipalities interested in learning more about Boulder’s efforts.

This recognition, and even more importantly, feedback from those involved in Boulder’s processes, serves as powerful motivation to continue. In many ways, the city’s work has only just begun. There’s significantly more to undertake, especially as the city continues to reduce barriers to participation for historically excluded community members; to make more space for diverse perspectives in city decision-making, and to evolve engagement processes so that community expectations better match their experiences. Neither the Boulder community nor staff is content to rest on the record established to date.

The following items have been identified as near-term priorities:

- **Increase the city’s emphasis on data fidelity and process evaluation:** As alluded to earlier in this memo, the Engagement Team is committed to strengthening its data-collection and evaluation practices to more consistently measure (and improve upon) the experiences of community participants and

policymakers.

- **Explore better ways of presenting quantitative and qualitative data to share a more holistic perspective:** Staff acknowledges the limitations of traditional survey instruments. There is a desire to learn more about equitable research practices and try new approaches to presenting quantitative and qualitative data so that policymakers better understand the potential ramifications of their decisions. This is especially important in Boulder, where longstanding practices and wealth have led to a large majority population and smaller, in number, diverse communities.

While incremental work is occurring in this area, the team plans to take a significant step forward with the city’s 2026 Community “Survey” Initiative, intended to gauge a communitywide perspective on city services and performance. In the past, this has been done through a Community Survey, conducted by quantitative research partner Polco. In the next iteration, the team plans to request an expanded budget and project scope to allow for a companion qualitative approach that provides alternative and more effective ways of gathering and considering feedback from diverse populations. The team plans to issue a Request for Proposals to select this partner in the second half of 2025.

- **Re-evaluate the city’s online engagement platform and approach to feedback forms:** In 2025, city staff intends to define its current and emerging needs for its online Be Heard Boulder engagement platform, which is currently hosted by Granicus’s Engagement HQ.

The existing Be Heard Boulder platform has been successful in terms of reaching larger numbers of participants than many open houses or in-person events can, especially if the topic is controversial. Data shows it has not, however, increased participation from those less likely to engage with the city, such as renters and lower-income residents. Digital and cultural barriers also remain for individuals who speak a language other than English, even when translation is provided.

The Engagement Team is also considering recent input from some council members about one of the most frequent types of engagement that occurs on Be Heard Boulder – the feedback form. There has, in the past, been a tendency for community members to view these forms as statistically valid and randomized surveys and assume that the city would simply tally the number of responses and draw conclusions about community-wide feedback. The city, in the early days of Be Heard Boulder, worked with the vendor to change the platform’s language from “surveys” to “feedback forms,” and the Engagement Team counsels colleagues across city departments to be clear about the limitations when presenting data and never to “count votes.” From a staff perspective, the limited sampling that occurs online is akin to the limited sampling that occurs at any in-person event. This does not mean the city should stop hosting in-person events or take away the option for community members to provide feedback online. What it

does mean, is that staff and policy-makers need to be clear that what they are receiving is a snapshot of perspectives, based on individuals who likely feel strongly about an issue.

For these reasons and others, the Communications & Engagement Department plans to issue a Request for Proposals in 2025 to evaluate newer online platforms that might better meet the city's and community's needs. Staff will be keeping questions about feedback forms and small sample sizes in mind when evaluating the options and the features they offer.

- **Innovate more deeply through the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) Update:** As City Council is aware, the city has a unique and exciting upcoming opportunity to try new approaches to engagement with the BVCP update. The teams involved have committed to a robust, multi-faceted engagement plan that will employ several promising strategies, including the following:
  - A Community Assembly: Community Assemblies (sometimes called Citizen Assemblies) are a technique for more democratic decision-making, particularly on challenging or complex issues. This technique provides the city with an opportunity to support its value of equity and perhaps involve community members from “the missing middle” in a way not done before. City and Boulder County staff will host a Community Assembly as part of the BVCP update with the intention of achieving more representative and deliberate dialogue around a key issue impacting the community.
  - Additional Diversity-Focused and Locally Led Engagement: In recognition that Boulder has many engagement experts with high levels of cultural competency and community trust, staff will partner with a local organization to design and resource meaningful and inclusive engagement with historically excluded communities. This effort will build staff capacity for new types of inclusive engagement, as well as seek to increase trust in city processes.
  - Recognize Arts as a form of Engagement and Expression: In partnership with Arts and Culture's *Experiments in Public Art* program, the BVCP update team will embed artists in various facets of engagement processes to collect, reflect, and embody community input in new and exciting ways. A pilot of this concept was seen at the Kick-off event as MOTUS Theater infused Playback Improv into the afternoon, bringing community voices to life through spontaneous performance.
- **Continue to evolve the Community Connectors Model, including an Outreach Pilot for Community Connectors in 2025-2026:** Hoping to continue the momentum around the Emergency Response Connectors Program, which sunsets in a few months, the city intends to leverage remaining ARPA funds between 2025 and 2026 to experiment with Outreach Connectors.

This program will keep city staff in direct dialogue with historically excluded communities both in manufactured home communities and other networks. Community members will receive current and timely information about a wide variety of city services and engagement opportunities. City staff will meet with this stipend-based team once a month to hear questions from the community and help navigate any services or resource needs that they may be hearing from their networks.

During this pilot, the city will collect lessons learned to inform future budget requests for what staff hopes will become an ongoing neighborhood/place-based Community Connector program.

- **Update the city’s Engagement Strategic Framework:** Work is underway to update the city’s Engagement Strategic Framework, detailing progress to date as well as outlining continued work ahead. While many of the foundational elements described in this memo are expected to remain, an updated document will provide an opportunity to ensure the content and commitment remains fresh and that the valuable lessons since 2017 can be formalized as a part of the city’s practices.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

A – Engagement Strategic Framework – Nov 2017

(<https://bouldercolorado.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/boulder-engagement-strategic-framework.pdf>)

B – Community Connector Assessment presentation – Sept 2023

(<https://bouldercolorado.gov/media/16399/download?inline>)

C – Community Connector Manual – March 2024 ([https://work-](https://work-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/CC_Manual_ENG_Final-1-202404231611.pdf)

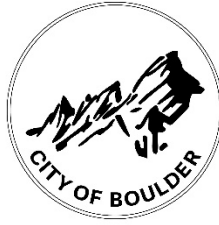
[static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/CC\\_Manual\\_ENG\\_Final-1-202404231611.pdf](https://work-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/CC_Manual_ENG_Final-1-202404231611.pdf))

D – Public Participation Working Group Final Report – June 2017

(<https://bouldercolorado.gov/media/7645/download?inline>)

E – Community Connector-in-Residence Mid-year Update to City Council – November

2024 (<https://bouldercolorado.gov/media/16428/download?inline>)



**INFORMATION ITEM  
MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council

**From:** Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager  
Chris Meschuk, Deputy City Manager  
Sarah Huntley, Communication & Engagement Director  
Ryan Hanschen, Community Engagement Manager  
Ana Silvia Avendaño-Curiel, Equity Policy Advisor

**Date:** November 14, 2024

**Subject:** **Community Connectors-in-Residence Update**

---

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Community Connectors-in-Residence update is designed to elevate the experiences and perspectives of historically excluded communities and keep city council updated on themes of community strengths and community issues as heard by Community Connectors-in-Residence.

**FISCAL IMPACTS**

Budgetary impacts to the city organization in continuing Community Connector-in-Residence programming are minimal. Implementation will be incorporated into existing staff work plans.

**COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPACTS**

Continued advances in inclusive engagement practices will help to ensure more thorough decision-making, increase the diversity of public participation, and build trust between historically excluded communities and city government. Community Connector-in-Residence work is directly tied to the following Sustainability, Equity and Resilience Framework goals:

- Accessible and Connected: Open access to information is provided both physically and digitally to foster connectivity and promote community engagement.
- Responsibly Governed: A local government that ... makes data-driven decisions informed by community engagement inclusive of those who have been historically excluded from government programs and services. Supports strategic decision-making with opportunities for accessible community engagement in multiple languages and timely and reliable data and analysis.

## **BACKGROUND**

Since the launch of the city’s Engagement Strategic Framework in November of 2017, staff have supported a shift in engagement culture, ensuring that city decision-making is more inclusive and meaningful. This has included a focus on identifying and removing barriers to engagement opportunities as well as co-designing sessions with historically excluded communities so there are fewer barriers to engagement in the first place. The city’s Community Connectors model, first piloted in the spring of 2018, represents a giant leap forward in this approach to community engagement.

The Community Connector-in-Residence program, specifically co-designed with community members to support the voices and build power of historically excluded communities by reducing barriers to community engagement, advancing racial equity, and surfacing the ideas, concerns, and dreams of community members, was launched in December 2020.

Additional information, as well as other recent updates to City Council, may be found at:

<https://bouldercolorado.gov/services/community-connectors-in-residence>

## **ANALYSIS**

This memo is intended to serve as an informational update. No additional analysis is included.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Community Connectors-in-Residence are committed to continuing to engage historically excluded communities and keep city council updated on community strengths and community issues as heard through two-way dialogue and capacity building opportunities with communities.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Community Connectors-in-Residence Mid-year Update – November 2024



# Community Connectors-in-Residence Mid-Year Update – November 2024



## Mid-year Update Purpose

This Community Connectors-in-Residence (CC-in-R) mid-year update, to Boulder City Council, is designed to elevate the experiences and voices of historically excluded communities – as heard through ongoing dialogue and as summarized by themes of community strengths and community issues – for use in city policymaking. This mid-year update includes:

- 'Building Power & Raising Voices' Sessions – Notes & Themes
- Racial Equity Instrument Step Review and Feedback
- 2025 City Budget Cycle Presentation to Department Directors
- Community Connector Wellbeing Programming
- Community Connector Confluence
- ICMA Equity Summit General Session
- Community Outreach

We welcome City Council’s feedback on this update and encourage you to share any thoughts through this [feedback form](#). Previous CC-in-R updates, including the most recent update in February 2024, may be found on the [CC-in-R webpage](#).

## Community Connectors-in-Residence

Community Connectors-in-Residence (CC-in-R) elevate the voices and build the power of historically excluded communities by reducing barriers to community engagement, advancing racial equity, and surfacing the ideas, concerns, and dreams of community members. CC-in-Rs earn a stipend, based on four hours per week, for their commitment, time, and expertise.

The CC-in-R program specifically aligns with meaningful and inclusive engagement practices as included in the city’s Engagement Strategic Framework as well as strategies in the city’s Racial Equity Plan: 4.1 - improve access to decision-makers; 4.3 - focus on high-quality community engagement; and 4.5 - address language, cultural, and engagement access barriers.

Each bicultural CC-in-R serves as a trusted voice and works closely with a community they are already a natural leader within. This may be geographic or cultural, and throughout 2024 has included community members who identify as Latina, Nepali, Black or African American, Indigenous, older adults, CU students, adults living with disabilities, residents of manufactured home communities, multi-generational households, immigrants, and individuals who are economically disadvantaged.

## ‘Building Power & Raising Voices’ Update

CC-in-Rs continue to build capacity to participate in local government among historically excluded community members without lived experience in that space. To address this, CC-in-Rs continue to

identify barriers to community engagement opportunities. In addition, they remain committed to facilitating their co-designed, two-hour ‘Building Power & Raising Voices’ session for community members.

These sessions aim to increase a sense of belonging



and trust in city government; build the power and skills of historically excluded communities to share their voices and shape decisions and policy about their community and the common good; increase understanding and education of local government and how to navigate systems; and lift up aspirations, engagement barriers, or issues that communities are experiencing.

In the summer and fall of 2024, CC-in-Rs facilitated three 'Building Power & Raising Voices' sessions, with a total of 45 participants:

- CC-in-R Selasee Atiase's circle
- Climate Justice Collaborative
- Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN)

Themes of Community Strengths from these sessions include:

- Accessible and free nature, mountains, and creeks
- Some city government services and resources

Themes of Community Issues from these sessions include:

- A need for youth spaces that appreciate who they are, support their mental health, engage them in activities, and better prepare them for their futures as well as increased safety for students in and near schools
- Increasing cost of living, especially with rent and groceries
- Expensive and inaccessible health and medical care
- Further opportunities for community engagement and community building
- A need for more community gardens
- More education about recycling

Analysis of pre/post-assessments found that 85% of participants in these three sessions reported an increase in one or more of the following:

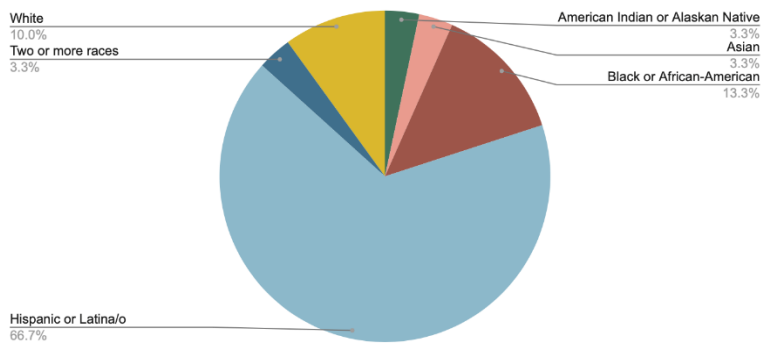
- I feel like I belong as a member of the Boulder community and that my voice/perspective matters to city government.
- I know the various services that the city offers.
- I know at least one way in which I can participate to offer my opinion during a decision-making process at the city.

Additional analysis found that after a 'Building Power & Raising Voices' session:

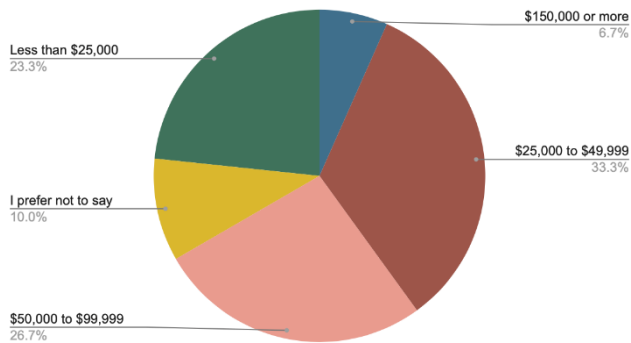
- 40% of participants identified an increase in prompt: "I feel like I belong as a member of the Boulder community and that my voice/perspective matters to city government."
- 75% of participants identified an increase in prompt: "I know the various services that the city offers."
- 60% of participants identified an increase in prompt: "I know at least one way in which I can participate to offer my opinion during a decision-making process at the city."

Participant demographics from these three Building Power & Raising Voices sessions:

Which race or ethnicity do you identify with most?



How would you describe your annual household income?



## Racial Equity Instrument Step Review and Feedback

CC-in-Rs and staff facilitate a [Racial Equity Instrument Step Review & Feedback](#) process, to focus CC-in-R feedback on city projects from a racial equity framework, to increase staff use of the city's Racial Equity Instrument throughout projects, and to share a clear pathway for staff to hear feedback that centers the lived experiences of historically excluded communities. Discussions with CC-in-Rs assist staff project teams in identifying gaps and concerns they should be addressing. This valuable feedback supplements more inclusive and accessible city practices, helps guide decision-making processes, and aligns with the city's [Racial Equity Plan](#). Since February 2024, CC-in-Rs reviewed, met with staff for 45 minutes, and shared feedback and perspective on the following city projects:

- Civic Area Second Window Engagement Plan
- Chronic Nuisance Ordinance
- Community Broadband
- E-bikes Program
- Natural Medicine
- OSMP Education Programs
- Snow & Ice Removal Team
- What's Up Boulder

## 2025 City Budget Cycle Community Engagement

Echoing similar priorities shared with council in a March 2023 letter (please see Appendix for full CC-in-R Council Retreat feedback letter) as well as based on community input from multiple budget education and engagement sessions with historically excluded communities in 2023, CC-in-Rs presented community priorities and strengths to department directors in June 2024.

Based on community input from previous and ongoing dialogue with community, CC-in-Rs shared that top community priorities included the following [Sustainability, Equity, and Resilience \(SER\) Framework](#) Objectives:

- Support the City of Boulder in advancing racial equity
- Provide a variety of housing types with a full range of affordability
- Support economic opportunity regardless of race, gender, ability, or socioeconomic status

Reflecting a constrained 2025 budget, with less opportunity citywide for new investments and enhancements, staff also designed feedback sessions within two specific areas of expanded funding: Wildfire Resilience Grants and Arts & Culture Community Culture Plan. In April and May 2024, city staff shared an overview of these programs with CC-in-Rs and sought their feedback on anticipated programming.

### Voter Education Postcards

In the fall of 2024, CC-in-Rs designed, printed, and distributed over 500 bilingual voter education postcards that shared details on registering to vote and encouraged community members to learn more about their ballot and to make a specific plan to vote. Postcards also shared opportunities for community members to learn more and participate in city decision-making at any point throughout the year.

**We Build Democracy Together!**

**Your vote, your choice**

**Your participation strengthens our community, shapes decision-making, and helps to create a better world.**

1. Register to Vote
2. Learn More About Your Ballot
3. Make a Plan to Vote

**Register to Vote:**

**Democracy is an every day matter. ANYONE can share their voice with the City of Boulder anytime.**

**A non-partisan project of:**  
**Community Connectors-in-Residence**  
<https://bit.ly/3vMROH4>

**Participate with the City of Boulder:**

**¡Juntos construimos la democracia!**

**Su voto, su elección**

**Su participación fortalece nuestra comunidad, moldea la toma de decisiones y ayuda a crear un mundo mejor.**

1. Regístrese para votar
2. Obtenga más información sobre su boleta electoral
3. Haga un plan para poder votar

**Regístrese para votar:**

**La democracia es un asunto de todos los días. CUALQUIERA puede compartir su voz con la Ciudad de Boulder en cualquier momento.**

**Un proyecto no partidista de:**  
**Los conectores comunitarios en residencia**  
<https://bit.ly/3vMROH4>

**Participe con la Ciudad de Boulder:**

### Civic Area Phase 2 Project Tour

As part of the second window of engagement on the city’s Civic Area Phase 2 project, CC-in-Rs joined staff in a tour of the Civic Area in September 2024. Walking through the Penfield Tate II municipal building, the greens along Boulder Creek, the main library parking lot, 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and the bandshell, staff shared potential opportunities for designing the future of our Civic Area park.

Themes from CC-in-R feedback during this Civic Area tour included:

- Ensuring that the history of Indigenous people and their connection to this land is accurately depicted and that there are opportunities for education and action
- Encouraging further cultural activities, including arts, music, and farmers market
- Reflecting that a community desire for a youth center surfaces in every CC-in-R session
- Increasing safety in the area by reducing needles and human/dog waste
- Enhancing multi-modal access and opportunities for leisure
- Welcoming natural beauty in the space, including flowers, plants, and trees



## Chat with Council

In May 2024, Community Connector and micro-business owner Ja'mal Gilmore hosted a Chat with Council at his Four Corners Hair Boutique. This chat included 13 micro and small business owners and the following themes were identified through small group conversations:

- Not All Small Businesses are the Same: Distinction between small business and micro business, and the need for the city to have specific strategies for supporting micro businesses.
- Capacity Building and Partnership: A need for mentorship, capacity building, cross sector collaboration and partnership, visibility, and capital for micro businesses – including accounting systems, grant writing, expanding business – especially when not all individuals are beginning from the same point.

- Micro Business Engagement: Engage more with micro businesses on decisions that impact them and the local economy, to help lay the groundwork for future vibrancy.
- Minimum Wage: Micro businesses will face unintended consequences and disproportionate impact if the minimum wage is raised. Specifically, they are struggling to pay employees now, and a raise could result in layoffs and fewer job openings.
- Property Challenges: Corporations are buying up commercial real estate, dividing an offer into smaller offices/space then leasing at very high rates. Additionally, lessees of older commercial buildings are concerned about these buildings being demolished over time.



A complete summary of this Chat with Council may be found [here](#).

## **Community Connector Confluence**

In April 2024, Community Connectors and their families, staff, and council members celebrated Community Connectors who have served our community and are transitioning out of their roles, appreciated current Community Connectors and their accomplishments, and welcomed incoming Community Connectors during an inaugural Community Connectors Confluence event. During this event, Community Connector alum shared reflections with current/incoming Community Connectors as well as with city leadership.

Special thanks to Community Connectors-in-Residence Alum:

- Ana Karina Casas Ibarra, Dinesh Karki, Markisha Key-Hagan

A special welcome to incoming Community Connectors-in-Residence:

- Bholu Katuwal, Emmanuela Nyonkah, Tulia Flores





## **Community Connector Wellbeing Programming**

Responding to a need identified by Community Connectors, and leveraging an increased program budget in 2024, staff and Community Connectors co-designed a menu of wellbeing sessions and activities. These opportunities seek to support Community Connectors who may be experiencing tertiary trauma from their dialogue with community around difficult issues and lived experience. To date, opportunities have included:

- Monthly Wellness Space with Natural Highs to reduce stress and recharge, including:
  - Acudetox opportunities
  - Wellness herbs and soothing teas
  - Resilience and neuroscience training and information
  - Strategies for addressing stress and anxiety
  - Non-judgmental dialogue about their experiences
- Chair Massage Therapist Opportunities (monthly)

- Healing Internalized Oppression Training, with Nora Alwah, Somatic Psychotherapy & Anti-Oppression Facilitator (one-time training in January 2024)
- Mindful Compassion training series with Naropa University (four Friday mornings in Oct & Nov)

Preliminary evaluation (n=25) of programming through October 2024 has identified that:

- 96% of participants stated that a specific opportunity was “very much” useful in supporting their ability to continue serving as a Community Connector.
- 100% of participants shared that a specific opportunity was “very much” useful in “benefitting your mental health,” “benefitting your well-being,” reducing stress or anxiety,” or “building skills in coping or resilience.”
- When prompted “What was most valuable about this opportunity?” select participant responses included:
  - “Sentí much más relajada y paz” [“I felt much more relaxed and at peace”]
  - “The thing that was the most valuable was when we were addressing a feeling that most of us have, like we are not doing enough, and what we are doing, is not having a big enough impact. The reframing of that, the recognition of how that is from a dominant culture perspective was a lightbulb moment for me. It helped me to shift my mindset in a way that nothing else had done so historically. I genuinely felt seen, heard, understood, and supported in the session with Nora. I'm so glad that this much needed support is now part of our standard practice. It is imperative to have mental health support in order to continue to do our jobs well, without the job itself, causing us harm from trauma, stress and more”
  - “The four main valuable things for me were learning more about the herbs, connecting with other people, the Acu Detox itself, and then the taking home of our own Anxiety Reduction herbal garden.”
  - “Conocer los beneficios de las agujas y de hiervas en beneficio de mi salud mental, muchas gracias por este apoyo ya que también me ayuda en lo personal y en relación al trabajo!!” [“Knowing the

benefits of needles and herbs for the benefit of my mental health, thank you very much for this support as it also helps me personally and in relation to work!!”]

## ICMA Equity Summit General Session

In July 2024, Community Connectors and staff presented a session, “Centering Historically Excluded Communities in City Budget Processes,” at the ICMA (International City and County Managers Association) Equity Summit. CC-in-



Rs were invited to present a session, which was attended by over 70 participants from across the nation, that focused on how they and city staff transformed the City of Boulder’s annual budget cycle by centering the experiences of historically excluded communities and by welcoming public participation as early as possible within the process. CC-in-Rs shared the culturally-proficient community engagement process they co-designed with city staff, how community input influenced the city’s Executive Budget Team and council, how they creatively trained community members to share their perspectives during council meetings, and how they kept community in the loop all along the way. Their community update from November 2023 may be found [here](#).

## Women Who Light the Community

In September 2024, Community Connector Ava Hamilton was honored by the Boulder Chamber as a “Women Who Lights the Community.” As an Arapaho elder and filmmaker, Ava has spent decades educating our community about her ancestral history of this land, advocating for the



protection and restoration of our natural lands, and urging action to address climate change. Ava has also demonstrated leadership as an instrumental partner with the City of Boulder, partnering with the Human Relations Commission in 2016 to establish City Council Resolution 1190, declaring the second Monday of October of each year to be Indigenous Peoples' Day.

## Community Outreach

CC-in-Rs tabled at several community events to share information about city services and resources, details about CC-in-R programming, and avenues for community members to connect with city government in addressing issues or questions. Tabling opportunities this past fall included:

- [El Centro AMISTAD Cumbre Compañeras](#) – “The goal of the Cumbre Compañeras is to raise awareness about social justice and equity, develop leadership skills, and increase resilience in our community. This leads to better educational, employment and health access opportunities for women and their families and, consequently, improve the lifestyle of our entire community.”
- [What’s Up Boulder](#) – “This event brings together all city departments to engage in dialogue with you about a variety of plans and projects, family-friendly activities, and opportunities to chat with council members.”



## Looking Ahead

Moving further into 2024 and 2025, Community Connectors-in-Residence will continue to:

- Keep City Council updated on community strengths and community issues;
- Review and share feedback with city staff on Racial Equity Instrument steps;
- Partner with a CSU graduate student in designing a 2.0 ‘Building Power & Raising Voices’ session, focused on supporting community members to take action; and
- Engage in ongoing dialogue with community members.

## Questions

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or to learn more!

- Ryan Hanschen, Community Engagement Manager, [hanschenr@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:hanschenr@bouldercolorado.gov)
- Ana Silvia Avendaño-Curiel, Equity Policy Advisor, [avendano-curiela@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:avendano-curiela@bouldercolorado.gov)

---

## Appendix

- 'Building Power & Raising Voices' session notes – Community Strengths and Community Issues
- What's Up Boulder activity notes – Community Strengths & Community Issues
- Council Retreat Community Priorities Letter – March 2024

## 'Building Power & Raising Voices' Session Notes – Community Strengths and Community Issues

### Community Connector-in-Residence Selasee Atiasee's Circle June 2024

#### Notes on Participant Feedback

- Support wealth tax in the city
- See consistently that community engagement continues to be under-funded
  - Time from staff/partners in the community to engagement work but often goes underpaid
  - Shift power sharing and not having to go through council "process" for decision-making and bring council TO community
  - Example – Superior Community Center
- Safe injection sites for people who use drugs
  - If a safe space can be provided, this could mitigate some of the issues we see with drug use
- Youth spaces
  - Drug-free space, to gather and build community, offer supports that are healthy, caring, cool, inviting, engaging
    - Safe spaces to be themselves and be celebrated
    - Community embracing and also watching over youth is important so that message is strong from both sides
- Support love and community building where multi-family and multi-age communities are created
- When city says "community," very important to invest in the communities that have been disenfranchised for so long

- Support each others spaces, support and funding for community building, leadership capacity, social justice efforts
- Reparations for Black and Indigenous and Latinx communities, fund fund fund community engagement and leadership

### **Climate Justice Collaborative**

September 2024

#### Love about Boulder

- Nature
- Change of seasons
- Boulder Creek
- Nature and bike culture
- Summer and green and mountain access
- Green nature areas
- Nature and Carolina!
- Intent of being more progressive
- Close to Longmont
- Culture lazy/relaxed/down to earth/chill/informal
- Walk in the mountains
- Has everything – mountains, pathways, hikes, animals, water, from top of mountains to here
- Free nature for us to enjoy
- Weather fresh and cool. Allergies no bueno!
- So many people to make Boulder a better place
- All of those and biking
- Do things like this and make difference in the world

#### Group Dialogue

- More prepared youth, more therapy so they don't abandon their studies, students don't continue with education after high school because they want to earn money first and go back but once they earn money they don't go back to school
- Improving economy
- Humans are destroying nature, this also destroys our health and we won't be able to survive

- In some neighborhoods people don't know how to recycle or compost or dispose of furniture, we need improvements for future generations
- Inform more to people – where to recycle when they don't need things at home, less elevated prices for recycling items like metal or vary price by income
- BHP well known for failing to share resources, lived there for a long time, staff underresourced, very hard to navigate
- Equity – students don't have the same resources, insurance, for what the community needs
- Boulder is the Beverly Hills of California, the lifestyle and economy are segregating people, people cannot buy housing, renting housing is very expensive, residents pay \$800 to rent land for manufactured home, San Lazaro has a clear petition for annexation and power for land, people will leave, resources are wonderful but people are needing to move away. Many people live outside Boulder but work in Boulder, the city just wants the workforce, I'm talking about equitable housing, housing for undocumented community to be able to buy property
- It's a constant struggle everyday. It's a big system that doesn't work and we need radical change not Band-Aid solutions. Access to food, food sovereignty, space to cultivate to share, more community gardens.
- City needs to change their own systems, small example would be to start with gardens and access to land, owning land
- Community gardens that can feed neighborhoods, able to sustain through farming for 20-25 people. The foundation of Boulder is Indigenous people moving them away, 63rd and Jay farm was in talks for land back. Policies avoid sovereignty, for example at Ponderosa we planned garden and chickens, the city was opposed because of public health, people cannot live in a sense of community, more people of color and natives in governance, systems change,
- Elevated costs for children's sports, way to expensive for children, we cannot afford after school sports activities
- Sports are very expensive, if a mother has 3-4 children, \$250 each is already \$1,000. Has to be more accessible for families, we want to start them in sports
- My kid has a scholarship, but only one-time, membership is for 3 months, \$75, PlayPass limited to \$250
- Aerobics classes are very expensive, I'm paying the same as families with more money
- SL – organizing in community, one person teach to swim, park rangers will take us to mountains once a month, one to teach art, Marta is helping us to get help, we don't have access to discount at rec center, we're making our own resources in our San Lazaro community . Third year we're organizing community gardens in SL, we need more funding for more gardens. Also to learn how to recycle, beautiful to bring large garbage bin once or twice per year, we



benefit from community gardens and less expensive vegetables. Coupons for fruits and veggies help a lot

- We live in very individualistic society, white fence, moving away from that and more community-based thinking, how can we come together as families and communities, how can city empower for skills shares or resources, community at city council meetings, not having to have communities continue asking for basic needs
- We want the style of program of CC is cool, the freedom to have freedom we have to have time to participate in decision-making process, changes in city council, a lot of power there but doesn't represent all members of community, leaves a lot of people out that cannot speak up. I would like to see, some people don't have decision making power to say what kind of businesses we'd like to see here, the building owners say what business here, housing limited in what art we can have, many policies decide what we can and cannot do, more focus on education, learning how to change policy, workshops for community members to better understand the impact of their lifestyles and how harming environment and lifestyles of others. Many people spend their lives in the city, work in city but leave after, how to share resources with them, share the vision of who belongs here in the city
- My neighbor moved out, retired and received her pension, they moved away because it's more expensive
- In community right now there is funding to help with wind damage, lots of money given to families to repair housing, they're doing a bad job, discrimination, only two people working on that, they gave me a window smaller than the one I had, charging \$6k for just painting, a lot of money they're investing in repairs, sometimes contractors not communicating and they're not doing everything
- We are well-connected with resources but want to know reports
- How can the city be funding more Community Connectors
- Have CCs had real systemic impact? CCs have connected to resources, moments when I've been annoyed because I want more radical changes, I have a pessimistic view, an author we need, author says to identify, then good attitude to change things

### **Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN)**

October 2024

Love about Boulder

- Views
- Close to the mountains
- More and more resources for Hispanics
- Mountains
- Landscapes

- Quiet area
- Physical Activity
- Food
- The rivers
- Safe Space

#### Group Dialogue

- Boulder streets are chaotic now, lots of traffic and honking cars
- I like to see that all the kids can go to school
- I don't want to see contaminated rivers

#### Continue what is working

- Connection to nature
- Equality
- A lot of trees and nature
- Continue in unity with everyone around us

#### What we don't want to happen, don't want

- See affordable housing, lower prices
- Frustrating situation with a lack of trains or more buses, so we don't have to use our cars for everything
- With health, it's complicated, many of us don't know how to get health insurance, that's also a right
- With education, we're working to improve
- I don't want to see so much garbage in creeks or in avenues. We need to plant more trees
- I don't see regard for employees in Boulder anymore, employees used to have class, care for workforce supporting. Boulder, we need to see more support back
- More support, there used to be Medicaid for families not from here
- Medical appointments are so expensive
- Rent very expensive so we can all afford to live here
- At the grocery store, we go home with less because groceries are expensive
- What are we going to do in this city it's so expensive
- Raise in prices if rent, making middle class people move out, only high-class people can be here
- Keep bringing more resources for Hispanic people
- Waiting time for street construction, stopped for four years in Lafayette

- I like this presentation, I didn't know a lot of this before, like the workforce, this is through the city of Boulder?
- It's my first time in a meeting like this, a lot of info for me to process, I need to study to understand what it all means. Grateful for this opportunity to be informed and know that we're not alone
- This information is very useful so thank you
- I don't want violence, we need to help people in need
- To live in harmony, in green spaces, no guns, no increase in prices, no violence or pollution
- Regarding the clinics, medical appts you have to wait two weeks - in two weeks you could die. My grandchildren get sick and they need medicine
- Some people are rude and need more empathy
- To stop violence, guns, prices of things, rent, continue to see programs like this to help immigrants, more health care
- We can spread the word to share what we've learned here, share the supports that we've heard about
- It's very dangerous to legalize drugs, when driving you don't know other drivers are high
- Some people have lost hope, and are sleeping on the street, please for them to be educated and to have some hope and to have housing again
- Safe place for kids so they don't follow those steps
- Some kids go to schools with guns, it should not be legal to sell guns to anyone, security door to check for guns, students have access to hunting rifles, metal detectors like in court, check bags
- Weapons need to be stored in a safe place at home, kids can be in danger, we have the right to have weapons but they need to be secured at home
- The rent is very very expensive, a way to make it more accessible
- We see homeless people using drugs and when walking by it's unsafe
- If increase cost of food please increase minimum wage

### **What's Up Boulder Outreach Notes**

Sept 7 2024

#### Community Strengths

- I'm thrilled to live in North Boulder 'dogpatch' no more, the 19<sup>th</sup> Street improvements are fabulous
- Nice people
- Bike trails and paths
- Access to nature
- Parks and Open Space
- Beauty

- Parks, bike paths [Los parques, senderos de bici]
- Community
- Everything!
- South Boulder Rec Center
- Playgrounds / kid-friendly town
- Open Space, awesome libraries, dedicated bike paths
- Environment preservation
- School
- I like how we go somewhere everyday
- The people
- Mental health
- Tennis indoors
- Open Spaces [Espacios Abiertos]
- Beautiful place
- Bike paths
- Community Connectors!
- Sunshine & Gratitude
- Friendly community
- Community library events
- Lots of skateparks
- We are safe
- Bike-ability!
- Open Space
- A dedicated city team working for justice with integrity!
- Boulder Creek path
- Strong engagement with public
- Open Space and children's programs
- People are so nice
- Parks/bike paths
- A lot of community help
- Bike paths
- Community
- In the vanguard of developing programs for the residents-needs
- Friendly
- Nice people
- Kid-friendly

- Ti's includev (sic)
- Water
- Transparency
- Hiking
- Everyone spreads joy!
- Neighbors
- The libraye (sic), the food
- Mountains x3 + trees + hiking trails & schools
- Connections to nature
- Kind people
- Activities for kids
- Beautiful nature
- Inclusivity of ppl w/ autism in community
- Beauty
- Shade in parks
- Parks
- Inclusivity
- Tolerance for different viewpoints
- Scool (sic)

#### Community Issues

- Housing, homeless, wildfires
- Housing
- You need so much muny (sic) to live here
- Affordability
- Housing prices
- Parking
- Affordable housing
- College kids – they're trouble
- Taxation is too high – reduce services targeted at over managing certain areas – reduce it
- Dog park – separate area for unsocial dogs
- Security
- Too much survelence (sic), not locally-based – so you can not feel big brother is on every corner
- Affordability

- Housing, more school funding, substance use outreach
- Affordability
- More public transit going east of Boulder
- Affordable housing
- Excessive residential construction, which at certain times of day, overwhelms our roads in town.  
Parking too
- Affordable housing, esp for seniors
- Traffic, construction [El trafico, construcción]
- I think we should use more electric (sic) car.
- The outdoor pool closes during the winter
- People running red lights
- Safety on bike paths + parks with unhoused individuals
- Expensive
- Housing affordability, price is too high
- Parking
- Litter, cars running over animals
- Traffic
- Safety
- The pollution
- Managing growth / affordable, accessible

## **Council Retreat Community Priorities Letter**

### **Council Retreat Feedback Letter**

March 22, 2024

Dear City Councilmembers,

Thank you for the invitation for Community Connectors-in-Residence to share perspective on the community issues and community opportunities most impacting our historically excluded communities.

Over the past two years, through our 'Building Power & Raising Voices' sessions as well as in dialogue with historically excluded communities (e.g., people of color, low-income households, immigrants), we have engaged hundreds of community members to better understand the strengths and issues they experience as individuals, families, and communities.

Community strengths include our natural setting, the people of Boulder, and some local government services. Community

issues include racial equity, economic opportunity, affordable housing, youth opportunity, and healthcare/mental health.

We've aligned each of the community strengths and community issues we hear with objectives in the City of Boulder's [Sustainability, Equity, and Resilience \(SER\) Framework](#) as well as included specific quotes heard by Community Connectors-in-Residence while engaging community:

#### Top Community Issues

- Supports financial security, economic opportunity, and social mobility for all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, age, gender, ability, or socioeconomic status.
  - "My husband has two jobs, he does not have time to spend with my kids, they grew up calling their uncle dad, because they never saw my husband and that makes me extremely sad, it is unjust."
- Provides a variety of housing types with a full range of affordability.
  - "Compared to the past, the city of Boulder is becoming increasingly difficult for the lower middle class. The availability of comfortable housing is becoming increasingly difficult. That is why the people here have to be displaced. Convenient housing is very important to me and my community."
- Builds organizational capacity for advancing racial equity by normalizing conversations about race, developing a shared understanding of institutional and structural racism, confronting oppression, and operationalizing equity strategies.
  - "Mexicans, we are everywhere, cleaning, cooking, building, everywhere. We are the ones who work the hardest, but they don't see us enjoying the city, they just want to see us working."
- Supports the physical and mental well-being of its community members.
  - "There are not enough mental health services, we cannot find them in our language, there are very long waiting lists, and there are no people who understand our culture."
  - "Wellness is a multidimensional category – physical and mental health is closely related to the subjective perception and objective material expression of the eight dimensions of well-being in people's daily lives. For a healthy balance to exist, we must care for nature, the community, and people. It is not about charity, but about strengthening capacities and skills in our communities to face the challenges that are presented to us and to seek and work for common solutions, the sense of achievement in people is a fundamental element for mental health, achieving therefore, the needs in the different areas of wellness directly affects the physical and mental well-being of people, which is why it is important to create programs and projects that positively impact our communities with a comprehensive well-being approach."
- Cultivates a wide range of recreational, cultural, educational, civic, and social opportunities for all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual identity, ability, or socioeconomic status.
  - "Summer work alternatives for high school youth to develop job skills, community leadership and income to support their access to goods and services;

scholarships for low-income college students.”

- “Leisure is the mother of all arts. We all need safe, healthy, and friendly spaces to develop creativity, enjoy life, and social, cultural, and civic participation. Unfortunately, some spaces are not culturally relevant or welcoming to all people. The city government has the great power to create inclusive recreational spaces. Cultural exchanges under equitable conditions, from an intercultural approach, and spaces for participation that respond to the context of the people. We know that not all people feel comfortable participating in all spaces in the city, and that is something that can be changed by including various activities, larger or free, accessible to all people, and fun. We need to integrate more joy and healthy enjoyment into all the actions of life. Friendly and healthy environments for all people in all parts of the city.”

#### Top Community Strengths

- Supports the natural environment and its ecosystems so they are better able to resist damage and recover quickly.
  - “My favorite thing about Boulder is the access to nature.”
  - “This community Boulder and my motherland Nepal naturally look the same. I love both countries. This is how I want to define both countries. Nepal is my homeland and Boulder (USA) is my homeland.”
- Enhances and facilitates transparency, accuracy, efficiency, effectiveness, and quality customer service in all city business.
  - “For city to want to listen to our voices and continue to engage, encourage for us to come to safe spaces to interact with the city and have language access too.”

#### Top Items on Existing Work Plan

Community Connectors-in-Residence are prioritizing the following work during 2024:

- Include historically excluded communities in 2025 city budget cycle engagement opportunities
- Keep City Council updated on community strengths and community issues
- Leverage additional General Fund program funding allocated at council’s request by recommending and participating in Community Connector Mental Health & Well-being sessions
- Co-facilitate ‘Building Power & Raising Voices’ sessions and explore expanding training offerings
- Review and share feedback with city staff on Racial Equity Instrument steps

Community Connectors-in-Residence elevate the voices and build the power of historically excluded communities by reducing barriers to community engagement, advancing racial equity, and surfacing the ideas, concerns, and dreams of community members. Community Connectors-in-Residence earn a stipend, based on four hours per week, for their commitment, time, and expertise.

For more information on Community Connectors-in-Residence, as well as past updates to City Council, please visit our webpage: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/services/community-connectors-in-residence>

Thank you,  
Community Connectors-in-Residence  
Adela Aguirre, Adriana Paola Palacios Luna, Ava Hamilton,  
Ja’mal Gilmore, Lenora Cooper, and Selasee Atiase