

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members of City Council

**FROM:** Jane S. Brautigam, City Manager  
Paul J. Fetherston, Deputy City Manager  
Jeff Yegian, Acting Housing Division Manager  
David Driskell, Executive Director of Community Planning and Sustainability  
Eric Ameigh, Senior Project Manager

**DATE:** February 12, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive Community Housing Strategy—Preliminary Discussion

### I. PURPOSE

Council is scheduled for a three-hour study session on May 14, 2013 to discuss the purpose and scope of a proposed Comprehensive Community Housing Strategy. This proposed planning effort will explore a broad range of strategies that might be pursued or adopted by the city to achieve community housing goals—not just for the city’s affordable housing program, but as a broad response to community housing needs.

To help staff prepare for a productive session in May, a preliminary two-hour discussion is scheduled for February 12 to discuss, at a high level, council perceptions of critical housing issues and opportunities, aspirations for the upcoming planning effort, and housing outcomes in relation to other community goals. Staff is hopeful that this initial discussion will help guide the agenda and packet preparation for the May study session so that it serves as an effective launch for this important planning effort.

### II. BACKGROUND

Since the late 1990s—when the city last undertook a comprehensive housing planning effort—the city’s affordable housing program has evolved and the local housing market has changed in many ways, some of which are dramatic. Despite some recent efforts to study and address Boulder’s continuing housing affordability issues, most notably the Affordable Housing Task Force, challenges around how best to define and meet the city’s housing goals remain.

During 2012, council identified a number of housing issues to be addressed through a variety of planned or tentative work plan items. These include a study of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Owner Accessory Units (OAU), a study of the density and distribution of affordable housing across the city, and possible updates to the Inclusionary Housing program as it applies to rental projects. Other outstanding issues identified for further analysis at council study sessions or through the Affordable Housing Task Force include, but are not limited to, senior housing, student housing, mobile home parks, development of market rate “relatively” affordable housing, and funding and resource allocation.

As staff considered how best to deal with each of these discrete projects, it became clear that a comprehensive housing strategy to better define goals and set priorities would help create a logical foundation from which to coordinate the disparate efforts. The development of an updated strategy offers an opportunity to take a fresh look, adjusted for current and potential future market realities, at how Boulder deals with its housing affordability challenges in the context of other sometimes competing priorities. Further, to help position the city organization for success in addressing housing issues in a more comprehensive manner, the City Manager's Office recently implemented the beginning of a transition plan for the city's Housing Division, separating it from the Human Services Division and creating a direct reporting relationship to the City Manager's Office. A search is now underway for an Assistant City Manager for Housing. The proposed planning effort will help establish the priorities for reinvigorated housing efforts by the city and its partners.

### **III. AGENDA AND FACILITATION**

The February 12 session is intended as an opportunity for Council to discuss housing issues at a high level and to help shape the May study session and subsequent strategic planning effort. A draft outline was shared with the Council Agenda Committee on Monday, February 4. Staff anticipates the discussion will cover the following:

- Council's perceptions of:
  - key current and potential future housing issues and opportunities and how they impact the kind of community Boulder hopes to be;
  - the effectiveness of current policies and practices in shaping housing outcomes and meeting community goals;
- Council's aspirations for achieving community goals by influencing housing outcomes; and
- Council's expectations for the Strategy scoping discussion scheduled for May 14, 2013.

The meeting will be facilitated by Charles Buki, who was chosen by staff to assist with this initial discussion due to both his facilitation skills and knowledge of housing issues. Mr. Buki is founding principal of czb, a Virginia-based planning firm established 12 years ago. Clients have included the White House, the Federal Reserve Bank, Harvard University, the Kellogg Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation at the national level. At the local level, clients have included a wide range of communities from Seattle to Park City, Santa Fe to Pittsburgh, and Baltimore to New Orleans. The core of the firm's work is the combination of precise statistical analysis combined with the development of strategies based on market knowledge to help shape the direction that communities take, especially with regard to the twin challenges of affordability and desirability.

### **IV. NEXT STEPS**

Input received from council during this study session will guide staff preparation for the May study session. The May study session will focus in greater detail on the scoping options for a Comprehensive Housing Strategy. As part of the preparation, staff may seek to engage a consultant for assistance in preparing the housing strategy.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, Section 7: Housing

# 7. Housing

The range of available housing opportunities helps to define a community. The social, economic and environmental well-being of the community is enhanced when individuals and families are retained, workforce housing is available, and existing residents with changing or special housing needs are served. The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, which identifies desired locations, densities and types of housing planned for Boulder, is an integral link in the community's housing strategy. Through a variety of policies, programs and regulations, the type, number, and affordability of new and existing housing units can be influenced, and programs and assistance made available to those who have limited resources or special needs.

The high cost of local housing results in many households paying a disproportionate amount of their income for housing or moving farther from their work in order to find housing that they can afford. Households who are burdened by housing costs or by the combined costs of housing and transportation have less money available for other necessities and may find it difficult to actively participate in the community, which can lead to additional demands on supportive human services and to an exclusion of key members of our society from the civic infrastructure.

Emerging trends facing the community include:

- Growth in the senior population;
- The addition of over 5,000 university students by 2030;
- The growing difficulty of providing affordable housing attractive to families with children in a land-constrained community; and
- The need to evaluate regulations to creatively accommodate an expanding variety of household types, including multi-generational households.

The policies in this section support the following city and county goals related to housing:

- Local Support for Community Housing Needs
- Preserve Housing Choices
- Advance and Sustain Diversity
- Integrate Growth and Community Housing Goals

## Local Support for Community Housing Needs

### **7.01 Local Solutions to Affordable Housing**

The city and county will employ local regulations, policies, and programs to meet the housing needs of their low and moderate income households and workforce. Appropriate federal, state and local programs and resources will be used locally and in collaboration with other jurisdictions. The city recognizes that affordable housing provides a significant community benefit and will continually monitor and evaluate its policies, programs and regulations to further the city's affordable housing goals.

### **7.02 Permanently Affordable Housing**

The city will increase the proportion of permanently affordable housing units to an overall goal of at least ten percent of the total existing housing stock through regulations, financial subsidies and other means. City resources will also be directed toward maintaining existing permanently affordable housing units and securing replacements for lost low and very low income units.

### **7.03 Populations with Special Needs**

The city and county will encourage development of housing for populations with special needs including residences for people with disabilities, populations requiring group homes or other specialized facilities, and other vulnerable populations where appropriate. The location of such housing should be in proximity

to shopping, medical services, schools, entertainment and public transportation. Every effort will be made to avoid concentration of these homes in one area.

#### **7.04 Strengthening Community Housing Partnerships**

The city will create and preserve partnerships dedicated to the community's housing needs by supporting private and nonprofit agencies that create and maintain permanently affordable housing in the community, and fostering nonprofit and private sector partnerships. The city recognizes the role of the university in the housing market and will encourage the University of Colorado and other post-secondary institutions in their efforts to increase the amount of on campus housing.

#### **7.05 Strengthening Regional Housing Cooperation**

The city and the county will work to enhance regional cooperation on housing issues to address regional housing needs and encourage the creation of housing proximate to regional transit routes.

Such efforts include the Regional HOME Consortium and the Ten Year Plan to Address Homelessness.

### Housing Choices

#### **7.06 Mixture of Housing Types**

The city and county, through their land use regulations and housing policies will encourage the private sector to provide and maintain a mixture of housing types with varied prices, sizes and densities, to meet the housing needs of the full range of the Boulder Valley population.

#### **7.07 Preserve Existing Housing Stock**

The city and county, recognizing the value of their existing housing stock, will encourage its preservation and rehabilitation through its land use policies and regulations. Special efforts will be made to preserve and rehabilitate existing housing serving low and moderate income individuals and households.

#### **7.08 Preservation and Development of Manufactured Housing**

Recognizing the importance of manufactured housing as an option for many households, the city and county will encourage the preservation of existing mobile home parks and the development of new manufactured home parks, including increasing opportunities for resident-owned parks. Whenever an existing mobile home park is found in a hazardous area, every reasonable effort will be made to reduce or eliminate the hazard, when feasible, or to help mitigate for the loss of housing through relocation of affected households.

### Diversity

#### **7.09 Housing for a Full Range of Households**

The city and county will encourage preservation and development of housing attractive to current and future households, persons at all stages of life and to a variety of household configurations. This includes singles, couples, families with children and other dependents, extended families, non-traditional households and seniors.

#### **7.10 Balancing Housing Supply with Employment Base**

Expansion of the Boulder Valley housing supply should reflect to the extent possible current employer locations, projected industrial/commercial development sites, variety of salary ranges, and the demand such developments bring for housing employees. Key considerations include housing type, mix, and affordability. The city will explore policies and programs to increase housing for Boulder workers by fostering mixed-use and multi-family development proximate to transit, employment or services and by considering the conversion of commercial and industrial zoned or designated land to residential use.

## Growth and Community Housing Goals

### **7.11 Incorporate Mix of Housing in Future Service Area**

In considering future expansion of the Service Area, the city will identify possible sites for housing that serves low and moderate income households. Designation of land uses in new growth areas will provide for a mixture of housing types and densities in order to meet the diversity of housing needs.

### **7.12 Conversion of Residential Uses in the Community**

The city will evaluate and revise its regulations to reduce the opportunities for the conversion of residential uses to non-residential uses or to require mitigation for residential units lost through the redevelopment of existing housing or the conversion of a residential use to non-residential uses.

### **7.13 Integration of Permanently Affordable Housing**

Permanently affordable housing, whether publicly, privately or jointly financed will be designed as to be compatible, dispersed, and integrated with housing throughout the community.

### **7.14 Minimizing Displacement**

The city will evaluate its policies and regulations in order to minimize the negative effects of displacement on low income persons when housing sites are redeveloped by the private sector. Available relocation assistance options in the community will continue to be offered to displaced low-income persons.