



2015 Living Lab Draft Communication Plan February 2015



Project purpose

Create complete street corridors to enhance access, safety and comfort for people using all modes of travel, in support of Boulder's Transportation Master Plan and community sustainability goals.

Background

Boulder residents ride the bus at twice the national average, walk three times as much and bicycle at 21 times the national average. In 1989, the City of Boulder envisioned and adopted its first Transportation Master Plan (TMP) in order “to provide mobility and access in the Boulder Valley in a way that is safe and convenient, and to preserve what makes Boulder a good place to live by minimizing auto congestion, air pollution, and noise.” Since then, the City of Boulder has actively strived to increase walking, bicycling, and transit use by improving the city's physical and social infrastructure to support sustainable transportation modes. This investment has helped to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and has improved the health and wellbeing of Boulder residents.

Although Boulder has an active and healthy culture and a diverse transportation infrastructure, there's still more the city can do to make bicycling, walking, and transit more desirable and convenient for people of all ages and abilities. Through the development and adoption of the 2014 TMP Update, the city has set its sights on ambitious, yet realistic, mode share goals for 2020 and beyond. The City of Boulder and its partner organizations are making every effort to accomplish a 30 percent bike, 25 percent walk, and 10 percent transit mode share for all trips taken within the city. In order to accomplish these goals, the city must go beyond conventional practices and continue installing enhanced facilities that help residents and visitors feel more comfortable using active and sustainable modes of transportation.

Experimental Process

In 2013, the City of Boulder launched the Living Lab program to test innovative facilities to determine how people feel when using them. The program has expanded citywide and several new types of facilities have been installed, with mostly favorable results from the overall community. These installations aim to enhance user experiences and to make bicycling, walking, and transit use more appealing by improving convenience, safety, and efficiency. The Living Lab program is being deployed as a series of pilot projects and programs that include qualitative and quantitative analysis to evaluate the potential for long-term application and appropriateness in Boulder.

To date, Living Lab projects have focused on new bicycle facility treatments and programs that enhance the existing system. Phase I projects have been opportunistic and followed a minimal,

yet focused public engagement process prior to project installations. The first wave of Phase I projects were installed in September 2013 and evaluated throughout fall 2014. As part of the second wave of Phase I projects, two new treatments were installed in October 2014. A third treatment is scheduled for installation in 2015. Evaluation of the treatments is currently underway, with the intent of testing the new facilities for approximately 12 months while conducting ongoing evaluations with all road users to determine how the projects work for them and overall sense of satisfaction.

Next Steps

The evaluation of Phase I projects will be ongoing throughout 2015. Results will be summarized and disseminated to the community to guide future policy decisions regarding whether to include the new treatments in the city's design standards. Concurrent with Phase I of the Living Lab, GO Boulder is launching Phase II in 2015. Phase II consists of studying four major corridors and applying a "rightsizing" approach to enhance active transportation options, such as bicycling, walking, and transit. It means providing an equitable allocation of space on the road for vulnerable users and applying contemporary techniques of street design that slow motor vehicle speeds while increasing their efficiency and optimal throughput. The attached project management plan illustrates the timeline and necessary steps for public engagement and implementation of Phase II of the Living Lab. The implementation approach and timeline will be refined based on City Council's discussion at the Feb. 24, 2015 study session.

Goals

- Establish the Living Lab as a visible and well-known program that tests and identifies specific facilities and innovative street designs in Boulder.
- Promote the Living Lab and other city programs to increase multimodal travel and help meet the 2020 mode share goals established by the 2014 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Update.

Objectives

1. In 2015, increase community awareness of the Living Lab by branding and promoting the program as a trusted city initiative that tests innovative new multimodal facilities in Boulder.
2. In the first two quarters of 2015, provide clear and concise information and updates related to the Phase I Living Labs, complete with shared evaluation metrics and next steps.
3. Prior to launch of the Phase II labs, provide compelling value propositions to increase community awareness and understanding of the quality of life benefits that may result from "rightsizing" select corridors.
4. During the Phase II labs, provide proactive communications to affected community members to create trust, rally support and reinforce the value propositions.
5. Facilitate and encourage community members (especially women, older adults and families with children) to use the Living Lab treatments and provide feedback.

Strategies

Objective 1

- Establish and promote the Living Lab brand by utilizing consistent imagery and color schemes for traditional media, digital media, and onsite installations.
- Increase Living Lab program visibility and recognition by sharing the key messaging and logo across all media channels.

Objective 2

- Create information sharing and update mechanisms for interested residents to learn about and better understand the Phase 1 installations.
- Create and share an evaluation template to clearly communicate and the Phase 1 results.

Objective 3

- Produce and share clear and concise value propositions to communicate the potential benefits of strategic corridor rightsizing.
- Garner support and understanding of corridor rightsizing via targeted community outreach.

Objective 4

- Provide proactive communication to affected community members in advance of Phase II communication milestones.
- Identify and leverage key strategic partnerships with residents, businesses, and community organizations to provide third-party support and encouragement.

Objective 5

- Create a central feedback loop and communication portal on the city's website to raise awareness of the community forums available to provide input on the Living Lab treatments.
- Host walk and bike audits and other events to facilitate use of the Living Lab treatments and dialog among community members to share their experiences and perceptions.

Target Audiences and key stakeholders

1. Boulder travelers, including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and bus riders – especially women, older adults and families with children.
2. Neighboring businesses, residents, and property owners along select corridors
3. Neighboring business customers, especially regulars
4. Local business organizations, such as Downtown Boulder, Inc., Boulder Chamber of Commerce, Boulder Convention & Visitors Bureau, Boulder County Independent Business Alliance and Boulder Economic Council
5. Transportation Advisory Board and City Council
6. Emergency response services such as the Boulder Police and Fire-Rescue departments and Pridemark Paramedic Services
7. Transportation organizations, such as Boulder B-Cycle, Boulder Transportation Connections, RTD and Via

8. Agency partners, including Boulder Valley School District (BVSD), Boulder County and the Colorado Department of Transportation
9. Bicycle and pedestrian commuter community, such as Community Cycles and Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs)

Key Media

- City of Boulder website
- Channel 8 (Comcast channel 8, Vimeo, and YouTube)
- City of Boulder social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, the “On the GO” Tumblr blog, Inspire Boulder, and Commonplace
- Inquire Boulder
- Boulder Daily Camera / Colorado Daily
- BizWest
- Downtown Boulder, Inc. email newsletters (bi-weekly general and monthly business)
- Boulder Chamber of Commerce email newsletters
- Community partners’ and stakeholders’ websites and communications tools

Budget

The project budget is limited and this communication plan will be implemented using existing staff resources and city communications tools and leveraging communications opportunities with partner organizations. All of the items included in this plan are included in the staff work plan through 2015.

Measuring Success

The Living Lab program aims to encourage and enable community members to further reduce their vehicle miles traveled by continuously improving safety for all modes of travel in order to increase walk, bike, and bus trips.

The success of this communication plan will be determined by establishing baseline data and measuring progress on an ongoing basis using a variety of quantitative and qualitative metrics that are tied to the measurable objectives of the 2014 TMP update.