

## Neighbors for Alpine-Balsam

January 8, 2019

RE: Daily Camera Commentary – “Adjust Alpine-Balsam Project to Benefit All”

Dear City Council Members,

We are a group of neighbors residing in the neighborhood surrounding the Alpine-Balsam site. While we endorse the project, we are concerned that the studies to date need to be carefully reviewed in relation to the density and parking ratios on the site. The scenarios presented thus far are out of scale with the neighborhood and will likely negatively impact traffic, parking and views in the area. Please see our attached article from the Daily Camera (December 30, 2018).

Additional Boulder residents have asked to sign in support of our article, and they are listed below.

We look forward to working together with you and the Boulder community to provide a successful project on our neighborhood site.

Sincerely,

Jorge Boone, Francesca Silva, Kathleen Hancock, Marina Florian

Attachments: I. Article from Daily Camera, December 30, 2018  
II. Additional Signatories  
III. Signatories

## Guest commentary

# Adjust Alpine-Balsam project to benefit all

By Jorge Boone,  
Francesca Silva,  
Kathleen Hancock and  
Marina Florian

**H**ow can Boulder grow economically, provide affordable housing, remain committed to the environment, and keep its unique culture? This has been the guiding question for much of the city of Boulder's work for the last decade.

The Alpine-Balsam project, a development proposal for the former Boulder Community Hospital site in north-central Boulder, is one piece of this puzzle. The City has put forward five planning scenarios ([beheardboulder.org/alpine-balsam](http://beheardboulder.org/alpine-balsam)) and continues to seek public feedback. We have attended City presentations on the project, studied the scenarios, and read public opinions.

Our group, Neighbors for Alpine-Balsam, endorses a mixed-use project for this site. However, we ask that the City honor the integrity of the established neighborhood and consider the implications of inserting a relatively high-density "urban village" into an existing neighborhood. This project will set a precedent for other neighborhoods where development is proposed. Now is the time to ensure that neighbors most directly affected — not just developers and government planners — are heard.

In its five planning scenarios, the City has not adequately considered housing density, increased traffic, parking scarcity, public transportation and views. We ask that the City and our fellow Boulder residents consider the points below as the City makes this neighborhood-changing decision on the Alpine-Balsam site.

**Housing density:** We support having a portion of the site reserved for affordable housing.

However, we ask that the density increase be modest. There are about 1,300 housing units in the neighborhood surrounding the project site.

Traditionally, this neighborhood has grown 30 percent over a period of approximately 38 years. The City's high-density housing scenario calls for an increase of more than 25 percent in just a few years. The area simply cannot assimilate such massive growth in such a short time period.

**Increased traffic:** High density scenarios would create gridlock, increase pollution, and make major streets more hazardous. Broadway traffic is already heavy, especially during commuting hours.

Traffic will be pushed onto Ninth Street, creating congestion and dangerous conditions for those walking, biking and driving in that narrow corridor.

When the Boulder Community Hospital was open, there was a healthy flow of traffic, but it was spread throughout the day. With a large influx of new residents, traffic jams would be significant during

commuting hours and have a greater impact overall.

**Parking scarcity:** The City is making unproven and perhaps unrealistic proposals about parking. The scenarios suggest one parking space per housing unit and two spaces per 1,000 square feet of offices. These are new, aggressive standards. The current city average is 1.2 per dwelling unit and 3.2 per 1,000 square feet of office space. These new anticipated parking ratios are untested. If used, they would generate an experiment that the neighborhood will have to live with permanently. Given the proposed parking ratios, we anticipate that there will be an increased demand for parking throughout the neighborhood, even with the likelihood of metered parking in proximity to the site.

**Public transportation:** The City and some commentators call for improved public transportation, walkways and bike paths to offset the influx of residents and office workers. We endorse these improvements. However, many people will still rely on cars for some or all of their activities.

**Views:** We are concerned about how the project will affect views along Alpine and Balsam. There are no publicly available studies on how the scenarios will affect views.

Almost all of the existing buildings in the area are one- or two-story structures except for the hospital buildings on Broadway.

None of the City's scenarios contemplate anything under three stories along Alpine and Balsam or a vision to retain view corridors to the mountains and other natural spaces. We urge the City to provide street level studies and plans that maintain the views we all cherish.

Whether it is this neighborhood or others in Boulder, no neighborhood should be subject to the out-of-scale, high-density development that some of the scenarios propose.

There are opportunities across the entire city to achieve our housing and office goals without burdening individual areas with unnecessary and destructive density that is out of character with those neighborhoods.

We are excited about the prospects of a beautiful, environmentally sound, mixed-use project at the Alpine-Balsam site.

Let's focus on a plan that satisfies the need for housing and civic uses and that honors the surrounding neighborhood, making this a compelling project for all.

*Other signers include Emily Andrews, Margaret Alfonso, Luciana Cordova, Brian Dolan, Mary Dolan, Courtney Faust, Jennifer Goldman, Josh Goldstein, Tucker Humphrey, Cindy Lefkoff, Zori Levine, Greg Norris, Megan Norris, Elizabeth Prentiss, Doug Rao, Aileen Schwab, Charles Schwab and Carolyn Usher.*

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