BVCP Focus Group #1: Friday 11/6/15, 1:30-3pm
Downtown main branch library, Flatirons Room
Focus Group Notes

Participants

1. Male, Gunbarrel, in area 22 years
2. Female, South Boulder
3. Female, North Boulder, in area 40 years
4. Female, Central Boulder/Newlands, in area 30+ years
5. Male, Gunbarrel, in area 15 years
6. Male, Southeast Boulder, 15 years in Central Boulder, then in CA, then 5 years in SE Bldr
7. Male, Central Boulder, in area 15 months
8. Male, Southeast Boulder, in area 20 years
9. Male, Southeast Boulder, in area 17 years

Question 1: What is going in the right / wrong direction?

- Comments re: right direction
  - Open space purchases
  - Bike trails / not needing to bike on side of street (although Folsom rightsizing "wrong")
    - Several echoed positive comments on bike paths
  - Beautiful; well planned; good things have been preserved; nice walking city
  - Attractive/nice redevelopments – e.g. downtown good; Two Nine North Apartments OK; Boulder Junction not as good
  - Alternative transportation pretty good – routes and frequency have improved over time. (One follow-on comment: without density, it is hard to get/support frequent bus service)
  - Boulder is trying to plan for growth; has been effective when done well.
  - Lots of major businesses / big-name companies in appropriate locations; nice residential areas; good mix of residential & industrial uses.
  - Parks, open spaces, Boulder Creek, kids' amenities, transportation – bike and bus, library, interactions on the street, important companies, mixed scale, nice vibrancy / feeling. All this makes me want to be involved.
- Comments re: wrong direction
  - Tall buildings downtown
  - As a primarily university town, the city should have a static population
  - The new high density development in Gunbarrel, near 63rd and Lookout behind King Soopers: the density doesn't fit / it's too much (2 people)

- Development is driven by developers, rather than city initiating it. Developers can make money building anything. (Counterpoint comment: developers are reacting to the market; developers need to navigate the city approval process.)
- No city has built its way out of affordability problems (1 person made this argument, similar message repeated by this person in other topic areas)
- In some cases decisions appear to be "knee jerk" – e.g. near Twin Lakes, a property zoned rural residential was changed to mixed use, with 140 units planned in a rural area with no access to services; shouldn't be located there.
- Misguided decision to keep Arapahoe east to 75th to one lane when rebuilt it, given 60K in-commuters – insufficient capacity. (Follow-on comment by another attendee: Boulder intentionally makes it hard to drive – not good)
- Worried won't be able to buy in; worried about scale.
- Rise in price of rents – making it more and more exclusive.
- Wonderful place, but maybe some things aren't being done correctly.

Question 2: Housing: diversity of housing is #1 value for receiving increased attention, although most want to maintain controls on rate of growth. Thoughts on housing?

- "Want to have our cake and eat it too"
- Arguments against more housing (1 person):
  - Name one city that has solved its affordability problems by building more. Won't impact prices with more supply; just will be more crowded.
  - Not realistic to build on open space.
  - Problem will finally be solved with good transportation between cities.
- Alternative perspectives:
  - Boulder has lots of open space – unlock some for housing – will help with climate change and traffic.
  - City cast its lot by being a job center and implementing growth control in the 70s.
  - It's all a matter of market demand; affordability problem is not the city's fault
  - Students (many per unit) drive up rents
  - Do we want to be a high cost exclusive place? Or build a denser place? (Density is attractive)
  - Whole county has to be part of solution. Surprise that the plan doesn't encompass the entire county – expand its scope? Make it easy to get into town. (Follow-on comment: transportation is not part of the new Gunbarrel development referenced earlier.)
  - Two separate questions: 1) city values diversity of housing types and values. 2) should the city engineer a solution? Boat sailed in the 70s with anti-growth.
- There has to be a little of a lot of things to address the affordability issue: e.g. transportation, cohousing for older people, raise occupancy limits
- City's housing program is good – wonderful to build equity – stays permanently affordable - anything to expand that is great. (Follow-on comment: needs to be done in a smart way, e.g. not like proposed 140 units near Twin Lakes)
- Nice to be able to walk to places – build mini communities around housing.

- What locations for affordable housing?
    - More east
    - Jay and 28th
- What's acceptable and unacceptable regarding affordable housing?
    - Newlands used to be affordable, now all scraped. Small houses are now all gone, only have bigger houses now. Put limits on how much one can develop?
    - Problem: no more land
    - Surprised/shocked at $2200 rents for a 2BR at Boulder Junction – not affordable. Do we need fancy things (e.g. granite countertops)? (Follow-on comment: those elements are a small part of the cost.)
    - Outside of the City's affordable housing program, there won't be a starter home ever built in Boulder again.
    - No matter how much is built, prices will always be unaffordable. So the question becomes how much density do we want.
    - The definition of affordability varies around the US – different in Ohio than here.
    - People tolerate smaller units in Boulder.
    - It's important to preserve existing neighborhoods – that helps make Boulder Boulder. An example of unacceptable housing might be where a new development is served by one street, and generates a large volume of incremental new traffic (impacting existing residents).
    - Preserve family neighborhoods; avoid situations where multiple lots are purchased, units are town down, and big house erected. Limit maximum size? Although that imposes on property rights and expectations of existing owner.
    - Great opportunities for a little more density in Table Mesa, Meadows Shopping Center, North Boulder – walking oriented development with commercial nearby. Holiday is good.
    - Downtown is good location since in a walkable area; existing units are huge; limit unit sizes so more people could live downtown?
    - Proposed Twin Lakes affordable housing unacceptable – backs up to wildlife habitat, hydrological issues.
    - Need to consider environmental impacts. Doing something on affordability is better than nothing. Trend has been for more in-commuters. (Counter-comment: adding more density may not reduce traffic if occupant subsequently changes job. Counter counter comment: in general, less traffic if outlying workers lived in Boulder.)
    - There's room for improvement on transportation: can get to Denver quicker than across Boulder.

Question 3: Mixed use development: what are the pros and cons? Examples of good and bad developments?

- Location is the most critical issue. It works in North Boulder, e.g. Holiday / Uptown Broadway.
- If going to have housing, makes sense to have neighborhood-oriented commercial on the ground floor, e.g. restaurants, cleaners, grocery, stuff you'd walk to pick up

- Steelyards and Peloton are good examples
- A lot of projects have a sameness to their look
    - Projects can only build so high – buildings come out looking boxy / same
    - Some buildings are grey boxes – colorless. (paint bright colors?) For example: Boulder Junction.
    - (CU set the architectural style for Boulder)
- Walkability and bus routes are critical. Most residents won't both live and work there.
    - Does living in a mixed use development actually decrease car use? Is there actual data? Do the residents own cars?
        - (Disaggregate car storage costs from other housing costs)
        - Cars per unit has increased in Boulder (a function of wealth). However: people may not always drive. There's a culture of walking in Boulder.
    - Don't kid yourself that residents of mixed use developments will stay in the neighborhood. People will get bored of that.
        - Counter: If there are no services provided, people will have no alternative but to leave the neighborhood; so at least there's a chance of staying in the neighborhood if services are provided
- Hard to know if I'd like mixed use development since I haven't lived in one
- Often mixed use developments are inwardly focused / aren't really knowable until you go in (not fully apparent from the street)
- Veneer of buildings matters as to how the city looks like
- Participant question: are we talking about mixed use developments which are self-contained, or those that blend into the neighborhood? Answer: both
- Prospect (Longmont) is livable. Planned neighborhood; residential and adjacent commercial
- Plenty of room for infill in Boulder, e.g. Diagonal Plaza is prime for mixed use. Huge parking lots; put parking underneath buildings. Area is already dense. Near bike paths, bus routes, Foothills Parkway.
- Other locations:
    - Old Sutherlands
    - Old Broadway hospital (some affordable housing, city offices; already commercial across the street)
    - Old Mapleton hospital (senior living center proposed)
    - East Pearl light industrial could be reclaimed

Question 4: Height of buildings – opinions on existing 35-40 / 55 foot height limits in Boulder?

- Height limit is critical. If hadn't done that, impacts on views.
- A diversity of building heights is nice, e.g. Denver and Manhattan; Denver's Spire building is beautiful
    - Counter comment: but we're different from Denver and Manhattan because we're against the mountains
    - Height is more appealing if it is more staggered. Boxy buildings will look dated in the future.

- Allow flexibility and architectural diversity, allow some density
- Acceptable locations – nonresidential east. (Different comments on what "east" is – east of 30th, east of Foothills, east of 55th; in industrial areas; NIMBY issue; wherever don't block residents' view of the mountains.)
    - Density on outskirts, with services added so residents don't need to come in to city
- Height limits create uniformity. Mix it up to get variable building heights, e.g. through cap and trade on building heights?
- Affordability vs. height:
    - if build housing, shouldn't all be luxury units
    - Counter: additional high density housing probably won't impact affordability; won't create a truly diverse population.
        - Counter counter: it's a supply/demand situation, and this would increase supply.
    - Do more public housing
    - Development needs to pay for itself – no free lunch.
        - New market rate units are priced at a premium to subsidize affordable units. Counter: developer still needs to figure out the market; can't price beyond the going market rate.
- Holiday is kind of like Prospect. Permanently affordable housing is part of the mix. Increase the share of permanently affordable housing.
- In many places, actual implementation makes it hard to create affordable housing.
- The city's affordable housing program is the only way to create housing diversity.

Question 5: Developer requirements. Top two responses per survey are to provide permanently affordable housing and protect views. What other impacts should be addressed?

- Transportation, access – things people can use
- Exceptionally high quality materials. Sounds like that means $$$, but can look cool but not be expensive. More creativity.
- Energy / sustainability – impacts whole community through power demand / potential need for new power facilities; lowers utility costs.
- Minimize auto use. Is the city doing this effectively? Folsom was astounding. Deliberately make traffic bad? That's a bad strategy. Better to supply benefits than punishment.
    - Should provide Ecopass. That helped CU – first started with students, then extended to faculty and staff.
    - Should have citywide Ecopass. (Currently the neighborhood Ecopass program is awkward, with blocks having to raise money. Improve that system.)
        - Negotiate that with RTD; factor in the real costs. Transportation services are a business too, will have to pay locally.
        - Buses are currently mostly empty.

    - It's not a developer's responsibility to limit SOVs. But it is appropriate to ask them to provide off-street bus access.
    - Bus transportation corridor plans: put mixed use and dense housing there.
    - Provide park and rides for commuters on outskirts of city, served by free buses to major parts of the city.
    - Have bus lines focus on serving businesses. The problem / challenge with bus routes is at the business end, not at the residence end.
    - Look at Silicon Valley – transportation hubs, regional buses.
- Usable public spaces are good (if not too much cost for developer)
    - Although: often these aren't used by the general public. (Although if a coffee shop there, they would be. And, if used by the nearby residents/employees, they won't go elsewhere/impact other areas.)
    - 11th and Pearl: should have had a plaza on Pearl.
    - Public spaces build community, open things up, enhance livability for locals.

Question 6: Any other topics we haven't addressed that you'd like to mention?

- When developing/implementing plans/policies, the city should be more data-driven. Learn from other cities, don't always reinvent the wheel.
- More two-way communication with the community.
    - Get news out more effectively. (How? Daily Camera, opt-in city newsletter, alerts. City website? But that's pull vs. push.)
    - More neighborhood meetings – build community, have (interactions?)
    - City Council come to different areas. E.g. with Right-sizing – listen.
    - Cincinnati: neighborhoods are part of city government – advisors to the city; neighborhood reps are at every city meeting.
- CU is a huge element of the community, 40,000 people. Evaluation of CU should be included in the Plan, including the south campus.
    - CU is a co-equal entity, doesn't have to answer to the city, can avoid height restrictions.
    - CU is an important part of the city's identity – world class university; attracts companies.
    - If we take students, we're a college town
    - Negotiate with CU on the plan? Why would CU sign on? Identify shared interests?
- Questions about content / process of plan
    - Bouldervalleycompplan.net
    - Is there a summary of the Plan available?
    - Although the BVCP is co-signed by city and county, it is really for the benefit of the city only. County signs because it can shirk off residential to city. (Relates to the issue of maintaining rural subdivision roads, which influences everyday life.)
    - Timeframe for plan?

BVCP Focus Group 2: 11/10/15, 5:30-7pm
401 Park Central Building
Focus Group Notes

Introductions

Female 1– Since 1981 – 3 kids raised here, Central Boulder, renter.

Female 2 – since 1995, South Boulder, several kids.

Female 3 – since 1998 – near Folsom and Walnut. Come for job.

Female 4 – Gunbarrel – 2 kids, originally moved here 30 years ago.

Male 1 – moved in 2000, currently live near Chautauqua.

Female 5 – 1996 moved as a student. Live in South Boulder.

Male 2 – Moved in 2008. Live near Chautauqua. 2 kids.

Female 6 – Since 1981. Live in South Boulder.

Male 3 – Arrived late, and missed introductions.

Question 1: Housing: diversity of housing is #1 value for receiving increased attention, although most want to maintain controls on rate of growth. Thoughts on housing?

Male 2

- It's an issue. Need to make hard choices.
- Wrong idea to try to provide every type of housing
- Over time, some areas it makes sense to increase density; not in others
- Can't please everyone
- Hill used to be neighborhood commercial; all student housing now
- Where should density be?
- Don't think whole town should be for everyone (don't try to accommodate everyone in all parts of town)
- High density attracts activity – look where it already exists. Boulder Junction is an example. (Design not great)

Female 4 – Housing in east for students is okay – students want to be close to other students. Area has transit, is walkable. People congregate where they have the same interests

Female 3 – Mixed income community – better to mix

Female 2 – not everyone wants/needs to live in SFR

- Open space better than big yard
- Encourage living spaces that aren't 5K sq feet houses

Female 6 – 500 sq foot condo efficiencies – feels like a hotel, not a house; although a choice

- There's no middle ground – tiny places and gigantic – market opportunity for mid range sized units

(Name?) – Hill: students want to live near University. If not there, where? Ship has sailed.

- I'm happy living in a high density area. Connected to open space too.
- Holiday – a good job. Low income and high income mixed there. Diverse people. Mix of styles. Things to walk to.
- Need more than just Downtown and Uni-Hill as cool places (add in other parts of town). Treat to be able to walk to coffee shop. Need to change zoning to allow coffee/corner shops in 15 minutes walk.

Female 2 – Lack of disabled accessible housing; have more which are adaptable for wheelchairs as population ages

- Husband part of Thistle
- People can't leave after hospitals stays due to lack of wheelchair accessible housing

Female 1 – In rental housing stock; can't get into a starter house

- Values: students push up rental values
- Lucky to have landlord with below market rent.
    - If changes, won't be able to stay; significant questions about future in Boulder
- More multifamily units are appropriate
- Let unrelated people live to together – better utilization of those big houses
- Dense housing in certain parts of town. Some might be more interested in bus, bike paths

Male 1 – I'd gladly split up my house into multiple units. (Rent downstairs currently)

- Pilot program – ADU, OAU – separate dwelling unit with own kitchen, alley house. City open to trying to allow that. But only OAU/ADU (not converting home to duplex). Owner still needs to live there in pilot program.
- Crested Butte destroyed by that regulation – short-term rental issue.
- I can't rent both units if I move out – would be helpful if could make house an official duplex. Neighborhood could have some input as to whether duplex use is appropriate. Might be house by house – way specific

Renter-starter house still slipping away. Startups – people getting hired and move to Erie. Singles, families. Balance jobs to housing.

Question 2: Jobs: City has 105,000 residents, 100K jobs – 18.5K jobs added over next 25 years (18% more jobs). How can we plan for the impacts? Is that too many / too few / right amount of jobs? Feedback on positives/negatives of job growth?

Male 1 – Never want to limit jobs. Sympathize with traffic (work out of house). Concerned about can't find job if change/lose job.

- Solutions: more housing, more interregional transit (to other cities)
- Lots of wasted space east of Foothills parkway – 55th and Arapahoe. Lots of business / vacant land; can accommodate more density / business. Jewish Community Center out there. Could be used for business and housing. Another Boulder Junction?

Female 1 – buildout – will that fill up white spaces (on map)? If these are the last choices, how much space is dedicated to housing vs. jobs? For her, more housing. Where? Don't impact existing older neighborhoods. But east of 33rd and Arapahoe, if built taller, wouldn't block views. Easy for transit.

Male 3 – If grow, concerned about traffic

- Light rail – why US 36 rebuilt that way (without it)? If light rail, would relieve traffic.

Poor infrastructure and planning. Longmont a done deal (lack of train). Ease commuting to less expensive areas, e.g. Longmont. Consider ability to get to Boulder

Male 2 – Chicago – train in median, works great

- Lots of wasted space, e.g. Superior Marketplace – duplicates empty spaces in Flatirons mall area
- Policy – Solidfire – if take over Pearl and Foothills will develop (?)
- Charge for virgin land, avoid taxes for infill
- Build dense businesses out east (?)

Holiday – new urbanism model – live where work. Mixed use so don't have to drive. Redevelop old buildings into mixed use. E.g. 55th and Arapahoe – a lot of old buildings

If you bring a business to Boulder, need a plan for where house employees and how they get there (to work)

Even if public transportation most will still drive. Counter: But if economical enough, will use public transportation. I'd use bus if more economical.

Have housing keep up with job creation

Ways to balance jobs – RTD, employers integral

Male 1 – encourage employers to shift hours– spread through day

Employee shuttles e.g., NCAR shuttle – 3 campuses – loop by shuttle. Primarily helps foreign visitors by far – don't have cars

- Business came up with own solutions
- Millennials don't like to drive?

Boulder used to be more self-reliant in business. Necessities / practical things of life less are now available. Want to be able to purchase what you need in town. Google not supporting city. Want to support McGuckins

Question 3: Mixed use development: what are the pros and cons? Examples of good and bad developments?

Male 2 – Lived in Chicago neighborhood with 130 year old urbanism: alley behind; each corner is commercial (hardware, cleaners, tavern, for example) – all bocks like that. Was fine. North Boulder close to that. It works – 4 to 10 DU/duplexes - doesn't feel too congested – can walk everywhere.

One person can walk to all basic needs – that's what love about Boulder

Female 4 – If had more mixed – more fun. At Foothills Parkway and 47th – 5 NCAR buildings. Condos next door. Where Iris under Foothills – wasted space (near soccer fields)

Depends on what means by mixed use. Like rural feel of Heatherwood. But if built a coffee shop / market there, would like that

Boulder city has good bike paths. Connect Gunbarrel to Boulder by bike path.

Male 1 – Mixed use is great. Allow where already have significant traffic – won't have residential feel anyway.

Where appropriate? Hard to retrofit existing neighborhood

- Hitting carrying capacity. If build new, should be mixed
- Goal of Boulder can't be to provide everything everyone wants
- Mitigate costs by increased density, but not insanely dense

Subcommunity in North Boulder – intentional – kids' parks – planned ahead. Affordable housing in there. Well thought out.

Mixed use not in industrial area with smokestacks, but in retail areas okay

Don't want to see tenements in Boulder. Appealing, planned well. Not maximize cost. Important to have a playground. Have movies in the park

Moderator – Comp plan – what do we value given constraints?

Eco passes are critical. Very expensive

- Mini buses very expensive

Moderator: Examples of mixed use density you don't like?

- 29th St. Mall a disappointment. Just expensive stores, Home Depot.
    - But, it is popular – there's a demand for it
- Steelyards – practically invisible

- New Gunbarrel stuff – is that mixed use density?
- Wheelchair accessibility of MXDs?
- Affordability a drawbacks of some MXDs

Male 3 – keep open space – don't build on open space

- Will reach a limit and won't grow further
- Preserve access to trails

What will we look like when reach limit – Aspen? Will space recycle?

What are you going to do when retire? Can make office parks denser?

Question 4: Height of buildings – opinions on existing 35-40 / 55 foot height limits in Boulder?

Female 3 – Will change culture with high rises – create wind tunnels, won't be outside in winter

Recycling space - after optimize existing space (e.g. build vacant parking lots, redevelop low-slung buildings), then maybe higher okay.

- But too early now, should stop granting 55 feet. Old Camera Building 1 story too tall. There are lots of other areas where can redevelop.

Male 1 – Agree, but if not affecting anyone, a waste not to go to 55 feet. Inefficient to not go to 55 feet if not affecting anyone.

Locations: Foothills and Iris, East Arapahoe

- Keep for core of Boulder, more in east
- Tie to some good reason e.g., improve housing. Make so want to live there (in the building)
- Buffer with neighborhood, parks

On way to airport – near Northwest Parkway, middle of nowhere in Broomfield near Louisville – apartments built not great, but they are filled. This style would not be good for Boulder.

- If 55 feet, need open space, housing, accessibility to bike trails – not nowhere. In mixed use development and rental.

Cooks, young families should be able to live here. Kids (of resident parents) can't afford to live here.

28th St. as a redevelopment area. Colorado and 28th. Huge hotel at 28th and Canyon – all car (focused), not pedestrian friendly. Possible to change infrastructure there?

Service industrial at Valmont and 28th. Could walk to store/restaurants. Strip malls have expiration dates. Iris to Pearl. What would make sense to Boulder?

Question 5: Any other comments / feedback?

Male 1 – given job projections to help with traffic: add more over/under passes (e.g. for peds)? Try not to stop cars mid-block. More traffic planning – worth cost? Feels guilty if he slows down 10 cars to cross street mid-block.

Pedestrian safety – they are competing with turning cars. Pedestrian underpasses would help.

- Avoid stopping cars
- Time mid-block crossings with traffic lights – don't need immediate response e.g., mid block on Folsom
- People don't stop for mid-block crossings. As a driver, I don't know if I have to stop (confusing as a driver) – I look around as approach to see if any people trying to cross

Student housing – need to involve university (and RTD). University will do anything it wants.

- Grew up in Evanston – Northwestern U – a state institution should take on responsibility for ownership of housing. A big burden if it put on the city rather than university.
- Build more student housing in Williams Village; including non-dorm housing, e.g., Bear Creek
- Dorms are packed
- Boulder Outback hotel – dorms? Student housing?

Male 1: OAUs – expensive and uncertain application process. But also, can't be too lenient, or might overburden city (with applications). Perhaps a tiered cost system (incremental additional costs as pass review thresholds)? Perhaps like a covenant community/HOA – new standards?

BVCP Focus Group #3: Tuesday 11/10/15, 7:30-9pm
401 Park Central Building
Focus Group Notes

Participants

Male 1 – Near Folsom and Mapleton, in Boulder off/on past 15 years, two kids, renter
Male 2 – Gunbarrel, in area 70s-80s, moved, then back past 10 years, kids no longer at home
Female 1 – Holiday, kids at home, 7 years in area
Male 3 – 22 years, near Lucky's in North Boulder, work in real estate
Female 2 – Gunbarrel, here from '79 on, came for school
Male 4 – Since '67, worked at City of Boulder, PhD CU
Female 3 – Since 2009, medical worker, 2 kids
Female 4 – 5.5 years, Master of Arts
Female 5 – Central Boulder, 5.5 years

Question 1: What is going in the right / wrong direction?

Male 1 – Lots of demand to be here – indicator of right direction

- Open Space and parks attract, impact him. Also, overall quality of life.
- But often Planning Department has great ideas but need more vetting
    - Right sizing – could have used better outreach and advance notice
- Affordability only gets lip service

Male 2 – Comp Plan well done since '77. Emphasized infill, maximizing infrastructure.

- Constricted growth impacting affordability
- Balance: protect values (what we believe in) and place
- Can tweak and make big gains

Male 3 – Balance recreation (we're not all athletes)

- Making small gains in arts, but far off of potential. Arts will bring tourists, spending.
- Affordable housing – insufficient attention. Little things can do (?), or will become Aspen.

Female 2 – Very livable and want to stay

- Want affordability, but charge high fees, insane rents
- Lots of apartments
- No good transit solution between Gunbarrel and Boulder – forced to drive

Male 4 – City calls itself cutting edge on parks, rec, biking, virtually everything

- But BMEA – 450 workers: less than 25% of members live in Boulder – cost
- Transportation a problem
- Changing downtown parking. Previous 3 hours free in library lot, now 1.5 hours and pay more; okay if upgrading
- Building apartments on top of each other. Apartment rents very high and going up.

Female 3 – City has much appeal – bike commuter – it works on many levels – S to N Boulder. Gets an ecopass. Can live by values she wants her kids to live by.

- Schools not very diverse – except CU students, visitors. Don't see much diversity in town

Female 4

- Right: offerings and access great. Can't bear going back to Ohio. More affordable to eat well in Boulder (non-GMO, etc.). Culture. Liberal / libertarian politics at Naropa. Not here long.
- Wrong: lack of diversity – race and socioeconomic. Feel they are kicked out of here. Unsustainable – caters to people with money. Lives on East College (student neighborhood).

Female 5 – Access to Open Space amazing. Excited about potential in arts, behind other cities, will bring diversity. Building lots of apartments, but won't add affordability. Like current apartment, but would like more housing options.

Female 1 – Livability – access to mountains. Easy to get around town. Great resource for kids. Easy to live here.

- Wrong: Affordability – couldn't afford if starting today. The only new folks are getting help from outside or are established in career. No way to get in market, even with townhouses.

Question 2: Housing: diversity of housing is #1 value for receiving increased attention, although most want to maintain controls on rate of growth. Thoughts on housing?

Male 3 – City is extremely rigid on ADUs, coop housing, inclusive housing, mixed housing in SF neighborhoods. Will see more multigenerational homes when more flexible with existing neighborhoods - make it more livable.

There's no commercial in Martin Acres – what if had a little commercial space there?

Male 2 – 1% housing rate vs. affordability: Not an either/or. Need to create picture of what looks like in a given neighborhood, e.g., Martin Acres – lots of rentals. Need to take on these on – political will. Do in creative fashion, do something different.

Female 2 – rigid code – impossible to add cottage. Lots of ½ acre lots – more flexibility – what constitutes a house/family?

Split lots on Mapleton work great. Martin Acres would be up for that. Why is everything in Martin Acres the same? Other participant answer: because built at same time.

A little bit of up and out and increased density.

Went to a moderate income housing session – discussed 2 hours. No silver bullet, many solutions. Some think affordable housing should be RTD and Longmont.

Moderator question: What density is acceptable?

- Apartments near environment-blocking view of mountains. Built new apartments around the church. Golden West residents – views blocked. Just completed another 6-story. Density doesn't work if… Don't know if density will solve affordability.

Density doesn't necessarily mean stacked cubes – need good architecture

What's allowable? Limited 3 unrelated

More nuance – not just SF and stacks. Holiday is mixed - dense, but feels human scale, small yards, views, people running around with yards. Different economic groups.

Losing views feels like an assault. Not for tons of blocks if it means more affordability.

Don't like traffic impacts of density. Right sizing removal was the wrong direction

Need traffic solutions

City thinks if build more housing, more affordable, more will live here / less traffic – is that true? Tested?

Won't accommodate everyone in town.

- Certain streets are for cars – make them efficient
- Inefficient "stroads" – combined streets (for people) and roads (for vehicles)
- Midblock stops awful
- Arapahoe east – 1 lane – make it efficient so don't disperse people to other routes into town
- Get clear on values

Crossroads – could have made part of it a transportation hub

- If have cars, make it efficient to drive

Commuter to Denver – RTD is great. That's one solution.

- Be more exacting to RTD on what pay (what service we pay for)
- We don't have a train to Boulder – get that train

We aren't clear about what we want and follow through

- Need to take control of it.

Question 3: Jobs: City has 105,000 residents, 100K jobs – 18.5K jobs added over next 25 years (18% more jobs). How can we plan for the impacts? Is that too many / too few / right amount of jobs? Feedback on positives/negatives of job growth?

What kind of jobs?

Economic vibrancy important to health of community – arts, schools.

But flip side – more driving in. Accommodate it or make it hard? If accommodate, let them in. Or open up the spigot a bit – more flexibility on (?)

Great to have more jobs, but more driving into town. No sure how well Boulder is accommodating workers.

Downtown EcoPass – EcoPass is important – apply to other parts of community. People use it.

Right sizing – better messaging. I used to pass out EcoPasses for Boulder Valley Women's Center – but people wanted to drive. Communicate the simplicity. Make it easy to figure out bus (Washington DC easy).

Easy ways to ride bike.

Wired community.

Bus takes 45-60 minutes Gunbarrel to University. 13 minutes to drive.

- Use EcoPass for Denver
- Only place in town it works is Skip

Denver to Boulder: bus takes 40 minutes, works great

Boulder is on the cutting edge of everything – RTD website and mobile app should be better

How make people in surrounding towns feel included?

Bus from Gunbarrel to Louisville takes 2 hours

4-5 light cycles for all west bound routes

Needs to be a concentration on local property vs. growth

- We want successful, prosperous, diverse, but don't need to sell the farm for it
- Google is coming, I'm toast (renter aspiring to become homeowner)

Question 4: Mixed use development: what are the pros and cons? Examples of good and bad developments?

Female 3 – Like the idea. South Boulder is ripe for more.

Stapleton good – like Holiday with commercial. Dated shopping centers could be revamped with housing, parks. Options for student housing.

Shopping centers – 50s/60s. Apartments above stores – helps those businesses

Sloan's Lake, St. Anthony – mix of units, Whole Foods, small offices

Our idea of mixed use has been limited – a little bit here and there

Federal lending rules – cap on amount of commercial space.

Boulder Community Hospital (Broadway) – huge potential for housing, used to traffic

Boulder Junction. Lumber Yard ripe for it. People better be ready for train noise.

With large pieces available – if don't build self–contained, you'll exacerbate (problems) – have a larger plan

Mixed use is great if planned well. Stapleton good – green space, bus stop

Peloton unaffordable

Would like diverse commercial mix in mixed use –work close to where live

Jobs match cost of housing stock

Need bus and bike path access

New generation wants to live above work – that's how the rest of world does it

Appropriate everywhere except historic neighborhoods

- Do it on larger scale
- Pearl St – mix of uses – pedestrian access, bus transportation, some affordable housing

Solana Development – had an affordable housing quota – they bought it across street. Shouldn't be across street, but rather as your neighbor. Shouldn't have a separate entrance for affordable units.

What effect of students on housing prices? Mom and dad pay. May stay. Do a lot of their issues have to do with University Hill?

Will start distributing EcoPass on Hill.

Provide sufficient student housing – raise bar very high

- Students get outside support, willing to crowd – willing to pay more
- Landlords can keep raising rents
- When students leave, an opportunity to raise rent

Rent control is illegal in Colorado

University trying to address students in first year

- Along 28th St. supposed to be for students

28th and Aurora – 10 different apartments – some really cheap, others really expensive. Businesses have failed there - why? Students have different buying characteristics than a family

North Boulder a great example – Holiday is done well, well planned/thought out

Anachronisms – Martin Acres and Table Mesa

Provide carrots and sticks. Need both/and, not either/or.

Question 5: Height of buildings – opinions on existing 35-40 / 55 foot height limits in Boulder?

Based on growth constraints – up is only option. Not sure about 35-40 vs 55.

Could put taller buildings everywhere east of Foothills – we all want the view

Okay with height, but don't go overboard with skyscrapers

Horizons 11 stores. Near commercial; has worked. Places where won't block views.

Get past "hell no" on height limit

Use taller buildings for senior housing - getting old fast. People will move here.

Going to have students and old people who need housing

A lot of people don't want yards

Don't need to go up much

- Keep view corridors
- Match density to services and transportation
- Would love to see housing in Table Mesa. Car share programs – ban cars?

I'm anti height - like 35 feet – for views and so feels open. Boulder Junction feels claustrophobic.

- There's a core area that could be 55 feet
- Frustration – have limit, but exemptions common

If build up, make rooftops outdoorsy/accessible = 11th and Pearl – can get on top. City scape on roof - not pay to use it. Civic spaces on rooftops (not just Rio Grande restaurant).

In NYC – skyscraper lobbies had to have art & public seating

If go taller, need to give people access to views – open to people not living there. Some areas could accommodate higher building. By Baseline Safeway. Pearl Parkway underutilized. If going to impede views, give people access.

- Calculate height algorithm.
- East of 30th from Arapahoe to Valmont – have two story industrial, no housing. No brainer (for redevelopment / higher buildings). Mixed use great – no housing, but lots of employees
- Commercial development – all integrated - civic space around square
- Let developers make great spaces

In Greeley and Glendale – if make a downtown district – can make liquor license float – open container law flexibility.

Question 6: Developer requirements. Top two responses per survey are to provide permanently affordable housing and protect views. What other impacts should be addressed?

Build things not built around cars

- Parking lots: only used during business hours – will perpetuate same issues
- Require percentage donation to the arts
- Players/public spaces – places for kids to meet/hang out – ice cream shop, restaurants. Pearl has lots of those. Replicate that feeling.
- Create multiple centers – not just Pearl.
    - Crossroads used to be that with food court
- City has lost vision of redevelopment
    - 29th Street – lost opportunity – city acted like Broomfield
- Every city in Denver area is willing to be cutthroat to get commercial business. Boulder can get above that – has tax revenue. Retail isn't a problem, it's other needs.
- Payment is lieu is never enough. Where put it?
- Cash let us buy hospital.
- Not just low but moderate income housing: 250-500K not available – above deed restricted – Broaden the definition of affordable housing.
- Aspen gives housing to employees, first. Does Boulder have that same policy? Less than 25% of its staff lives here.

Question 7: Any other topics we haven't addressed that you'd like to mention?

- AirBNB – Glad we passed that. Let renters do that too – they're cut off at knees. We say we want affordable housing, but then act against them.
- 300/301 – NIMBY – make sure development avoids that – fractious
- City lacking in communication with public in everything
    - Don't get Channel 8
    - More concerted effort to communicate with people
    - Low hanging fruit
    - That can help with fractiousness
        - 300/301 going to battle
    - City tries – try harder with better communication
- Daily Camera is not always accurate. Channel 8 requires cable TV. How will the city get information out with all the cord cutters?
- Look at Longmont – they have universal wifi – it provides a sense of community and buy in. Also they have their own transit system – added on top of RTD – additional lines on own.

    - Longmont becoming a more livable place
- Several years ago – added new bike path signage – "Broadway Boogie" – $250K waste
    - $50K study – why prairie dogs live at ballfields – waste of money
- Civic center – incredible project – will help cars out – impressive vision.
- Boulder's doing a lot well – love being here
    - Keep improving. Cutting edge is fine, but fill potholes too – don't neglect the basics for the cutting edge.

BVCP Focus Group #4, Thursday 11/12/15, 3:30-5pm
Boulder Public Library Main Branch – Flatirons Room
Focus Group Notes

Group: 8 participants, 3 female, 5 male, all older than 35/40 except for one male, most have been in area 10+ years except Male 2, Female 2, and Male 3.

Question 1: What is going in the right / wrong direction?

Male 3 – bike paths are awesome, open space and trails are great, seen really expensive condos more and more and these change the feel of boulder – "less natural" – have less of that type of development

Male 4 – keep the spirit of boulder the same – open space, parks – progressive nature – solve problems – no problem with new development but balance jobs and housing – have limited residences but have grown jobs/business – see a better balance between the two – like the N. Broadway, mixed/higher density – would rather see development in Boulder than in unincorporated Boulder

Female 2 – agrees – good to see business grow – better transit from boulder to outlying area to help – would like more mixed use as well – transit could be more on demand (small vans/buses)

Male 4 – keep the same… don't ignore the history of Boulder, maintain the character of Boulder, ex: 'monster on Pearl' – central transportation in/out – thinks transit is halfway there – don't like the way the U keeps up on their account – dislikes rising prices, large blocks of rental buildings (ugly, squeeze people in) – lose character, historical character

Female 1 – those who work in Boulder can't afford to live there – commute in – unnecessary traffic, solve transit problem – more housing in boulder that is affordable – thinks boulder has great transit compared to other cities but concerned about additional cars being added with growth of business

Male 2 – Boulder shouldn't give up a focus on healthy lifestyle – the essence of what he sees in boulder and what attracted him to Boulder – sees a political change happening – people making a choice to have things different in the future – job growth vs housing has to be seen as a singular thing, address those needs – affordable housing needs to be in the equation – wants to build inclusive policy and increase diversity

Male 4 – saw election as a vote for the status quo

Female 3 – in county and is impacted by the Boulder votes but didn't get to vote – likes trails and open space even if she doesn't use them – wants affordable housing – "why can't we all just get along?" – how do we handle growth? The people who work here can't afford to live here. Doesn't want to be exclusionary – not what Boulder is about.

Male 1 – bought house and happy to see property value going up – unhappy about flood mitigation or lack thereof – if they don't do more – neighbors displaced from flood – of all the things that the city really needs to focus on, from a safety standpoint, he sees a need for focus on flood mitigation

Male 5 – doesn't feel represented by the council (aka outlying areas) – would like to see councils from 10 (?) areas of Boulder to increase representation

Female 1 – liked prop 301. To give neighborhoods representation

Male 5 – thinks business and housing growth should be held to the same percentage growth

Question 2: Housing: diversity of housing is #1 value for receiving increased attention, although most want to maintain controls on rate of growth. Thoughts on housing?

Female 3 – more mixed use, no specifics on where she would like to see it – everything drives back to getting the opportunity to vote – frustrating to not have a voice

Female 2 – look at housing efficiency – lots of single family and a fair number have a little cottage in the backyard but nobody is allowed to sleep there – very walkable, transit – additional opportunity to grow housing without adding new housing permits

Male 4 – I wouldn't mind the lot sizes being half the size, people being allowed to split their lots rather than build very large houses – urban style development/mixed use – "if we're going to have affordable housing, that means there is going to be more people in town." Rather them be in town

Male 3 – current plan for affordable housing = difficult, lots of hoops, not a great investment, and doesn't incentivize – drives past light industrial on Arapahoe and if city is going to sprawl, that location makes the most sense

Female 3 – as long as they have transportation (to Arapahoe area)

Male 3 – ok with some rezoning (55th and pearl)

Male 5 – 10% but there's only 7%... Fit the type of housing to the location – not everywhere – don't put mixed use everywhere – Google employees… university growth… but they don't come with housing, just more competition – you expect to build your way out of this? Not when you're constrained by open space and a 55 foot cap. Not everyone will ever be able to afford – and it's a shame but they can't.

Female 3 – what is the strategy? "Because whatever the strategy is now, it's not working."

Male 4 – more pressure on the U to provide student housing – alleviate restrictions on unrelated people per housing – allow splitting lots – encourage mixed development in some of the areas – don't like the way Transit village looks but the principle is good – "I live in a city and I'm willing to accept that."

Male4 – agrees with everything except the change in number of people – aka college students – can't handle traffic with increase in people in housing – I'm for it but not everywhere in town

Male 3 – Co-op housing – increases energy efficiency but there are only three places in Boulder that allow that – sees interest in it – could help keep prices down and allow more people to live in a house

Female 1 – Supports these ideas – is there a way to have more unrelated people but limit the cars/parking? – likes the lower height restriction – don't want neighbors to build above – like the greenspace around it so doesn't want to lose that – agrees with Arapahoe area as potential to rezone

Question 3: Jobs: City has 105,000 residents, 100K jobs – 18.5K jobs added over next 25 years (18% more jobs). How can we plan for the impacts? Is that too many / too few / right amount of jobs? Feedback on positives/negatives of job growth?

Less land zoned for future housing compared to future job growth potential – skewed towards jobs

How much open space is going to get diverted? I'd like to look at some of these "cracker boxes" of buildings and see them turned into quality buildings. Hopes code will impact the character and keep it intact in the future. Doesn't have to look the same but sustain the character.

Male 3 – Martin Acres, South Boulder, w/ old ranch homes are ugly – why don't they get renovated into houses that fit more people? Development rate for housing sounds slow (murmurs of agreement) – sees old housing as barrier

Male 4 – if people live in the town, they are less likely to need cars/drive as much

Female 3 – as long as those on the outer areas can still utilize these areas

Male 4 – don't reduce number of jobs, but slow increase

Male 5 – follow London, throw a big circle around the middle and say no cars with parking on the outskirts – a little wild

Male 4 – but Boulder thinks that way, and should continue to think big, crazy ideas

Male 3 – whatever happened to the light rail?

Male 4 – we probably need to be thinking regionally with transit – broader than boulder but not RTD district – the hop and the skip, good, total boulder

Female 1 – Google did not build enough parking

Male 4 – and they shouldn't! houses, not parking – parking = waste of land

Female 1 – but where are they going to park?

Male 5 – plop a big building in, create a hot spot, but don't consider how it impacts the area

Female 2 – "one car policy" – regional transit approach

Question 4: Mixed use development: what are the pros and cons? Examples of good and bad developments?

Male 4 – likes it – North Broadway is pretty good – wants to see it when Mapleton clinic is redeveloped (against Sanitas)

Female 1 – likes it, considered it as a place to live, N boulder – loves access to things – not sure where but encourages it instead of big apartment buildings

Male 4 – there are tradeoffs, it's a balance thing – we do one extreme or the other – big condo or single family – some sort of hybrid - could be livable and have soul – warehouse district on Arapahoe as affordable housing?

Female 3 – if area on Arapahoe/55th would be perfect for mixed use – love to see townhomes, some rental, some residential, some small businesses, services – 63rd and Arapahoe – don't need the gas stations off 55th/Arapahoe

Male 2 – goal is diversity then everything has to be included – some people say no infills…no conversion of open space… everything needs to be discussed – mixed use is great but if you're thinking about influx in 25 years, look at what Millennials are looking for – that mixed use is part of it – more transit (less desire for cars from Millennials) – community that supports needs of different groups and future groups, not just who is living here now

Male 3 – across from the Shell gas station on 30th, xfinity store on baseline… remember what it was like before, I don't like it now

Male 4 – 29th street – just apartments and mall – no character – mostly parking lot – not pedestrian friendly

Male 5 – transit mode from 28th street to downtown Boulder – like 16th Street in Denver

Female 1 – ex from Austin, TX – they were required to put in affordable housing along with other developments, so it's mixed single family, mixed use, condos – great example of what you could do to have a really nice, balanced community – affordable housing mixed with single-family – bikeable towns

Male 5 – dislikes planning focus on one of the groups – millennials, bicycles – but at the other end are seniors – they don't look across the broad spectrum – seek the balance – look at all the groups – when you come in with something big, ask what the impacts are across the spectrum – make it better for more/the most people

Male 4 – consider impacts on everyone – the car is incredibly privileged in our society – looking for multi-modal – right-sizing on Folsom poorly done but what really upset me was how so people were so

enraged that their commute was minorly impacted – we want to be multi-modal but everyone wants their cars

Female 3 – consider fixed-income residents – how are they impacted by this growth and cost of living increase – they are part of what makes Boulder Boulder – how many citizens?

Question 5: Height of buildings – opinions on existing 35-40 / 55 foot height limits in Boulder?

Male 5 – it's served this community well for decades, so why screw with it? Like the limits, don't change

Female 2 – it's a slippery slope – the look of the town – especially Boulder where the view is a big part of the city

Male 3 – moved here because it doesn't feel like a city and values the views – important to maintain views/feel of the town – against large buildings

Female 1 – especially in single family home areas

Male 4 – what about in Arapahoe corridor?

Female 3 – please no! already the stacks

Male 4 – generally agrees with restrictions and wants to be careful – lived in DC for a while with its limits but architecturally very dull – same – if it's going to be big, it should at least be architecturally interesting – incentives to maximize space = boring boxes – consider set-backs, solar shadows, etc. – houses shouldn't be bigger than 2,500 square feet for example

Female 2 – there is a lot near the library – has 6 little cottages on the same lot – beautiful, very quaint – so much capacity in Boulder where additional units could be added – don't need those mansions

Male 2 – I'm going to disagree – if you're thinking outside the box and in a comprehensive way to address new challenges, everything should be on the table – height restrictions are based on viewsheds so easily could identify viewsheds that impact few people or where mixed-use, higher density fits into this – people coming to Boulder don't care if they are in a high rise if they have amenities nearby – sometimes Boulder thinks it needs to reinvent this old paradigm – be prepared to compensate… if people are denied a viewshed, be prepared to compensate for that

Male 5 – wants to see more condos built for rentals – "keep your hands off our open space"

Male 2 – can reduce property tax – but they could also gain transit, access to amenities

Male 4 – my sense is that we have a split… people who support/oppose the recent amendments – but here we could have a frank conversation about how we could have worked through those issues – we want an inclusive conversation – "You can pry my open space from my cold dead hands but I'm happy to get rid of my car. Others might think differently."

Question 6: Any other topics we haven't addressed that you'd like to mention?

Male 5 – everything is possible…but I would not want a blanket statement that says all types of housing anywhere – do what works where it works – municipalization…lots of information made available vs Folsom was enacted without input/information

Male 1 – I didn't feel like I had a lot to say. I'm curious to see what would happen if they did nothing. Everything is conspiring towards bad things happening… too many jobs, no housing, too many cars, unknown transit… and what if another flood? Lots of people buy outside of boulder and that's not going to be affordable in Boulder any time soon. Limited in space. Demographically what is going to happen? People are going to move out… and that's going to have an affect too. Something needs to be done if people who live here now want to retain the character it has. Boulder is going to change regardless. If they don't make the changes, people are going to move out. Change is inevitable…

Female 1 – think regionally… both for transit and housing

BVCP Focus Group 5: Thursday 11/12/15, 7:30-9pm
The Hub
Focus Group Notes

Participants

Female 1 – Southwest Boulder, 2 kids
Female 2 – Foothills and Arapahoe – 2 years in area, work at CU.
Male 1 – Iris and Broadway, 25 years, 2 kids
Male 2 - Retired, Chautauqua, 9 years
Male 3 – Near 19th and Balsam, 27 years, 2 kids
Female 3 – North Boulder, near Iris/Catalpa
Female 4 – Newlands, 1 year
Female 5 – Table Mesa since '90

Question 1: What do you want to change vs. preserve about Boulder?

Female 1 – I treasure the open space – it defines the city – don't want to see it changed; protect it. Don't see wildlife on open space any more – off leash dogs.

- Love transportation by bus – get anywhere within Boulder
- Like bike – want it to be bike safer. Sorry about Folsom

What makes Boulder what it is was some of the decisions made in the 1960s – Blue Line, Mall. Virginia met with business owner to convince them. Vibrant downtown.

Right sizing – need to fix transportation system – sorry about pushback. We've been progressive – not willing to walk the walk.

Avid biker: disagree – felt less safe on Folsom – couldn't pass another biker. Felt less safe with bollards. For his wife, though, it was great.

- City didn't do background work – how to get you out of car. Assumed bike lane was the magic thing. Cart before horse.
- Great bike infrastructure. 30th St. bike lane is great.
- Can make the bike system better
- Less good biking outside of Boulder. Connect Gunbarrel to Boulder.

Right sizing – issue was process – too much stick, not enough carrot

- Leading vs. imposing
- Bikes not the solution. If serious, free bus through community

Female 4 – moved here because Boulder is a laboratory for progressive ideas.

- When you look around – the city has rich and tech focus. Not seeing deep environmental ethic any more. Shouldn't just be Menlo Park.
    - Free buses, municipalization, 100% renewable
    - Net zero energy homes

Connection to nature – losing some of that with development

- E.g. with Camera site
- But I'm not saying "no growth"

Like balance of local business vs. big chains. Encourage small business.

- Affordability issue
- Too much tech industry. Will be cyclical like everything else.
- Ensure that small businesses get accommodated
- Don't overly accommodate tech

Mountain Flower Dairy next to rec center – agriculture in urban area

- Nice that the dairy is being expanded
- Could emphasize arts and music more. e.g., pianos in town in Fort Collins. New Orleans – amazing music.

Balance issue: less grandiose huge efforts (e.g., municipalization), more important to deliver basic services, focus on homeless and poverty, don't need to buy more Open Space.

Market - forces – Boulder on track to be very rich

Affordability is a big issue. Have to address. 92% white. How can have a vibrant city if all rich white people? We are at a breaking point.

Affordability: Not just a matter of diversity, also service workers.

Question 2: Housing: diversity of housing is #1 value for receiving increased attention, although most want to maintain controls on rate of growth. Thoughts on housing?

- Preserve mobile home parks – can't be used for other purposes – zoned for mobile home park; or city buy the mobile home park.
- One housing project – residents get support for education
- Like the Folsom and Valmont project
- Tradeoff – environment (Open Space) – preserve that
- Do density if softened with environment (e.g., creek through town)
- Density doesn't have to be ugly/no trees
- Density has to be everywhere, not just industrial areas. 8 plex instead of huge houses.
- Like West Hollywood – alternate 8 plexes and single family residences. A parking issue, but ok.
- Given that Boulder will grow, what's best way to make it denser? Parking may be a little harder
- Support density in commercial areas, near other large buildings, maybe 8 stories?

- Fee bus passes – bus could be easier and cheaper – get on and go.
- Boulder could do ultra-high speed internet network
- Municipalization – biting off more than can chew – ideology and emotion – noble ideas, but not the best method
- Commercial space not desirable
- Goal of net zero for downtown or government, like Fort Collins?
- Lack of appropriate small business spaces
- Give up money on municipalization for housing
- How it's done can be better – e.g., next to Chez Thuy are ugly
- European cities – architecture and design matter
- Need some aesthetic design – need some thought
- Willing to pay more taxes for free transportation - would help with density (gas taxes)
- New buildings have parking
- Low cost/free bus would help
- Give up to 5% of open space, if properly planned (multi use, streams, walkable), not willy-nilly, rational process
- Can get housing via rent control, public subsidy, create market conditions where can create stuff cheap
- Land by 119 and Foothills – proposed for housing – but it was shot down. Council acknowledged great presentation, but none of them would want to live there. If threshold is Council not living there, then we'll never get affordable housing.
- Many spaces won't look great until developed
- Alternative viewpoint: we should do anything to preserve Open Space – otherwise a slippery slope

Question 3: Jobs: City has 105,000 residents, 100K jobs – 18.5K jobs added over next 25 years (18% more jobs). How can we plan for the impacts? Is that too many / too few / right amount of jobs? Feedback on positives/negatives of job growth?

- It's an issue of quality of jobs – high paying tech jobs pay more – raises costs
- Would like to see teachers, police officers live in Boulder. If live here, would absorb some common values e.g., environmentalism. Police not shoot elk if lived here.
- CU employs about 7K people
- Sense of what sectors are growing? Are they incentivized to come here? No, came for quality of life.
- We hear a lot about tech, but also natural foods, space, outdoor products
    - Entrepreneurial/start up valued
    - Entrepreneurial on all levels
- Not the city's business to control jobs – unintended consequences
    - E.g., height limit creates uniformity
    - Concerned about inter-city traffic – need park-n-rides, free bus

- What's our capacity for water? Relatively good here. But how many can we support? What's our environmental capacity? Towns out east are limited.
- Are we exacerbating problem limiting housing rate but not commercial growth rate? Mathematically not in balance. (Growth of housing may vary with permitting timing)
- What if scenarios – want to see scenarios – what would city look like under those (would be easier to answer than 1% - too abstract)
- Can't we disincentivize driving with parking tax?
    - Incentivize to use other modes
    - Free/low cost, convenient bus – people would like that
    - But people would react to People's Republic
- CU could have big impact – e.g., no cars with freshman. Notice in the summer when .
    - What impact did free transportation really have at CU, Downtown
- Car sharing ideas, e.g., Lyft, driverless cars

Question 4: Mixed use development: what are the pros and cons? Examples of good and bad developments?

- Shanahan Ridge – mixed use – would've had a grocery at Montessori (grocery not allowed). Condo starter homes, then move up to single family, then back to condo when senior. But now condos very expensive too. Have bus stop. Would like some commercial – coffee shop, restaurants, North Boulder good.
- Like mixed use development. Shanahan not mixed use.
- Mixed use is great – if planned well, you can walk
    - Is idea to morph Boulder to mixed use? Or mostly new?
- Denver, Boise – neighborhoods are cool due to walk to restaurant from home. Super cool if Boulder eased up. Rino – shipping container building – mixed use tastefully done.
- Rockbridge in Oakland – Mixed use development, European, shops open
- Hospital – condos, restaurants
- Mixed use developments – great, but depends on how do it
    - E.g., 19th St – church changed to synagogue. Could have rezoned to mixed use development. Bus line there.
- 29th St – big mess up for not mixed use development – no housing. Have 29 North now. But wish there was more.
- Boulder Community Hospital (Broadway) – do a combination of townhomes, condos, street-level retail
- Police and teachers – cousin (who is in public service) lives in subsidized housing in Paris
- Denver – has a building built for artists – accommodates big art installations
- Loveland - subsidies for visual artists. Permanently affordable to cap prices/rents.
- Old Boulder Community Hospital – Could put lots of density, bury parking, on Skip
- When Ideal Market goes, a little higher there
- Basemar – great location (if manage parking)
- Steelyards – horrible parking due to restaurants – not enough parking

- Boulder light rail
- Hope to repurpose Boulder Community Hospital building – otherwise a waste of landfill space, energy. Could look great.

Question 5: Height of buildings – opinions on existing 35-40 / 55 foot height limits in Boulder?

- Gradation may make sense
    - 55 feet buildings would have less impact out east, than Daily Camera site downtown
    - Okay east of Foothills Parkway
- Analyze/codify height
- But also feels like out east is okay – don't foist off on others
- How arrived at 55 feet? That height can still block someone's view.
- Height impacts the feel of the place
    - Williams Village – they inspired the height ordinance
    - Impacts scale of city. Part of charm/character of city relates to height - things kept to scale.
- Lifting limit would wreak havoc
- A few big buildings in Boulder, not bad
- Vancouver – huge condos – is that what we want?
- Need some parameters. Could a different height make a significant affordability impact?
- Variances/deviations are the norm, not the exception. Be consistent if have a rule (process issues)
- Ideal Market not an architectural masterpiece. Add 1 more story.
    - Pursue opportunities like that – housing above. Not end of problem.
- Housing above shops on North Broadway, Holiday work well
    - People don't gripe about North Broadway in Camera
- What do you want the town to look like?
- Form based code – intended to help solve appearance issue – make things look decent – could be an answer
- Exception depending on type of use? Exception to allow for affordable housing?

Question 6: Any other topics we haven't addressed that you'd like to mention?

- RE: jobs – what are the tax impacts of different types of business? Should that influence decisions? That would inform answers?
- With lots of interdependent variables – lead to keep same, or incompatible
    - Model for real time with parameters – turn this knob for housing. A tool like that would be helpful for providing feedback - then see the totality of the scenarios.
- Is growth suitable? Or try to limit/manage it.
- Used to be able to live in Sausalito, Santa Fe but can't anymore; it's only for the wealthy

BVCP Focus Group #6: Friday 11/13/15, 1:30-3pm
Boulder Municipal Building West Conference room
Focus Group Notes

Group:

- Male 1 – 4.5 years in Boulder, from Eagle County for 30 years, lives across the street
- Female 1 – Retired from Environmental Design at CU, lived in Boulder since 2006
- Female 2 – Moved here in 1991, lived in Gunbarrel, bought small condo at 30th and Colorado. Went to DU in 1966, continuously in CO since 1975.
- Female 3 – Gunbarrel area 2.5 years, Exec. Development
- Female 4 – Moved here last Jan. from east coast, 11-month-old daughter
- Female 5 – On Hill. Formerly lived in Downtown Bldr. Was active in St. Julien Hotel discussions, etc. Tries to participate in various civic activities.
- Male 2 – Two months in Boulder, 17 years Seattle area, prior to that KS. Computers.
- Male 3 – Area II east of town near Platt Middle. Colorado whole life, mid 90s Boulder, works in Denver.

Question 1: What is going in the right / wrong direction?

Female 3 – Get most places by biking trails, easy to get around. Growth plans are a concern = planning for growth. "They're looking at building on vacant lots at high density, maybe apartments, density is the concern."

Female 2 – Loves open space. Walks 4 miles to post office. Boulder still feels like a small town. I like that I can cover Boulder on foot. "Boulder can't accommodate all who would like to live here." Where do we go when we are maxed out – if we're nice, people will keep coming.

Male 1 – Got rid of 1 car, drive under 8,000 miles per year. Echo same things – concerned with some of the changes in density. Reserving judgment on Camera building. Concerned with it, seems like we are putting brick walls too close to streets. Tradeoffs, I know. We are uncomfortable with "vagrants," wife is uncomfortable at night. Boulder is over accommodating people who come here to panhandle.

Female 2 – agree about Camera building

Female 5 – Liked duplexes and mansions. Trends going to gentrification. If we are saying where is out buildout are we saying "wealthy people, or their families." "We don't want to live in a homogenous community."

Female 4 – Moved here for culture, has a laid-back feel and vibe. Accepting, not pretentious. Hard to find a unit in Newlands (rent). We realized we can't afford to live here. Think about how you want to grow. Talked about a guy who is a barber and a nurse living in affordable housing – don't lose these people.

Male 3 – I appreciate the active Boulder lifestyle, schools are wonderful. I appreciate the nice balance of outdoors and resources like CU and restaurants going well. Concern is the increased "narrowing" of the city – lack of diversity in terms of race and socioeconomics. He's a faculty member at Metro, concerned about his kids growing up without diversity; it's feeling elitist. The mechanism of who lives here is money.

Female 2 – There is diversity (she lives near 30th and Baseline and is aware of people that others may not see. People don't know how many of these people there are).

Male 1 – Diversity is a problem. How do you achieve it without destroying what's nice.

Female 4 – Young daughter, Argentine father. Has concerns about diversity.

Male 3 - There's not enough, if you go with the census.

Female 1 – Green spaces, ability to go a week+ without using car. Needs to be a discussion about what size population you want. We don't have economic diversity. Need support for middle class communities as well, grad students can't stay here. We bought before prices ballooned. Wouldn't have been able to live here without.

Poor design. City is now learning from that. 30th Street, loss of human scale. Buildings built with no place for a tree. Need high quality design for density.

Male 2 – These are nice problems to have. Towns half Boulder's size (near Seattle) which are immensely harder to get around in. There's not a lot of traffic compared to what we were used to. Boulder has done a good job containing itself. In Redmond, problems are sprawl.

Question 2: Housing: diversity of housing is #1 value for receiving increased attention, although most want to maintain controls on rate of growth. What are you willing to change to achieve greater density of housing?

Female 2 – It's not density but I don't want ugly buildings. Pearl St. Junction is "horrendous." Big fan of tiny houses. I hate what's happened with Daily Camera building.

Female 3 – We could be leaders in tiny house movement. New units in Gunbarrel is my complaint. Ugly buildings are coming based on what was built in Lafayette.

Female 1 – Tiny houses are a tourist attraction

Male 2 – I love the height limit but wouldn't mind if some area would be available for housing or retail.

Female 5 – Williams Village is such an eyesore

Male 1 – Depends on the type of people you're trying to keep. Are we trying to make it for people who work here, or people who are commuting to Denver? You can't be all things for all people. Essential services makes sense, but not "pure affordable" for everyone. Not sure everyone should be entitled to.

Male 3 – Makes good environmental and economic sense to have people near their jobs. Suggest focusing on "workforce" housing rather than "affordable" housing
(murmur of agreement from group)

Question 3: Jobs: City has 105,000 residents, 100K jobs – 18.5K jobs added over next 25 years (18% more jobs). How can we plan for the impacts? Is that too many / too few / right amount of jobs? Feedback on positives/negatives of job growth?

Female 5 – Aerospace people at Ball don't want to live here, so we don't need housing for everyone.

Female 2 – Saw survey that says people could live in Boulder but they live elsewhere to get more. Don't build housing that people don't want.

Female 3 – Likes focusing on workforce housing ("or is affordable housing for anybody – they aren't making that distinction")

Female 2 – Why do we have a rigid thing between residential and commercial? Boulder Junction is horrendously ugly. "Holiday I like." OK to change some residential to mixed use.

Female 5 – Trick is Whittier example. Tried mother-in-law apartments. You want a balance?

Male 1 – Ski areas have given density as a way to get diversity. <u>Start small</u>, we want 10% teachers in town to start.

Female 3 – Loves no lights in her neighborhood

Female 1 – Supports helping middle income to live here. There's a value in seeing diversity.

Female 5 – More afraid of mountain lions than homeless

Male 1 – Sees disgusting things downtown

Female 4 – Had a concern. Not enough lighting. Her other point is thinking about middle class. We are middle income – 2 incomes.

Male 1 – Tried to get a definition of what incomes we are talking about. He (and Female 2) are afraid that you keep putting in so much housing (until we hate it) but density may not address the issue and bring down prices.

Male 3 – Complicated situation. City has a transportation demand system. Need a housing demand management system. I don't think density is the problem.

Question 4: Mixed use development: what are the pros and cons? Examples of good and bad developments?

Consensus: Quality mixed use is great.

Male 1 – Does mixed use make development less expensive?

Female 4 – Great if you have mixed use areas

Female 2 – Pocket parks. Mixed use is great. I walk to virtually everything I need. Concerned with ugly buildings. Alfalfa's is cool – the high rise is great –everything is proximate. "BEING ABLE TO WALK is a biggie."

Male 3 – 55th and Arapahoe – all warehouses. A place to do more.

What would get you to move here – discussion of how more housing could be provided. Expansion of North Boulder area. Mixed use in N. Boulder is OK.

Female 2 – Many buildings could be torn down and rebuilt with better buildings. Enhance the area – keep the feel. CU Research Park is very cool. Transit Village undesirable.

Male 3 – Concerns about City getting aesthetics rather than tangible results (how does it make you feel, setbacks) etc. Meadows is a giant parking lot.

Female 5 – Meadows, Basemar, OK to put residential above

Male 1 – I think N. Boulder is "pretty neat." Others said they agree with that. Consensus: "it's a positive example, what's happened up there."

Question 5: Height of buildings – opinions on existing 35-40 / 55 foot height limits in Boulder?

Male 1 – Height limitation "makes Boulder Boulder."

Female 2 – "I want to see the sun."

Female 5 – I wouldn't mind if they could create something visually interesting (like church steeples) and flat roofs could be varied.

Male 3 – Prefers an average of 55' on a block – different heights. 6 stories, then 3, <u>not</u> all 5 stories.

Female 1 – Wants ability to put solar in

Female 3 – That view thing is a concern. Needs to be well managed. 4-story building in a field is too big.

Female 5 – I don't know why you couldn't build higher at the area where the storage facilities are (i.e. East Arapahoe).

Female 3 – Why did the northeast site get thrown out (the Diagonal proposal)? Santa Fe. Santa Barbara – amazing design.

Female 1 – You can design attractive affordable housing

Female 2 – Well thought-out design makes it more attractive

Female 5 –Longmont has a lot going for it that Boulder doesn't have. Longmont: Great parks throughout town. Municipalization. Internet. Parking behind buildings on Main Street.

Female 2 – Don't be afraid of good design, just because it raises prices.

Male 1 – Planning processes seem to drag on. Boulder needs to get on with things (like) the civic area plan.

Female 3 – They (county planning and housing) don't listen. Let go of their agendas enough to be creative.

Female 2 – I'm pleased that the City/County has gone to this extent (i.e. focus groups, surveys, conversations). Appreciate that they are asking. Many places don't do that.