

Twin Lakes Stakeholder Group (TLSG)
Wednesday, May 25, 2016
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Stakeholders: Norrie Boyd, Brian Lay, Rolf Munson, Dave Rechberger, Glen Segrue, and Ian Swallow

City and County Staff: Dale Case, Lesli Ellis, Pete Fogg, Steven Giang, Michelle Krezek, and Jay Sugnet, Nicole Wobus

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Katie Waller

Meeting summaries are a record of what was said at each meeting. A statement's inclusion does not mean that all stakeholders agree to its accuracy or intention.

Next Steps

<i>TLAG</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a spreadsheet with weighted average calculations of density to TLSG members.
<i>City and County staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide pictures of unique, affordable housing design ideas, such as those that look like single-family houses but are three units. • Provide blocks or cutouts of to-scale houses for developing scenarios at the next meeting. • Prepare a summary of BCHA housing requirements (people per unit) for the next meeting.
<i>Ian and Jay</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide TLSG members with locations of some affordable housing developments in the area to serve as examples of density or design.

Public Comment

The amount of public comments submitted is increasing. As TLSG has limited meeting time, it was suggested that the questions are separated from the comments so that the public will still be getting answers to their questions, comments will still be received, and meeting time will be used effectively. Some stakeholders thought that it would be best if the questions were answered in writing rather than during meeting time. Others agreed but were concerned that not addressing the public comment during meeting time would lose the answers to the submitted questions. Stakeholders agreed that the facilitator will read through the public comment and separate the questions from the comments. The public comment will be organized by theme, so if there are issues that have already been addressed, staff can refer them to past meeting summaries instead of issuing the same response multiple times. All public comment will be passed on to the group, but not all the comments will be addressed during meeting time. This approach will save time and provide the public with more thoughtful, written answers. This change in addressing public comments will begin at the next meeting on June 8, 2016.

Many of the questions submitted for today's meeting are directed at the school district and inquire about past actions taken by Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) regarding unwanted land. As there were many questions about the same issue, Glen Segrue answered questions about the topic generally. Below are the highlights of this answer.

- The situation and desire for affordable housing has changed over time and is now a large focus for agencies in the region.
- BVSD has looked for affordable housing opportunities in the past with private developers and private properties.
- The real estate market changes often and in the past, properties such as the Washington School were not feasible options for building affordable housing at the time.
- Twin Lakes provides a unique opportunity to partner with Boulder County Housing Authority (BCHA) to construct realistic, affordable housing.

Definitions

To ensure a consistent conversation regarding density, stakeholders discussed the definition of various planning and zoning terms.

- **Density** is most often discussed in terms of dwelling units per acre (du/a).
- A dwelling unit is a single place of residence and can be any size; it remains one singular dwelling unit regardless of the number of people living in it, although there are occupancy limits on most dwelling units based on zoning requirements.
- There are internal BCHA policies that limit how many people can live in one unit; the land use occupancy limits are less restrictive than affordable housing occupancy limits.
- BCHA will provide a summary of housing requirements to TLAG for the next meeting.
- The range of dwelling units per acres (du/a) for the relevant BVCP land use designations are as follows: Low density is two to six du/a, mixed density is six to 18 du/a, medium density is six to 14 du/a; the BCHA proposal requested mixed density and the TLAG proposal requested open space. Open space is zero du/a.
- The above densities are associated with land use designations, not zoning regulations.
- Building height is mainly dictated by zoning; each zone has a height limit and a sometimes a floor-to-area ratio (FAR) maximum.
- **Intensity** is not typically a word used to describe residential development.
- Residential development is discussed as dwelling units per acre, and the overall size of development is often described as **bulk**, massing, or scale, rather than intensity.
- The definition of **community benefit** depends on context; for annexation, the community benefit being assessed is that for that of the City; in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) the context for community benefit is the City and the County.
- Annexation evaluates community benefits for the City of Boulder because it must be assessed if providing utilities to a new area is worth the tradeoffs.
- Even though BCHA will be managing Twin Lakes in the case of development, the City will most likely view the project as offering a community benefit for annexation regardless of who is constructing the project; the City works with many partners to offer affordable housing, and views affordable housing as a community benefit.
- **Land use designations** are a concept, **while zoning designations** are regulation.
- Zoning designations and land use designations must align for a property to be developed; often there are multiple zoning designations that would be eligible for the dwelling units per acre defined in a land use designation.
- Land use designations and zoning designations move with the property, not the owner.
- Annexation agreements can also limit the number of dwellings on a property.
- **Density bonuses** can be added to developments during the site review process and are discretionary; however, any density bonus cannot increase the number of units higher than the limit provided by the associated land use designation.
- Density bonuses are a possibility, but not a guarantee.

- Annexation would not occur unless all parties were clear about the total number of units projected for the development.

Boulder County Land Use Department – Review of Neighborhood Development Patterns

To inform the density discussion, staff from the Boulder County Land Use Department gave a presentation to TLSG to review the neighborhood development pattern around the Twin Lakes parcels. Below are the highlights of this presentation and the ensuing conversation.

- The County measured gross density; however, the City of Boulder uses net density measurements.
- Both net density and gross density are legitimate and reliable methods for measuring density, but they have different uses.
- Density is assessed within the broader context of the character and mix of development that exists in the neighborhood as a whole. It is important to look beyond just numbers and to take into consideration overall aesthetics, and how a development would fit within the context of what currently exists.
- Density is technically the number of dwelling units per acre, but the human and design elements of the neighborhood are equally important to consider. Development can provide cohesive and positive community amenities if thoughtfully designed and integrated into the neighborhood.
- The Twin Lakes area has a diversity of density, made up of residential areas, open space, and designated Open Space.
- The Twin Lakes parcels are considered Area II, meaning they have been slated for annexation from the time of the first Comprehensive Plan.
- Area III designations are meant to protect the areas from urban levels of development. Development is not envisioned in those areas, though annexation of some space could ultimately occur in those areas.
- The people who own the southern parcels of area three land on the Area II and Area III map also requested a land use designation change to Area II; some stakeholder suggested that this was requested so that they could develop the property at a higher density.
- The Area II and Area III designations do not follow strict property lines and must accommodate easements and the associated buffering spaces.
- There are many types of public lands and conservation easements in the area around the subject properties.
- Acreage of open space is calculated to include all surface area.
- The Boulder County Land Use Department ran a density analysis exploring densities of the specific subdivisions within the Twin Lakes area and found that densities range from 2.2 d/a to 15.6 d/a. The fact that a wide range of densities exists in the Twin Lakes area plays an important role in understanding the neighborhood context.
- The average of the density values for the identified neighborhoods is 8.35 d/a, though this is not the focus of staff's analysis.
- The average density number is just a discussion point. Quantitative assessment of density is only one tool of many that would be used to influence any land use designation changes.
- There are different ways to calculate density; one method calculates density at the subdivision level, and then weighs it to reflect overall density of the Twin Lakes area as a whole. Higher density subdivisions account for a much smaller amount of acreage within the area than do the lower density subdivisions. TLAG will send those calculations of density to TLSG members.

- Brandon Creek was included in the analysis because it is nearby and influences the larger context of the Twin Lakes parcels. The common denominator among areas included in the County's analysis is their location along Twin Lakes Road. Residents of the area utilize Twin Lakes Road to access Spine Rd and 63rd Street. This includes those living in Brandon Creek.
- The County chose to show a map of the neighboring areas to provide a visual aid illustrating the range of densities as part of the broader community.
- The designs of the existing, surrounding neighborhoods are not any that would be approved by the City or County now; the desired aesthetics and geometry of a property are now completely different.
- The design aesthetics of any future development will be more influential on the Planning Board during the site review process, but can still influence the land use designation change as part of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP).
- The Planning Board will mainly be examining possible zoning options, rather than addressing issues associated with land use designations.
- The site developers are not going to invest significant funding in developing project-specific design details until the broadest parameters have been set, such as the land use designation; zoning cannot be examined until there is a full application and the site review process has begun.

Twin Lakes Action Group – Density Maps

Twin Lakes Action Group (TLAG) gave a presentation on the density in the area. Below are the highlights of this presentation, as well as the ensuing conversation.

- Density should be assessed as weighted dwelling units per acre.
- Based on a weighted calculation method, the average density for all the subdivisions in the Twin Lakes neighborhood is 4.4 d/a.
- There are different ways to calculate density, and the gross density analysis method used by TLAG ensures that small dense neighborhoods are afforded the same “weight” as large, sparse neighborhood density calculations.
- This method shows that development on the Twin Lakes parcels would greatly increase the average density in the surrounding areas.
- The calculations on the map assume that both parcels are developed to mixed density residential (MXR), making use of the entire land across both the BCHA and BVSD properties.
- These numbers use the gross calculation of density, not net density.
- City calculations have stated that all of Gunbarrel has an average density of 6.4 d/a, which includes future development on the Twin Lakes parcel.
- City staff will be presenting their analysis and recommendations to the four decision-making bodies using a net density analysis of the surrounding properties. Other analyses are always welcome.

Heat Maps

As requested by TLAG, the City prepared various maps showing how various levels of development on the Twin Lakes parcels would impact the rate of dispersion of affordable housing throughout the City. There were questions about the scale of the map, which is affordable housing density per acre rated from zero to eight. Below is a summary of the conversation regarding the heat maps.

- A heat map was used because it protects the identities of those who live in affordable housing units in Boulder.

- This map considers all affordable housing units within the city limits of Boulder, regardless of partnerships.
- The maps show the change in the distribution of density throughout the City with different levels of development on the Twin Lakes parcels.
- The City heat map includes rental and ownership units; the City current mix is 79 percent rental units and 21 ownership occupants. *NOTE: Correction, Jay initially stated the mix as of 81 percent to 19 percent.*
- TLAG heat maps show development on the parcels using dwelling units per acre and go up to 18 units per acre.
- TLAG chose to use 18 du/a because that is the maximum density allowed under the proposed MXR designation.
- BCHA does not plan on developing the property at maximum MXR density, rather 6 to 12 du/a.
- Land use designations and the associated densities follow the property, not the owner.

NOTE: After the meeting, City staff was able to clarify that the legend refers to the density of values per acre, not the number of units per acre. The way the analysis was completed was to take each point and search for other values in the same area. From there, density is generated based on how many points are found, and the higher the number, the higher the surface density. The legend may be a bit skewed as the same color spread is the same as the original map. The darker the color, the more units there are in the area. It is easiest to understand the analysis by ignoring the legend and instead assessing the color gradations. If TLAG members desire an analysis showing how many units there would be on each property at each d/a, that would be a different effort. This density analysis is designed to generalize populations into a continuous surface allowing staff to compare and contrast across an area independent of variables such as parcel size.

Meeting the Identified Interests at Twin Lakes

At the previous meeting, the Group discussed how to meet the identified interests with the three options that are currently being considered – no change in land use designation (low density), open space designation, and Mixed Density Residential (MXR) designation. To best understand the tradeoffs associated with the interests, stakeholders drew rough scenarios on maps of the parcels for various levels of density. All these conversations took place with the assumption of annexation. Below are summaries of each of the scenarios; the associated conceptual drawings are attached to the summary at the end.

Scenario One (low density)

Scenario one consists of 60 dwelling units in one building. The building would be four stories. Below are the highlights of the discussions of the development of this proposal.

- This design would likely not meet zoning requirements.
- There is public road access in and out of the property, as well as fire access.

Scenario Two (low density)

Scenario two consists of the following characteristics:

- Low density development
- 1-story patio homes
- No basements
- Two nested rows of houses on both parcels

- Pitched roofs
- Soft-surface trail and connection on the east side of the properties, serving as a wildlife corridor
- Off-site peripheral trail loop
- Lobo trail connection
- Trail connections via bridge
- Playground in a safe space
- Natural, public park
- Clubhouse on southern parcel

Below are highlights of the discussion of the development of this proposal:

- Smaller, patio homes that are lower in height could allow for certification as a Leadership for Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) community.
- A concept with low-height and low-density housing would meet many interests.
- Twin Lakes is the most used per square mile open spaces in the County, so this area should provide recreation opportunities for the larger Gunbarrel community.
- This area does not have a playground, and that could be a nice amenity to offer the community.
- This development could be a mirror on the northern and southern parcels.
- The school district could use the clubhouse as a training room for staff.
- There should not be development on the southern edge to avoid delicate natural features unfit for significant development.
- There are multiple trail connections to existing trails in this scenario.
- Public parks and playgrounds should only be developed if there is no increased use of water.
- Any development should have architectural integrity.
- Dwellings should have design features to fit in with the existing neighborhoods; this could include using pitched roofs and no carports.
- Land cost is not a concern when it comes to this project, but rather building costs; the proportion of a development project dedicated to property costs did not significantly change.
- Three, six-plex units would be cheaper than all single-family patio homes.
- It is imperative to keep operating costs low, and units are more efficient when there are shared walls.
- BCHA only builds high-quality units so that they do not require as much maintenance in the future.
- Future costs will include utility improvements.
- While it is possible to work with Habitat for Humanity, they typically require the house to be constructed on a lot that is perfectly flat and poses no engineering challenges.
- The neighboring community is very permanent and value continuity; they do not want a transient feel of people moving in and out.
- This scenario offers non-hydrostatic pressure with smaller buildings and minimized on-street parking.
- Lower density makes it harder to have more open space because the units must be spaced out more throughout the property.
- Lower density development requires larger lots.

The Stakeholder Group assessed this scenario to see how it best met the interests that were previously identified; below are highlights of this discussion.

Meet housing needs.

- The cost per unit of a one-story patio home is high, making this scenario not feasible to provide realistically affordable housing.
- This scenario would most likely only be able to offer ownership options with no rental opportunities.
- This scenario will better meet housing needs if it has diverse housing options, rather than just one type.
- This scenario would better meet housing needs if it included a mix of rental and ownership options.

Utilize land that is near existing infrastructure and jobs.

- This scenario does not do a good job utilizing existing infrastructure and jobs.
- This scenario does a good job utilizing existing infrastructure and jobs.

Protect the environment and wildlife

- Naturalists recommend leaving 300 feet on either side of a wildlife corridor undeveloped to not bother wildlife.
- This scenario took into account wildlife and environmental concerns.
- The soft-surface trail can also serve as a wildlife corridor.

Develop neighborhood amenities

- There needs to be an agreed-upon definition for amenities.
- Community gardens, public parks, playgrounds, new recreational infrastructure all count as neighborhood amenities.
- There could be a sponsor for an exercise loop around the property or a snow skiing loop.
- The newly identified trails could connect off the property to create a larger recreational loop.
- This scenario is moderate regarding what it offers for neighborhood amenities.

Develop property to meet community interests and needs.

- This scenario provides additional housing, which meets the needs of a broader community.
- Developing the property at all is not an interest of many of those in the nearby community.

Retain teachers and other employees throughout the County.

- This development would offer higher price points for employee housing.
- There are not many units per acre, so the scenario is not efficiently retaining teachers.

Develop a vision and plan for Gunbarrel.

- This scenario does not include a sub-community plan for Gunbarrel, which is still problematic.
- The issue of sub-community plans is larger than the scope of this Group.

Avoid setting regrettable legal precedents.

- This sets a questionable legal precedent in regards to the annexation of open space.
- This scenario also sets a precarious legal precedent for hydrology.

Protect the rural -residential feel of the neighborhoods and surrounding lands.

- This scenario excels at meeting this interest.
- This interest is confusing.
- For those who live in the area, this means preserving the current feel of their neighborhood through means such as no streetlights, privacy, smaller buildings, lower density, no modern architecture, and a sense of community.

Protect homes that already exist.

- Lower density and a smaller footprint would be better for the surrounding neighborhood.
- This scenario still raises concerns about hydrology.
- Reducing shrink-swell can impact existing houses.

Preserve agricultural lands.

- The only way to meet this interest is to make the property open space.
- The NRCS classification of agricultural lands of statewide importance means that the type of soil on the property is suitable for agricultural production; agricultural production is not consistent with the current or projected use of the land. Therefore, the land is not designated as agricultural land of statewide importance in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan.
- This land would be more important agriculturally if it were to have water rights, but it does not.

Learn from and improve on past projects.

- This improves on all past BCHA projects.
- Affordability becomes an issue because of house size.
- Trails are useful in keeping residents invested in their homes and minimizing turnover.
- BCHA is always improving County sustainability.
- Geothermal energy may not be practical at this site due to hydrological concerns, but solar energy could be feasible.
- There are many incentives for solar energy in affordable housing.

Scenario Three (low density)

**Note - these was confusion between stakeholders if this scenario was medium or low density.*

Scenario three consists of the following characteristics:

- Low-level development
- 96 dwelling units on both parcels
- Diversity of price points and housing types
- Peripheral trail connection utilizing bridges
- Interconnectivity into North Boulder and nearby neighborhoods
- Wildlife corridor in the ditch and away from owls
- 12 duplexes with three bedrooms maximum
- One, two-story, six-plex with six units
- Two, six-plexes with small units that are set back from the road and provide six to 12 units each
- Community garden or a park
- Trail connectivity
- Lot sizes the same as bordering neighbors

Below are highlights of the discussion of the development of this proposal:

- Almost everything in the nearby neighborhoods is two stories with basements.
- Most of the houses in Red Fox Hills have basements, although they probably should not have basements.
- Most houses in the area do not have attics, but some have third-story crawl spaces.
- There are concerns about building two story houses on the property because of hydrology issues, but those problems may be mitigated with engineering solutions.
- This scenario would accommodate different income levels and different needs through diverse types of housing.
- The City likes their developments to have a presence on the street, so it does not come across as so insular.
- The developers can create new roads or use optical illusions to make it seem as though the houses are forward facing.
- BCHA will provide pictures of houses that look like single family houses but are actually multiple units, and houses in Northfield Commons that use traditional architecture.
- It would be ideal not to have the two parcels be mirror images of each other.
- The community space might be more inviting to a broader community if it were on the outside of the houses rather than inside.

Scenario Four (low density)

Scenario four consists of the following characteristics:

- Open space on the outside of houses
- No development next to neighboring houses
- No cul-de-sacs
- 42 units on the northern parcel, made up of two-floor duplexes and three-plexes
- 42 units on the southern parcel, made up of two-floor three-plexes with six units each
- One way road on the southern parcel that is still large enough to fit a fire truck
- Shared yards
- Water feature
- Beekeeping or other desirable community benefits
- Parking lot in the northern parcel to decrease traffic on the road.
- Houses bordering a road can be viewed as a design feature.

Below are highlights of the discussion of the development of this proposal:

- Building additional roads is expensive for the developer and impacts a number of impervious areas.
- Providing green areas outside of the houses will benefit the community and provide wildlife buffers.
- Providing a parking lot rather than constructing new roads will save the developer money and take excess traffic off the infrastructure.
- The water feature could also be useful in serving as a retention pond to help address hydrological issues.
- The parking lots and an increase in non-permeable surfaces raise hydrological concerns.
- This scenario could help attract teachers with a diversity of housing types and price points.

- Over half of this property is open space.
- Six d/a developments allow for many different types of buildings since it overlaps different density categories; these different zoning categories would regulate other development characteristics, such as height, bulk, and set back.

Scenario Five (open space)

Scenario five consists of the following characteristics:

- Unirrigated grass, except for possibly pond irrigation
- Private – public partnership to get provide recreational opportunities
- Short, prairie grasses
- Trail connections
- Community garden
- Ancillary picnic structures

Below are highlights of the discussion of the development of this proposal:

- This scenario is meant to get rid of stormwater runoff.
- The open space should be covered in short prairie grass since that is what it used to be, and there is enough acreage to do so.
- The trail connections on this property would expand the current Twin Lakes recreational opportunities that serve over 100,000 people a year, as it is the only recreational area in Gunbarrel.
- There could be a community garden on either the north or south parcel.
- This property is unique from a community perspective as some Stakeholders believe it meets the five Open Space criteria and is the most visited open space among Boulder County and City trails.
- The scenario is meant to expand the options for community gatherings through connectivity and gathering areas.
- There is still room on one of the parcels for a small library and a small playground.
- Open space with no housing development is more likely to be used by the broader community rather than open space surrounded by houses.
- There is no place in the area that currently serves as a community gathering area.
- It could be possible for one parcel to be used for open space for the other one to be developed; it would provide some engineering challenges, but nothing that is insurmountable.
- This serves the neighbors' desire for parks and green space to feel like a public domain and not part of a housing development.
- All stakeholders want these parcels to serve as a community gathering place.
- Recreation in this area could take the place of Eaton Park – a recreation area that was taken down by the City.
- It may be possible to create housing based on some of these open space concepts.
- It is not desirable for the property to remain in its current state.

Next Steps

When the facilitated dialogue process was originally laid out at the first meeting, there was a discussion about the meeting after the scenario discussion to involve public comment on the scenarios. The Group discussed the possibility of bringing these scenarios to the public; below are highlights of their conversation.

- The scenarios are hard to visualize, so presenting the scenarios in their current form may not be beneficial to the public.
- The scenarios will become even harder to understand when they are roughly drawn out at higher densities.
- When presented to the public, the maps and building footprints should be to scale.
- It could be beneficial for future TLSG conversations about higher-density development to have blocks or cutouts that are to scale.
- Stakeholders could have future conversations about higher development using houses that have been developed by the City or BCHA in the past.

TLSG agreed that they are not ready to present the scenarios to the public because they do not want to offer misleading information due to lack of accuracy in the proposed scenarios. The next meeting, Wednesday, June 8, 2016, will be solely dedicated to creating more accurate scenarios with properly-scaled boxes or cutouts. Ian Swallow and Jay Sugnet will provide TLSG members with the locations of some affordable housing developments in the area, based on density so that Stakeholders will have a better visual idea of what these numbers will look like on the ground. Dale Case will work with staff to provide blocks or cutouts for the next meeting so that the higher-density conversations can be more accurate in terms of scale. After the created scenarios are more accurate, the Stakeholder Group will discuss if, how, and when to present them to the public for feedback.