

Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan – Phase 1 Summary of Culturally-Sensitive Outreach and Engagement (through Oct. 16, 2015)



A high priority of the comprehensive plan update is to reach constituents who may not normally be involved in the planning process including immigrant communities. In Boulder the primary immigrant communities include Latinos from Mexico and other South and Central American countries, Nepalese, Hmong, and Russian immigrants.

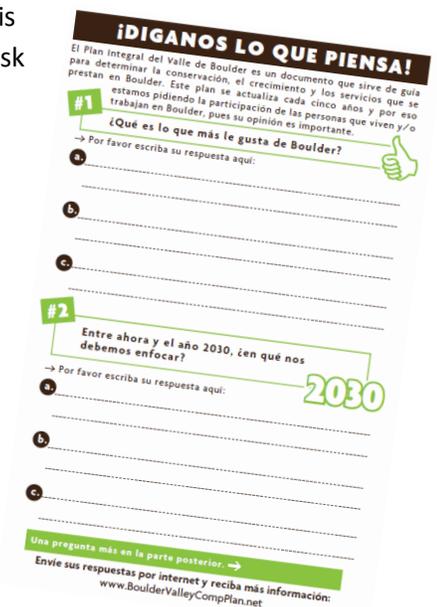
The city and county have committed to having a creative and responsive process, providing quality information and seeking input and dialogue. Staff and decision-makers seek a meaningful engagement process with immigrant communities and aspire to develop culturally-appropriate venues and processes. The approach focuses on one-on-one conversations with community leaders and spokespeople, building on their knowledge and trust within the community. This is being accomplished working with community partners including the Latino Task Force, Intercambio and city family resource staff.

Culturally-sensitive engagement takes into consideration:

- Some people may not be comfortable coming to big open meetings because of language barriers, work commitments and attire, family commitments, expectations, communication styles or other reasons.
- With some communities it is necessary to start conversations with organizations and individuals who have the trust of that community.
- Electronic and online outreach methods do not work as well for the Latino and other immigrant communities. People won't take the time to go through long and complicated surveys or questions online or they may not have the skills.
- Outreach needs to focus on questions and topics that are of concern to the immigrant community. These topics are likely not the same as for the community as a whole or may be more focused in the near-term. Topics of concern are likely to be around housing, transportation, safety, affordability, ability to open a business, etc.

Engagement with immigrant communities includes:

- Working with leaders or spokespeople, recognizing that this is the preferred approach for immigrant communities.
- Ensuring that a range of leaders and spokespeople are contacted so that it isn't just a small number of people speaking for a whole community.



- Working with leaders in organizations to frame questions that will be meaningful to the participants, meaningful to inform the update, and are not biased or leading.
- Pop – up meetings at places where people gather (i.e. Walmart, Eben Fine Park)
- Translating key questions or some basic materials but not all materials. Some responses may need to be translated from Spanish to English.

It is a great city with very little violence. Lots of nice and friendly people. Lots of places to do outdoor activities, mountains, biking, you can walk without feeling scared, day or night. I love Boulder.

(to be added: a summary of events attended)

What People Are Saying

Individuals shared their views on what they love about Boulder and what they see as important to address for the future on comment forms. Verbatim responses from the comment sheets have been translated from Spanish and are included below and in the full comment sheet summaries [link].

Common themes about what people love about Boulder are around safety and lack of violence. People appreciate access to services, natural beauty and good schools.

Potential areas of focus center on affordable housing, transit access, activities for youth and maintaining safety.

Other important issues were discussed in conversations with individuals as well as Human Services and Family Resource Staff members. Areas of concern arising in discussions include:

- Affordable Transit, Community Eco-Pass and bike infrastructure – Finding ways to decrease transportation costs would be an area of extreme impact to ease families’ financial struggles. Community eco-pass would be very helpful, especially for retired people who may have had passes through their employer but no longer do. Better transit for in-commuting as Boulder is a business activity and center. The city needs workers and we don't want them to have to come from other communities – need to increase ability to take alternative transportation. Promote more cycling especially at low income housing sites as a viable way for youth to get around the city.
- Affordable Rental Housing - Families are leaving Boulder due to high cost of living, scarcity of affordable housing, and rent increases. People struggle to cover basic needs: Cost of living because of housing- do I pay the rent or do I pay an after-school program, food? Basic needs. Policy - certain areas around documentation status - don't reflect the level of need for the whole family - documentation mixes within families. Even with working requirements.

- Living Wage - There is a trend that families qualifying for low income housing don't transition out by increasing their income. This limits the opportunities for others. A city-mandated living wage might help.
- Child Care – The impact of child care costs to middle and low income families is very significant. At the end of the day middle income households become low income because so much of the income goes to child care. Perhaps there could be incentives to businesses to help or increase ability to offer child care on-site.
- Gathering Places - There is a lack of inviting multi-cultural gathering places where Latinos feel welcome. The Boulder that is promoted is not as welcoming (Pearl St., Farmers Market). It would be good to create places that people can freely gather. Elks Lodge is one of the only places. People go to Longmont. People seek spaces that remind them of home – e.g. plazas with vendors on the streets. Increase ability for people to sell food on the street or in open areas without having to go through so much permitting and expense. Ethnic grocery stores are limited - stores that have products from home - Spanish or Latino markets. It would be better if people did not have to leave the city to shop. How can the city protect certain businesses in certain areas - micro loans and ability to sell?
- Youth Employment – Programs are needed to help the youth transition to employment. They will be part of the coming workforce. Due to ethnicity, they are not welcomed. They live here and they may have difficulty finding work, but fill the service industry gap. We want them to be engaged, not disenfranchised at a crucial time to capture the talent and provide a place for them to work. Perhaps ways to work with small businesses that might see youth as ambassadors. This could be a sustainable way to funnel money and capital into the local immigrant community. Suggested programs include job readiness trainings, training about speaking, dress, how to be adept in the business world. This could be modeled on the bridges out of poverty program but for kids or with neighborhoods.
- Service Jobs - As the city grows and adds people, those people need services and immigrants are likely the ones to fill certain service needs. The city could partner with other entities (e.g. CU) to welcome them and give them a basis to be successful. Build on programs that help people have a good foundation to move out of poverty. These workers are essential to the economy; they should be welcomed and assisted. An example is like Intercambio to support education.
- Employment- There are many immigrants filling the gaps in services and they are likely to change jobs frequently. Many are over-qualified for service jobs but there are limited jobs the next step up. Other jobs require more specific higher level skills. Many of these jobs have been pushed out and people have to travel long distances if they want to transition upward.

Comment Form Responses

What do you love about Boulder?

It is a calm and fun town
For me everything is very good for now. In Colorado we are safe.
It is friendly and harmonious

I very much like to live in Boulder because there is a lot of nature, we can go on our bikes and there are lots of places to walk and look at nature.
It's a united city and a very safe place, no violence.
It helps Latinos.
It is a great city with very little violence. Lots of nice and friendly people. Lots of places to do outdoors activities, mountains, biking, you can walk without feeling scared, day or night. I love Boulder.
Because it has well-founded ordinances, and also because it help the Hispanic community
There are good places to walk, ride your bike. Boulder Creek. The public libraries. I love it here. Focus on youth and children.
It is not so dry and also I like the nature and everyone is so happy here. That is why USA is the best country.
I like living here because there are many resources available to the community and in my opinion the best schools for my children. I have lived in many cities and I have always returned here.
Nature is respected, we recycle and we compost. It is a beautiful city.
I think Boulder is the best city in all of Colorado, it is safe and has great schools.
It is well organized, pretty and very safe.
There is a lot of security (it is very safe)
There are many places to walk and be in nature. I love living here.

More responses to be added as they are translated.

Between now and 2030, what are areas that need focus?

More sports for children and parents, family resources and a safer space for people.

Organizing open positions better, by specialty.

To keep up maintenance of green spaces like parks and recreation centers and make sure this remains a safe place for everyone.

That our roads are always under construction.

Office jobs accepting more hispanics. Getting closer to God

Recycling, caring for nature, children's education. To be better human beings and help those who needed it, in particular in educating all children.

Keep it up, keep helping (the Hispanic community)

I don't like that marihuana is so accessible.

I want it to stay the same

Keep it up, every time the community needs help, the city has helped.

The environment

More activities for youth and more accessible rental housing

Widen the roads; Improve public transportation

Take better care of our youth

More activities for the whole family.

More responses to be added as they are translated.