

East Boulder Subcommunity – Working Group #16 - Meeting Notes

Wednesday, September 23 from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m.

Hosted via an online video and phone conference meeting

Working Group Members		Staff	Community
<i>In attendance:</i>	Ben Molk	<i>In attendance:</i>	Alberto De Los Rios –
Matt Appelbaum	Tim O’Shea	Jean Gatza	Boulder County
Peter Aweida	Judith Renfro	Ryan Hanschen	
Erin Bagnall	Patti Smith	Kathleen King	
Lori Call	Dawn Williams	Holly Opansky	
Ana Karina Casas	Jeff Wingert	Kalani Paho	
Lucy Conklin		Jean Sanson	
Julia Dullien	<i>Unavailable:</i>		
Leticia Garcia	Aaron Cook	<i>Consultants:</i>	
John Gerstle	Aaron Johnson	Mark De La Torre	
Laura Kaplan	Adam Kroll	Jay Renkens	
Ken MacClune	Kirsten Millar		
		<i>Translators:</i>	
		Marina La Grave	
		Angela Maria Ortiz Roa	

Purpose: Focus on Station Area Planning by introducing the MIG Team and exploring “What Could Mixed Use Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Be for 55th & Arapahoe?”

Agenda – July 22

- 2:30 – Overview, Purpose, and Ground Rules
- 2:40 – Public Comment
- 2:50 – Update on Feedback from Advisory Boards
 - Update on Community feedback from Vision Statements
- 3:10 – Intro MIG Team & Discuss Integrated Subcommunity and Station Area Planning
 - Discussion Topics:
 1. Mixed Use TOD to generate activity
 2. Balancing existing uses with potential redevelopment
 3. Access to 55th & Arapahoe Corridors
- 4:50 – Wrap Up and Next Steps
- 5:00 – Meeting conclusion

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Summary and Key Points of this meetings

- When considering a TOD, STAMP, & Mobility hub, there was support for an area that is safe and accessible while connecting with multiuse pathways; support for building community with permanent (not just apartments) and affordable residence, flexible business uses, and an entertaining environment (during the day and evening).
- Integrate the information the working group has created to date regarding housing and density. Concentrate on “high enough and best for the community use”, instead of “highest and best use”.
- The STAMP boundary will be further refined.
- Investigate avenues to support business owners with lower rent options.
- Develop ways to solicit input from residences south of Arapahoe as well as employers and employees in the area.

How will input from this Working Group meeting be used?

- Updating the Station Area Planning process.

Overview, Purpose

Jean Gatza reflected on the generous commitment Working Group members have made to this point, especially in the last 7 months, and thanked them for their contributions. She noted the focus of the meeting was on the Station Area Planning by introducing the MIG Team and exploring “What Could Mixed Use Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Be for 55th & Arapahoe?”.

Public Comment

No attendees from the public today and no comments.

Update on Feedback from Advisory Boards

Kathleen King shared a status update on the project and solicited input on the draft indicators to two boards this month. Some of their feedback follows:

9/14: Transportation Advisory Board’s feedback on the indicators included:

- Would like to measure bike access and transit access, similar to walk access
- Would like a density indicator

9/17: Planning Board’s feedback on the indicators included:

- How to measure commercial and residential “affordability”, as well as the same time of new buildings

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and How to measure commercial and residential “affordability”

- Would like an indicator to measure diversity of potential housing types, or housing mix
- Diversity of jobs
- The status of the airport; how will the Airport Master Plan 2024 may or may not conflict with this East Boulder plan

Update on Community feedback from Vision Statements

Jean Gatz reported out on the results of the Vision Statement summary and report found [here](#) and encouraged folks to read the comments.

Intro MIG Team & Discuss Integrated Subcommunity and Station Area Planning

Jay Renkens, principal at MIG, described the consulting firm’s background by highlighting their mission dedicated to improving, adapting and creating environments, organizations and tools in support of human development (and not always physical development of buildings, but also programs and policy that support goals). He mentioned that the STAMP project team was made up of Jay Renkens (planning), Mark De La Torre (planning), Jessica Hernandez (transportation), Andrew Knudtsen (economic and systems), and Celeste Cizik (sustainability).

Mark De La Torre, project manager, described the scope, schedule, and study area of this project. Jay continued with sharing information about the scope to give an overall idea about what is involved in this type of project. The features he highlighted the Transportation Oriented Development (TOD), STAMPs (Station Area Master Plans) and mobility hubs. This also included information about Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) ideas. (See the presentation a part of this meeting for details.)

They shared how the TOD, STAMP, and mobility hub(s) dovetail with the East Boulder Subcommunity Plan by using the vision statements guiding principles (possibly the Vision Statements, overall themes, and other work products) the working group has worked on. Work completed by the working group to date provides the consultant team with the foundation for the STAMP work .

Mark continued to describe various options that would integrate a mix of land uses with urban design as well as the importance of Non-Measurable Trade-Offs (that are qualitative and experiential).

Clarifying questions and comments

Tim: Asked the group and MIG to consider “Pondering Parking: <https://www.kittelson.com/ideas/whats-the-future-of-parking-garages/>” .

***Jay (MIG):** replied that they specifically work with Kidston(?)*

Lori: Commented that it was helpful to see the possibilities, rather than just what is there today.

Ben: Commented on the challenges of not a lot of vacant land in the area that forces the options to “upzone” an existing property’s designation to encourage redevelopment, but that process has been difficult and very hard to get done. His group has analyzed redevelopment potential as land only and with buildings, and the summary

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was that more density would be needed to justify redevelopment in this area to make concepts work.

Jay (MIG): *Replied that the company EPS would be doing specific analysis to help understand delta or whether a development pencils; adding that density is one way to increase value, as well as “use change” can also contribute to that by getting more yield through use or usable space is how people figure out if something pencils; suggested looking at how can community incentivize redevelopment?*

Kathleen (staff): *Concurred that staff would look at tools to incentivize; and tools that make redevelopment unattractive or not doable; noting that recommendations may look to modify code language, as well as other methods to achieve community vision.*

Judy: Expressed that she was not sure the goal was to look at allowing more intense development.

Peter: Mentioned that the north end of Fort Collins ad an awesome way of integrating industrial, commercial, residential; drawing the parallel that the city of Boulder has also used bridges and tunnels to connect campus to Boulder Creek; concluding that this could be a reasonable way to connect - then asked for feedback?

Jay (MIG): *Replied yes, they would be looking at-grade or separated grade ped and bike crossings to create greater connectivity to station*

Matt: Cautioned that one should never use the term “highest and best use”, because it was essentially where the most money can be made. He suggested focus on all the other considerations – even if it does not yield highest profit. He asked how will team thwart through all this?

Jay (MIG): *Replied that the process relied on what the community desires then testing that; He shared that EPS’s plan was to do a high level market assessment, but also use community input and precedents to test particular uses; then they would look at gap and how to close it – like time, and other tools and strategies; interesting and complex piece of process; He refined the phase to highlight their goal to reach the “high enough and best for the community use”.*

John: Enquired about the Corden Pharma site and why it was left out of study area. He wondered what logic was in this choice?

Mark (MIG): *Replied that they decided to omit the site knowing they just publicly announced expansion of their operations. He shared that they planned to refine boundary with the subcommittee, as this initial boundary was a starting point and could be revisited.*

Erin B.: Enquired what was the plan for hubs along Arapahoe?

Jean Sanson (staff): *Replied that within the Transportation Master Plan and the East Arapahoe Transport Plan, there were 15 stops planed along this road between 1-25 and Boulder. She noted that since East Boulder is a job-dense area, there was a desire to have stops every half mile within this area. She continued that mobility hubs were also desired, and that they already somewhat exist at some intersection(s).*

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Discussion Topics (3):

1. **English:** Comment What do you think is the right mix of uses to include in 'Mixed-Use TOD' in this area, building or otherwise, to generate activity in this area? (This can apply broadly to the STAMP as well as the Subcommunity Plan- What's viable)

Española: ¿Cuál cree que es la mezcla adecuada de usos para incluir en la "TOD de uso mixto" en esta área, ya sea un edificio u otra cosa, para generar actividad en esta área? (TOD: Desarrollo relacionado al tránsito)

Laura: Expressed interest in housing with supporting retail. She commented that there were a lot of folks who do not like density and intensity; noting that it needs to be attractive to existing neighborhoods who might not be thrilled about density. She requested help figuring out how to make it attractive and co-locate housing with transit?

Ken: Encouraged getting people in the area and life into east Boulder. He supported a mix of housing / retail / entertainment.

Ben: Supported at the immediate intersection, higher density housing.

Julia (Erin B. agreed): Supported housing that aimed to retain people (not standard TODs which have a fast turnover rate.) So more...cozy? Coffee, bars, restaurants, pocket park. She lived at Denver's Alameda station TOD that lacked character and was amenity based but did not retain people (just apartments and temporary oriented, and it drove her away).

Judy: Cautioned that the station is does not become the tail wagging the dog. She supported the uses the group has already discussed (in the last year plus).

Ana (Judy, Laura, Alberto, Lety agreed): Supported affordable housing, and affordable business space for residents (local?).

Alberto De Los Rios (Boulder County): From a county planning perspective, he supported increased density along with access to transit, and safe active mobility. He continued that the combination of those two were paramount, along with having a diverse use of businesses that have a variety of access costs. Placemaking and streetscaping that are compatible with Vision Zero goals would be ideal.

Lori: Supported more vibrancy by combining housing, entertainment, that restaurants that kept people engaged in the area, beyond 5 p.m. She requested help to figure out how to allure people to area (other than restaurants) after 5 p.m. to really make it a community.

Alberto (Ana agreed): Supported pop-up space for food trucks and music / art venue?

Ken: Supported outdoor spaces with mix of different restaurants, permanent food trucks, music and lighting; an area where people want to mix.

Julia: Supported flexible indoor/outdoor space for pop-ups, projected movies, music.

Jay (MIG): Commented that a collection of restaurants can be a nucleus, like former department stores, etc.

Peter: Accentuated support for safety by slower speeds along Arapahoe Avenue and would help create more of a community near this intersection.

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Jean Sanson (staff): Mentioned that the East Arapahoe Transportation Plan calls for looking at how to slow down speed on Arapahoe, above & beyond posting a sign. For example, landscaping, urban design along the street, and narrower lanes can be a cue to drivers to slow their speeds.

Ben: Requested help figuring out the connections to multi-use paths especially with floodplain.

Judy: Did not support the idea of attracting people to the area to promote growth merely because it is a place for STAMP. She did not believe neighbors on the south want a new entertainment district across Arapahoe. She shared that neighbors have talked about this for the last two years, and that they don't want a new downtown. She concurred that there was a need for affordable housing and business space. She was confused about how far east this conversation was covering and did it include the area in conveyance zone – highlighting that it could get a whole lot of pushback. She supported the ideas discussed in the last year talking about types of uses that did not focus on a whole lot of development. She supported sticking with mixed uses previously discussed. She encouraged production of something specific to for neighbors to respond to.

Laura: Agreed with Lori, Julia, Alberto, and Ana about activation, with Peter about slowing down, with Judy about the of impacts to neighbors to the south (of Arapahoe).

Alberto: Supported the idea of Portland's Mercado, a mixture of restaurants, community hub, and event venue that center the Latinx community. He also supported 3 lanes with Rapid Flash Beacons (RFB), a type of signal, 4-way colored crosswalks, wider sidewalks...

Patti: Supported business operation agreements for multiple uses.

Ken: And one could see such venues being more north.

Patti: Noted that there were many HOAs in the south neighborhood, making it more difficult to streamline outreach.

Someone: Supported a place that was safe and accessible.

- English:** *The NE corner of 55th and Arapahoe is largely comprised of existing, affordable office/employment. A market utilization analysis will likely show that this area is underutilized, but Boulder generally lacks these types of products. How would you suggest balancing the needs of the existing users with future potential? (Maybe we keep it the way it is,)*

Española: *La esquina NE de la 55 y Arapahoe está compuesta en gran parte por oficinas asequibles/lugares de empleo existentes. Un análisis de mercado probablemente mostrará que esta área es subutilizada, pero Boulder generalmente carece de este tipo de productos. ¿Cómo sugiere usted que equilibremos las necesidades de los usuarios actuales con el potencial futuro?*

Ben: Commented that a couple users may not be as small mom and pop shops as initially thought and suggested areas further east are opportunities to retain affordable employment space.

Erin B.: Supported existing uses in conveyance zone as affordable to preserve affordable development and low-moderate rents.

Jay (MIG): Commented that if the vacancy rate was low, then the places were in demand.

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Laura (Erin B. agreed): Highlighted that this area outlined for the Station Area Master Plan was not that big of a part of the sub-community. She pointed out that right by the transit hub was not the most critical place to preserve office space. She suggested that affordable office space could be preserved elsewhere in the subcommunity?

Ben (Lucy agreed): Commented that there would not be redevelopment in conveyance area which would preserve lower rents unless flood mapping changes. He encouraged redevelopment in immediate vicinity of station.

Julia: Solicited help in finding the answer if Boulder had something like a “community business trust” like a housing trust to keep low rent business options?

Peter (Lori agreed): Supported a higher use than warehouse/manufacturing, since this location was so close to the intersection and within a 1/4 mile of transit. He supported maximizing uses at that intersection.

Judy (Dawn agreed): Enquired about the boundary and how far east of 55th Street? She supported to protect the lower rents as much as possible while updating the places that need it most.

Patti: Supported “existing affordable”.

Matt: Yes, it's currently much "underutilized," and quite a mess -- but one of the very few places left that can support small businesses. But it will almost certainly redevelop eventually, and arguably the area nearest to the intersection should have higher intensity uses. I think it is very hard to guarantee "affordable commercial/industrial" space -- so at minimum we should find another nearby location that could (re)develop to hold as many of these existing uses as possible. Further east of conveyance zone may be more appropriate for affordable employment, but might take longer to be available and won't be available when displaced businesses need to relocate; some people looking at this area for housing

Tim: post-COVID, might rethink larger office uses; choose wisely so not locking into zoning or land uses that don't adapt;

Matt (Lori agreed that affordable commercial is challenging to define, beyond nonprofits): Agreed that the area was currently much "underutilized," and quite a mess, then commented that it was one of the very few places left that can support small businesses. But it will almost certainly redevelop eventually, and arguably the area nearest to the intersection should have higher intensity uses. He commented that was very hard to guarantee "affordable commercial/industrial" space -- so at minimum finding another nearby location that could (re)develop to hold as many of these existing uses as possible. Further east of conveyance zone may be more appropriate for (?).

Tim: Commented that from a use perspective, there were good examples of that with the Spark and Boulder Junction developments. He supported density as it 'fits' well close to transportation. He supported (going back to his earlier Parking mention), some uses can be fit to match today's needs that can be transitioned to incorporate future needs (e.g. Parking structures being converted to mixed use spaces).

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3. *English: As you know from your exploration in September of 2019, access to the corridors, both 55th and Arapahoe, is limited. Is there the possibility of creating new connections to the corridors (not necessarily across it)? If so, where?*

Española: Como ya saben debido a su exploración en septiembre de 2019, el acceso a los corredores, tanto la calle 55 como la avenida Arapahoe, es limitado. ¿Existe la posibilidad de crear nuevas conexiones con los corredores (no necesariamente a través de ellos)? Si es así, ¿dónde?

Ben: Recent project in FBP is lacking connection to multi-use path; team tried but couldn't make it work because of high hazard/conveyance zone issues; TMP includes connections that feel like they're undeliverable; concerned it will be hard for developers to meet city's goals if connections are impaired because of locations.

Judy: Requested clarity about the question, if it was asking about walk and bike or auto connections?

Peter (Dawn agreed): Suggested something near the railroad tracks...they are right in the middle of this neighborhood. He supported the idea of a Gondola station idea somewhere near this intersection. Look at grade-separated connections; better north-south connectivity.

Julia (Judy, Dawn, Tim agreed): Suggested at the golf course...also more north/south connections coming off of Boulder Creek paths. She suggested in general there needs to be a biking/walking study through the whole business park area - a series of greenways with paths interconnecting.

Tim (Dawn agreed): Suggested adding a deep look at pedestrian access under Arapahoe closer to the hub area.

Ken: More walkability (and run ability).

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Next Meeting dates are on October 28, November 18, and December 16.

Kathleen: To clarify she reassured working group members that the group was not starting over but moving forward with ideas brought up over past year. She encouraged members to look toward the upcoming subcommittee meeting to refine work.

Meeting conclusion