

East Boulder Subcommunity – Working Group #9 - Meeting Notes

Wednesday, Feb. 26 at 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

The Spark Performing & Creative Arts at 4847 Pearl St., B4

Working Group Members		City Staff	Community
In attendance: Matt Appelbaum Peter Aweida Erin Bagnall Lori Call Ana Karina Casas Lucy Conklin Aaron Cook Leticia Garcia John Gerstle Laura Kaplan Adam Kroll Kirsten Millar Patti Smith Dawn Williams	Jeff Wingert Unavailable: Julia Dullien Aaron Johnson Ken MacClune Tim O’Shea Judith Renfroe Translator: Angela Ortiz Roa	In attendance: Matt Chasansky Krista Flynt Jean Gatza Melissa Morgan Holly Opansky Jim Robertson Jean Sanson Dana Sparks Mandy Vink Unavailable: Kathleen King Ryan Hanschen Sarah Huntley	Jennifer Shopland

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss Arts & Culture with Matt Chasansky & Mandy Vink

- Agenda**
- 2:30 pm - Meeting start & welcome
 - Dillion Kenyon, Executive Director of The Spark
 - Jim Robertson, Comp. Planning Manager, overview
 - 2:40 pm - 10-minute public comment
 - 2:50 pm – Arts and Culture presentation, polling, and Q & A
 - Matt Chasansky and Mandy Vink
 - 3:10 pm – Group exercises and discussion
 - 4:10 pm – Report out from activity
 - 4:30 pm - Conclusion

Summary and Key Themes of Group Discussions

- **Art is a key characteristic of this subcommunity, highlighted by:**
 - Highly supportive “yes” responses by Working Group members, to the slideshow survey asking if art should be included in the East Boulder neighborhood in a variety of different ways.
 - Ideas supporting art as a place for:
 - Creating art;
 - Viewing, absorbing, and experiencing art;
 - Purchasing art;
 - and, displaying art in public (whether it was put there by the government or by local businesses tenants on their facilities – permeant and temporary).
- **Culture is a key characteristic of this subcommunity, highlighted by:**
 - Ideas supporting existing cultural aspects of:
 - Native American communities

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- Latinx communities
- Waterways, connection to nature, natural beauty and views
- Agrarian history and current food and beverage industries
- Patchwork of gritty, quirky, authentic, and mixed industrial / service / artistic-artisan identity. “Once you lose the elements that made an area great it is hard to add them back in again.” If employed as a tool, an art district in East Boulder would have a “grittier” more “authentic” feel to it than North Boulder’s art district (possibly favoring a Creative Neighborhood concept that retained existing features and sprinkled resources throughout the subcommunity.

Staff’s suggestion to take these ideas to the next step: Develop policies and potential land use options that confirm art/cultural goals to protect existing character specific to East Boulder.

- **Food and beverage uses (and industries) are important to this subcommunity’s:**

- *Arts and culture:*
 - Allowing for restaurants / food trucks / food halls / food stalls **and** beverage establishment options near art retail environment(s) to compliment and support a positive economic environment
 - Allowing for Latinx (and/or other minority) food truck owners a place to park
- *Workers:*
 - East Boulder workers desire more restaurant options for lunch and for dinner / happy hour. The later afternoon / evening restaurant options could offer workers/commuters a desirable place to grab a bite or a beer after work, and could disperse the end of day exodus times and potentially alleviate some of the traffic crunch around 5 p.m.
- *Residences - both existing (surrounding the subcommunity) and potentially new (within the subcommunity):*
 - To create a “15-minute neighborhood” that is walkable, and “park once” to walk from art resources to, food and beverage resources, to residence, and possibly to work
 - Nice alternative to downtown Pearl Street resources and experiences

Staff’s suggestion to take these ideas to the next step: Shape potential land use options to support and / or add food and beverage uses.

- **Continued affordable commercial space and character in this subcommunity is paramount, and some goals maybe to:**

- Identify ways to retain affordable rents for existing (and future) art / maker / service / industrial tenants, noting major concerns that facilitating potential development and making the area more attractive (to work, live, enjoy art, shop) that commercial rents could rise and push out existing tenants and uses. Some ideas are to:
 - Maintain lower rents for the ground floor businesses by building residences on top of existing commercial spaces
 - Prevent displacement by promoting live/work studios for creative tenants
 - Consider other options than creating an Arts District, as this seems to inherently change the affordability of an area as scene in Santa Fe and RINO art districts
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- Support zoning and land use changes that make it economically manageable for many uses other than just expensive condos (and national residential builders), so that existing (and future) local tenants can thrive.

Staff's suggestion to take these ideas to the next step: Develop policies to protect affordability.

- **Transportation needs improvement to increase connectivity (to the arts and cultural resources) via:**
 - Facilitating access to existing and potentially new food destinations, art studios, and artisan or service businesses that are currently difficult to reach.
 - Improving signage and wayfinding for people to find these places
 - Aligning public art around transportation corridors (greenways, public transportation hubs, key road gateways to the subcommunity, i.e., “walk-through” art – like the Malecon, Seattle.)

Staff's suggestion to take these ideas to the next step: Develop new connections (roads, paths, sidewalks) and suggest programs to address wayfinding and access

- **The former Xcel power plant could be opportunity artists to live and work , but there are things to consider:**
 - Can the City contribute financially either by subsidies or direct funding?
 - Would Xcel sell the property?
 - Who pays for extensive clean up?

Staff's suggestion to take these ideas to the next step: Explore opportunities, options, and partnerships

Groups' Discussion Notes

Group One: Matt Applebaum, Erin Bagnall, Lori Call, Lucy Conklin, Laura Kaplan, with staff Jim Robertson

Q1: Art in Public Places - What cities, towns, or districts have you visited... or heard about... that have great collections of public art which might translate conceptually to East Boulder? Why would they work?

- The Malecon in Puerto Vallarta – seaside boardwalk with a number of sculptures. The numerous greenways in East Boulder were mentioned as an opportunity to display art along. Art display in areas that are also throughways.
- Pueblo's river walk is another example of the above.
- The Breckenridge Troll is an example of a type of art installation that would work well with the areas greenways and parks. Group mentioned “grown art” that is planted and grows and changes over time and seasons.
- Alyce Beach, FL – a town where all the buildings are white that uses projectors onto the

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- buildings to create temporary art installations. A festival is built around this event.
- Miami – Wynwood walls – numerous large scale murals
- Berkeley
- Rosetta Hall (new in Boulder) – micro stalls that could combine places to eat and places related to art.

Q2: Creative Placemaking / Art Districts - What are the cultural assets to leverage in East Boulder that could lead to creative placemaking or an arts district? What is missing that would need to be developed?

- Assets listed: Greenways through the neighborhood. Parks provide space for art (could be living art/grown art). Group questioned what property in the neighborhood the city owned that it could build below market rate space for artists.
- Group suggested partnering with local businesses to displace art in everyday settings. The art could tour from business to business so you always see different art on the walls while you are getting your tires changed.
- Area needs: zoning to support local businesses/arts. Better signage to advertise local businesses. An art walk. Public art.
- The area must RETAIN: existing small businesses and existing artists. Its greenways.
- Is there an opportunity to develop the Power Plant area? Would need to be cleaned up.
- The city should/is looking into adding a new definition of community benefit bonus to developers. New definition would include creating spaces for nonprofits, perhaps for arts organizations, etc.

Q3: Venues / Art Studios – What are the arts (or artistic) assets to leverage in East Boulder that could lead to more arts? Would it serve a regional audience (music/theater type of venues), or more for the local makers (art making, practice spaces, artist studios, and hands-on experiences)?

- Group was interested in adding walkable explorable economic center to the neighborhood. Explore entertainment. Bars. Restaurants. The lack of residents creates an opportunity to leave space for uses that create more noise, new music venue. Want this to be a 15-minute neighborhood. A “park once” area.
- Young people in Boulder need more cool places to go. They have money and they are looking to spend it.
- Group viewed this as a place for primarily people from within Boulder to go, but also perhaps the surrounding towns.

Q4: Creative Neighborhoods – What are the neighborhood-level cultural assets that may be worth expanding? What is missing for that might improve social cohesion of people who live and frequent the area?

- Better signage, wayfinding, and transportation to improve knowledge of the area, and facilitate easier travel through it.
- The area is missing residents. Add people and homes.
- Look into live/work opportunities.

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Group Two: Peter Aweida, Aaron Cook, John Gerstle, Adam Kroll, and Dawn Williams with staff Jean Gatzka

Q1: Art in Public Places - What cities, towns, or districts have you visited... or heard about... that have great collections of public art which might translate conceptually to East Boulder? Why would they work?

- RINO in Denver – originally industrial
- South Beach Art District – murals on buildings in industrial area
- Public art in a median. Iris just East of Foothill Pkwy
- Longmont Sugar Mill – sculptures and art/landscaping
- Old Pearl – Scrap metal art. Anywhere – boulevard, bike path, front of a building, public transit. Scottsdale, AZ path and horses.
- Art at the gateways to East Boulder (Legion Park, Diagonal, Valmont at Pearl).
- Pueblo has a neon sign area.

Q2: Creative Placemaking / Art Districts - What are the cultural assets to leverage in East Boulder that could lead to creative placemaking or an arts district? What is missing that would need to be developed?

- Missing: Culinary. Lots of breweries and distilleries. Needs connections and food to compliment. For example, a food hall or some element of the concept “Rayback East,” or food truck pop ups.
- Missing: Tying in craftsmanship. Signage etc. Living and use in the same space. Making it a regional draw would create too much traffic. There isn’t enough parking.

Q3: Venues / Art Studios – What are the arts (or artistic) assets to leverage in East Boulder that could lead to more arts? Would it serve a regional audience (music/theater type of venues), or more for the local makers (art making, practice spaces, artist studios, and hands-on experiences)?

- Start a trend or momentum around several places. Create an East Boulder Art District. Keep it local. Compliment to business hours. Making it a regional destination would draw too much traffic. Not enough parking.

Q4: Creative Neighborhoods – What are the neighborhood-level cultural assets that may be worth expanding? What is missing for that might improve social cohesion of people who live and frequent the area?

- Galleries
- Education
- Living space at 63rd
- Residences built on top of existing buildings maintaining low rents for businesses

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Group Three: Ana Karina Casas, Leticia Garcia, Kirsten Millar, Patti Smith, and Jeff Wingert with staff Jean Sanson

Q1: Art in Public Places - What cities, towns, or districts have you visited... or heard about... that have great collections of public art which might translate conceptually to East Boulder? Why would they work?

- Seattle – walk-through art
- RINO in Denver. However, there are fears of the gentrification that has occurred in this neighborhood.
- Each town in Jalisco, Mexico displays the name of their town in different mediums and art forms.
- Mural art in East Boulder.

Q2: Creative Placemaking / Art Districts - What are the cultural assets to leverage in East Boulder that could lead to creative placemaking or an arts district? What is missing that would need to be developed?

- We already have cool art. It is just hard to get to.
- We need better ways to navigate – wayfinding, signage
- Microbrewery district. Create a district to make it more obvious to people that these places exist in East Boulder. Create a map that people can use to guide them on their bikes to hit every brewery.
- What do businesses do to create more business?
- Area needs more parking.

Q3: Venues / Art Studios – What are the arts (or artistic) assets to leverage in East Boulder that could lead to more arts? Would it serve a regional audience (music/theater type of venues), or more for the local makers (art making, practice spaces, artist studios, and hands-on experiences)?

- Venues for food trucks. Could be an opportunity for local Hispanic small business (truck) owners.
- Close down the street to create space for festivals. Space for food trucks.
- Old power plant. Provides an opportunity to build a live/work art space.
- Create space for youth to create art/murals. Multicultural, and multi-age participants.

Q4: Creative Neighborhoods – What are the neighborhood-level cultural assets that may be worth expanding? What is missing for that might improve social cohesion of people who live and frequent the area?

- Create space for youth to create art/murals.
- Transportation and navigation need much improvement. Neighborhood needs a way to move around and connect the various areas.

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Emailed input from Working Group members who couldn't attend:

- "let's have art. Perhaps more 'edgy' by Boulder standards art"
- There should not be a special East Boulder Arts District, but art can be encouraged there by keeping the affordable, gritty character, and it will "fall out" with a little

- encouragement if the adjacent uses are the right type and the zoning allows the arts uses, and they remain affordable.
- There are actually quite a few arts locations springing up under the radar in old warehouses. They may flourish best as an "open secret" with a minimum of attention beyond the persons who use them. There could be more, if low cost space were available
- Making more of this area an "arts district," a "creative place making," a "venue" for music or theater performances that will attract a regional audience. This runs a large risk of gentrifying the area, raising rents, driving out the talent incubators and locals who want to try things. Would bring unwanted traffic. I don't want to see entertainment, bars, and night life to East Boulder.
- Public art will be most appropriate something one sees as one drives, or bicycles by, or as something to observe from the parks, maybe from occasional "rest areas" along trails.
- I see a need for more lesson studios for both music and dance.
- Promote participatory/performance arts, not just the visual arts. Create public space for this – performances, busking, impromptu jams, etc.