

East Boulder Subcommunity Plan Engagement Plan

Last updated August 28, 2020

Introduction

The City of Boulder has committed to creating a series of subcommunity plans to create long-term visions for each of the 10 subcommunities in the city.

The first process, launched this spring, will focus on East Boulder. ([Click to see map of this subcommunity's boundaries.](#)) This planning effort is expected to take 18 to 24 months.

East Boulder is home to some of Boulder's great businesses, urban parks and green spaces. This subcommunity is one of the city's primary employment centers, with many local businesses specializing in scientific, research and technology sectors. There are also important local businesses in East Boulder, including construction industry professionals, warehousing and small-scale manufacturing.

With the community, this planning process will explore three questions, in three separate phases: Who are we? Who do we want to be? How do we get there?

It is important to be clear that this process is a path toward implementing the communitywide goals set out in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan. These goals are to:

- Increase the diversity of housing types and the number of affordable housing units throughout the city, including in commercial and industrial areas;
- Increase access to alternative modes of transportation;
- Ensure that redevelopment and infill development deliver buildings and public spaces of high-quality design and create pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods;
- Achieve energy system resilience;
- Improve community capacity and resilience to natural and economic disruptions;
- Reduce carbon emissions;
- Support climate stabilization;
- Support arts and cultural experiences as essential to community well-being; and
- Support and retain small local businesses.

The city recognizes that residents, landowners and neighborhood groups likely have their own goals for their subcommunity. The planning process will seek to capture strategies that address both communitywide and local goals and provide a forum for discussion and decision-making in cases where these objectives may conflict.

Decision-Making Process

Community input will play a significant role in the development of a draft subcommunity plan. While there will be opportunities to consult with anyone who has an interest in this plan, the city has convened a working group of stakeholders, who represent the unique blend of interests in the East Boulder subcommunity as the primary means for collaboration. The working group consists of 21 members, who were chosen through an application process, including a Planning Board liaison.

This group will strive to reach consensus in any decision-making it does. If that is not possible, the city will welcome comments from both the majority and minority viewpoints. Staff commits to sharing these with subsequent decision-makers.

Authority for reviewing and adopting a final plan rests with the Planning Board and Boulder City Council. Both these bodies make recommendations and adopt policies based on a majority vote.

What's on the Table/What's off the Table?

The city is excited to support a creative, community-driven process that emphasizes the desire to achieve as many of the BVCP goals as possible. There was an extensive community process that led to the creation of these goals. It would not be appropriate to use the subcommunity planning process as a means for reconsidering the goals.

At the same time, the city recognizes it may not be possible for every subcommunity to achieve all the goals. This process leaves room for discussion and consideration of some goals as higher or more attainable priorities, given the unique characteristics of each subcommunity.

Project's engagement commitment

The East Boulder Subcommunity plan will operate in the *collaborate* space of the Boulder Engagement Spectrum. This means the participation goal is to “partner with the public in each aspect of the process including the development of alternatives and identification of a preferred solution.” As defined in the [Engagement Strategic Framework](#), working in the collaborative spaces makes the following promise to the public: “we will work together with you to formulate solutions and to incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.” This type of engagement requires employing multiple methods for outreach, education, communication and participation to achieve successful outcomes through a transparent and democratic process.

The subcommunity planning program has adopted four engagement tenets or objectives:

1. *Build capacity of city stakeholders.* Stakeholders in the subcommunity planning process include residents, landowners, business owners, community organizations and public entities. Not all these groups or individuals share a common understanding about the city's decision-making process and their own role in decision-making within the community. The subcommunity planning engagement program will include educational opportunities that build stakeholder capacity to play a meaningful role in subcommunity and citywide futures.

2. Provide inclusive, context-based participation opportunities. Not all methods of engagement are appropriate for all subcommunities, neighborhoods or stakeholders. The subcommunity planning engagement program will develop multiple strategies for participation that respond to stakeholder interests, availability and facilities. Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way community engagement can be conducted in person, the city is committed to providing safe, convenient, and easy opportunities for people to continue to participate, provide meaningful feedback, and fully employ the working group.
3. Deliver memorable experiences. Subcommunity planning creates a comprehensive picture of an area of the city at a moment in time and produces a vision for long-term futures of community neighborhoods. Producing the material for this endeavor affords a lot of room for creativity in each phase of work. Participants in the subcommunity planning process should find the process engaging and memorable.
4. Offer consistent and clear communication. It is critical that communication about subcommunity planning maintain a consistent voice that connects stakeholders with information. Coordination among city leadership, staff and community members to deliver clear communication is a key component of the program.

Who we are trying to engage:

Residents

The residential population of this subcommunity sets it apart from the other nine subcommunities in the city. There is only one residential community within the boundaries of East Boulder. San Lázaro Park is actually located outside city limits, in unincorporated Boulder County. It houses around 400 residents. Other residential neighborhoods interested in the future of East Boulder lie outside the subcommunity boundaries. Boulder residents living south of Arapahoe Avenue have expressed particular interest in both the East Arapahoe corridor as well as the East Boulder subcommunity. These residents not only frequent the subcommunity for travel shopping, and perhaps employment, but they have an acute interest in how change might affect their neighborhoods. In addition to individuals who have an interest due to proximity, the city recognizes and welcomes participation from residents in other parts of Boulder. What happens in this subcommunity is likely to impact anyone in the city who passes through or visits this part of town and future planning could create opportunities for housing and other ways for individuals to interact with East Boulder.

Employers and Business Owners

East Boulder is the city's hub for industrial activity and land use. Some of the area's larger employers, like Ball Aerospace and Corden Pharma, have specific needs related to the nature of the work they do. Other small local business owners will have interests in access and affordability of spaces in East Boulder and ensuring their customers have positive experiences in the area. Both want to be able to attract and retain a solid workforce.

Workers

This subcommunity hosts a significant number of jobs in the city. Employees are likely to have

thoughts about commuting and access challenges, proximity to retail and restaurants and general quality of life during the workday.

Visitors and Recreationists

While many consider East Boulder to be more industrial and office-focused, this area is home to many popular regional destinations, including Valmont City and Bike Parks, Gerald Stazio Ball Fields, the Boulder Dinner Theater and a handful of local breweries and coffee shops.

Land Owners

The city is the majority land owner in the East Boulder subcommunity. Most of this land is comprised of the area's parks and open space holdings. As visions for the area evolve, it will be essential to communicate and collaborate with other area land owners to identify paths towards implementation. Engagement with land owners will be particularly important within the station area, as more specific land use and infrastructure related recommendations will require focused input and feedback by individual landowners.

Communication Channels:

The city plans to utilize a variety of platforms to keep interested community members, and decision-makers, informed about the goals, status and engagement opportunities associated with this project. These include the following:

- Social media (citywide Twitter and Facebook accounts, Nextdoor)
- Newsletters (city print newsletter, e-newsletter, Boulder Planning newsletter)
- Be Heard Boulder and other surveys/tools
- Website updates
- Digital newsroom posts/blog posts on city website
- Press releases
- Channel 8 and social media videos
- Channel 8 news coverage (Inside Boulder News)
- Direct mail, flyers
- Heads Up to Council, council memos and information packets
- Email blasts
- Zoom meetings
- ESRI Hub (pilot)

Communication with city staff:

Community members with questions or input for staff are invited to email subcommunityplanning@bouldercolorado.gov. When appropriate, a member of the staff project team will respond.

Communication with working group members:

Community members who want to share their feedback directly with working group members have four ways to do so:

1. Fill out the comment form on the project website; comments will be shared with the working group on a regular basis
2. Participate in input opportunities on the Be Heard Boulder project site; results will be shared with the working group at the end of each engagement window
3. Sign up to speak at a working group meeting; the group has agreed to allot 10 minutes at the start of their meetings.
4. Participate in in-person or virtual engagement opportunities, many of which will be “staffed” by working group members interested in interacting with the broader community

Communication among working group members (outside of meetings):

The city has established a separate email channel, east-boulder-working-group@list.ci.boulder.co.us, for members of the working group to communicate with each other in a transparent way. Working group members are able to post to this list and respond to each other’s posts; interested community members may sign up to view the list.

Phase One: “Who Are We?”

This stage of engagement is intended to be an opportunity for data collection as well as reflection. Engagement efforts will collect information about the subcommunity history and stories, special places, character and unique attributes. This stage will also look to community members to identify sites, spaces and issues within the subcommunity that are valued or that need improvement. Staff inventory and analysis will be vetted with community members to confirm or critique data-based assumptions about the area.

Key Strategies:

- Develop quick, convenient and fun ways for subcommunity members to tell us what they love about the area. How would they describe it today? What attributes make East Boulder unique?
- Create a [working group](#) that represents a cross-section of the stakeholder interests described above. This group will be the primary means to a collaborative process, with important collective learning, evaluation and decision-making occurring at its meetings. The group’s members will also have a responsibility for raising awareness within their spheres of influence about the process and incorporating others’ perspectives as much as possible.
- Provide online and in-person opportunities for subcommunity members to weigh in on both the perspectives/perceptions of other participants as well as the more technical analysis being done by staff prior to moving to the next phase of engagement.
- Demonstrate a commitment to transparency through the creation of effective communication channels, posting of meeting agendas and notes, response to questions, etc.

Engagement Tactics:

Valentine Teaser: What do you LOVE about East Boulder (February): Valentine comment cards and boxes placed at Vision Quest Brewery, Baby Goat Coffee House, Humane Society of Boulder Valley, Foothills Hospital, and Ozo Coffee Co (5340 Arapahoe). Comments were also received through project website, Twitter and Instagram.

Walking Tours (May): Walking tours of the subcommunity: one for planning staff team, two for working group members and one for general public in collaboration with GoBoulder’s Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan effort as part of its Walkabout program

Subcommunity Stories Videos (Starting in July and continuing through process): Video stories of people who live/work/play in this area and what their hopes and concerns are related to this process and the future of East Boulder

Working Group Convening/Orientation/Shared Learning about Planning and Likely Issues (Starting in May and continuing through process): Recruitment and application process, orientation process, group storming and norming, exposure to various issue areas, feedback on inventory and analysis report

Place-Based Who What Where Why Mini-Workshops (August): Series of pop-up sessions at places where stakeholders are already gathered, will share inventory information most relevant to that location, ask some general “who are we questions?” as well as a couple of context-specific questions, invite participants to learn more and react to more inventory boards at BeHeardBoulder

A couple of general questions will be asked at all locations, such as What brings you to this part of town currently? What do you like best? What makes it unique? The teams will then ask a couple of quick, place-based questions. Incentives, such as popsicles or food truck bucks/cafeateria cash, will be offered to participants who stop and talk with teams.

The following is a sample chart. More specifics will be added as they are developed:

Location	Inventory Focus	Place-Based Questions
Food Trucks at Flatiron Park	Transportation and land use	Commuting questions: How did you get to work today? How far do you live from your office? Land Use questions: What amenities would make your time in East Boulder more enjoyable? Transportation Q: How often do you walk in East Boulder? What destinations do you typically walk to from your office?
Boulder Creek Bike Path – 48 th St entrance and/or intersection at 55 th	Transportation and cycling	Quality of experience: How would you rate your bike ride along the path today? What would you improve about the Boulder Creek Bike Path?

		Transportation: How often do you use this path? What is your ultimate destination (home, work, lunch, etc.)?
Stazio Ballfields	When does softball season end – HO to check with Parks to find out when the most popular times are? Land use and transportation	Visitors to East Boulder: Which subcommunity do you live in? How often do you travel to east Boulder? Why do you typically travel to east boulder?
Valmont City Park/Valmont Bike Park	Similar Q's to Stazio	
55 th + Arapahoe Bus Stops	Commuting and transportation	Rate the quality of amenities at this bus stop What types of amenities would improve your experience taking the bus to/from 55 th and Arapahoe
CHaRM / ReSource Center	Land use	How often do you visit? Dropping off or picking up? How will you re-use the material you've collected?
Foothills Hospital – Cafeteria	In their lobby, parking lot	
Boulder Dinner Theatre		
Airport Blvd Office Park		
San Lazaro Park	Work with Community Connectors to identify location and best questions/techniques	

Engagement Scrapbook (posted on the project website and updated throughout process):

Creation of an interactive, public scrapbook of what engagement has occurred, as well as key feedback themes and how they will be incorporated

Sharing of Who We Are Results with council and public (September 10, 2019):

Council was updated on the results of the engagement activities and in the fall of 2019. Summary reports and results from all engagement will be periodically shared with decision-makers, the Working Group, and provided on the project website for community review.

Resources and Budget for Phase One:

The project team has allocated \$15,500 of the project budget towards community engagement efforts. This cost is anticipated to cover printed materials and mailings for outreach, working group material, community participation incentives, professional facilitation services, project advertising and event venue costs.

What Success Will Look Like in this Phase:

City community members, the project team, working group members, planning board and city council will have a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the subcommunity's existing conditions and identity. Key opportunities and challenges may rise to the surface. The city and working group will have achieved a greater sense of awareness of this planning effort among subcommunity stakeholders.

Phase Two: “Who Do We Want to Be?”

Phase Two provides stakeholders with the opportunity and freedom to be visionary about the future of the subcommunity and identify how their neighborhood will contribute to citywide goals.

- Stakeholder input will contribute to the development of vision statements for each goal area that will guide assessment of alternative future scenarios.
- Community member participation will provide essential feedback on tradeoffs and choices for the future direction of the subcommunity. Reaching a diverse range of people in this process, including employees, employers and current residents of the subcommunity will be critically important.
- All of this feedback will help the Working Group make recommendations for a preferred alternatives and shape the components of the plan.

What Success Will Look Like in this Phase:

City community members, the project team, working group members, city boards and Council will have a clear vision for how East Boulder will contribute to implementing the citywide goals described in the BVCP. While there may not be consensus among all parties surrounding the vision for each goal, community members and decision-makers will make choices to define the path forward based on robust analysis and visual examples.

Key Strategies:

- Leverage the working group to focus on the technical elements of putting together a vision for a complete mobility network and major land use changes (Working Group)
- Generate focused ideas on policies, programs and projects that will help achieve citywide goals in the six focus areas (Focus Groups) Provide opportunities for “big idea” thinking, brainstorming and creativity to generate ideas for the future of East Boulder in 2040 (Online idea generation – Be Heard Boulder)
- Include the voices of young people and other less connected community members in this ideation (Growing Up Boulder, Youth Opportunities Advisory Board and community connectors)
- Effectively communicate the trade-offs associated with key choices and prioritization (Be Heard Boulder, ArcGISUrban, and Working Group members as engagement ambassadors)

- Demonstrate a commitment to transparency through the creation of effective communication channels, posting of meeting agendas and notes, response to questions, etc.
- Provide opportunities for community vetting and prioritization of policies, programs and projects to achieve city-wide goals (how still to be determined)

Engagement Tactics:

Growing Up Boulder

Growing Up Boulder (GUB) will host a series of Concept Development sessions with East Boulder youth to generate ideas about what kids would like to see in East Boulder in the future, under each of the six focus area topics. In addition to hosting such sessions around the subcommunity, GUB will develop a replicable curriculum for elementary school-aged children to participate in the Concept Development phase of subcommunity planning.

Youth Opportunities Advisory Board (YOAB)

City staff will continue to meet with YOAB subcommittee on East Boulder to solicit input and invite participation by teens in engagement opportunities.

Focus Group Meetings

The city will engage a consultant to host six topic-specific focus group sessions to generate an ultimate vision for how each of the six citywide goals should be realized in East Boulder. At least one session will be conducted in Spanish.

Targeted Stakeholder Sessions

City staff and consultants will inform and engage targeted stakeholders in the station area to share information about the potential for future investment in the area and listen to ideas and concerns.

Be Heard Boulder Tools

1. Ideas Campaign—Messaging should be about welcoming all ideas about the future of East Boulder; recognizing that we don't know what the future of industry, transportation, housing, communications, etc. holds (just think about all the changes that have happened to the way we live our daily lives in the last 20 years). Goal is to create a platform for open sourcing of ideas for changes in East Boulder that support each of the 6 focus areas.
2. Vision Statement Questionnaire – Drawing from the input from the first phases of engagement, draft vision statements will be created and confirmed by the working group, then shared with the community to ensure their values and visions are reflected.
3. Weighing Trade-Offs – Utilize existing BeHeardBoulder tools with ARC Urban to help community members wrestle with, and provide feedback on, tradeoffs.

ARC GIS Urban

ArcGIS Urban is a web-based solution that applies GIS technology to analyze the impact of land use scenarios, visualize potential future development and generate indicators data. This tool will

help community members visualize potential land use scenarios and assess impacts and trade-offs around key indicators.

Communitywide Vetting

The city will develop a method to vet the vision around each of the citywide goals and proposed priorities with the community. This may be a survey, or another technique.

Community Meeting/Workshop

The city will host at least one workshop (either in-person or virtually depending on the ability of people to safely gather) to present the findings of the study and “launch” the conversation and input period for weighing tradeoffs.

Ongoing Tactics (continued from Phase I)

- East Boulder Working Group Meetings
- Subcommunity Stories Video Series
- Engagement Scrapbook

Citywide Engagement Windows – Phase 2

Dec. 2019 - Feb 2020	July – Sept 2020	Oct. – Dec. 2020	Jan.-Feb 2021	Mar. – April 2021
Feedback on Vision and Goals (Focus Groups)	Draft Vision Statements	Indicators & Tradeoffs of Land Use Concepts Station Area Existing Conditions – Opportunities & Constraints	Refine Concepts	Preferred Alternatives
Working Group On-Going Engagement				

Phase Three: “How Will We Get There?”

Stakeholders will collaborate with city leadership, staff, and community partners to prioritize future projects, plans and improvements to the subcommunity and help define the path towards implementation. This phase is intended to create stewards of the plan within the community who will carry its goals towards implementation.

What Success Will Look Like in this Phase:

Have agreement and direction on preferred alt and general vision for the subcommunity from the previous phase to inform development of specific policies, programs and implementation supporting the final plan.

The result will be a well-vetted draft subcommunity plan and implementation documentation that outlines the priorities and future of the subcommunity.

Key Strategies:

Engagement for these phases will be fleshed out later, based on learnings from the previous phase(s).

Engagement Tactics: