

# North Boulder / Palo Park Listening Session

November 18, 2015

## Discussion Notes



People were asked to suggest key topics for longer group discussion. The longer discussion topics selected are listed below in bold with summary notes.

**Suggested topics for discussion:** Sustainable building, Housing + Transportation Issues, Affordable Housing, Workforce Housing; Sustainability, Energy, Ecosystems + Wildlife, Pedestrian Safety, Livability, Growth, "Ugly" Buildings + Views, Community Character, Noise, Complete Neighborhoods, Githens Acres, Redevelopment + Adding Density.

Topic	Summary Notes
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	
Locations for Aff. Housing	City definitely needs more affordable housing. Spread it around the city (Holiday OK). It is important for diversity. N. Boulder has vacant land that is some of the last in the city. AH is being focused in N. Boulder but we need diversity for a vibrant community.
Concentration of AF	Concern concentration in an area will turn a diversity of people away. Different types of AH. Price lock (deed restricted) in Foothills Community Park; Holiday good example: design is appealing (homey).
Design issues	Violet & Broadway - "rat cage" and looks like a project. Emphasize mix of housing - low prices with market housing. Design of Holiday promotes community. Violet & Broadway is too close to the street - dislike this and it lacks street level retail.
Jobs: housing mix	Boulder is a job hub with high cost housing and limited low cost housing: donut in the middle.
Jobs: housing mix	3x jobs - 1x housing - issue. People need to live and work in the community. I worry for loss of housing due to development. Ponderosa mobile park if annexed would require roads, water, sewer, and housing standards to equal millions to meet and would threaten Ponderosa's ability to provide AH.
Tiny houses	Tiny housing as a possible solution - does zoning allow this? Tiny housing could fit into single-wide lots at mobile home park: city code would require wider lots because mobile homes to meet city code requires wider lots.
Mix of housing / size	Access to outside is important. People want yards. Importance is mix of types - consider all types. New building is only 1 type. New buildings are not necessarily affordable. Original N. Boulder had a mix of housing. N. Boulder becoming one type: multi-million homes.
Tiny Houses / ADUs	Homeowners in Boulder are interested in tiny homes in their yards to add to housing diversity. Zoning allows ADUs in some neighborhoods but are allowed depending on proximity of other ADUs.

Tiny Houses / Allowed increases in density	Reiteration of homeowner interest in ADUs and for tiny houses - "friendly" way to increase density. Proposed zoning for N. Boulder will allow up to 6 properties per lot. Concern for type and form allowed when 6 units are allowed - it takes away from nature.
Diversity	Be clear on how to define diverse: income, age?? Mid-20s households can't afford housing in Boulder. Affordable housing program is inadequate and results in ugly, poorly designed homes that lack community orientation.
Co-housing / Tiny homes	We need more co-housing, tiny homes, etc. Zoning isn't user friendly, adaptable. 2 year planning process - edges out all except wealthy developers. Need housing options for 30-40's families with children. They want traditional style with yards.
Housing options / More flexibility in regulations	The lack of housing options across the spectrum - down sizing into equally expensive housing. Aging in place restrictions in regulation. Want more flexibility in zoning. City regulations are onerous - too many.
Agriculture	Allow for urban agriculture.
<b>Growth &amp; Smart Development</b>	
Road maintenance	Wondering what the plan is to fix the roads?
Caps on density	Like Crestview park. Interested in smart development.
Cell Coverage	Cell coverage in N. Boulder is bad!
Redevelopment / Neighborhood character	Living next to an Air BnB has concerns with the neighborhood make-up. Need smart / wise redevelopment. It feels like the growth is too fast. Not knowing the vision for N. Boulder. Concern with traffic.
Rate of Growth	Keep things static about developers. Slow down growth. Concern with lack of multi-modal options.
Short-term rentals	How do I deal with not feeling bad about being frustrated with short-term rentals and long term rentals? It is about quality of life in the neighborhood.
Voice	North Boulder is not heard, need more online participation options.
Armory	Armory growth - do not want large buildings that are out of character with the area. Contextual building heights.
Jay Rd. Development	Concerned with Jay & 36th Development All growth will impact transportation
BCH	Development of Boulder Community Hospital.
Growth	How do we properly house populations growth? Are growth limits being exceeded every year?
Smart growth	Smart growth is the preservation of neighborhood character. Concerned with building heights. Boulder is at risk of overpopulation. Quality of architecture is important. N. Boulder has tons of residential but not a lot of anything else. Want livable neighborhoods.
Accessibility	Would love to be able to walk to a grocery store. Would love to walk to a post office.
Voice	The opinions of N. Boulder are not factored in. NB is treated unfairly. Process and involvement for NB needs to be better and more accessible.

Development	Thinking about leaving neighborhood because of recent developments. Want to find the balance between my own investment and affordable housing. Feeling helpless with the decisions of the city.
Rural Character	Want to maintain the rural / small town nature of the neighborhood. NB is unique and we should keep it this way instead of becoming denser like mid-town or S. Boulder. How do we say no to development?
Changing demographics	Trends report reveals a drastic change in demographics. More than 50% of homes in Boulder are rentals. WE need to think about this. No one predicted the rental prices jumping so much.
Affordability	You don't have to house everyone. If you can't afford to live here then why should you?
Transportation	We need to take a county-wide look at transportation. Compares to LA.
Rentals	We need to be radical in our approach to control the amount of rental properties. Ask CU to start student housing. No more rental properties if you live outside of Boulder
<b>Pedestrian Safety &amp; Livability</b>	
Affordable housing, youth & livability	Pedestrian accessibility; children getting to school; safety
Pedestrian Safety & Livability	Diversity
	Traffic
	Voice for all ages.
	Mix of residential to commercial - jobs: housing mix.
	Process for the plan put to action. 16 year old said Boulder is turning for the worse.
	Enforcing views.
	North Boulder retail - Lucky & North - zoning commercial local serving.
	Armory 's density.
	Views diminishing; where are the mountains?
Ugly development	
<b>Community Function</b>	
Micro houses	Micro-houses can be temporary. Try it - if it works, it can stay.
Local change	In south - Winston-Salem - a group called "change". City went through and addressed every single issue. Need to formalize smaller neighborhood units.
Retail	Chicago- ... corner hardware store was feasible. If you served us together - connected us - I fell like we box and isolate. I really think we can foster that (the hardware store). We could be much more creative in how we accomplish that.
Retail	Used to live on Hill @ 9th and College - "the store" - tiny store building. Was nice to have that there. Lucky's has a corner on the market in NB. Prices have rocketed. Is a bit of a node now. Has some of the neighborhood things.

Armory	Talked about artists studios to a general store. Developer hit a brick wall - height ordinance issue in order to make numbers work, needed to go 4 stories, but we've been so anti-height.
Architecture	Form-based architecture. Diversity is beautiful. Would be nice to see some beautiful and unique architecture. Boulderado doesn't disrupt anything , and people love it.
Connectivity	Please connect all the trails. Off-road trails.
Flood work	Floodplain improvement project. We could bond to let developers contribute or it can into the spot. West at 20th didn't get done.
Mobile homes	Boulder meadows mobile home park - fabulous location. Prices we pay, could buy a 4 bedroom 4 bath house in other places.
Complete Neighborhoods	Picture of complete neighborhoods sounds great but can it encompass a larger area?
Diversity	Armory - what if there won't be diversity? How do we incorporate that? Buildings are available to families, elderly, single people. Different kinds of units.
Community empowerment	How does the community have input on what the community needs?
Retail	NoBo can't support retail outlets (Hardware store that elapsed). Need an ACE hardware.
Neighborhood empowerment	Why don't we just do these things? Why can't a neighborhood get together to propose something - just like you can build a house. We are really powerful to do something - you can build your won community. Let's have the ability to build a mechanism into our community. Need to have responsibility to do things.
Neighborhood empowerment	NB used to be called "dog patch". Minimum # of people to come together to decide what to do.
Arts District	Look at barriers to building Dairy Center for the arts. Didn't succeed. Artist community - N. Broadway - really fun.
Arts District	Let's get N. Boulder arts district really going. Place for artists to inhabit. Need mixed use - live work sell.
Arts	So strict in code - assistant art studio. Says you can't have any in the city. Can't have it unless it is a residence - must be a home occupation. But can't have someone help you.
Micro houses	Artists would consider micro houses. Eugene, Portland, Houston. Trailers lost something in their construction. Micro houses are like little pieces of sculpture. Discussion of what a micro house is - safe and not safe.

<b>Transportation</b>	
Changes due to Technology	Autonomous car will replace Uber; Don't know if Boulder infrastructure can handle the changes; electric cars inevitable just don't know timeframe; one way streets promote efficient travel; technology will drive the elimination of cars (transit, car sharing).
Public Transit	Why pay RTD for this service? Municipal transit system could provide better service, RTD service ends too early, poor frequency routes not dense enough. Trolleys, smaller shuttles instead of big buses that aren't full. Transit so good in Europe that you don't want a car. Can take 2 buses or more to get where you need to go. If service was great, how much would you pay for it? (\$1000/year too much - but if collected would raise serious resources). How collected matters a lot (tax vs. user fee). State legislature would need to take legislative action to get Boulder out of RTD - but could do more routes like HOP (not owned by RTD). Sexier options than buses - trolleys, trains.
Bike Paths	Would like to see the network completed. System is a hodge podge of off-street, on-street, and crossings dangerous infrastructure. This issue is specific to N. Boulder. Should we use eminent domain? Not everywhere, but possibly for critical connections. Also work to wait for redevelopment and exact it from developer. Narrow travel lanes for cars by expanding bike lane width to slow down traffic. Bike paths are beautiful in Netherlands and are like their own streets.
Congestion and Routes & Traffic Calming	19th St. is "pleasant" option for people who want to avoid Broadway. This results in a lot of traffic diverted to 19th that otherwise wouldn't be there. Use traffic calming and traffic circles to discourage through traffic. As people age they go slower and then so does everyone else. Traffic circles effectively calm traffic, but may not be a good option for emergency service routes.
Broadway Crosswalks	Lots of blind spots near restaurants and library. Crosswalks in general need to be more visible because cars don't stop. Some people honk at cars that stop at crosswalks.
Right-sizing for Iris?	Mixed views. Bike lanes might be better on other (lower traffic) streets. Although bike lanes can help slow traffic. But does it raise accidents or fatalities? Key question is if we want to slow down the cars.
<b>Rights of Nature</b>	
Protect the Wildlife	Recognize that all the small steps increase the human footprint and impact. Consider at a fundamental level. The rights of the creatures are important. We shouldn't add more paths and subdivisions. There is very rich habitat in N. Boulder. At times I have counted 14 deer in my backyard. There have been bear, mountain lions. This has been a learning experience that I shared with my kids and would like to preserve to share with my grandchildren.
Preserve trees and vegetation	Raspberry bushes are a key source of food for wildlife. In 10-20 years it should look like it looks now.

Changes along the Creek	There are plans that could modify the creek significantly - 2 and 1/2 times wider. The multi-use path would alter the neighborhood significantly. Flood improvements would mean tree removal.
Impacts	There have been annexations since the flood that have lead to subdivisions, more fences, less habitat. It is a mistake for character of the community. There will be more traffic, more people, more annexations.
Topaz	Thoroughfare through Topaz is a concern.
Remodels & Annexations	Limitations on annexations - no subdivisions with annexations. "Remodels" adding a lot of sq. footage are really "remodels". This has encouraged subdivision and redevelopment. People annex to the city when they need to but then they ask for subdivision and remodel, land use change and zoning change.
Bike Path	The board has already decided on matters of the bike path. Easements rights along bike path already secured by the city. Bike path proposal was in 2 segments: 1. 19th to Sumac (strong opposition among group); 2. Under 26th - this one is being proposed. Previous discussion already decided. Why is this being reconsidered? They were going to build a tunnel under 19th Street.
Githens	Want to keep neighborhood as it is. We have to keep saying we "want to stay in the county!". The city has violated the process so many times in the past.
Preserve Creek	This area offers an opportunity to preserve a stretch of Four Mile Canyon Creek. There are already street / bike options and the neighborhood is bike friendly and kid-friendly already.
Flood Debris	Hire young people to clean the stream channel instead of spending \$250,000 on a bike path. Keep the waterways clear with the resources available.
Nature	Plants and animals have a right to be in the neighborhood as much as we do. We've already encroached on them over centuries and decades. Every little change we make increases the human footprint and affects nature. It matters. We have conviction that it's necessary to take in the rights of nature at the core of decision-making. Consider global warming.
<b>Githens Acres</b>	
Rural Character	Rural neighborhood - people want to keep it rural and not have development or more density in this area. People want to keep the natural landscaping.
Affordability - Githens	There has been redevelopment in this area into "trophy homes" that are not affordable. This makes it difficult if not impossible for young people to live/stay in Boulder.
City/county issues - Githens	It feels like people's voice doesn't count as they are county residents, not city. Residents are surrounded by city. Annexation is really expensive - Over \$100K too much for retired people. County taxes are high as well. Give a tax break so retired people can stay in the community.