

CITY OF BOULDER
PLANNING BOARD ACTION MINUTES
April 16, 2015
1777 Broadway, Council Chambers

A permanent set of these minutes and a tape recording (maintained for a period of seven years) are retained in Central Records (telephone: 303-441-3043). Minutes and streaming audio are also available on the web at: <http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/>

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Aaron Brockett, Chair
Bryan Bowen
Crystal Gray
John Gerstle
Leonard May
Liz Payton
John Putnam

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Hella Pannewig, Assistant City Attorney
Susan Meissner, Administrative Assistant III
Chandler Van Schaack, Planner I
Susan Richstone,
Coutland Heyser

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair, **A. Brockett**, declared a quorum at 6:06 p.m. and the following business was conducted.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. **Mike Marsh, 265 31st Street**, noted that the BVCP update will define the future of Boulder. Reach out to everyone in the community and be inclusive of residents who do not use email. He recommended that the city mail a survey to everyone. Dig deeply to assure that everyone has a voice in a defensible and scientific manner, not just a representative sample.

4. DISCUSSION OF DISPOSITIONS, PLANNING BOARD CALL-UPS/ CONTINUATIONS

C. Gray thought that the staff memo and findings of fact accurately reflected the board's intention.

C. Gray moved, seconded by **L. Payton**. Passed 5-2. **J. Putnam** and **B. Bowen** opposed.

On a motion by C. Gray, seconded by L. Payton, the Planning Board voted 5-2 (B. Bowen and J. Putnam opposed) to find that application no. LUR2014-00090 fails to meet the requirements of the Boulder Revised Code, denies the application, and adopts the staff memorandum dated for the April 16, 2015 Planning Board meeting as findings of fact and conclusions of law.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Board adjourned the meeting at 9:41p.m.

APPROVED BY

Board Chair

DATE

JOINT STUDY SESSION

The Joint Study Session between the Boulder Planning Board and Boulder County Planning Commission was called to order at 6:14pm.

Introductions:

The board members and staff introduced themselves.

Staff Presentation:

L. Ellis, Pete Fogg and C. Hyser presented the item.

Board Questions:

Board members asked staff questions about the plan and process.

Board Feedback:

Following a presentation from city and county staff, the city Planning Board and county Planning Commission participated in an exercise to identify each member's top three topics for community engagement and issues. Following that exercise, the boards engaged in an open discussion of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan 2015 Major Update. Both the results of the exercise and the subsequent discussion are summarized here.

Written Exercise Results

Staff asked the Planning Board and Planning Commission to provide feedback from their city or county perspective and note what is most important (i.e., "top three" topics for each) for:

1. Successful community engagement, and
2. Critical issues/topics the 2015 plan update to address.

The notes are grouped by themes below.

1—Community Engagement

General Engagement Ideas and Concerns

- What's still missing is a reason for people to participate
- Ask folks but also reflect what they say/suggest so they know they have been heard
- Aligning work/housing/transportation
- Identify and weigh various community objectives
- Make everyone aware that the comp plan exists... Rationalize and measure public feedback to distill/clarify where it is coming from and to get past most vocal to the unheard
- Provide contextual info regarding local/state/national trends to mitigate myopia

Groups and Demographics to Include

- Successful engagement reaches all ages, from children through the elderly, Incorporates scientific sampling, Is interesting enough to attract people's attention
- Community outreach – organizations, groups, schools, businesses
- Work with neighborhoods including mobile home parks, low income housing
- Consider reaching out to major Boulder Valley employers to set up/facilitate opportunities for those employees to engage
- Reach out to HOAs – see if they would host a visit
- Go to the people not normally digitally engaged. Go to the neighborhood scale and use those networks.
- Involve demographics not typically active in land use issues (e.g., young adults, non-native English speakers)
- Diverse input
- Sustained public engagement beyond the usual suspects
- Broad diverse public input
- Diverse representation
- Small groups, with diverse representation – cross pollination of ideas
- Direct outreach to underrepresented portions of the community
- Engage a broad cross section – requires innovative meeting exercises/formats. Consider field trips
- But – do not exclude groups with focus and expertise on Comp Plan
- Encourage some groups to hold meetings independent of staff

Methods

- Use traditional methods along with social media
- Absolutely suggest the idea of a city-wide poll on issues, as comprehensive and scientific as possible
- Identify means to evolve appropriate weight given to differing points of view
- Hands-on engagement so people can better understand impact of policies

- VISION engagements
- Continue city speakers program on planning topics
- Multiple collection methods
- Diverse tools
- Visual and engaging
- Tools that keep engagement
- Strong digital engagement and visibility
- Concern that if these are 15 different ways to give input we will get input from the same 30-40 people, just multiplied 15 times

2—Critical Issues and Topics

Presenting Information

- Vision – Imaging 3D urban form tool
- Showing land-use map changes and development over time – trending
- Clarify and illustrate the desired urban form for changing parts of the city – Written policy moving into visual representations – implementable actions
- Critical Topics: 3D, Urban Form, Demonstrating what growth looks like
- VISION issues
- Neighborhood mapping and area plans
- Be a document that is embraced by the community
- Enhanced visual tools (i.e., 3D, mapping, graphics)

Urban Form and Growth

- Reconcile growth with levels of service
- Decide if Hogan-Pancost should move to Area III
- Sustainable urban form – idea of regenerative improvement: what parts of the city are so good they cannot be allowed to change?
- Inform design guidelines where needed to get an outcome
- Critical topics: Land use map changes
- Give clear, regulatory guidance about development potential in infill areas of the city
- Growth
- Resolve long-standing ambiguity about parcels on the edge (e.g., Hogan-Pancost)
- Deciding on a desired urban form for areas of town that are likely to change
- Giving the community a chance to have a robust discussion about growth

Other Specific Topics

- Reconcile job growth with job types and housing and commercial space affordability
- Transit
- Community Diversity

- Energy: Solar, wind, water; natural gas? Transportation --how can this support resilience?
- Agriculture: Support local food production – both inside and outside urban centers. How does this affect energy? How does this support resilience? Does this support diversity?
- Diversity: Income; cultural; professional. How can this support resilience?
- Critical topics: Renew IGA soon.
- Begin work on IGA renewal ASAP.
- Identify ultimate population density (by area)
- Identify alternate transportation objectives by neighborhood
- Identify future public land uses by area
- Metrics/tracking
- Metrics on transit, affordable housing
- Resilience
- Addressing resiliency
- How to address jobs:housing imbalance
- Strengthening public understanding with strong visuals
- Housing – especially for younger and older segments of population (affordable and market rate)
- Tying policies and land use code clearly together. Should help de-politicize (to some degree) planning approval process
- Channel development to coincide with transportation infrastructure improvements.

Discussion Summary

Following the initial exercise to identify each board member's top priorities, the boards engaged in an open discussion of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan 2015 Major Update. For this summary, comments from that discussion are grouped according to major themes that arose:

- Community Engagement
- Regional Context and Perspective
- Feedback on Foundations Tasks Underway
- Growth and Urban Form
- Presentation of the BVCP Document
- Issues to Address this Summer

Community Engagement

- Q: Is the public application process (both text and maps) going to be changed?
A: Staff has historically done a screening process to whittle down the applications to proposals relevant to the specific BVCP update cycle topics/criteria, which then goes to the four bodies for their further review and decision making. The Area III Planning Reserve application process was debated in the 2010 update, but was ultimately left unchanged. All of the applications are due and analyzed at the same time. For this update, the opening date for accepting 2015 applications is anticipated to be in August.

- There still isn't a reason for certain people to participate which could mean a risk that we will hear from the same people, just in 15 different ways. The topic of the "Comprehensive Plan" is perhaps a bit dry and not engaging. Perhaps meetings should instead be framed around relevant topics, such as building form or density that people really care about.
- Give residents of neighborhoods an overview of how staff/city identified and defined them, then have a conversation with the residents about their preferred identifying characteristics, topics/issues, and boundaries.
- Presenting the plan in a visual, quickly digestible way would help with public involvement and understanding the importance of the plan.
- Strive to engage a fuller range of the demographic spectrum that does not usually participate in BVCP updates (less affluent, ethnic minorities, elderly, the young, etc.) – they make and provide important contributions to our community.
- Reach out to organizations that already have relationships with hard-to-reach people rather than expecting staff to reach out to them directly.
- Remember that "the community" also includes county enclaves. How do we reach them?
- Try to capture input on these issues from the many ways that we are engaging the community in other projects—from other planning processes.
- Create an *affinity for interaction* (staff to public, diverse socioeconomic and ethnic groups, etc.) vs. *a fear or resistance to interaction*.
- Show how public input is actually being used and implemented vs. heard and recorded (but then vanishing). We need to provide information to people that they can relate to.
- Provide more on and off-line communication tools and connections to neighborhood/city maps – road trips, walking tours, computerized/Google Earth "fly throughs", build-out and redevelopment scenarios, etc.
- The "community" includes all those who regularly interact with Boulder, and not just those who live or own property in town.

Regional Context and Perspective

- Regional context is important (i.e., the Front Range and state)? Where do we track with these trends, and where are we divergent? "Our Vision" doesn't get set entirely by the boundaries of the Boulder Valley.
- Other communities in Boulder County are reaching their limits too (i.e., growth boundaries, services, infill/redevelopment, housing diversity, etc.). We have common issues like "what is density/what are its benefits and drawbacks?" It would be useful to share/exchange ideas about approaches to dealing with these topics.
- The regional context informs many of the problems we face, especially the things just beyond the edge of the BVCP planning area.
- It is important to look at the big picture, but also important not to let that dominate or overwhelm needs and desired vision/future of the Boulder Valley – need to balance carefully.
- Remember that the county's role in the update is important. County constituencies both within the Boulder Valley and beyond are affected by the city's actions.

Feedback on Foundations Tasks Underway

- Q: Will there be trends devoted to the acres consumed by various uses (e.g., informal parkland that gets uses in places like redeveloped schoolyards; while formal parkland is added elsewhere)?

A: Land use analysis will be a component of the foundations work. We will be meeting with Parks and Recreation staff to determine park-specific data and indicators for the trends snapshot.

- Consider how open space use has changed over the years (e.g., places with public access vs. open space saved for conservation).
- It may be interesting also to show the biodiversity of open space in terms of “non-human” use. Show progress and assess the value of open space in relation to human uses.
- Include statistics on parkland and energy use.
- Q: Is the idea of a 3D map of the city linked at all to the LIDAR mapping that is also going on?

A: Yes. There are many paths that could be taken to create a 3D model, both big and small in scope. The LIDAR data helps with mapping existing conditions.

- Spend some time with the Open Space/Other designations when doing the land use map clean up. This becomes a problem particularly when land use is not lot-based.

Growth and Urban Form

- The conversation about urban form is important even though the scope needs defining. It may be time to “bite the bullet” and really have these conversations. It will be difficult, but we should not shy away.
- We seem to have a growth management system that may be out-of-date and has been patched over time. Could there be a way to revise this system?
- Energy use/per capita energy use is an important part of the growth discussion. Need to address energy usage comprehensively. For example, the energy savings earned by smaller buildings/home designs can be negated by one larger building. Urban form issues (densities, areas of stability/areas of change) will also affect energy use and should be considered.
- Architecture and urban design excellence is something that should be elevated in our community. This doesn’t necessarily mean architecture micro-management, but it is something that should be addressed periodically.

Presentation of the BVCP Document

- Taking a graphics-driven approach is helpful. A document that is too text-heavy becomes hard to engage people. Expand the use of metrics to the extent possible.
- Integration with department master plans is a great idea. Continue working on this.
- There are aspirations in the comp plan without links to action items or implementation steps. Making the links more clear would be helpful.

- Don't be too constrained by the existing format and layout of the BVCP. There may be an opportunity to reorganize the document itself – “less can be more” in terms of comprehension and gaining interest/readership.

Issues to Address this Summer and Other Comments

- Send a BVCP update informational post card to everyone in the Boulder Valley.
- The discussion about an IGA renewal should happen sooner rather than later.
- Settle the two body vs. four body process issues raised in the 2010 update, and do it sooner rather than later (like the IGA renewal).
- The city and county need to continue working on better communication and coordination with each other about resilience issues. Where are we on developing unified/complementary plans, and what gaps or needs in resiliency planning and coordination already exist?
- Might it be possible to re-frame subcommunities with a slightly finer grain so as not to lump neighborhoods together that are, in fact, very different places? (This seems especially important in the central area.)
- Can we talk about urban gardening and food production? Should regulations or designations related to food production be changed?

DRAFT