



# Alpine-Balsam

## What We Heard

Phase 1: March 2018 to August 2018

### Introduction

Starting with a community kick-off event on May 16, 2018 the City of Boulder spent five months this spring and summer engaging with community members about the Alpine-Balsam area planning process.

We sought to achieve four things during this phase of engagement:

- To keep individuals who participated in a 2017 visioning process updated and interested in this project;
- To invite additional community members and perspectives to the conversation;
- To better understand general hopes and concerns associated with redevelopment of the former Boulder Community Hospital site; and
- To seek community input about how the city should rank seven priorities associated with this opportunity.

The following events were held during this phase of engagement:

- Kick-off event – approximately 45 participants
- Three “Popsicle Pop-Ups” – approximately 140 people
- Four Neighborhood Office Hours – approximately 20 people
- A focus group of community members who belong to disconnected populations in Boulder – 10 participants
- An information session for nearby property owners – 10 participants
- About 15 telephone and email exchanges between staff and interested community members



In addition, the city utilized its online engagement platform, <http://www.beheardboulder.org>, to invite questions from community members and survey participants about seven priorities. Staff also gave individuals an opportunity to complete a similar priority-ranking exercise at many of the in-person events.



## Key Themes

In general, several common themes emerged during these discussions:

- Many viewed the opportunity to redevelop the hospital site as unique and exciting.
- As the city plans for redevelopment, Boulder should consider not only today's needs but also future trends and needs.
- While previous guidance from city council has emphasized a desire to consolidate civic facilities and develop new housing at the site, there are diverse viewpoints about how much of each is appropriate.
- Any new uses are likely to have anticipated and unforeseen impacts. Residents said it is important to consider how people will travel to and from the area, for example, and what level and types of parking will be necessary. Community members were also interested about steps that could be taken to reduce flood impacts.
- Some community members would like to see the city leverage this site to its maximum potential in terms of addressing affordable housing issues and showcasing the potential to build a diverse and inviting community. They encouraged the city to be "bold" in its planning.
- At the same time, there is concern about how development might affect the existing area. Some residents expressed strong opinions about density, building height and design, as well as a fear that redevelopment in this neighborhood could resemble growth in other parts of town. Boulder Junction came up more than once in conversations, typically from individuals who are critical of the design and scale of buildings there. They encouraged the city to carefully consider impacts and unintended consequences of decisions.
- Many indicated they want the city to preserve the views of the Flatirons, and community members repeatedly identified the North Boulder Park as a neighborhood asset.
- Individuals who do not already live in the neighborhood are interested in opportunities that could exist for more affordable housing options for specific populations, like older Boulder residents.

- Real estate agents want more information and clarity about the city’s plan and services at the site. They are receiving many questions from potential buyers of other properties in the neighborhood.
- The concepts of efficient and consolidated civic spaces and welcoming community/public life space seemed to resonate.
- A handful of participants indicated they would like the city to use the entire site to expand the park or for open space.
- A smaller number of residents raised concerns that redevelopment could exacerbate challenges associated with transients and individuals experiencing homelessness.

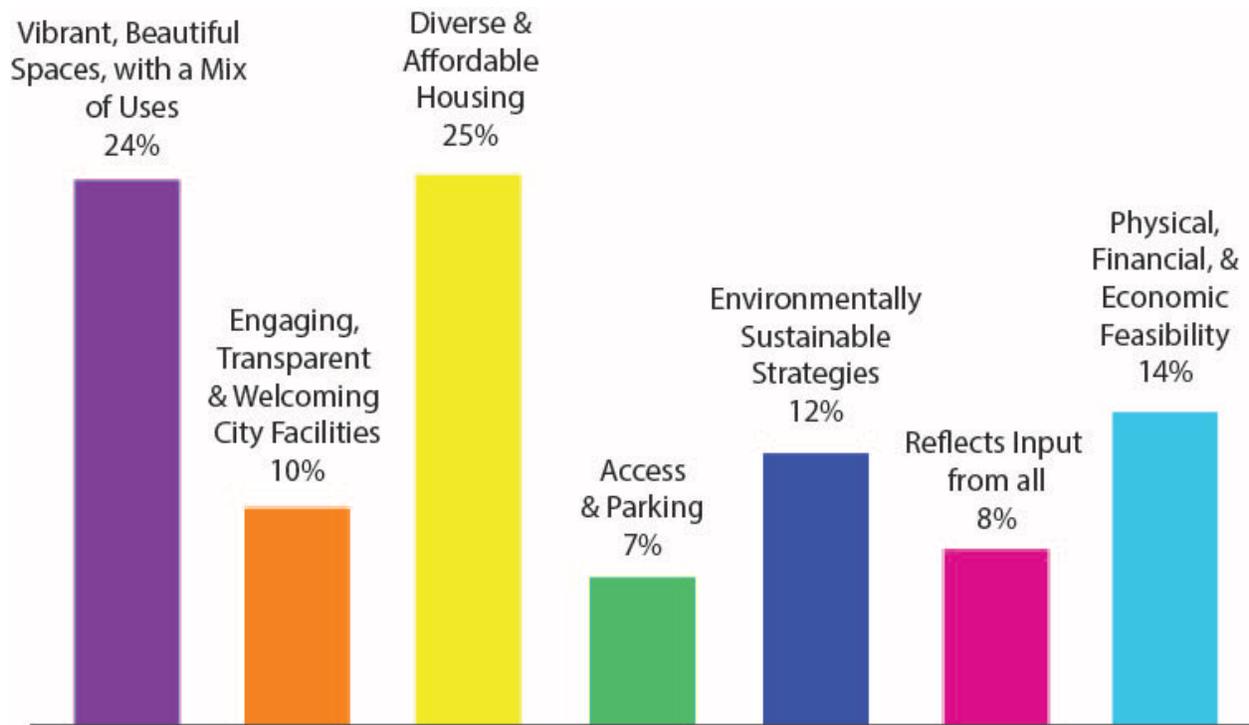
### **Priority-Ranking Exercise**

As part of these conversations, city staff sought to manage community expectations about redevelopment of this site, given its limited size and other constraints. Seven potential goals were identified for the site, and we invited community members to prioritize these. We pointed out that some could be accomplished in tandem, while others might compete with one another.

We asked community members to reflect on the potential goals and to select their top three from this list:

- A. Provide vibrant, beautiful spaces for community life with a mix of uses
- B. Feature engaging, transparent and welcoming city facilities
- C. Provide diverse and affordable housing options
- D. Include comprehensive multi-modal access and parking
- E. Adhere to environmentally sustainable strategies
- F. Reflect input from all interested city residents, property and business owners
- G. Balance city and community needs with physical, economic and financial feasibility

A graph on the next page summarizes the feedback received both online and in-person in response to the opportunity to prioritize the potential goals.



As this figure illustrates, two priorities stood out among the rest:

1. Diverse and affordable housing; and
2. Vibrant, beautiful spaces with a mix of uses

In retrospect, and through public feedback received during this phase of engagement, it might have been helpful for the seven priorities to have been framed more distinctly.

### Participant Demographics

The city also believes it is important to understand who participated and who did not. Most of the participants at the in-person events during this phase were white residents, ranging from their late 20s to early 70s. It was not possible to determine income levels, or whether these residents were renters or homeowners. About a third of participants told us they live in or near the neighborhood now. By setting up in parks and offering refreshments for kids, the city was able to reach more parents than typical.

More than 670 individuals visited the city’s Be Heard Boulder site during this phase of engagement, and 100 completed the prioritization survey. Here is what we know about the survey respondents:

- While there were participants from all parts of the city, two areas were represented most: North Boulder (36 percent) and Central Boulder – north of Arapahoe (27 percent).

- More than half (54.5 percent) of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 54. Another 21 percent indicated they were 65 or over.
- Eighty-six percent of respondents identified as white, and 70 percent were female.
- Nearly 82 percent indicated they own their home.
- Twenty percent of respondents declined to provide annual household income information, but for those who did, the highest percent (34.5) was in \$150,000 or more; 18 percent chose \$50,000 to \$99,000; 17 percent chose \$100,000 to \$149,000; and a total of about 9 percent chose from less than \$25,000 to \$49,999.

### **What's Next**

The next phase of engagement, which will begin with a community workshop on Oct. 29, will focus on the trade-offs of emphasizing one priority over another.