

The City of Boulder would like to clarify future Upper Goose Creek flood mitigation efforts that will likely take place in tandem with the redevelopment of the Alpine-Balsam site, the former Boulder Community Health Broadway campus.

Staff and decision-makers agree that North Boulder Park is an essential community asset and the planning for future flood improvements will reflect that value. A primary assumption is that mitigation improvements will be designed to protect and potentially improve the usability of the park.

Flood mitigation improvements can be constructed in many ways and it is very common to utilize and design parks or other urban open space as places to detain water periodically. Consideration of park detention, not retention which implies permanent water in the park, is being informed by the baseline assumptions of respecting existing tree canopy and maintaining current uses in the park, i.e. reconstructing ball fields with flexibility of an open lawn area.

On a daily basis, this detention area would be the typical dry lawn that it is today-not a “pond”. The strategy would improve life safety in the area, decrease flows significantly through the Alpine-Balsam site in the event of a flood; potentially reduce impacts of storm events across Broadway and sites east of Broadway; and create additional water quality treatment for upstream runoff.

Generally, projects such as this are evaluated at a high level in the area plan and specific project design is analyzed much later once funding is programmed. There is a long way to go before the engineering is complete and any decisions are made.

Here’s what we think next steps look like:

1. Understanding feasibility of detention in park and how that affects design and flood conveyance on the Alpine-Balsam site (underway, results anticipated by May to be shared with community and decision-makers)
2. Outline approach in draft area plan for assumptions and further design for mitigation-based results of general feasibility and get community feedback (June-August)
3. City Council to adopt approach in area plan (August – Sept)
4. Secure funding for design and construction of flood mitigation (earliest possible - 2020 budget)
5. Design alternatives evaluation and community process to inform a preferred design
6. Construction of flood mitigation plan

We hope that as a part of the Alpine-Balsam project the city can help meet its goals to provide flood mitigation for Upper Goose Creek that can better protect our community during floods.