"What if?" Shaping the Future of Boulder Valley

May 11, 2016

Meeting Summary

Community members were invited to dig deeper into the key issues and "focus areas" that have been identified so far in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Update on Wednesday, May 11, from 3:30-7:30 at the Boulder Public Library. These focus areas were identified through the analysis of trends from the foundations work, direction from city and council leadership and the great deal of community input that staff received throughout this past year. The input around these focus areas will help start shaping the key choices, desired outcomes and recommended changes to the plan. The focus areas include:

1) Housing Affordability and Diversity
2) Climate Change, Energy and Resilience
3) Balance of Future Jobs and Housing
4) Urban Design and Community Benefits
5) Targeted Assessment and Planning
6) Addressing Local Needs

The event had a variety of activities for the community to participate in and provide their input. These activities included a BVCP Open House about the BVCP Update, and its most up-to-date work. People also engaged in hands-on activities related to the topics of resilience, climate and energy, and the city's built environment, and housing. White papers were also available, which contained background information on the focus topics, proposed approach to the issue, associated tradeoffs and key questions. People provided input on comment sheets for Key Questions. As part of the main presentation, a series of "what if" idea pitches were also heard from a diverse set of community voices, who shared their thoughts and vision for the Boulder Valley's future.

Approximately 60-70 people attended the event and it was televised on Channel 8 (live stream). The event has been recorded and can be found in the link below. The same materials and questionnaires that were presented at the event has been posted on the BVCP website for the community to provide their input **ONLINE here:** https://bouldercolorado.gov/bvcp/what-if

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BOULDER VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

White Paper Questionnaires

A series of white papers were produced by staff which covered the following topics: (1) Vision and Core Values, (2) Design, Housing and Jobs, and (3) Climate, Energy, and Resilience. In addition to the background information, and proposed recommendations, each white paper asked a key question(s) for the public to answer. Additional input will be collected online through June 5th and a final summary of all input received from the questionnaires and comment forms will be provided.

Exercises

The community also engaged in few hands-on exercises to explore what housing types are appropriate for different parts of town, and evaluate the types of metrics that should be used to assess future scenarios and potential land use changes.

Housing Prototype Exercise

This exercise identified 5 different character areas that make up Boulder: Major Corridors, Regional Activity Centers, Neighborhood Activity Centers, Industrial/Innovation Areas, and Neighborhoods. The purpose of the exercise was to find out what housing prototypes the community feels are currently lacking and where they would be most appropriate in Boulder (or not). Following below are initial takeaways from the meeting. (Additional input is still being gathered on the online questionnaire.) Generally, feedback was:

Regional Activity Centers

- Most input suggested a broad range of housing prototypes (except for small lot single family housing) are appropriate for regional activity centers.
- Tiny houses, apartments/condominiums, and Micro-unit housing were seen as inappropriate by about fifth of the participants.
- Accessory dwelling units and mixed-use residential were most favored.
- Live-work was suggested as another types of housing.

Neighborhood Activity Centers

- Accessory dwelling units and cottage courts were most favored.
- Tiny houses, apartment/condominiums, mixed-use residential, and micro-units were seen as inappropriate by about fourth of the participants.
- Small lot single family housing was strongly discouraged by participants.
- Co-ops, and Cohousing were suggested as another types of housing.

Major Corridors

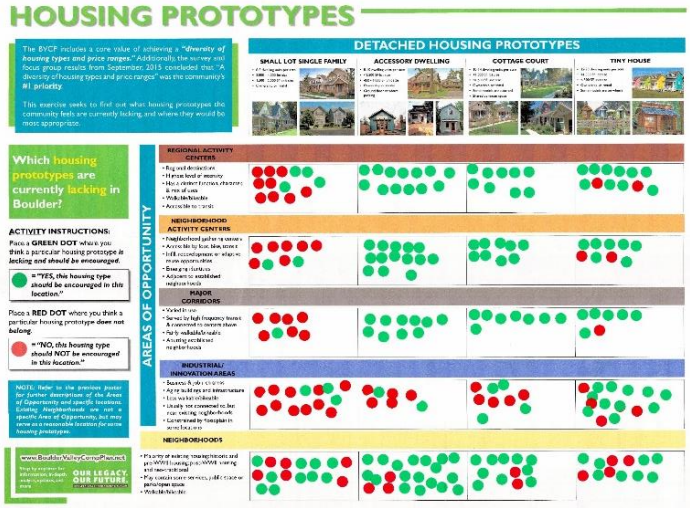
- All housing prototypes except small lot single family housing were favored by majority of participants.
- Accessory dwelling units, cottage courts, row houses/town houses, and mixed-use residential were most favored.
- Live-work was suggested as another types of housing.

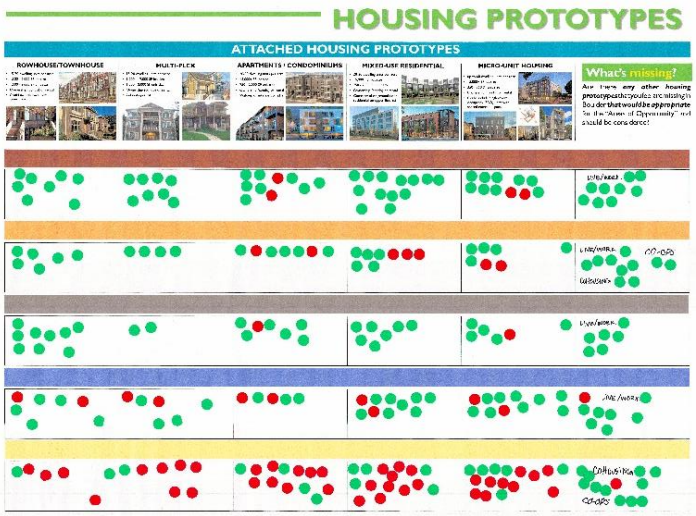
Industrial/ Innovation Areas

- Participants had mixed opinions on what housing prototypes are most appropriate for this area.
- Mixed-use residential, micro-unit housing and tiny houses were most favored, while housing prototypes with lower intensity of housing were less favored.
- Live-work was suggested as another types of housing.

Neighborhoods

- Housing prototypes with lower intensities were most favored in neighborhoods, such as small lot single family housing, accessory dwelling units, cottage courts and tiny houses.
- Housing prototypes with higher intensities, such as apartment/condominiums, mixed-use residential and micro-unit housing were strongly discouraged.
- Co-ops, and Cohousing were suggested as another types of housing.

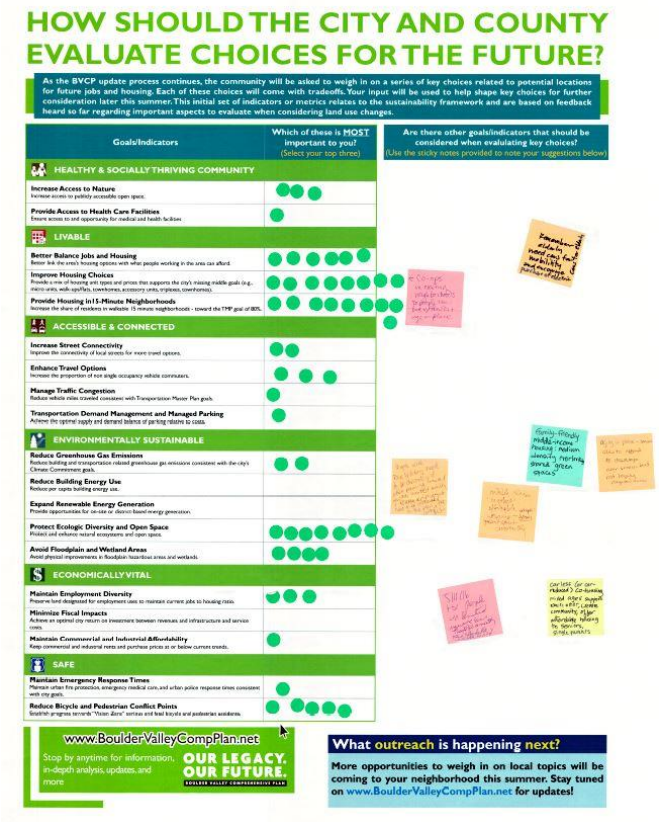




Establishing Goals/Indicator Exercise

As the city continues to work with the community to shape future scenarios and potential land use changes, indicators or metrics related to the sustainability framework will be developed and are important to help evaluate the tradeoffs of different scenarios. In this exercise, participants were asked to do two things:

1) Select a goal/indicator that's most important to them,
2) Suggest new goals/indicators that should be included.



The initial set of indicators or metrics used in the exercise were based on the feedback that staff has heard so far.

Key Takeaways

- "Livable" was primarily chosen as the most important goal/indicator by participants out of the 6 sustainability frameworks that were listed. The goals/indicators listed under "livable" includes: better balance jobs and housing, improve housing choices, and provide housing in 15-minute neighborhoods.
- Protect ecologic diversity and open space, avoid floodplain and wetland areas, and reduce bicycle and pedestrian conflict points were also highly valued.

Additional Goals/Indicators suggested by the Community

- Increase options and access to electric vehicles for the elderly
- Support for housing types: Co-ops, "market" middle income, Co-housing, affordable, walkable
- Family-friendly middle-income housing: medium density overlooking shared green spaces
- Options for those with disabilities