

Blue Ribbon Commission
Meeting Notes
September 27, 2006

Boulder's Demographic Data and Trends

Population

- Are CU college students included in population estimates?
Yes – for students residing in Boulder
If we provided population numbers without students, Boulder might more closely resemble national population numbers
- Between 1990 and 2000, the proportion of children in Boulder remained constant. During this period, the actual number of children living in Boulder grew slightly and appears to mirror population growth
- What constitutes a “family?”
- What is average household size?
- How does Boulder's poverty level compare to comparable communities
 - **We're not certain. What are the comparable cities? Typical benchmarked cities may no longer be comparable**
- What is the geographic distribution of Boulder's low-income population?
 - **Part-time students may skew the low-income statistics**

- Low-income residents tend to reside on the fringes of the city, and as a result, may receive marginal levels of service
- In addition to families, senior and fixed-income residents also live below poverty line

Housing

- University communities typically have high percentage of rental housing compared to other communities
- Affordable housing programs aimed at middle income households
- Aging housing stock may be an economic red flag
 - The effect may be lessened by housing renovations
 - Apartments and rental housing may not be renovated at the same rate as single family homes

Employment

- Boulder's employment base soared in the 1990s
- Boulder's job center status is a relatively recent phenomenon
 - Although recent job growth (since 2000) has slowed with more development occurring in neighboring communities
 - Job center phenomenon may be weakening
- Current projections indicate a 0.8% annual job growth rate, which is much slower than the growth seen in the 90's

Open Space and Mountain Parks - Delani Wheeler

- Accelerated Acquisition Program to be complete by 2030 and substantially complete by 2020
- 5.5 million annual visits to Open Space

- Two sales taxes expire by 2019, leaving an 0.40% sales tax to maintain and improve the Open Space system
 - The permanent 0.40% sales tax should be sufficient for future maintenance and capital requirements
- 13 ballot issues – all but two issues passed
 - Ballot initiatives need to be considered carefully
 - GOCO grants have not generally been awarded to Boulder
- Lottery Funds shared by Open Space, Parks and Recreation and Tributary Greenways
- Other Open Space Fees?
 - Generally not feasible to collect from residents, although the department has implemented fees for the dog tag program

Revenue Options – Phyllis Resnick

- Current illegal options are shown to highlight all potential revenue sources and because the city may decide it is reasonable to challenge the illegality.
- Streamlined sales tax – Colorado is not participating
- Public Improvement Fee information will be presented at a later meeting.
- Property-based sales are more immune to higher taxes than a services
- Utility Bill Fee Examples:
 - Streetlights (Colorado Springs – Expense recently moved to General Fund)
 - Boulder pays for street lights

- Transportation Maintenance
- Park Maintenance
- Property Taxes common but generally disliked
 - How would be generated by De-Brucing all city property taxes?
- Fee versus Tax
 - Tax – Requires vote
 - Fee – Does not require vote
- Tax and Fee Exemptions
 - May want to examine policies
 - Under what circumstances can costs be shifted to private sector
- Excise Taxes
 - How are they assessed? How often?
- Head Taxes
 - May be more regressive than sales taxes
 - Governmental institutions will not pay employer share, but may be willing to collect it on their employees
- Sales Taxes on Services
 - Iowa charges sales tax on services
 - Better to approach on a regional basis versus individual basis
 - Broader-base with lower rates impact residents less than narrow-base with higher rates
 - May not be politically feasible to assess sales tax against all services