

Temporary Moratorium of Development in the University Hill Business District

What action did the City Council take on July 29, 2014?

The Boulder City Council passed a motion enacting a temporary moratorium on all building permit, concept plan review, and site review applications that will result in adding floor area to those areas zoned Business Main Street (BMS) in the area generally described as University Hill business district until August 20, 2014.

What exactly does that mean?

It means that for now, the city is not accepting applications for building permits, concept plan reviews and site review requests from entities that want to redevelop existing properties to add additional building square footage within the University Hill business district. The current action is effective for approximately three weeks. Council will consider a longer term moratorium and related planning effort to consider and address issues of concern at its meeting on August 19, 2014.

Where exactly is included in the University Hill business district?

The “University Hill business district” means those areas located in the general area west of the campus of the University of Colorado, across Broadway, zoned Business Main Street (and generally shown in the 2010 Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan on page 74).

Are all city building permits halted?

No, within the University Hill business district—those properties zoned BMS—building permits for repairs and internal renovations will still be accepted. Building permits that will add new square footage outside of the BMS zoning district are not affected by this moratorium.

Why did the City Council take this action?

The market for student housing is strong. It’s very profitable for developers to create new student housing, and applications continue to be submitted. But the University Hill business district is an “activity center” in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) that is planned to have a mix of uses including business, retail, and non-student residential. The moratorium allows time for the city to take a comprehensive look at its revitalization strategy to determine the appropriate mix of uses, the appropriate corridors for new development, and the impacts of converting existing structures into new student-oriented residential units. A moratorium provides the breathing room for an assessment and to come back to council with a more comprehensive revitalization approach.

What can the city achieve between now and Aug. 20?

The moratorium is temporary. Staff will return to the City Council on Aug. 19 with a proposed work plan and proposed longer-term moratorium of at least 6 months, in order to achieve the intent of this short-term emergency moratorium.

Was this targeted towards one redevelopment project?

No, it was in response to a current trend. It was important to enact the moratorium now to ensure the city can assess long-term revitalization and stability in the University Hill business district rather than approve projects that may have short-term financial gains at the expense of the long-term community development goals.

Isn’t University Hill a student-oriented area, and isn’t student housing close to the CU campus a good thing?

“University Hill” is a large area encompassing residential neighborhoods as well as the commercial district. The moratorium applies only to the commercial district, and was prompted by concerns about how best to ensure the long-term success and viability of the district. The city is working on several fronts to support the creation of new housing opportunities for students in close proximity to campus.

