



# **Boulder Municipal Airport Community Conversation: Community Working Group (CWG)**

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**Meeting 5 Summary**  
**September 12, 2023**



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## Introduction

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This summary has been prepared to detail the notifications efforts and outcomes of the fifth CWG meeting. Additional details about the Community Conversation project can be found on the [project website](#).

## CWG Meeting 5

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### Meeting Information

- Location: City of Boulder Open Space & Mountain Parks (2520 55th St, Boulder, CO 80301)
- Date: Tuesday, September 12, 2023
- Time: 4:30 – 6:30 pm
- Number of Attendees: 18 CWG members, 7 project team members

### Project Team Attendees

Natalie Stiffler, COB  
Allison Moore-Farrell, COB  
John Kinney, COB  
Dylan Swanson, COB  
Amalia Andrews, Kimley-Horn  
Kathleen Wanatowicz, PR Studio



## CWG Members

18 of the 38 member CWG attended the second meeting. The complete member list is included below.

Name	Email
Andrew McKenna	<a href="mailto:andrew@journeysaviation.com">andrew@journeysaviation.com</a>
Ariana Garcia	<a href="mailto:arianagarcia0757@gmail.com">arianagarcia0757@gmail.com</a>
Ben Molk	<a href="mailto:bmolk@crescent.com">bmolk@crescent.com</a>
Bill Shaffer	<a href="mailto:cmaxshaff@gmail.com">cmaxshaff@gmail.com</a>
Bret Heidkamp	<a href="mailto:bret@crosstac.com">bret@crosstac.com</a>
Bri Lehman	<a href="mailto:bri.lehman@gmail.com">bri.lehman@gmail.com</a>
Bronson MacDonald	<a href="mailto:Bronson.macdonald1972@gmail.com">Bronson.macdonald1972@gmail.com</a>
Carl Lawrence	<a href="mailto:Carl@EnergySense.com">Carl@EnergySense.com</a>
Carol Ciufolo	<a href="mailto:cciufolo@aol.com">cciufolo@aol.com</a>
Clemens Ceipek	<a href="mailto:clemens.ceipek@gmail.com">clemens.ceipek@gmail.com</a>
Elise Edson	<a href="mailto:elise.edson@gmail.com">elise.edson@gmail.com</a>
Elliot Dickerson	<a href="mailto:elliott.dickerson@gmail.com">elliott.dickerson@gmail.com</a>
Ginger Zukowski	<a href="mailto:zukowsk1@msn.com">zukowsk1@msn.com</a>
Glen Marshman	<a href="mailto:glenm@1bfit.com">glenm@1bfit.com</a>
Glenn Brillinger	<a href="mailto:glennb@brungardaviation.com">glennb@brungardaviation.com</a>
Guy Kenny	<a href="mailto:guy@gkennybuilders.com">guy@gkennybuilders.com</a>
Harry Ross	<a href="mailto:harryrosstemp+CWG@gmail.com">harryrosstemp+CWG@gmail.com</a>
Hep Ingham	<a href="mailto:hep@igc.org">hep@igc.org</a>
Jan Burton	<a href="mailto:jan.burton111@yahoo.com">jan.burton111@yahoo.com</a>
Janet Heimer	<a href="mailto:janetheimer48@gmail.com">janetheimer48@gmail.com</a>
Jill Grano	<a href="mailto:jill@jillgrano.com">jill@jillgrano.com</a>
Julie Heins	<a href="mailto:itnotpa@comcast.net">itnotpa@comcast.net</a>
Keith Stagg	<a href="mailto:staggkm@gmail.com">staggkm@gmail.com</a>
Laura Kaplan	<a href="mailto:laura.kaplan.pb@gmail.com">laura.kaplan.pb@gmail.com</a>
Lisa Morzel	<a href="mailto:lisamorzel@gmail.com">lisamorzel@gmail.com</a>
Lonnie Hilkemeier	<a href="mailto:lonnie@specialtyflight.com">lonnie@specialtyflight.com</a>
Magali Botello	<a href="mailto:magalibotello2012@gmail.com">magalibotello2012@gmail.com</a>
Marda Kirn	<a href="mailto:info.ecoarts@gmail.com">info.ecoarts@gmail.com</a>
Mark Crossen	<a href="mailto:mark@raynemark.com">mark@raynemark.com</a>
Philip Ogren	<a href="mailto:philip.ogren@outlook.com">philip.ogren@outlook.com</a>
Rachel Stanton	<a href="mailto:Rachel.stanton327@gmail.com">Rachel.stanton327@gmail.com</a>
Rob Range	<a href="mailto:rob@boulder-air.com">rob@boulder-air.com</a>
Robert Murphy	<a href="mailto:bob@bcmurphy.me">bob@bcmurphy.me</a>
Ryan Schuchard	<a href="mailto:ryanbouldertab@gmail.com">ryanbouldertab@gmail.com</a>
Sheila S	<a href="mailto:Westernskyhiker@gmail.com">Westernskyhiker@gmail.com</a>
Taran Volckhausen	<a href="mailto:tvolckhau@gmail.com">tvolckhau@gmail.com</a>
Tulia Flores	<a href="mailto:tuliaff@gmail.com">tuliaff@gmail.com</a>
Whitney Park	<a href="mailto:whitneyfpark@gmail.com">whitneyfpark@gmail.com</a>



## Meeting Notifications

- Email invite to CWG members
- Email reminder

## Presentation Topics

- Summary of Community Questionnaire #2
- Summary of Bilingual Community Meetings
- Evaluation Considerations Feedback Summary
- CWG Accomplishments and Outcomes
- City Council Meeting Report Out
- Next Steps
- Closing Remarks and Comments

## Summary of Meeting

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The presentation slides are included in this document as **Appendix A**. The project team reviewed Questionnaire #2 highlights. A detailed summary of the Questionnaire feedback is included as **Appendix B**.

**Please note:** The Be Heard Boulder questionnaire is an engagement tool for collecting feedback from the public. It is not intended to express a scientific, statistically valid representation of all of the city's residents. In addition, staff is not interpreting the feedback as "votes" for or against future scenarios. The Be Heard Boulder questionnaire is just one of the tools the city uses to solicit input and the city acknowledges the limitations with this type of questionnaire. Nevertheless, it is a useful engagement tool to help identify trends and potential areas of commonality in the community's opinions on the subject and as a channel for people to provide anonymous feedback without attending a meeting."

- The most favored City **of Boulder goals and objectives** (as identified in the Sustainability, Equity and Resilience Framework) were:
  - Environmentally Sustainable
  - Safe
  - Responsibly Governed
- The most favored **physical and programmatic elements** were:
  - Bike path and/or nature trail
  - Restaurant and/or café
  - A range of housing types
  - Improved aviation facilities
  - Community Park
- When asked which **near-term action items** should be implemented at the airport, respondents most frequently identified the following items:
  - Facilities improvements
  - Community serving uses



- Community relations
- Update noise abatement procedures
- Better roads connected to the airport
- Address the use of leaded fuel
- Landing fees
- Eliminate recreational flights
- Most Common Vision Words:
  - House/Home
  - Airport/Aviation
  - Neighborhood
  - Communal
  - Quiet
  - Thriving
  - Vibrant
  - Inspire
  - Nature
  - Peace
- Scenario Feedback:
  - **Scenario 3: Airport with Neighborhood Serving Uses and Limited Housing is the most preferred option** and scenario 4 is the least preferred option.  
According to public feedback, the scenarios are ranked in the following order:
    1. Scenario 3: Airport with Neighborhood Serving Uses and Limited Housing
    2. Scenario 2: Airport with Aviation Improvements
    3. Scenario 1: Existing Airport with Enhanced Maintenance
    4. Scenario 4: Decommission Airport and Create New Neighborhood

CWG Comments on Questionnaire #2 include:

- It's important to caveat this feedback by sharing it is not statistically valid.
- One CWG member mentioned that noise issues near his home are a bit more granular, he sees more traffic than other areas.
- There is concern that adding more planes or facilities will increase noise.  
How many more hangars could the airport add?
  - Capacity to add maybe 100 more in addition to the current 80. But this will depend on style and needs.
- The project team should be clearer about grant assurances and what the obligations mean. One CWG member feels that the project team does not understand what it would take to close the airport.
  - The project team shared that working with the FAA is not black and white. If the city were to pursue closing the airport, it is a policy decision. The City Council can choose to challenge the FAA.
  - Some stakeholders expressed they did not see flexibility in recent communications from the FAA.



## City Council Study Session

The Project team shared some highlights from their presentation to City Council on August 24, 2023.

- The project team shared that the City Council wanted the team to investigate the feasibility of the near-term action items.
- One CWG member mentioned that she heard the city council members express a desire for additional background into aviation and case law.
  - The project team shared that the city has outside council who will study the case law.
  - Additional near-term action items include:
    - Additional legal analysis.
    - More discussion with FAA.
    - Financial analysis on closing the airport.
- One CWG member asked why we continue to talk about the possibility of closing the airport in meetings and with City Council if it is an unlikely option.
  - The project team reiterated that this project is intended to gauge if that was the desire of the community. Some community members expressed interest in this and this option must be discussed.
- One CWG member expressed concern that the participants in this process are only those who care about what it is happening at the airport. The City Council needs to take into consideration the full community of Boulder.
- The four scenarios offered have difficult tradeoffs, it makes it hard to see the best option and choose the best scenario.
- One CWG member felt that housing advocates should look for other opportunities for housing that don't require taking on the FAA.
- One CWG member felt that the uncertainty of the future of the airport make investing in new equipment difficult.
- One CWG member expressed a desire to share the outcome of the noise abatement meetings with the public and CWG.

## Bilingual Meetings

The project team held two bilingual meetings with the residents of the Vista Village and San Lazaro communities. These meetings go into similar detail as the CWG. The meeting summaries are included as **Appendix B**. Highlights from the meetings include:

- Desire to keep airport but reduce noise, especially on Sundays.
- Desire for the airport to provide job opportunities for near-by residents.
- Is an airport needed in Boulder? Discussion of pros and cons for neighbors.
- Concern about displacement if/when land uses changes occur nearby.
- Concern about increase in vehicle traffic.
- Concern that community improvements in scenario 3 and 4 would be too expensive and not benefit the manufactured home communities.



## Comments from the CWG:

- CWG member wanted to know if similar meetings have been organized for other nearby neighborhoods.
- One CWG member shared that she has lived in a mobile home community for 30 years. She often finds it hard to have a conversation with someone 10-20 feet away. However, noise is not always the biggest concern in a conversation like this where changes may not benefit the current residents.
- Feedback from the meetings was really focused on how to improve the neighborhood for those who live there now.
  - There is fear that changes at the site will impact housing affordability.
- One CWG member reiterated that we should focus on getting rid of lead, improving the noise and find ways to engage the community.
  - Several CWG members expressed that they had ideas on how to accomplish this.
  - New near-term action item:
    - Find ways to connect the community to employment and aviation opportunities.
- One CWG member requested that the project team should add the mobile home communities to the scenario drawings.

## CWG Accomplishments

The project team shared the following accomplishments with the CWG:

- Airport facts, history and character.
- Identification of airport areas of improvements.
- Listening and understanding neighborhood concerns.
- Incorporate community feedback to develop scenario programmatic elements.
- Developing goals and evaluation criteria to inform each scenario.
- Near term action items and prioritization.
- Feedback and recommendations for each scenario.
- Established a new culture for community involvement.

The project team asked the CWG to share what they think the group accomplished.

- Opened a dialogue. There is a lot left to be done and unsure if anything got accomplished in this phase but looking forward to the future.
- Learned from others.
- Identified things that can be address immediately.
- Making connections with the community. Would like more dialogue about noise and actionable improvements.
- Fostered respect towards one another and for the concerns of the community.
- Encouraged by the sensitivity to concerns of community.
- Learned there is an active noise abatement group but has yet to see improvement.
- The city and community would benefit from understanding how we got to this point.
- Good to hear both sides of the conversation.





- The pilot community should spend more time getting to know the community and listening to concerns.
- We have identified a separate path for near-term and long-term actions, but there is still a lot left to be done.
- There has been some great dialogue but some misconceptions that have crept into the process.
- Has learned a lot from the pilots and the community.
- Has a deeper understanding of the perspective of the mobile home communities nearby.
- There has been an increased awareness about the airport and concerns.
- Desire to keep the group going and work with council.
- Developed interest in the overall condition of aviation on the front range.
- Desire to see more diversity of voices involved in the community.

## Meeting Wrap Up

- Next Steps for staff:
  - FAA discussions and clarification
  - High-Level Feasibility of Scenarios
  - Technical work on the Near-Term Action Items
  - Formation of Community + Airport Noise Group
  - Final City Council meeting in early 2024 to provide staff direction
- The airport masterplan update is anticipated to begin in 2025.
- The final city council study session will be in early 2024.
- The project team thanked the CWG for participating. These conversations would have been unimaginable a year ago, but the group made momentum in the process by having tough conversations.
- This meeting is the conclusion of the CWG.



**Appendices**

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**Appendix A. Presentation Slides**



**Appendix B. Questionnaire 2 Feedback Summary**



**Appendix C. Bilingual Meeting Summaries**