

# CU South Annexation

## Dec 2020 – Mar 2021 Engagement Summary Report

### Executive Summary

The purpose of this CU South annexation engagement window was to provide updated information to the community on proposed terms of annexation and to solicit feedback to inform on-going negotiations, continued community engagement and the decision-making process. While city staff and CU representatives continue to translate the CU South Guiding Principles into proposed annexation terms, the SBC process subcommittee requested that staff focus engagement efforts on topics of greatest concern, which include transportation, continued public recreational access and the built environment. Council representatives also encouraged staff to provide opportunities for community members to provide open-ended feedback.

Subsequent engagement included one online questionnaire and multiple virtual community meetings to provide information, answer questions and collect feedback. Written materials were also provided to over 6,500 addresses and provided through social media and online city-wide.

Highlights from the feedback received from this engagement are consistent with previous feedback received and include:

1. **Opposition to any form of annexation and support for maintaining public access and the existing natural character of the area.**
2. **Inclusion of the following elements if annexation is approved:**
  - Flood mitigation without delay
  - Preservation of wetlands, key wildlife habitat and natural areas
  - Developed areas that include:
    - Building height and placement to minimize impacts on views and impacts to adjacent neighbors;
    - Public access for recreation (running, walking, skiing, etc.) for people and off-leash dogs with minimal regulation;
    - A “pleasantly lively” space without too much light or sound;
    - Local amenities for area residents, such as coffee shops;
    - Affordable housing outside of flood-prone areas that compliments existing residential areas;
    - Safe routes to school in surrounding neighborhoods; and,
    - Transportation mitigation that focuses on innovative, clean mobility.
  - Developed areas that **do not** include:
    - Cost to Boulder tax/rate payers;
    - Stadium or other noise and lighting that negatively impacts wildlife or surrounding neighborhoods; and,
    - Increased traffic problems, which are a major concern and little to no tolerance for increased vehicle traffic in the area exists. Traffic mitigation strategies must consider access points and mitigate impacts on nearby neighborhoods and major streets.

**3. Consideration of overall tradeoffs is important, costs should be fully examined, and annexation must provide a net benefit.**

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FEEDBACK OVERVIEW

The following summary information provides an overview of engagement efforts and feedback received. The full Report of Results from the Be Heard Boulder [Questionnaire](#), notes from community meetings and other meeting materials can be found on the [project website](#).

Completed Outreach Dec 2020 – Mar 2021

<b>BE HEARD BOULDER QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	Jan 11 -	~1,500 visits
<i>Questions related to annexation terms and open-ended comment opportunities</i>	Mar 9	~525 comments
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY GROUP MEETINGS</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ATTENDEES</b>
<i>Brief presentation and extended Q&amp;A</i>		
Martin Acres Neighborhood Association (MANA)	2-Dec	58
Frasier Meadows & South Boulder Creek Action Group (SBCAG)	3-Feb	40
Save South Boulder/Southeast Boulder Neighborhood Association (SEBNA)	4-Feb	25
South Creek 7	1-Mar	20
Hy Vue Neighborhood	TBD	
<b>COMMUNITY BRIEFING</b>		
<i>Presentation and Q&amp;A with city staff and CU representatives; Recorded and online</i>	11-Dec	47
<b>OFFICE HOURS</b>		
<i>Small group Q&amp;A with city staff and CU representatives 4 sessions</i>	2-Dec - 15- Dec	25
<b>INFORMATIONAL POSTCARD</b>		
<i>Announcing engagement opportunities</i>	21-Dec	6,591
3,527 property owners, 479 businesses, & 2,585 renters		

Outreach channels include Twitter, Press Release, e-newsletters, direct email with Boulder Housing Partners, Facebook, NextDoor and related project email lists.

Additional Planned Outreach

The current engagement window is ongoing and will proceed with listening sessions and community briefings to provide new information and additional opportunities for feedback on proposed annexation terms. Additional opportunities for community engagement are planned and include:

- Community Briefings on new information or status of the annexation
- Listening Sessions
- Online Feedback on draft annexation agreement
- Advisory Board Feedback and public hearings at decision-making meetings

## Neighborhood and Group Meetings

Staff members met with more than five neighborhood and community groups to share information, answer questions and listen to feedback (see list above). The questions and comments mirror the themes that arose from the survey and included a wide range of topics including transportation impacts to key intersections and neighborhood streets, open space and environmental protection, flood mitigation and related earth fill, and costs. Although there is general support for some form of flood mitigation, a community desire to decouple flood mitigation from annexation still exists as do questions about condemnation versus annexation. The community is concerned about sufficient safeguards to enforce the annexation agreement and any terms should CU sell the property and concerns about the lack of a detailed site plan persist. Links to materials and notes from meetings can be found on the project website under [“Past Meetings / Meeting Summaries”](#)

## Be Heard Boulder Questionnaire Feedback Overview

The purpose of the Be Heard Boulder Questionnaire was to solicit detailed input on proposed annexation terms and major areas of concern, as well as provide open-ended comment opportunities. The following key themes and take-aways are summarized here, whereas the [Full Report of Responses](#) contains all the verbatim responses.

It should be noted that there was sharp criticism of the questionnaire, and some described it as a “push poll”. This dissatisfaction surrounded wanting to express preferences about whether the annexation should happen at all, whether the entire parcel should be preserved for open space and recreation or if there could be a different solution for land for CU in another part of the city. While the questions were intended to provide an accurate picture of the status of negotiations and get feedback informing key priorities to be included in an annexation agreement, feedback about opposition to the annexation came through clearly from many respondents.

The questionnaire was organized around the following topic areas, which are followed by a more detailed report of feedback received each.

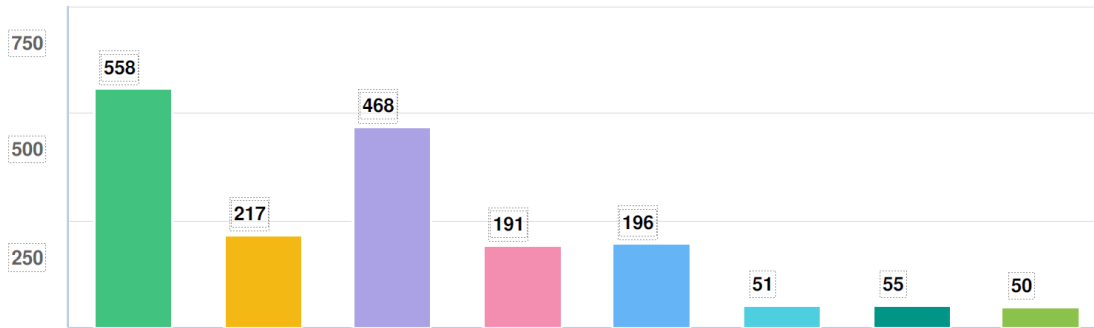
- A. Interest in the area
- B. Community Benefits
- C. Development Limitations and Requirements
- D. Priorities for Benefits and Limitations
- E. Proposed Allowed, Prohibited Uses, Limited Impact Area
- F. Public Access and Recreation Amenities
- G. Level of Support or Opposition

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### **A. Interest in the Area**

People were asked about their interest in the area with a majority of respondents indicating they live nearby, recreate at CU South, or live in flood-impacted area downstream of CU South.

**Q1 Please tell us about your interest in the area (check all that apply)**



**Question options**

- I live nearby
- I live in the potentially flood-impacted area east of CU South
- I visit CU South for recreation
- I am an interested city resident but don't live nearby
- I am affiliated with CU - student, faculty, or staff
- I am not a city resident but am interested in the CU South annexation
- I work near CU South
- Other (please specify)

Optional question (942 response(s), 13 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

“Other” interest indicated:

- Concerned resident about flooding, process
- Own rental properties nearby
- Work near CU South
- Upstream neighborhood / Marshall
- Live nearby but outside the city limits
- Environmental concerns about the area

## B. Community Benefits

The questionnaire asked about proposed community benefits and whether and how much they provide benefit to the community. The responses provide a sense of priority among the different categories of potential benefit. Of the community benefits listed, respondents prioritized them as follows (*highest number of people indicating strongly or somewhat agree they provide a benefit to the community*):

1. Public access;
2. Land for flood mitigation and open space;
3. Recreation Facilities;
4. Land for Public Safety Facility; and,
5. Housing as the predominate use.

Maintaining **public access** for recreation is clearly very important for many respondents. Many people value the natural setting and ability to walk dogs off-leash.

**Trade-offs** around community benefits are very important and for many; they would like to see more details and a full picture of the balance of potential benefits and impacts. Many mention concerns about **costs** the city and the need for that information to inform the full picture.

Many respondents indicate they **don't want the annexation** to happen at all and don't see any of these (beyond land for open space and flood mitigation) as benefiting the community and describe **environmental preservation** as the highest community benefit. Many describe land for **flood mitigation** as the paramount benefit.

Comments about **housing as the predominant use** reflect many people's preference that the area is not developed. Some comments indicate a preference for academic uses over housing or that the housing would be far from the main and east campus areas but most of the objection about housing seems to be directed at development in general. Some emphasize housing for faculty, staff, and married or family housing as the priority.

Comments about the land for **public safety facility** were mainly concerns about potential loss of Station 4 on Darley.

### C. Development Limitations and Development

Responses to this development question provided a sense of priority among different development limitations and requirements as follows (*highest number of people indicating strongly or somewhat agree they are important*):

1. Transportation System / network improvements;
2. Building height limitations;
3. Flood plain limitation; and,
4. Review of plans.

#### *Transportation Impacts / Traffic Study*

Many expressed concerns about **additional traffic, especially on Table Mesa, Moorhead, the intersection with Table Mesa and Broadway and smaller streets through neighborhoods**. Concerns about the number and type of access points There were several suggestions for improvements for bikes and peds on Table Mesa and a safe crossings and connections with existing paths.

Many suggested an **innovative transportation system for CU South**, emphasizing few or no cars, more bikes and transit. Others expressed **concerns about traffic study**, use of traffic data during pandemic, consideration of appropriate future uses.

#### *Building Height Limits*

Many respondents indicate that the proposed **55-foot height limit is too high** or that two- or three-stories would be preferred in this area. Others suggest preferences for allowing higher buildings 7-8 stories to achieve more housing and less building footprint. Other comments suggest including setback requirements (no canyon of buildings) and to ensure buildings **don't block views of mountains**.

#### *No Buildings in Flood Plain*

Many comments **support not building in the 100- or 500-year flood plain** even though this is allowed with conditions under the city building code. Some suggest being **more conservative** due to uncertainty of climate change. People expressed concern about **risk** to future residents and exacerbating current risk or impacts to neighboring areas. Many expressed concerns about raising the area with fill, high groundwater.

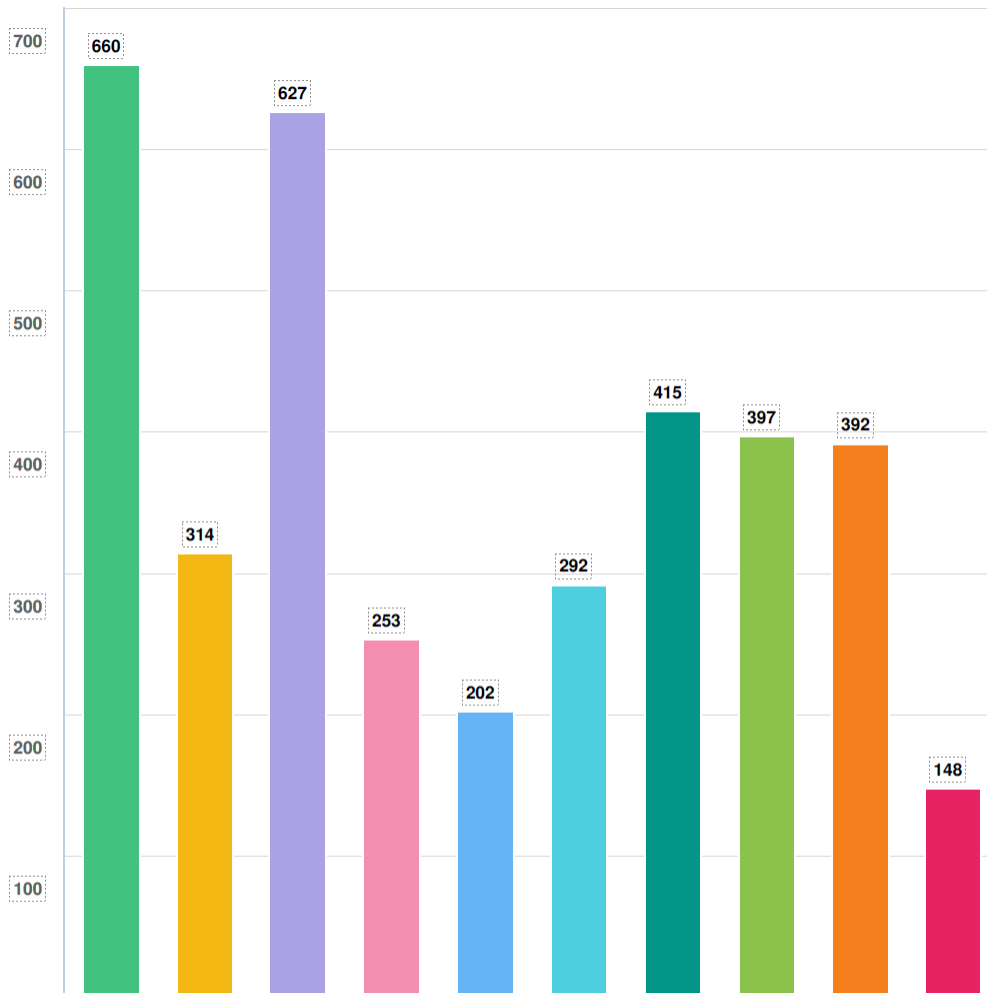
Some think it would be **ok to build in 100- and 500-year** flood plain areas like other development in the city, especially if that would allow development to be further from riparian areas or with innovative design.

#### *City Review of Plans*

Many responded that city review of development plans is essential. Many commented that a **site plan should be required with annexation** and there should be an enforceable site review process. Other expressed less priority for this requirement and recommend not slowing the process with additional review.

#### **D. Priorities for Benefits and Limitations**

The questionnaire included a question asking, “of all the benefits and requirements, which are most important to you?”



**Question options**

- Other (please specify)
- An all-mode transportation program
- Limitation on buildings in the 100-year and 500-year floodplain areas
- Limitations on building heights
- Review of University plans
- Land donation for public safety facility
- Recreation facilities
- Public access to amenities (e.g. walking and biking trails)
- Housing as the predominant use
- Land donation for Flood Mitigation and Open Space

**Responses to “other” priorities:**

- Architectural character
- Full public access
- Limit Building heights
- Limit impacts from noise, light
- Limit impacts to infrastructure (water, roads)
- Limit parking / ensure there is enough parking
- Limit young students
- Low or no costs to the city
- Maximize housing potential
- Mitigate traffic impacts
- No annexation, nothing on the site but flood mitigation
- Open Space, environmental preservation, habitat protection
- Paths that are natural
- Process pace (both speedy and slow process noted)
- Specific CU development plan

- Leave the Darley Fire Station

#### E. Allowed and Prohibited Uses, Limited Impact Area

##### *Allowed Uses*

The questionnaire included a list of proposed allowed uses in the area designated “Public” including:

- Residential uses;
- Accessory uses (for the benefit or convenience of residents (e.g. coffee shop, convenience store);
- Daycare center;
- Research and academic teaching facilities;
- Small sport venues (courts, fields); and,
- Community Gardens.

Many comments indicate that the proposed uses are appropriate and **support for residential uses over classrooms or research facilities**. Support for **accessory uses** to reduce trips, ensure area is a complete neighborhood and walkable is high. There is some concern that additional retail might compete with existing businesses in S. Boulder.

There is support for **daycare and community gardens**. People’s interest in **sports venues** varied, some think this would be a good location for venues and/or fields and courts while others expressed concern about size and impacts.

Many expressed concern about **development near the flood zone** and there were suggestions for **buffering of all uses** to nearby homes. Many comments expressed **opposition to any development**, any uses except flood mitigation, natural areas, public access to open space.

The questionnaire included a list of proposed prohibited uses in the area designated “Public” including:

- Large-scale sports venues (e.g. stadium, coliseum);
- Large research complexes like the East Campus;
- Housing intended for first-year students; and
- Roadway by-pass between Highway 93 and Highway 36.

Many comments indicate that the proposed list **seems reasonable**. There was a lot of agreement about prohibiting or limiting large-scale uses, academic facilities (especially time-sensitive like classrooms); sports or entertainment venues with amplified sound to reduce traffic or light impacts.

Other uses mentioned for prohibition include:

- Large parking facilities;
- Bars, clubs, nightlife;
- Power generation other than solar;
- Warehousing, distribution, administrative offices, maintenance garages;
- Large retail;
- Conference or hotel venues;



- Fences that block wildlife; and,
- Research facilities that might have toxic or hazardous substances.

Many comments expressed views that **all development should be prohibited**, residential uses should be prohibited and the area only used for flood mitigation.

There were several comments indicating support for a **road connection between Foothills and Hwy 93**.

#### *Limited Impact Area*

The questionnaire described more restricted uses in the area abutting a nearby established neighborhood.

Feedback about preferred uses in this area indicate strong preference for **restricting the height** of new buildings at a scale in line with adjacent homes, however some suggested allowing more density and height to be able to truly achieve a critical mass of affordable housing. **Housing for faculty, staff and graduate students** in these areas is generally preferred.

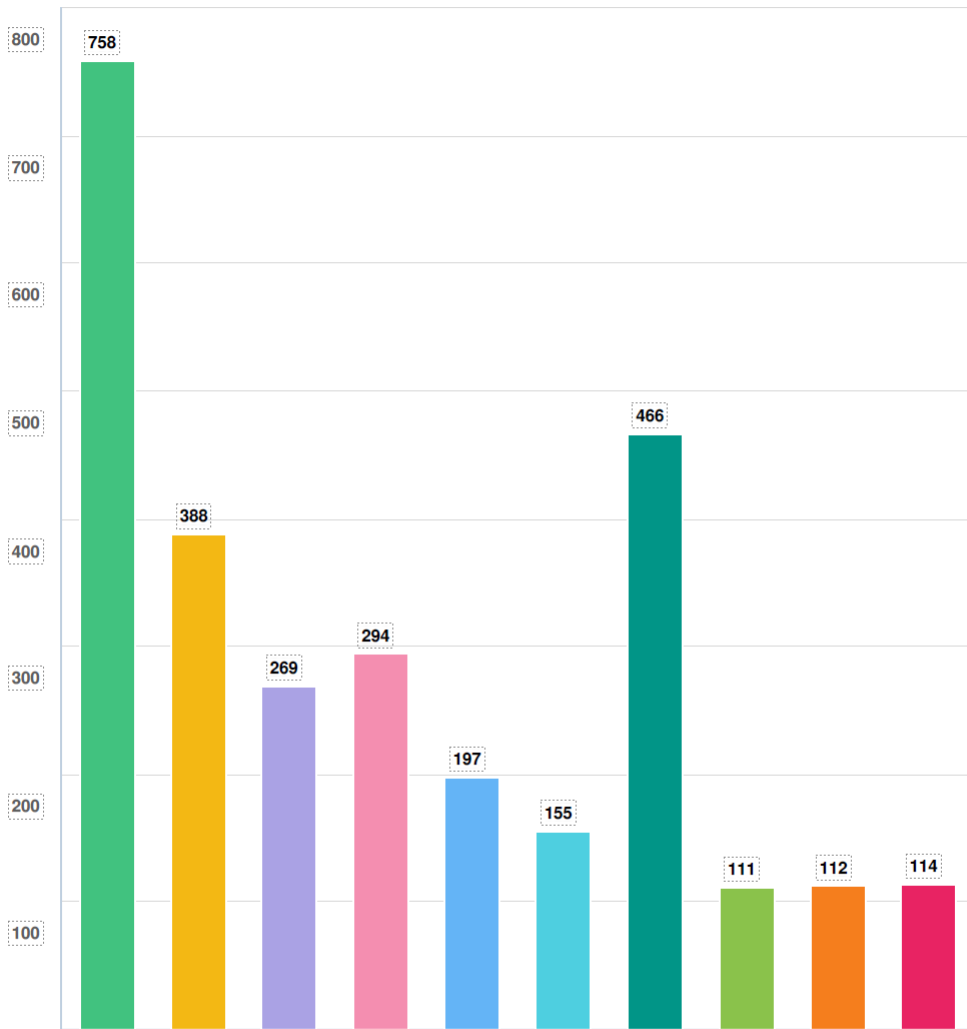
Many comments suggest locating **accessory uses** near existing neighborhoods to encourage community-building and to be able to serve the nearby neighborhoods.

Some indicated support for **recreation amenities** to be located near neighbors for shared use (paths, fields, gardens, fitness), but not lighted fields for competition. There were many concerns expressed about **impacts** from light, shadows, and noise, and the need for a buffer. These comments focused less on uses and more on design and how the uses are planned.

While the questionnaire mentioned the Hy View subdivision, many comments recommend **expanding limited impact** to the area near Tantra Park and South Creek 7 subdivision.

#### **F. Public Access and Recreation Amenities**

**Q18 Public Access and Recreation Amenities** The university has proposed that public access for recreation be provided. Knowing this, what amenities would you most like to see on the stie in the future? Check those that apply.



**Question options**

- Other (please specify)
- Parcourse fitness trail
- Frisbee golf course
- Bike paths
- Running track
- Recreation fields
- Off-leash walking area
- Dog park
- Accessible paths (i.e. limited incline/decline for walking)
- Trails for walking, running and cross-country skiing

Optional question (868 response(s), 87 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

“Other” desired public access or recreation amenities suggested:

- Arboretum
- Baseball facility
- Bike park
- Bouldering walls / features for no-ropes climbing
- Courts, public for pickleball, handball, tennis, futsal
- Dogs off-leash / on-leash
- Fields for ultimate frisbee / kickball / rugby
- Gardens and beautiful landscaping, community gardens, areas with benches and shade trees
- Natural areas / Bird and wildlife habitat (no pets allowed)

- Nature interpretation / outdoor class space
- No development / Open Space
- Parking – plenty / not too much
- Paths – paved and unpaved
- Permeable surfaces
- Pool or swim facility
- Public art
- Public bathrooms
- Roller-skating Rink or Facility
- Skatepark
- Sensory trail
- Slackline park or structure
- Sports venues for CU (track/field, lacrosse, tennis)
- Trails for Nordic skiing

## G. Level of Support or Opposition

The questionnaire asked an open-ended question about people’s level of support or opposition, what elements are people excited or concerned about? What would increase their level of support? As responses to this question were open-ended, quantitative data is not available. Key themes from the responses are consistent with previous feedback received and indicate a lack of consensus about annexation and a persistence of the full range of support and opposition to annexation. The quotes provided below are samples of the many comments provided.

**Support** generally surrounds flood mitigation implementation and interest in possible future amenities.

*“This question has been open for too long. The city and CU need to move.”*

*“Protect us from floods!”*

*“Above all else the flood mitigation on the property is essential.”*

**Opposition** generally surrounds any future development and a firm belief that the City of Boulder should own this land to implement a larger flood mitigation project and preserve natural lands.

*“This whole project is bad for the community other than the flood mitigation proposal that does not require the city to fill in land.”*

*“I do not agree with the annexation of CU South. I think the environmental destruction and the inconvenience of construction are enough along to stop this project.”*

**Other** responses indicate benefits the university brings to the community and the need for housing.

*“I think it is reasonable for CU to want to develop this property. CU needs to provide more housing for students, faculty, and staff but I would like to see some continued public access, specifically for off-leash dog use.”*

*“First choice, no development and continued public access as open space. Next, would be with lots of public access and public recreation facilities.”*

*“I’m very excited about the prospect of continued public use of the area while also developing housing to alleviate the cost pressures many students AND faculty face when attending/working at CU.”*

## What Would Increase Support

**Address Traffic Concerns:** Many are concerned about future traffic impacts and recommend a robust transportation program. Impacts to neighborhood streets in Tantra Park and Martin Acres are of particular concern, especially around schools.

*“The car traffic in Boulder is already very bad. I would like to see CU implement a transportation system that greatly discourages the use of cars. If this is not possible, this is one of my main concerns with using the CU south campus for housing if any kind.”*

## Assurances of Open Space Preservation and Public Access:

Many want assurances that environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitat are protected. Continued public access for trails and dog walking is a primary concern and very highly supported. Differing opinions on dog walking were offered. Many value the off-leash opportunity and others would prefer leash law enforcement due to off-leash dogs approaching them/children/leashed dogs and waste management.

*“I am concerned about losing the dirt paths currently used for all manner of activity. Especially I am concerned about having the off-leash dog area replaced by a dog park. I realize that some trails will be lost due to development, I just hope several miles of exiting trails can be maintained and/or new trails can be added. This area is highly valued by South Boulder residents.”*

**Certainty Around Development Plans:** Many expressed needing more detailed development plans, assurances for enforceability of the annexation agreement and compliance with city regulations.

*“I oppose the annexation without more detailed planning from CU, including building plans and transportation planning.”*

**Net Benefit to the Community:** It is important for many to demonstrate that cost impacts have been fully evaluated and there is a net benefit to the community.

*“The city should look at whether, in balance, there is a net “community benefit.” Each of the above questions looks at individual benefits in isolation.”*