

East Boulder Subcommunity Plan

Summary of Engagement Window Events

Trade-offs & Opportunities

Jan. 2021 - Feb. 2021

The purpose of this East Boulder Engagement Plan engagement window was to get feedback on test concepts for land use changes to answer the question “Who Do We Want to Be?”

The project’s staff team and Working Group hosted multiple venues for discussion and feedback and collected input from community members across the city and targeted specific audiences for participation, including residents of the San Lazaro Mobile Home Park, East Boulder workforce and commuters, East Boulder business owners and residents living in neighborhoods surrounding the East Boulder subcommunity.

Engagement for this phase of the project included three major products:

1. Scenario modelling of each alternative future concept to provide measurable indicators that describe the potential impacts of proposed land use changes
2. Video presentations to describe the East Boulder context, the purpose of subcommunity planning and the choices for changes that are image-rich and easy to understand in English and Spanish
3. A community questionnaire offered in English and Spanish that asked participants to make choices between significant trade-offs resulting from potential changes to land use in East Boulder.

Completed Engagement Events and Links to Summary Reports

- **Community Event (Online)**– This event was designed to maximize time for participants to discuss trade-offs and opportunities with other community members in break-out rooms. Discussions were facilitated by East Boulder Working Group members. Participants shared feedback on what they liked and disliked about land use concepts, trade-offs and flexibility around building heights to achieve key goals. *Details: Monday, Feb. 1, 2021 with over 100 registrations, 80 attendees.* [Event Summary](#).
- **East Boulder Policy Roundtable Discussion (Online)**– This event was hosted by the Boulder Chamber and included representatives from many of the key businesses and industries that are located in East Boulder, as well as other Chamber members and interested community members. Participants shared feedback about opportunities and constraints in the proposed concepts and offered critical feedback about potential land use changes. *Details: Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021 with 70 attendees.* [Event Summary](#).

- **Spanish Event** (Online)– This event was delivered in Spanish and included a project overview presentation, Q&A, and break-out rooms for discussion. Participants shared feedback about key concerns, especially for residents who live in the East Boulder Subcommunity at San Lazaro Mobile Home Park, hopes and needs for the future of the area. *Details: Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021 with 20 attendees.* [Event Summary.](#)
- **Community-wide Questionnaire** - This community questionnaire was hosted on BeHeardBoulder.org for five weeks and paper copies were delivered and collected through Community Connectors. The questionnaire was available in both English and Spanish. The questionnaire responses provide quantitative and qualitative data about community choices impacting decisions about change in land use. The questionnaire included descriptions of proposed land use concepts, including a “no change” option, and analysis of the differences between choices for key indicators like number of homes that could be generated, types of jobs, and land use mix by area. Participants were also asked to prioritize outcomes based on tradeoffs and about priorities for the 55th & Arapahoe Station Area. Many participants also offered critical feedback and comments through open-ended questions included in the questionnaire. *Details: Jan.-Feb. 2021 with 329 total respondents, 30 responses in Spanish, 55% nearby neighbors, 14% East Boulder Subcommunity employees and business owners.* [Event Summary.](#)

What We Heard

Between the quantitative data included in the questionnaire and the hundreds of comments staff received during events and through BeHeardBoulder.org, participants in the East Boulder Winter Engagement session provided thoughtful and productive feedback that will move the East Boulder Working Group, city staff and decision makers toward a preferred land use alternative. Below is a summary of the key themes that have received consistent support or discussion from this phase of engagement. These are aligned with the six focus areas of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) and the East Boulder Subcommunity Plan (EBSP).



Housing Affordability & Diversity

- Most people support developing some new housing in East Boulder – especially new affordable and attainable housing aimed at supporting the workforce in the area.
- There is a desire to see new housing integrated with a mix of other uses. There is little interest in creating new residential-only neighborhoods.
- There is community support for improving the quality of life for San Lazaro Mobile Home residents, protecting the mobile home park as an affordable housing option and providing residents access to city services and programs. A recommendation for annexation of San Lazaro would be an outcome of this plan that could support these community interests.

- **There is** general community interest in locating new housing near green spaces, city park space, and Open Space.



Small Local Business

- It is important to preserve and prioritize business space for a variety of business types and sizes in East Boulder.
- There is general support to develop new retail sites. Commonly requested retail types include grocery stores or markets and food and beverage.
- There is some interest in expanding medical uses in East Boulder.
- Comments and concerns focus on:
 - Being mindful of existing business' future plans and allow flexibility so businesses can evolve, grow, and stay in Boulder.
 - New housing could create conflict with some industrial uses (i.e. noise, truck traffic, security) so be strategic about locations to avoid conflicts.
 - Loss of business space, "gentrification" of East Boulder businesses and "losing" businesses to other near-by communities.
 - Loss of industrial and service industry jobs



Resilience & Climate Commitment

- There is support for and interest to:
 - Develop mixed-use neighborhoods as a method for reducing the environmental impacts of commuters traveling by single-occupant vehicles and reducing the number of trips generated throughout the workday into and out of East Boulder.
 - Ensure changes in and around flood plain don't increase flood risk. There is some community interest in reducing the risk of flood by changing uses in the flood plain.
 - Explore the benefits of creating a vision for new uses at the Valmont Power Plant site.



Design Quality & Placemaking

- Community feedback prioritizes preserving mountain views as a planning and design consideration.
- People would like to see new places for social gathering as well as passive recreation or green spaces.
- There is community interest in allowing taller buildings (up to 55') in certain locations of East Boulder if these allowances would produce beautiful architecture; if redevelopment can allow for

a more “open” ground plane; and if additional height would allow for more mixed-use buildings and neighborhoods.

- Comments and concerns focus on:
 - attention to aesthetic cohesiveness and architectural detail in the built environment.
 - concern that planning could result in regulation further limiting redevelopment, instead of incentivizing change.
- There is a lot of support for the 55th and Arapahoe area as an area of focus for redevelopment.



Access & Mobility

- There is general support for increasing and improving connections, transportation facilities and mobility options throughout the subcommunity. People recognize improvements are needed.
- People would love it to be easier, safer and more attractive to get around without driving. Some people would like to see reduced surface parking and others would like to ensure people (and trucks for businesses) can still easily get around and park.
- There is strong interest in reducing the amount of commuter traffic and concern about increased traffic as a result of land use changes.
- People support mixed use neighborhoods as a way to reduce trips and promote 15-minute walkable destinations.



Arts & Culture

- There is community support for the development and/or preservation of space that can host/house art and performance in East Boulder.
- New gathering spaces and the addition of a community center or cultural destination would be a great focus for the future East Boulder.

Incorporating art and culture throughout the area is highly valued by community members as a way to ensure East Boulder builds community and feels like a neighborhood.

Key Feedback on Land Use Concepts

- Concept 3 had the most “love” – most positive ratings
- Concept 1 was deemed to have the “most potential”
- More people “hated” Concept 2
- People “aren’t digging” the No Change option – most negative ratings

Representative and / or pivotal comments

Likes:

"I love the addition of small shops, groceries, stores in the area. The idea of having a main street that connects to Valmont Bike Park is particularly appealing."

"I like the idea of integrating neighborhoods that provide housing, services, dining as well as office space. I would be very much against a major increase in housing density and would especially be opposed to high rises."

"Like: increased mixed-use residential. Like: dense transit-oriented development. Like: housing near jobs. Like: bus rapid transit and protected bike lanes to support regional transportation."

Dislikes:

"I don't like the intensity along Arapahoe. Would like fewer jobs, more housing in the Flatirons office park along 55th."

"As a business owner in the proposed open space area on Arapahoe, my concern that our current property value has decreased with this plan. Would the city buy us out and at what value? Where could we relocate at a price we can afford in Boulder or will we need to leave Boulder and take our business outside the area along with our employees?"

General:

"Mixed use brings in residential and small retail while preserving space for industrial uses."

"Balancing jobs and housing is always tricky; the east side of Boulder is already under strain from the level of commuting traffic coming from the east of the city. I would like a solution that addresses Boulder's housing problems without forcing jobs out of the city."