

CITY OF BOULDER
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA ITEM

MEETING DATE: September 30, 2020

AGENDA TITLE: Flatirons Golf Course Facility Design

PRESENTERS:

Ali Rhodes, Director

Jeff Haley, Planning, Design & Community Engagement Manager

Tina Briggs, Parks Planner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Flatirons Golf Course facility replacement project replaces core infrastructure destroyed in the 2013 flood and follows direction determined with City Council input in 2014. At that time, and with analysis of options for long-term viability of the city's only public golf course, staff proceeded with demolition of the Flatirons Events Center and began saving and planning for a smaller replacement facility to serve base needs. The current concept replaces the temporary restroom trailer and to-go snack shop with an energy-efficient building that includes accessible and gender-neutral restrooms, provides space for a family-friendly, neighborhood restaurant, and takes advantage of the setting and iconic Flatirons views with an outdoor event space.

The project was originally approved in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) last year for the current planning and design process to be ready for bidding and construction starting in late 2021. The construction is funded almost entirely from Permanent Parks and Recreation Funds (PPRF), which are dedicated to the acquisition or permanent improvement of parkland. As PRAB will recall, staff have gone through several rounds of budget prioritization and reductions to ensure that the top priorities for the community and the department's assets are addressed given this time of fiscal responsibility. Golf course operations are funded entirely by user fees and included in the quasi-enterprise Recreation Activity Fund (RAF). This investment will ensure that golf operations are not subsidized and can instead contribute funding for services that benefit the broader community. In the current state, the temporary facilities limit operations and the ability to support community-benefit programming, such as programs for youth, those with low-income, and community events.

Like the recent Scott Carpenter Pool redevelopment and the Boulder Reservoir Visitor Services Center, this project has been planned and prioritized within the department's capital program to ensure that the operations are not interrupted and the most cost-effective solution for replacing the core infrastructure is realized.

The project process through October of 2020 is concept planning only. If the concept plans are approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) and with City Council approval of the 2021 CIP, the proposed plan will move into the next phases outlined in the Design Standards Manual, which are: Design Development, Construction Documents, and Bidding and Construction with anticipated completion in 2022.

BACKGROUND:

The Flatirons Golf Course is the only public golf course in the city of Boulder and offers the opportunity for all community members to participate in the sport of golf as a more affordable option than traditional private golf clubs. Flatirons green fees do not require membership and are in the lower third when comparing pricing with other local golf courses, with senior and youth programming provided at a discount. This project also leverages the growth of golf in the pandemic and the role of municipal golf in providing a safe and family-friendly sport, developing new players of all ages, providing experiential learning opportunities and using the profitability to support non-golf related programs for community members systemwide.

The Flatirons Golf Course strives to be more than a traditional municipal course. With the new facility, BPR will expand access to non-traditional players while also providing traditional golf including senior, women's and youth leagues. This will be facilitated by the increase in profit anticipated with the project, which will allow for greater discounted access. For example, the department's extensive Financial Aid program does not currently include discounts at the golf course and increased operating revenue will fund the expansion of this program to the golf course, facilitating access for all at Flatirons.

In addition, the proposed facility will be a re-imagined community space replacing some of the functions provided by the previously demolished building. Community engagement for this project showed that current users are interested in and excited for community events to return to the facility, creating a more vibrant and inclusive atmosphere. The re-imagined design does not intend to duplicate the pre-2013 event uses but has focused on current needs and relied heavily on the early outreach for the East Boulder Subcommunity Plan. The golf course is adjacent to the actual borders of the plan but is representative of community needs in that part of Boulder.

Below are highlights of the proposed facility design that emphasize how multiple needs of the facility can be fulfilled while considering the greatest community benefit for the investment.

- **Primary Need** – Replace **core infrastructure** destroyed in the 2013 flood and as determined with City Council input in 2014. Temporary facilities, installed in 2015 and estimated to last 3-5 years, provide for a very minimum level of service, however, impact the long-term viability of the facility and limit options for community-benefit programming
 - Temporary mobile restroom trailer will be replaced with year-round indoor plumbing to a full-service restroom including family-friendly and gender-neutral options and more convenient ADA accessibility.

- Temporary salvaged corner of the previous event building currently functioning as a snack shop (serving golf course patrons only) will be replaced with a small indoor/outdoor food and beverage area designed to serve as a neighborhood and family-friendly restaurant.
- **Secondary Need – Maximize community benefit** through design that serves the community beyond golfers.
 - The new facility will include a kitchen sized appropriately to service continued takeaway items for golf course patrons, an indoor/outdoor restaurant, and the outdoor event lawn.
 - The lawn space to the west of the proposed facility will be designed to accommodate outdoor events, including space for the placement of larger event tents to extend the use into the shoulder seasons. This will allow the golf course to increase revenue, with the ability to host full golf tournaments onsite (not currently possible and local organizations host fundraising golf tournaments outside the city) while also serving as an outdoor event venue for the community. The department plans to host multiple free events for the community throughout the year in addition to allowing reservations for other community events.
 - The proposed indoor/outdoor food and beverage areas will feature partially open-air dining areas, extended shaded outdoor areas, and unshaded patio space connected to a game lawn (example: cornhole). The intention of the casual space is to provide a family-friendly experience that serves the local community in addition to golf course patrons.
 - The facility was designed to take advantage of natural features and minimize the investment. The facility was evaluated and set on the building site to take advantage of the iconic views of the flatirons and maximize passive and active solar energy. The existing parking lot was not heavily impacted by the 2013 flood and can continue to accommodate capacity for the proposed and future design plans, including community events. The area to the west of the facility requires only minor modifications to create the appropriate space for an event lawn, which would increase opportunities for a multitude of activities that could attract participants from all parts of Boulder. Air circulation in the building and extended outdoor areas was also maximized to take advantage of the quiet, beautiful, and already well-manicured surroundings.
- **Future Need** – And finally, with the expectation of facilities to have a life span of 50+ years, the design needs to consider **future needs and growth of the community** with flexible and scalable spaces.
 - The current financial situation shifted the project focus on infrastructure and core needs, however, a 50+ year facility lifespan requires some consideration of future needs for flexibility and expansion. The proposed design focuses on maximizing the use of the core infrastructure, while a future design developed alongside the core concept ensures that future expansion could be constructed at minimal cost,

if or when, the funding is available. The future design (not funded or in the budget request) includes indoor reservable community event space.

The facility is designed first and foremost as a golf facility but will also become a multi-functional space open to the community for dining, entertainment/games and small outdoor events.

The **Proposed Concept Plan** is roughly estimated within the existing construction budget of approximately \$6.95 million and will continue through design development and construction, if approved. The Proposed Concept Plan shows a new facility that includes restrooms, indoor/outdoor dining space, kitchen/prep areas, storage and other related functional areas. The golf services and cart storage remain in the existing building with some renovations. This plan also shows a multi-purpose lawn with the potential to place an event tent to host a full tournament (144 attendees) in addition to hosting other events that would attract the broader community to the facility. Click on the plans below to review the Proposed Concept Plan with a regular and enlarged view of the facility.



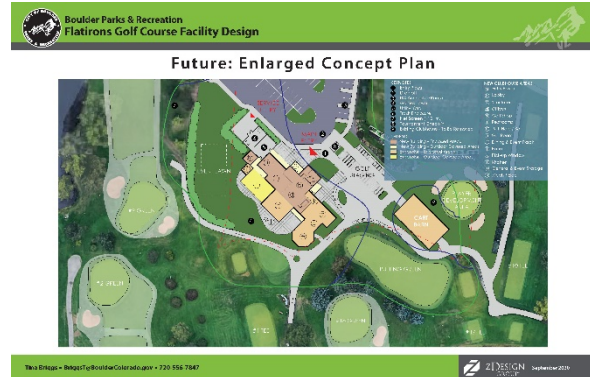
The existing golf services building, built in 1987, provides space for the pro shop, staff offices and some golf cart storage. Some minor improvements are required to ensure that it will continue to function properly in the near future. Examples of improvements that will be part of this project or planned in upcoming years in the CIP include:

- Repairing and updating exterior finishes for coordination with the new building
- Roof repair and/or replacement
- Window repair and/or replacement
- Repair and replace stairs/railings as needed
- Update and refresh interior finishes
- Repair mechanical/electrical systems



Figure 1: Current Golf Services Building behind the temporary restroom trailer.

The **Future Concept Plan** was developed to ensure that the new facility is primed for the least expensive scalable growth as funding or need arises. The Future Concept Plan shows an expansion of the new building to include golf services, offices, additional indoor/outdoor dining and small event/meeting space. The existing building currently used for golf services would be replaced by a cart barn that could accommodate a full fleet of golf carts. This plan would allow a full tournament or other small events/meetings to be held indoors and still accommodate other community activities on the lawn. The Future Concept Plan building footprint is smaller than the previously demolished event center. The parking lot will accommodate parking for intended use of the building and lawn without creating competing need between events and golf services. Click on the image on the right to review the Future Concept Plan.



The project process through October of 2020 is concept planning only. The current part of the process heavily relies on community and PRAB feedback. Future project process moves into technical development of the concept plan which commonly does not include additional community feedback. PRAB will receive regular updates throughout the overall project process.

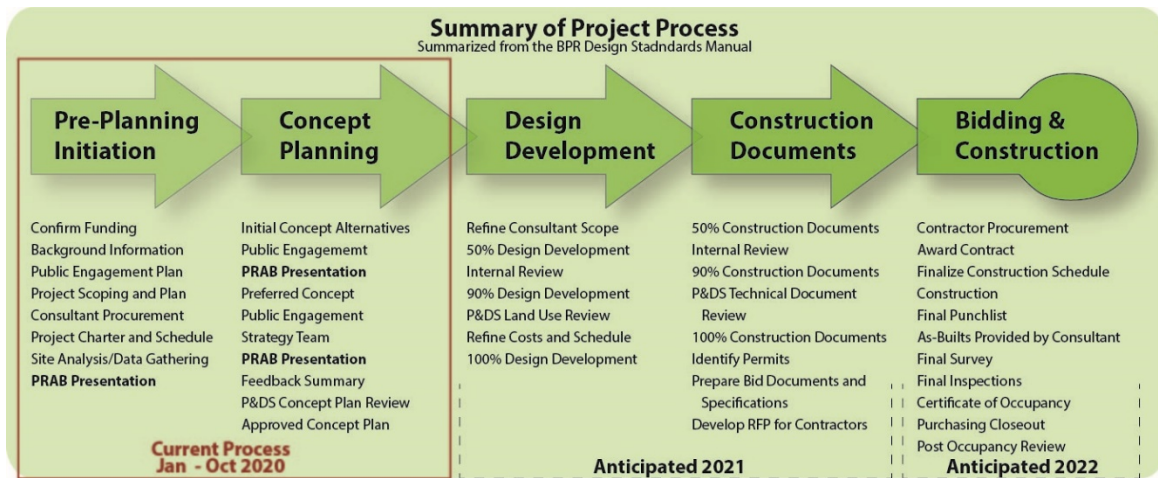


Figure 2: Summary of the Entire Project Process from Planning Through Construction, as defined in the Design Standards Manual

This project was identified, planned and funded prior to COVID-19. Nonetheless, the city and its consultants remained committed to community safety and followed social and physical distancing guidelines in gathering community input. Community engagement conducted per these guidelines, included virtual sharing, questionnaires, digital connection tools and limited in-person contact at the golf course. Several rounds of community engagement focused on reaching out to existing users and the general

community. Those efforts were combined with recent engagement and research from other related projects, such as the [East Boulder Subcommunity Plan](#). The golf course is adjacent to the actual borders of the subcommunity plan but is representative of community needs in that part of Boulder.

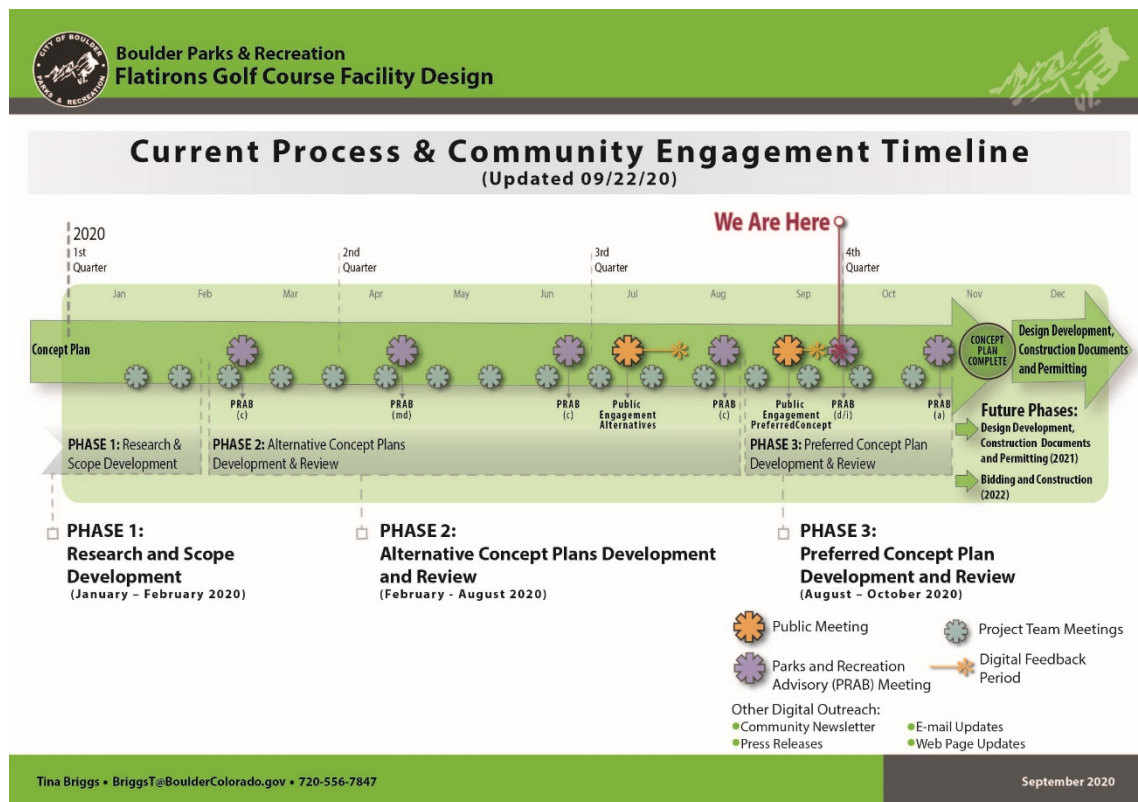


Figure 3: Detailed View of the Current Process (pre-planning initiation and concept planning) Including Community Engagement Timeline

Community Engagement was an important part of the design process. Two engagement periods were planned and executed to ensure the community and patrons were aware of the project and were provided opportunities to participate and influence the future. Engagement summaries and all comments for round 1 are available in 2 parts (a and b) on the [project web page](#). The feedback in part 1a referenced building style, atmosphere and other general user aspects. That feedback was used to refine the design and develop a more specific visual questionnaire for part 1b.

An example of key engagement outcomes that influenced the design:

- Careful screening of light and noise for golfers and neighbors
- Placement, access and number of restrooms
- Casual, welcoming and flexible spaces for a wide variety of community members
- Continued focus on golf as a primary function while being inviting to the community
- Taking advantage of the amazing views with consideration for shade
- Modern architectural style with lots of windows and some mountain inspiration
- Access, circulation and wayfinding improvements
- Conservative budget consideration

The engagement summary for the round 2 shows an overall interest and approval of the concept designs. Questions, comments and concerns were addressed and incorporated into the plan where feasible. The full list of comments are available on the project web page. The second round of comments did not result in any design changes to the concept plans.

Flatirons Golf Course Facility Design Engagement Summaries can be found here:

- [Summary of Public Engagement Summary 1a](#) (July 6 - 13)
- [Summary of Public Engagement Summary 1b](#) (July 22 - 31)
- [Summary of Public Engagement Summary 2](#) (Sept. 3 – 15)

Other engagement considerations included applicable areas of the [East Boulder Subcommunity Plan Focus Group Report](#) submitted in March of 2020. Six of the 10 general areas of consensus from the report were considered in the design of this project to support needs of the general community and as highlighted below:

Increasing the walkability of and multi-modal transit options within East Boulder

There was near-universal agreement among the Focus Group participants for increasing the walkability of and multi-modal transit options in East Boulder. Participants expressed the desire to access restaurants, breweries, parks, and community spaces without the need to travel by car. Often, participants cited specific streets, intersections, or routes for improvement.

Providing options for a commuting workforce

Focus Group participants were enthusiastic around ideas that would provide options for a commuting workforce, including non-vehicular travel and public transit; options for local housing; and local amenities including lunch restaurants and daycare facilities.

Holistic approach to support equity, access, and affordability

Another common theme among Focus Groups was support for holistic, inclusive approaches to East Boulder that would ensure continued support and/or improvement around equity, access, and affordability. This discussion often included social elements, such as homelessness, gentrification, and housing affordability, but also touched on representation of diversity and culture, affordable community-oriented spaces, and senior and disabled-accessibility and housing.

Supporting small local businesses and nonprofits

Focus Group participants expressed pride in East Boulder's small, local businesses, and participants had many ideas to support, promote, and increase them. Many participants would like to see East Boulder continue to support mom-and-pop shops; quirky and unique storefronts; nonprofits and start-ups; and commercial spaces for service industries.

Protecting natural spaces and views

Most Focus Group participants want to see the natural spaces, trails, and Flat Iron views preserved and protected. Participants placed value in the accessibility of these natural spaces and views, including the value for mental and physical health, community gathering, and the environment.

Creating spaces for arts and culture

Many Focus Group participants identified arts and culture as a priority area for East Boulder. Participant ideas included the construction of a library, shared arts and business co-ops, art galleries, flexible community theaters, and public outdoor gathering spaces.

ANALYSIS:

The Flatirons Golf Course Facility Design extends beyond golfers to provide broader community benefit not currently available or feasible today. Several opportunities for community feedback were provided and used to improve the design with patron support and excitement to re-imagine a vibrant facility for everyone. The increased community benefit is outlined below.

Increased Community Benefit:

- Indoor/ Outdoor Food and Beverage Area managed by a community-oriented local partner
 - Walkable neighborhood dining experience that draws non-golfing guests
 - When asked “*What kinds of businesses would you want to see in East Boulder?*” in the East Boulder Inventory and Analysis Report, the most popular answer was overwhelmingly “Food/Restaurants” at 56%, suggesting a restaurant would be well-supported here
 - Casual, family-friendly atmosphere with outdoor patio space and outdoor games area to host simple, free active opportunities like cornhole.
 - Tourist destination that includes an accessible facility with incredible views of the iconic flatirons (no need for a rooftop)
- Outdoor Event Lawn
 - Reservable outdoor space for events such as tournaments, small weddings, and private parties.
 - Event/program operations can run simultaneously with golf activities while not detracting from event guests’ or golf patrons’ experiences.

The success of the above, along with increased visitation anticipated from addressing the site deficiencies, will contribute to greater profitability at the golf course. With operating revenues going into the quasi-enterprise Recreation Activity Fund, profits are available to subsidize community benefit programming such as: programs for youth, programs for those with low-income, and community events.

NEXT STEPS:

Based on feedback from PRAB and community members at the September PRAB meeting, staff and consultants will make necessary alterations to the concept plans. Staff and consultants will return in October to request PRAB’s approval for the Flatirons Golf Course Facility Design. If the concept plans are approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) and with City Council approval of the 2021 CIP, the proposed plan will move into the next phases outlined in the Design Standards Manual, which are: Design Development, Construction Documents, and Bidding and Construction with anticipated completion in 2022.

Attachments:

Previous Project Updates:

[PRAB – Consent Agenda, January 27, 2020](#)

[PRAB - Matters from the Department, April 27, 2020](#)

[PRAB – Consent Agenda, June 22, 2020](#)

[PRAB – Consent Agenda, August 24, 2020](#)