# Executive Summary:
# *Building Bridges Phase I*

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## Summary

This document summarizes Phase I of Building Bridges, a City of Boulder initiative with the goal of shifting the city's culture of public engagement. Building Bridges employs principles from design thinking and deliberation to bring together community members

in public forums to a) brainstorm norms to guide Boulder's public engagements efforts and b) wrestle with tensions and trade-offs associated with activating and transforming public participation practices.

## Background and Purpose

In Summer 2017, the Public Participation Working Group (PPWG) made their final recommendations to Boulder's City Council, which included "co-developing guidelines for civil and constructive conduct in meetings, dialogue, and decision-making processes." As part of efforts to change the culture of public engagement, City of Boulder staff conceived of Building Bridges as a design workshop with the goal of operationalizing the PPWG's recommendation. A large public event was held in November 2017 with 65 community members. Discussion centered on ways the city ought to change convening practices as well as the individual behavior changes necessary to improve the conditions for engagement. A second workshop was facilitated with the Youth Opportunities Advisory Board, who emphasized the need for inclusivity in public processes.

In early 2018, the city invited BoulderTalks (now the Center for Communication and Democratic Engagement, or the CDE) to collaborate for an iterative re-design of Building Bridges. Combining the principles of deliberation and design thinking, the workshop set out to build the public's capacity to innovate and reimagine Boulder's public participation processes and practices, and asked community members to collectively grapple with their role in changing Boulder's culture of public engagement. After reflecting on November 2017 outcomes, Building Bridges also moved away from co-creating a set of prospective guidelines to thinking more broadly about the norms (i.e., standards for action) that ought to underride Boulder's culture of public engagement.

As a condition of collaboration, the CDE shifted process framing away from "civility" to "civic conversation." Although calls for civility resonate with experiences of a deeply polarized political climate, "civility" can be used to silence people with less power. Shifting frames to "civic conversation" opened the conversation beyond behavior changed and convening and was reaffirmed by the community in early 2018 Building Bridges discussions.

## Objectives

Three primary objectives guided the process design and facilitation:
- Gather contributions on new norms for public participation and civic conversation (to a group of community members for synthesis and development)
- Enact the engagement we seek
- Grapple with our roles as community members in changing the culture of public engagement

## Process Design

The process as framed by the overarching question: ***What norms ought to guide public engagement in our community?***

Community members heard a brief presentation from organizers explaining the importance of and structure for the process. To expand conversation beyond more typical and formal modes of engagement, such as public comments at city council meetings, participants were introduced to "Boulder's Civic Communication Landscape," a graphic representation of the range of spaces where culture change is sought.
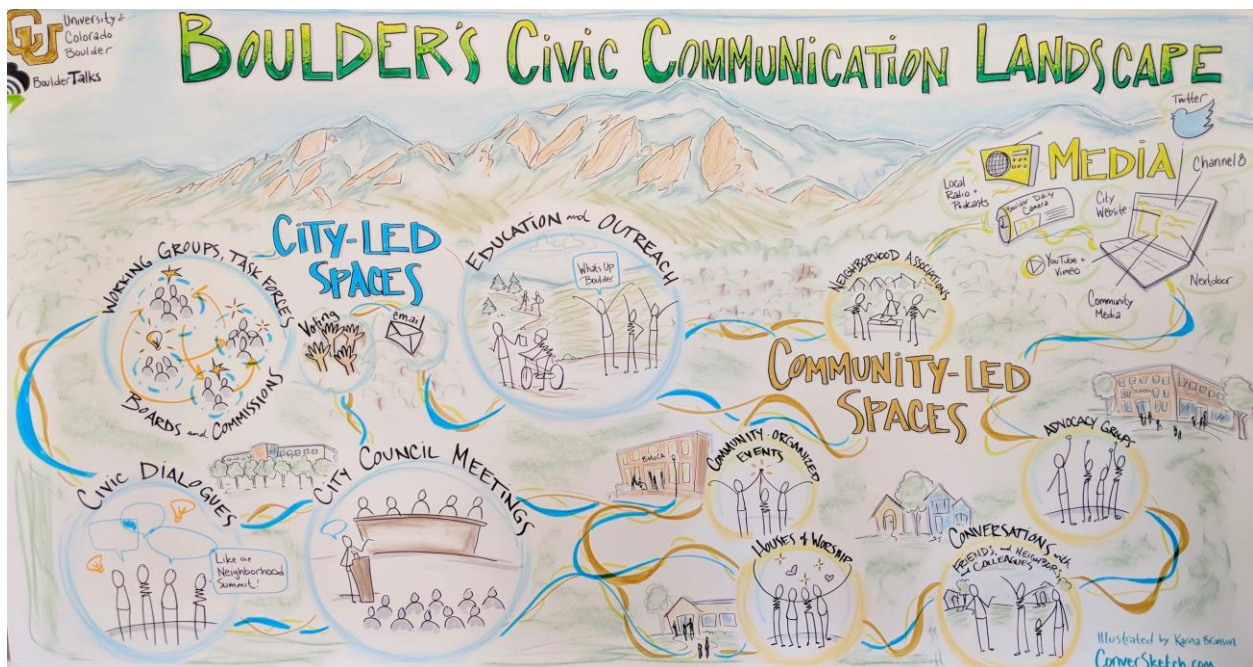


Facilitated discussions gave community participants an opportunity to brainstorm norms (i.e., standards for action) to guide Boulder's public engagement. After writing each norm on a Post-It note and sharing in small groups, participants were asked to thematize and prioritize candidate norms through a dot-voting exercise. Themes for categorization were developed from analysis of the community input offered during the November 2017 meetings. These themes included: convening norms, diversity and inclusion, listening, participant mindset, play, trust, and space for new ideas.

The next phase of the process allowed community members to deliberate to surface tensions and trade-offs, as well as underlying motivations and values associated with proposed norms. Earlier iterations of the process moved community members towards developing design prototypes for a norm, whereas later processes focused on developing a more robust sense of the tensions that would need to be managed and the trade-offs community members would be willing to make to improve public engagement.

Conversations were facilitated by 18 undergraduates, graduated students, and community members, who were trained by BoulderTalks (now the Center for

Communication and Democratic Engagement, or the CDE) in facilitation and note-taking practices. Co-Director Leah Sprain lead the process design collaboration, with Graduate Research Fellow Lydia Reinig supporting the design collaboration and providing data synthesis and reporting. Sheridan Gill, undergraduate intern, and Bill Shrum, graduate associate, provided additional support. City of Boulder staff provided logistics and outreach support. City of Boulder was consistently represented at events by Brenda Ritenour, Neighborhood Liaison, supported by Sarah Huntley, Ryan Hanschen, Aimee Kane, and Brady Delander on a rotating basis as needed.

## Participants and Events

Following process redesigns after two events in late 2017, seven Building Bridges events were held during Spring and Summer 2018.

*For raw data reports and more detailed synthesis of each meeting, please visit:*
**https://bouldercolorado.gov/engage/building-bridges**

*A detailed demographic breakdown is provided on page 15-16.*

*CU Diversity Summit, February 13, 2018:* Thirty-four participants attended this session and brainstormed 125 possible norms to guide public engagement. Given the broader themes of diversity, equity, and inclusion that framed the summit, conversation during this session highlighted the need for all voices to be heard and called for recognizing that disagreement is part of meaningful process. To build more inclusive and accessible public participation, participatory processes ought to "meet people where they are" with intentional outreach in the places that community members live, work, and play. Cultivating opportunities for all voices to be heard requires critical evaluation of how we listen to each other, and fostering authentic, honest conversations that make space for different opinions, experiences, and views. Whereas "respect" and "civility" are valued, these ideas can be used by those with more power and privilege to preclude others from speaking up and out. For this group, shifting the culture of public participation entails more than creating prescriptive rules.

*Boulder Public Library, February 15, 2018:* Twenty-one community members attended. For attendees, changing Boulder's culture of public engagement begins with recognizing that community members want to be heard and respected in public processes, and all opinions matter to decision-making. Designing public participation processes that empower community members to engage together and influence decision-making were at the heart of conversation, which focused on issues of trust, transparency, power, listening, and improving communication structures. Trust is eroded by a lack of transparency. A lack of clarity about how decisions are made and compounding frustrations from not being heard over time were at the root of concerns. Balancing power is difficult when community members perceive that their input has little influence on decisions made by the city (council) and/or that outcomes are predetermined. Attendees envisioned a culture of active listening, rather than one that responds to the loudest voices. Participants were keen to have better communication structures that

created engagement opportunities that were interactive, accessible, diverse, and focused.

*Boulder Housing Partners -- Resident Advisory Council, April 19, 2018:* An abbreviated Building Bridges meeting was held with five representatives from Boulder Housing Partners' Resident Council and two BHP staff members. The design process was amended to allow those present to share stories of navigating bureaucratic systems in an attempt to be heard. Conversation centered around three themes: (a) fostering proactive communication and active listening; (b) working within, around, and through bureaucratic constraints; and (c) recognizing barriers to access and inclusion. To foster better communication structures, participants characterized four key components: (a) active listening strategies, including asking questions and reflecting back what was said; (b) proactive, audience-aware message designs; (c) clear communications pathways to share concerns and next steps, and to receive feedback; and (d) genuine expressions of care and concern, particularly from people in power.  To address tensions around transparency, community members concluded that the public needs to understand and respect the limitations of the process, while authorities need to acknowledge they are aware of concerns and assure the community a process is being followed. Knowing a process is being followed and that officials are taking responsibility builds trust. Finally, they spoke to issues of access and stigma.  To challenge stereotypes, BPH residents found it necessary for low-income residents to share who they are and find common ground with others in the community. As residents of Boulder's low-income housing, they experience a constant fear of housing instability. This perpetual fear can make some people elect not to make waves in the community.

*First Congregational Church, April 20, 2018:* Sixteen community members, representing the interfaith community, gathered at First Congregational Church, where they brainstormed approximately 90 candidate norms to guide public participation. Discussion and deliberation focused on building capacity for dialogue across differences by creating spaces where community members can find common ground while respecting sometimes conflicting viewpoints. Participants envisioned a culture of public engagement where individuals were respected and worked together towards the greater collective good. Participants named a broad list of values and motivations for improving the culture of public engagement. This list builds from themes in earlier processes and includes: empowerment, listening, equity, inclusivity, questioning assumptions, engaging with a spirit of curiosity, practicing vulnerability, making space for emotional expression as valid engagement, and creating new opportunities for voices to be heard outside city council meetings.

*New Vista High School, April 23, 2018:* Seven community members attended this public-invitation Building Bridges session. Participants brainstormed approximately 50 possible norms. Discussion centered on improving the culture of public participation through: competent facilitation, setting clear process expectations, making space for diverse voices in a culturally-responsive manner, practicing active listening, creating environments the cultivate space for vulnerability and risk, being self-reflexive, and seeking the perspective of others before sharing your own. Participants wrestled with tensions and trade-offs around facts and opinions; logic and emotion; asking people to

assume good intentions; and the challenges associated with notions of "civility" setting forth boundaries for expression and behavior in civic space, and yet, these same norms being used to restrict expression from under-heard voices.

*Mylk House Salon, May 20, 2018:* Six community members gathered at Mylk House, a North Boulder salon. Meeting in this space allowed for intentional outreach with participants who represented more diverse identities and experiences in the Boulder community (e.g., race/ethnicity, age, North Boulder and Gunbarrel residents). The design of the event was reframed to focus on storytelling (i.e., participants were asked to share stories about frustration, exclusion, or personal indifference surrounding public engagement) and began by acknowledging that engagement systems are broken and are likely not working well for these participants. Participants' stories offered a vision of public participation in Boulder where people are inspired to create positive change in the community. Participants found great value in capacity building efforts (e.g., ongoing monthly conversations), mentorship, and incentivizing participation to support a new culture.  To enact this vision, the community must be willing to push back against recognized barriers to public participation. While many barriers exist, participants focused on power imbalances, poverty, the "brick wall" of politics (i.e., ideas being shut down by political officials), and the need to foster dialogue across difference (namely to talk about trade-offs).  They also considered personal accountability (i.e., their role in taking action towards positive change) and institutional accountability (i.e., decision-makers modeling accountability to those they represent, and mindfulness of the matrix of relationships that exist and possible conflicts of interest).

*City of Boulder Boards and Commissions, July 26, 2018:* Twenty participants attended the final Building Bridges design workshop. This design workshop was held with members of Boulder's boards and commissions, along with some members of the public. For a new iteration of the process, participants were presented with two sets of draft norms, which were derived from community brainstorms at all previous Building Bridges workshops. The first set of draft norms reflected ideals to guide Boulder's civic conversations broadly (i.e., listening, disagreement, personal accountability, curiosity, power, co-creation, and common ground for action). The second set provided guidelines specific to convening public participation processes (i.e., inclusivity, receptive and responsive, accessible, organized, and map issues to enable creative problem-solving). Participants had the opportunity to brainstorm additional dimensions and add clarification to existing descriptions. Deliberations centered on issues of power, inclusivity, and accessibility. As members of Boulder's boards and commissions, participants recognized their position in the hierarchy of municipal governance. And yet, they challenged the perception that boards and commissions have broad authority in decision-making (i.e., Boulder's Board and Commissions don't have legislative power, although a few boards do have quasi-judicial power to interpret ordinances and arbitrate claims). Members of boards and commissions find value in having formalized structures for public comment.  Having structures keeps comments efficient and ensures fairness towards all speakers. This contribution contrasted with what was heard at previous event, where there was more support for more informal communication structures.

## Draft Norms

In June 2018, CDE staff drafted two lists of candidate norms that had emerged during in-person Building Bridges meetings. Across meetings, participants shared reoccurring iterations of several norms guiding public participation:

***Norms to Guide Boulder's Public Engagement:***

- **Listening**. Attentive, active listening with empathy, open-mindedness, and respect. This can take the form of:
  - Listening before speaking
  - Listening without judgement to understand another's perspective
  - Echoing back key points
  - Asking questions for clarification
  - Creating moments to check for mutual understanding
  - Openness to explore underlying assumptions
- **Disagreement.** Engage in respectful disagreement; recognize that some discomfort is necessary.
- **Personal accountability**. Be accountable to your own perspectives and biases; own your intentions and the impact of what you say.
- **Curiosity**. Approach with a spirit of curiosity, risk, and innovation; focus on possibilities, be willing to try something new and compromise.
- **Power**. Acknowledge power imbalances and speak into power.
- **Co-creation**. Build relationships while building ideas, change statements to questions, provide equal opportunity to speak.
- **Common ground for action**. Identify commonalities, share goals/values as starting point. Orient to big-picture context.

***Norms to Guide City Convening of Public Participation:***

- **Inclusivity**: Be intentional to gather diverse voices. Presume intersectionality where everyone has multiple identities and interests. Ask who else needs to be in the conversation with an eye for: young people, social class differences (including renters vs. property owners), different ways of thinking (cognitive diversity), and a broad political spectrum.
- **Receptive & responsive**. Seek public input early in the decision-making process and prioritize community ideas. Provide feedback and follow-up; complete the feedback loop between community members and city officials when decisions are made.
- **Accessible**. The city reaches out to the community, rather than expecting the community to come to the city. Solicit feedback through multiple mediums and modalities.
- **Organized**. Be focused; have a purpose; provide timelines and tasks; speak specifically and succinctly. Effective and agile facilitation.
- **Map issues to enable creative problem-solving**. Share possibilities and constraints of potential solutions/outcomes. When limitations are known, share those constraints. Acknowledge every decision has trade-offs. Educate

community on why the city is acting, reacting, and/or proceeding in a specific way.

These candidate norms have been the springboard for Phase II work by community members.

**Tensions and Trade-offs**
When deliberating about candidate norms across Building Bridges public meetings, community members' conversations surfaced several tensions and trade-offs that seem inherent to public participation:

- **Talk and Action**: Some community members are frustrated that too much time is spent dialoguing and gathering input without ever moving towards action. Yet moving quickly towards action breeds distrust and the perception that decisions are already made, decision-making is top down, and opportunities for collaboration are missed. How can we better manage tensions between talk and action, so we avoid distrust and frustration?
- **Open-ended vs. Clear plans**: Some community members seek more opportunities for open-ended meetings where there is chance to explore a range of community issues and set the agenda for conversation. Other participants have called for clarity around the goals, purpose, and outcomes of any engagement process. Most likely, the meetings would appeal to one group and would alienate the other. An obvious, partial solution is to explore a range of engagement strategies. How else can the city manage desires for open-ended engagement and clear, concrete processes?
- **Managing Time: Fast vs. Slow**: Listening requires space and time for processing before responding, which is not often sufficiently available (or practiced). This suggests the need to build capacity for deep listening and dialogic interactions. And yet, whereas deep listening is an ideal to strive for, it's not always feasible when projects need to move forward. Moreover, time can be limited, particularly when so many people in Boulder want to be heard. How can we better manage the need for active listening with project timelines?
- **Respect vs. Disagreement**: Respect for others' experiences is necessary for engaging across difference. And yet, focusing on 'respect' can foreclose discussion by not digging into the heart of matter, thereby avoiding conflict and leaving real disagreement unexplored (e.g., "everyone is different"), which makes it easier to conclude problems are intractable (i.e., problems can't be solved due to differences). When respect avoids disagreement, participants often don't grapple with tensions and trade-offs of issues in constructive ways. How do we design processes that feel respectful, yet make space for necessary disagreement?
- **Echo chambers**. Most participants recognized the value of engaging with community members who look, think, and act differently than themselves. Yet they also acknowledged that it can be easier to engage with people who share similar opinions. Boulder's demographics can make it difficult to interact with people with opposing viewpoints. The current climate of organizing into interest groups that represents proponents and opponents can further exacerbate these tensions. How can we move beyond our own echo chambers?

- **Vulnerability and trust**. Building trusting, strong civic relationships is more complex than a set of sequential steps that can be universally applied--it requires accountability and humility. Robust participation requires a willingness sit with discomfort and to try out (or try on) ideas and consider their implications without fear of judgement. How do we allow people to be vulnerable while we are still building civic trust?
- **Beyond polarized positions** (i.e., proponents and opponents): Cultivating the capacity to sit with discomfort means shifting from thinking in terms of "either/or" (i.e., tendency towards polarized dichotomies) (e.g., either my position is supported, or it is denied) to thinking in terms of "both/and" (i.e., tendency towards fluid dialectics) (e.g., aspects of both proponents and opponents positions are represented in policy action). How do we go about cultivating this capacity?
- **Facts vs. Opinions**: Distinctions between facts and opinions are a source of tension. On one hand, distinctions are necessary for establishing the legitimacy of arguments. Misinformation and manipulation undermine our ability to make good community decisions. On the other hand, facts can be used by skillful people to build exclusionary knowledge hierarchies. This can crowd out other community members and dismiss community values, experience, and other ways of knowing. How can we manage tensions around facts and opinions to avoid potential problems?
- **Logic vs. Emotion**: When asked to discuss ideal civic conversation, some people want it to be grounded in logic and reason-giving. Yet emotions also matter for understanding the significance of issues as well as individuals' diverse experiences. How do we manage the expression of both?
- **Assuming good intentions**: Assuming good intentions is part of establishing collaborative relationships across different perspectives. And yet, assuming positive intentions is difficult when people hold opposing viewpoints that are quite personal. How should we proceed?
- **Transparency vs. Accountability**: Community members can be critical of the city for not being transparent in its decision-making processes. However, in some instances, full transparency is not possible. How do we cultivate a public recognition of the limitations of disclosure while also getting city officials to acknowledge they are aware of concerns and assure the community that a process is being followed (e.g., we can't share the details, but we are in a process)? How can city officials assure the public they are taking responsibility for public concerns?
- **Stakeholders vs. Publics**. Some processes try to focus on the needs and concerns of the most impacted individuals—what can be called a stakeholder approach. Yet this can mean that not all members of the public are treated equally. When is disproportionate influence warranted?
- **Underheard voices**. As the city tries to convene more inclusive conversations, disproportionate time and effort can be spent trying to reach under-represented groups with limited gains towards representing underheard voices. And yet, disproportional representation is a key issue for public participation. What needs to give to bring underheard voices to the table?

- **Representation fatigue**. As the city attempts to engage under-heard voices, they often turn to the same, established connections and contacts, asking these groups and/or individuals to speak on behalf of a larger community and their interests. How can city officials effectively reach out to under-heard communities without burdening them?
- **Orderly versus Informal:** Orderly, structured public engagement is necessary to uphold fairness and transparency in process, create mechanisms for accountability/transparency, and ensure deep listening. And yet, structures can formalize conversation in ways that preclude opportunities for co-construction, co- learning, and establishing common ground, as well as making participation more intimidating for the public. How might this tension be balanced?

# Be Heard Boulder Outreach Summary

In Spring 2018, BoulderTalks (now CDE) facilitated five discussion forums on the City of Boulder's Be Heard online engagement platform in order to hear from more voices on the key topics that emerged in face-to-face Building Bridges workshops.  Forum topics included: listening (n=127 postings, including affirming facilitation response[1]), trust (n=79 postings, including probing facilitation responses), and collaboration (n=22 postings, no facilitation). Two additional forum topics were drawn from key tensions participants named in the face-to-face workshops: talk and action (n=4 postings, with probing facilitation), and facts and opinions (n=11 responses, with affirming facilitation). The unofficial count was 94 participants across forums. Outreach was conducted on the CU Boulder campus to engage college students. To support dialogue and deliberation, affirming and probing facilitation style were used to foster continued interaction and conversation.

*Listening:* In response to the question, *"If we do a good job listening to each other, what would that look like?"* community members highlighted listening as active rather than passive, concluding that good listening necessitated reaching an understanding of the speaker, attentive body language, and question-asking. Overall, answers spoke to the importance of understanding what the other person was saying, whether through empathy or asking follow-up questions.

*Trust:* The question posed was: *"If community members, staff, council members, and board members trust each other, what would that look like?"* Responses were heavily tied to listening, with many participants saying they needed to feel heard. Participants offered that trust meant feeling safe to express opinions without fear of recourse, particularly when people were in disagreement. Forum participants noted that collaborators (e.g., members of the public and council members) who trust each other are more effective/successful in their pursuits. Effective communication played pivotal a role in building trust, as did trusting one another to do their jobs.

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[1] Because of a glitch in the system and BoulderTalks' use of multiple facilitators, eleven times a response from a facilitator was posted twice on one community comment, which skews the total number of postings higher.

*Collaboration:* The guiding question for the concept of collaboration was, *"If we do a good job of collaborating together to address community issues, what would that look like?"* Successful collaboration, then, includes either coming together to work towards a goal or reaching a goal as a group. The ways in which people should treat each other while collaborating incorporated themes from both the trust and listening forums. Respectful behavior towards one another and the ability to express dissenting opinions were both very prominent in responses. The responses to what good listening, collaboration, and trust looked like overlapped a great deal, underscoring participants' desires for respectful, active, engagement that hears and takes into account diverse voices.

*A more detailed report of Be Heard Boulder postings, including a summary of the few postings on the talk/action and fact/opinion forums, is available from the CDE.*

## Summary of Interviews with Underheard Voices

To gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of voices that typically go unheard or underheard in the city, the CDE interviewed Spanish-speakers (n=2, outreach to 8 members), residents of Boulder's manufactured home community (n=2), and commuters (those who work in Boulder, but do not live in the city) (n=8). Interviews set out to learn:
- What local issues are of concern to them? How have they been involved in these issues?
- What motivates them to participate? What causes them to lose interest?
- What barriers to participation exist for them?
- How they would like to engage with the city? What modes of participation would be easiest and more convenient to them?

Although interview samples were limited, we learned that finding innovative ways to engage under-heard voices on their own terms is necessary to make engagement inclusive, accessible, and relevant.

### *What did we learn?*
*Spanish-speakers*
The two interviewees identified a range of issues they cared about most (sustainability, food justice, affordable housing, primary and secondary education, multicultural development and the city's engagement with people who identify with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds). Each participant noted being involved in some way with the issues they cared about.

Both participants expressed that they have had difficulty participating. One participant felt talked down to by city officials and that the use of jargon in meetings made it difficult to understand. Language barriers were also identified.

Both participants identified a conversational structure as the preferable way to engage, expanding on that idea by saying that dialogue is preferable. Speaking in a "low pressure" small group was preferable to a large group. More creative modes of

engagement, such as drawing and visualization of ideas, also make participation more accessible. Having the city partner with someone who belongs to the Spanish-speaking community and who wants to listen could also make participation more accessible.

*Manufactured Home Community*
Primary issues of concern for the two representatives of the manufactured home community included: discrimination of their neighbors by mobile home park management, home ownership, and income inequality in Boulder. Their concerns led them to form an HOA, and to engage in public forums (e.g., speaking at City Council meetings, attending planning session, and emailing city officials). One participant noted that while participation was not a challenge for her, others in their community lack the time and resources to attend meetings, adequately research issues, and prepare to present/speak to public officials. Transportation can also be a barrier to engagement. One of the participants had had positive experiences interacting with City Council, whom they found supportive (i.e., enacting ordinances to protect mobile home park residents). In doing so, the city was acknowledging these residents as valued members of the community, making mobile home park residents feel heard and listened to in the process. She noted that it's better to have some voice than no voice. She also noted that while planning meetings are inclusive of the communication, they remained unsure of how community input shaped decision outcomes.

The second interviewee focused on the broader divisiveness and fear that characterize our political system, stressing that the public must be involved and politically informed. Civic engagement and grassroots activism are key to our upholding a democratic society. Community members must also be willing and capable of sitting down and have coffee with people who are different from them.

Both participants underscored the importance of focusing on neighborhoods and fostering practices of 'neighboring' (i.e., being a good neighbor by caring about those around you, building connections, and helping each other out).

*Commuters*
Even though just two of the participants identified as active in the community, all eight participants identified issues they cared about. The issues were far-ranging, including local issues related directly to their commuter status (i.e., land development, affordable housing, job opportunities, and transportation). Three interviewees offered that they had participated in the more traditional way of attending community meetings and town halls. Six of the eight people interviewed answered that the easiest way to participate would be through an online forum. Two offered the idea of a more interactive survey.

Participants' responses to barriers and level of interest in participating were interrelated. For example, one commuter expressed feeling a lack of connection to the community as a reason for losing interest and identified the commute itself was the biggest barrier. Three participants said that the fear or belief that their voices wouldn't be heard if they did participate made them lose interest. They responded that time and other obligations were their biggest barriers, suggesting that, when competing responsibilities and interests are present, participants are more reluctant to get involved

if they feel their voices won't be heard. One individual said they lost interest in getting involved because of a lack of information and two mentioned adequate information as the biggest barrier in participating, saying they didn't know how to get involved. Other barriers to participating were transportation, feeling like their age kept them from fully participating, and that many meetings were held during business hours while the person worked.

*A more detailed report of interview findings is available from the CDE.*

## Iterations and Learnings

In the spirit of design thinking, Building Bridges moved through several iterations. First, we moved from public events (i.e., CU Diversity Dialogues and Boulder Public Library in February, and New Vista High School in April) to targeted outreach (i.e., Boulder Housing Partners--low income residents; First Congregational Church--interfaith community group; Mylk House--racially diverse, Gunbarrel and North Boulder residents; Board and Commissions). Targeted outreach allowed the city to build partnerships through existing community networks and proactively seek broader representation.

Second, iteration of the process design allowed for incorporating insights from past processes into future discussions. For example, draft norms themes were amended between processes to account for new suggestions. Conversations were also framed differently for different groups. For example, at Boulder Housing Partners, we adapted in the moment when we recognized that sharing experiences and being heard by the city was what participants most sought from conversation. At Mylk House, instead of brainstorming specific norms, we started with storytelling, acknowledging that the process is broken and is likely not working for participants. Conversations at Mylk House and with Boulder's Boards and Commissions centered on a compiled list of draft norms developed from previous events, allowing for ongoing community reactions to the design team's synthesis. Discussions with Boards and Commissions focused on reacting to draft norms, wrestling with the perspectives of being both a community member and a city official, while digging into tensions.

Building Bridges provided opportunities to try innovative engagement strategies and learn from failures. For example, to be responsive to feedback, a public-invitation Building Bridges event was scheduled on a Saturday afternoon. Insufficient RSVP was received, leading to the cancelation of this event. Childcare was also offered at events, although it was rarely utilized. To engage with families, an event was scheduled at a school with language support available. The April date proved challenging for families, leading to the cancellation of this session. We learned that timing and relevance to potential community member matters. Processes ought to build from getting to know the community's rhythms and needs, rather than being planned around the city's needs.

To engage with the business community, a presentation was scheduled with the Chamber's Community Affairs Committee. Due to agenda competition, we were only able to give a brief presentation, and provide committee members a link to an online

survey.  We learned from this experience that the business community feels connected to the city organization in other ways.

Because interest groups play a noteworthy role in Boulder's public engagement culture, we wanted to bring this perspective to the conversation.  We tried to leverage personal connections (so the invitation was not initially coming from the city or university), however this created multiple layers and, ultimately, no interest groups followed up on the invitation.

## Moving Forward: Phase II

The culmination of Phase I design processes led to the formation of a small community group. Members of this group met monthly throughout Fall 2018 to synthesize community input from Phase I and co-create innovative strategies and designs to activate a new culture of public participation in Boulder.  Community members working on Phase II were part of Phase I workshops.  The outcomes of their efforts will be taken back to the broader community in 2019.

# Building Bridges, Phase I | Summary Demographic Characteristics

| Event | Number of Participants | Known Demographic Characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| Boulder's JCC | 61 participants | 21 surveys provided the follow information:<br><br>Age:<br>18-34: 5%<br>35-54: 30%<br>55-64: 30%<br>65 and over: 35%<br><br>Gender:<br>Female: 71%<br>Male: 24%<br>I do not identify with one gender or I do not identify with one gender more than the other: 5%<br><br>Race (self-identified):<br>Caucasian/White: 14<br>Black: 1<br>Hispanic: 1<br>Other: 3 |
| Youth Opportunities Advisory Board | 14 participants | Ages 15-18 were present, representing a diversity of genders and races. (14 people) |
| CU Diversity Summit | 34 participants | Over half of the participants were undergraduate students (17 people, ages 18-34); university staff were strongly represented with several graduate students and faculty also attending. About a third of participants (11) were people of color. |
| Boulder Public Library | 21 participants | Three-fourths of participants were identified as over the age of 60 (16 people over age 60, 5 people under 60 years of age). Three people of color attended (3 POC, 18 Caucasian) |
| Boulder Housing Partners | 5 participants | Five participants of diverse backgrounds and abilities, representing residents of Boulder's low-income housing community. |

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|---|---|---|
| First Congregational Church | 16 participants | Approximately five attendees were in the 40-60 age range; the remaining participants were in the 60+ age range (11 people). Three attendees were from under-represented populations (3 POC). |
| New Vista High School | 7 participants | All were Caucasian (7). Four (4) were estimated at 40-60 years old and three (3) were 60+. |
| Mylk House | 6 participants | Three (3) participants were over 55, while two (2) others were 40 to 55 years of age. One (1) participant was identified as late 20s. Two (2) African Americans attended (4 Caucasian) |
| Boards and Commissions | 20 participants | Five (5) participants were identified as under 40 years of age. Nine (9) participants were categorized as being 40 to 60 years of age. Six participants were over the age of 60. Eight (8) men and 12 women attended. |
| Interviews: Spanish Speakers | 2 participants | One male and one female were interviewed. Both (2) participants live in North Boulder, were 35-54 years of age, and identified as "Hispanic or Latinx." Both (2) participants rent their homes and classified their average annual income as $25,000-$49,999 |
| Interviews: Manufactured Home Community | 2 participants | One male and one female were interviewed. Both (2) participants live in North Boulder, and identified as being 54-64 years of age. When asked whether they rented or owned a home, both (2) participants selected "Other." |
| Interviews: Commuters | 8 participants | Where do you live?<br>• North Boulder: 33%<br>• Crossroads: 25%<br>• East Boulder: 16.7%<br>• Palo Park: 8.3%<br>• Central Boulder: 8.3%<br>• Southeast Boulder: 8.3%<br><br>What is your age range?<br>• 18-34: 25%<br>• 35-54: 58.3%<br>• 55-64: 16.7%<br><br>What gender do you most identify with? |

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>• Male: 75%<br>• Female: 25%<br><br>Do you rent or own your own home?<br>• Rent: 66.7%<br>• Own: 16.7%<br>• Other: 16.7%<br><br>Which race(s) do you most identify with?<br>• White: 50%<br>• Hispanic or Latinx: 30%<br>• Asian: 10%<br>• Two or more races: 10%<br><br>How would you describe your annual household income?<br>• $25,000-$49,999: 40%<br>• $50,000-$99,999: 30%<br>• $100,000-$149,999: 10%<br>• $150,000 or more: 10%<br>• Prefer not to say: 10%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Be Heard Boulder Forums</td><td>114 participants</td><td>Where do you live?<br>• North Boulder: 6%<br>• Crossroads: 1%<br>• East Boulder: 5%<br>• Central Boulder: 34%<br>• Southeast Boulder: 1%<br>• South Boulder: 4%<br>• Gunbarrel: 1%<br>• CU Boulder: 41%<br>• Not from Boulder: 6%<br><br>What is your age range?<br>• 18 and under: 1%<br>• 18-34: 87%<br>• 35-54: 3%<br>• 55-64: 4%<br>• 65 and older: 4%<br><br>What gender do you most identify with?<br>• Male: 29%<br>• Female: 71%<br><br>Do you rent or own your own home?<br>• Rent: 53%<br>• Own: 10%<br>• Other: 14%<br>• Prefer not to answer: 3%<br>• No response: 19%</td></tr>
</table>

| | | Which race(s) do you most identify with?<br>• White: 63%<br>• Hispanic or Latinx: 6%<br>• Asian: 4%<br>• Black or African American: 1%<br>• Two or more races: 7%<br>• Prefer not to answer: 3%<br>• No response: 16%<br><br>How would you describe your annual household income?<br>• Less than $25,000: 20%<br>• $25,000-$49,999: 5%<br>• $50,000-$99,999: 10%<br>• $100,000-$149,999: 8%<br>• $150,000 or more: 11%<br>• Prefer not to say: 19%<br>• No response: 26% |
| --- | --- | --- |

# Total: 310 participants