

Junior Academy Area Plan



Prepared by:
City of Boulder Department of Community Planning & Sustainability

Approved by City Council on October 27, 2009
and by Planning Board on November 19, 2009

Background

At its meeting of January 13, 2009, Planning Board and City Council approved a public process to address comprehensive plan land use designations, zoning, housing types, massing, site access and circulation patterns for the 5.84 acre site of the former Junior Academy located at 2641 Fourth Street. The area planning process was recommended to address City Council’s desire for a public process for redevelopment sites that have been used historically for public or semi-public uses such as schools and churches, and to address the inconsistency between the Comprehensive Plan land use designations and zoning.

Three public workshops and an open house were conducted in January – April, 2009 to help develop a plan that addresses community concerns and objectives.

Site Analysis

The site is bound by Dakota Place to the north, Fourth Street to the east, the Mapleton Medical Center to the south, and city open space to the west. A trailhead located immediately north of the site provides access to the open space.

Topographically the site is defined by a steep slope to the west with significant views toward the north-west corner of the site and more limited views toward the Mapleton Medical Center. The north edge of the site is defined by the trail head and trail segment while the south edge is defined by a drainage ditch. The east edge, facing onto the established residential neighborhood is defined by a hillside rising upward from Fourth Street to the more level benched portion located toward the center of the site.

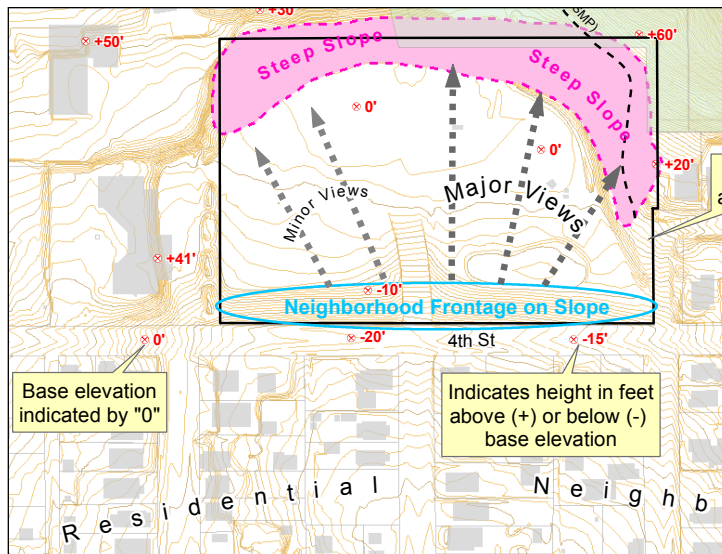


Figure 1: Site Analysis Diagram

Plan Objectives

Community Engagement - Engage community members in the area planning process, particularly those in the surrounding neighborhood.

Sensitive Infill

- Support and strengthen the surrounding neighborhood through appropriate building scale and height; compatible character, architecture, site design and density of new development; and sensitively designed and sized rights-of-way.
- Define the acceptable amount of infill and redevelopment with standards for design quality in order to avoid or adequately mitigate negative impacts and enhance the benefits of additional infill and redevelopment.

Continued

Plan Objectives - Continued

Urban Design

- Integrate new development with the existing neighborhood by relating positively to public streets, sidewalks and paths; providing opportunities to walk from the street into the area; and incorporating well-designed functional open spaces.
- Development of the site should feel like a continuation of the existing character along 4th Street.

Environmental Protection - Hillside development will avoid negative environmental consequences to the immediate and surrounding area and the degrading of views and vistas from and of public areas.

Access and mobility

- Design new neighborhood streets in a well connected and fine grained pattern of streets and alleys that extends the existing street grid to disperse and distribute vehicle traffic and promote bike and pedestrian travel.
- Mitigate traffic impacts that cause unacceptable community or neighborhood impacts or unacceptable reduction in level of service. Include strategies to reduce the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generated by the development.
- Integrate access to the open space trailhead into the neighborhood.
- Provide easy and safe access by foot to neighborhood centers, community facilities, transit stops or centers, and shared public spaces and amenities.
- Ensure that new development and redevelopment is designed in a manner that is sensitive to social, physical and emotional needs including accessibility to those with limited mobility; provision of coordinated facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists and bus-riders; and the provision of functional landscaping and open space.
- Provide for a safe and efficient transportation network.

Housing

- Further the city's affordable housing goals by providing permanently affordable housing consistent with city policies and regulations.
- Encourage a mixture of housing types with varied price ranges and densities that fit within the character of the neighborhood. This could include congregate care, duplexes, and triplexes in addition to single family detached houses.

Existing Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations and Zoning

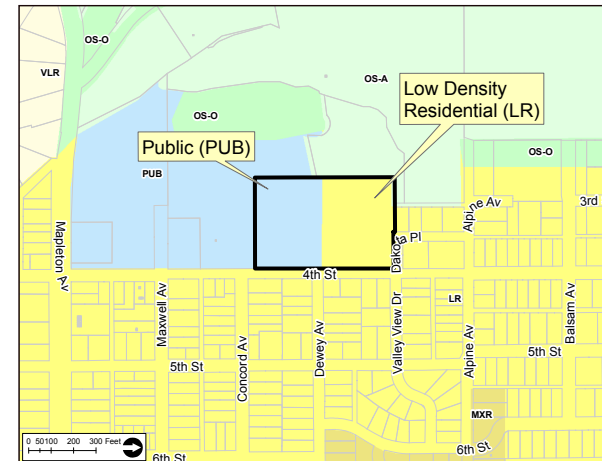


Figure 2: Existing BVCP Land Use

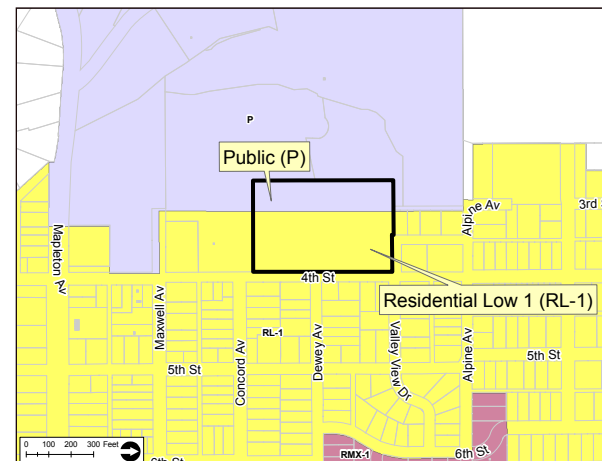


Figure 3: Existing Zoning

The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) land use designation indicates the desired future land use for the site and provides guidance for zoning. The north half of the study area parcel is designated Low Density Residential and the south half is designated Public on the BVCP Land Use Map. The current zoning is not consistent with the BVCP designation with the western 130 feet of the site zoned Public and the rest zoned Low Density Residential (RL-1). Research indicates that the site was zoned single family residential prior to 1971 and was also designated Low Density Residential in the 1970 BVCP. The current split land use designation has been mapped since the 1977 BVCP was approved.

Proposed Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation

A Low Density Residential Land Use Designation is proposed consistent with the existing low density residential character of the surrounding neighborhood. The Low Density Residential land use designation represents a density of two to six dwelling units per acre.

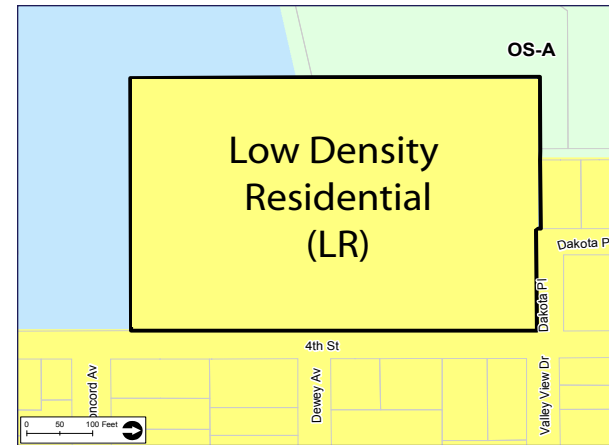


Figure 4: Proposed BVCP Land Use



Houses should respect the character of the Mapleton Hill neighborhood.



Redevelopment Principles

1. The hillside area in the northwest portion of the site will be preserved and restored as appropriate.
2. The site shall include a mixture of housing types with varied price ranges affordable to households with a range of income levels.
3. Single family detached houses will be located along the west side of Fourth Street and will be compatible and consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and reflect a continuity with the existing neighborhood character:
 - Houses will vary in size and design, and conform with the outcome of the city's compatible development project.
 - Re-grading of the site along 4th Street should improve the relative elevation of new homes to existing houses on the east side of 4th Street.
 - Garages for houses along 4th Street should be accessed from a rear alley.
4. Any larger buildings should be located on the southwest portion of the site and generally consistent in size and height with buildings to the south, and should be no more than three floors above finished grade.
5. New buildings should respect and be compatible with the diverse character of the Mapleton Hill neighborhood. Issues such as solar orientation, shading, views and privacy should be addressed in the design process to facilitate the livability of these buildings and for adjacent properties.



Figure 5: Illustrative 4th Street frontage



Front Porches are encouraged.

Detailed design guidelines will be developed at the time of site review. Specific design elements to be encouraged include:

- Front porches, defined entries and active rooms facing the street are encouraged to create neighborliness and a friendly street frontage.
- Roof massing should be hierarchical, with a clear expression of primary and secondary masses. Gable, Gambrel, Hipped and Lift-up dormers are encouraged.
- Projecting architectural elements are encouraged; however, these elements should be approached through simplicity of form. Functional bays, turrets, dormers, and gable ends can help to break down the scale of buildings and soften the transition between houses. Deep eave overhangs and exposed rafter tails are encouraged.
- Building materials should reflect the neighborhood character and a diversity of materials is encouraged including brick, stone, siding, and wood shingles.



Figure 6:
Illustrative 4th
Street section

Access Plan

Site access options are limited due to terrain and adjacent property ownership. Steep terrain and city Open Space to the west preclude the possibility of vehicular through access, any access proposed to the south in alignment with Concord Avenue would require negotiation with the adjacent property owner, and access possibilities to the north are limited due to the steep grade of Valley View Drive/ Dakota Place and the location of an existing public trail. Therefore, all available access options are served by 4th Street on the east side of the property. Two alternatives for principal site access are illustrated in Figures 7 and 8.

- **Option 1:** A primary access in alignment with Dewey Avenue along with a secondary emergency only access near the north or south edge of the property; or
- **Option 2:** Two primary accesses in alignment with the alleys on the east side of 4th Street.

Option 1 would provide less points of conflict between pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. It would also provide alignment with the existing intersection, meeting vehicle driver expectations. Option 2 would add an additional conflict point, but also may disperse traffic on 4th Street and slightly decrease the amount of traffic on Dewey. In order to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access through the site, both options would require pedestrian and bicycle access in alignment with Dewey.

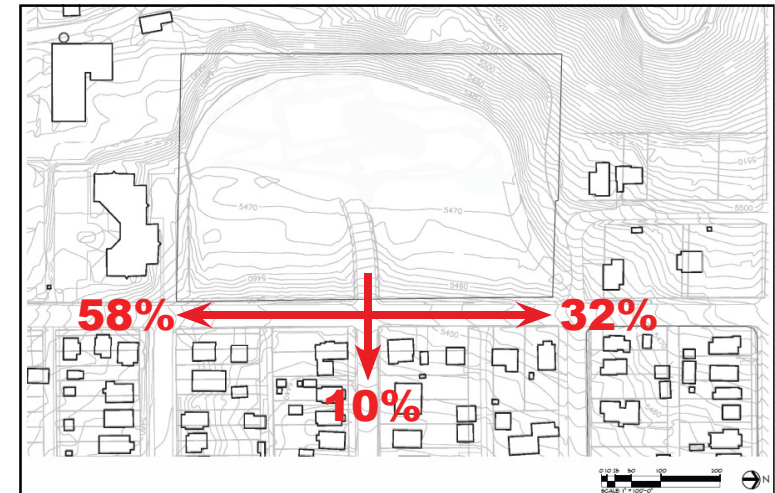


Figure 7: Access Option 1

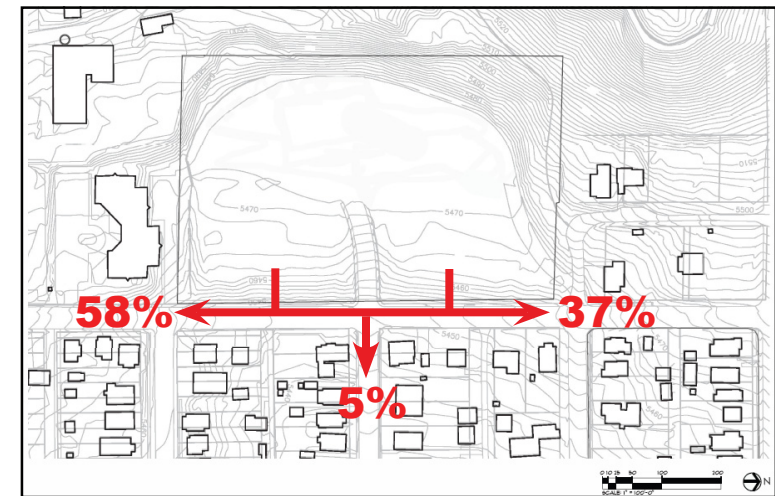


Figure 8: Access Option 2