

Frequently Asked Questions about the CU South Annexation v.4.7.2021

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1. **Annexations**: What does it mean to annex a property into the City of Boulder?

The process by which a municipality incorporates territory is annexation. If annexed, the CU South property would come under the city's jurisdiction like the other campuses, and utility and other city services could be extended to site. Annexation would not mean the city would own the site.

2. **Annexation Timing**: Why is annexation necessary if CU does not have near-term plans to develop the property?

The CU South property is owned by the University of Colorado Boulder. University master planning for CU South is several years away. However, significant flooding events in the area have prompted the city to expeditiously pursue a flood mitigation project that requires a portion of the CU South site; that portion of the property only becomes available to the city with annexation of the entire CU South site. As a result, the annexation agreement would need to detail certain development standards that control the type and intensity of future development, but not the exact type and location that a traditional site plan would detail.

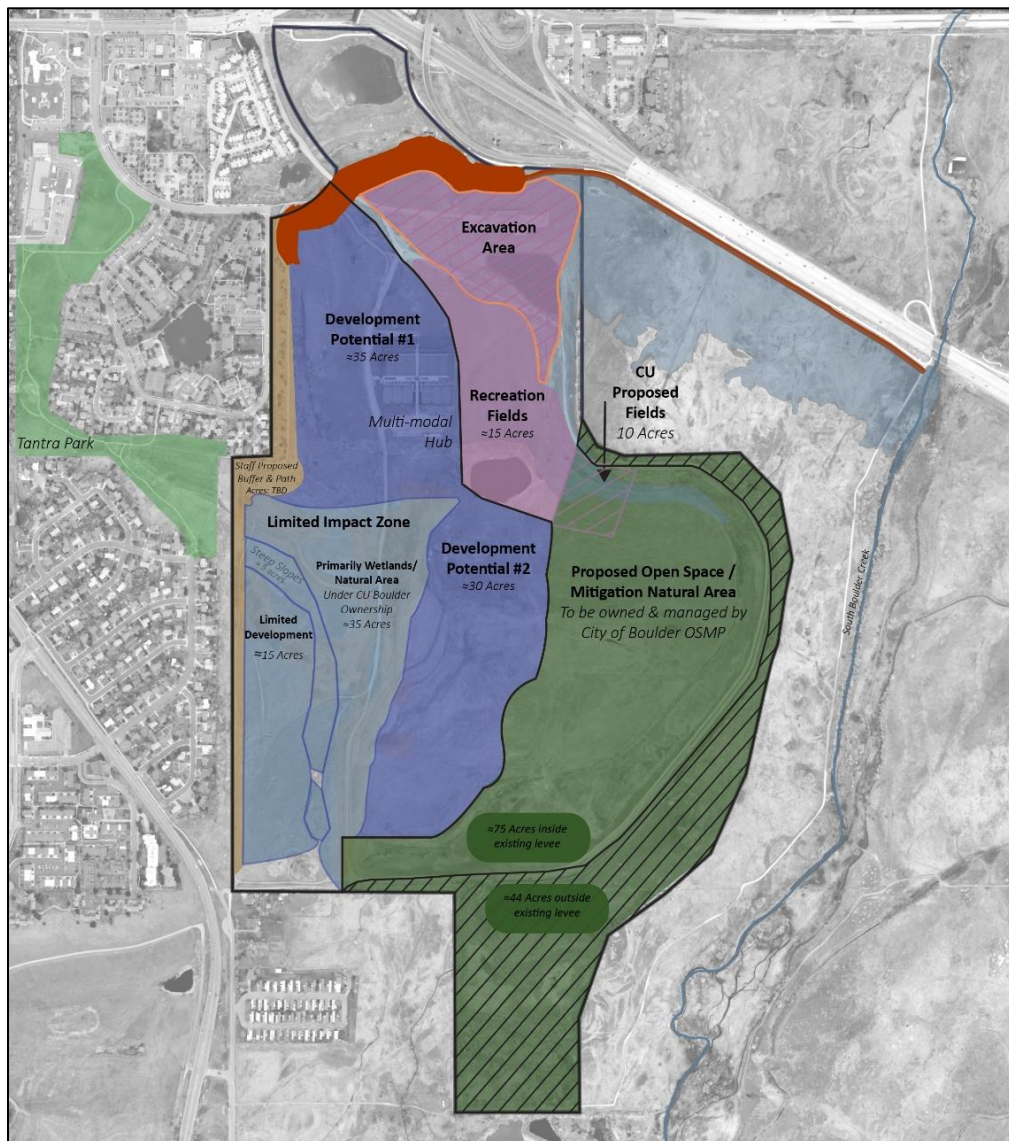
3. **Sale Contingency**: What happens if the city annexes the property and CU Boulder then sells the land to someone else? What sorts of protections can be put in place for that scenario?

The annexation process is both legislative and contractual in nature. The terms of annexation, memorialized through an annexation agreement, need to be agreed to by both the city and owner of the property being annexed. An agreement can include conditions to address this concern. In the event that financial considerations make it impossible for CU Boulder to build

the campus as anticipated in the annexation agreement, the property could remain undeveloped until such time as it is financially feasible or it could amend the annexation agreement, which will be a new and separate negotiation that will require city council approval. A condition could also be drafted to require a non-university affiliated entity that may own the property to also comply with city development regulations.

4. **Size of CU South Development:** Does CU South’s 308-acre property essentially equal the size of CU’s 313-acre Main Campus?

The current CU South parcel is 308 in total, of which a **total of 129-acres in the area is anticipated for university development**. Within that there are restrictions in place to prevent the entirety of the 129-acres from being developed. The university has offered to donate 80-acres of the land to the city and used for flood mitigation efforts and open space. The remaining 99 acres are the subject of ongoing annexation negotiations, through which the parties are determining whether the land can be preserved as open space.



5. CU Future Development Plans: How can the city evaluate the annexation without a specific development plan?

As noted above, the timelines for the city's flood mitigation project and the annexation do not align. Knowing this, the city and county jointly adopted the [CU South Guiding Principles](#) in 2017 to provide a framework for how to address this in an annexation agreement. The city's approach to addressing this is to focus on development restrictions on the site (e.g., building height limits, wetland protection) and subsequent impacts off the site (e.g., transportation impacts).

6. Future Uses: What is CU planning for housing?

The site would predominantly be housing for university faculty, staff and non-freshmen students in order to address the fact that Boulder housing is currently unaffordable to faculty, staff and students. Except for recreational facilities (e.g., ballfields), development will be phased such that non-residential space will be phased after a significant amount of housing is built. Later phases will be dependent on demonstrating that initial phases achieve objects of mitigating off-site impacts like traffic. While there is an estimate of 1,100 units, the exact amount, types and location of residential and non-residential space will be refined to with future university master planning and as a transportation analysis is conducted.

7. Traffic: What will be the traffic impact when the CU Boulder South Campus is built out?

CU Boulder submitted an initial draft traffic impact study in January 2021. The purpose of the study is to quantify the anticipated new automobile traffic generated by the CU Boulder South Campus when it is built out, and to assist in identifying potential traffic impacts within the study area. The study will be updated based on feedback from staff, advisory boards, community members and council and will ultimately inform the overall approach to transportation-related issues like a trip cap program, transportation demand management strategies and required improvements to the system.

Using a draft land use scenario that includes a mix of housing and limited academic facilities, continued recreation facilities, and a transit/mobility hub on-site, the study estimates approximately 7,000 vehicle trips per day would be generated. The city and university have agreed to several performance-based standards to not unduly impact the transportation networks that serve the property. More details on the proposed standards can be found in the [Briefing Book](#).

8. Costs to the City:

Why should the city pay for costs such as relocating CU's tennis courts or earth fill?

It is common practice for Utilities projects to compensate property owners for project impacts and elements related to conditions of approval. The city's flood mitigation project requires a portion of the land where the tennis courts are located. Specific compensation and funding sources related to removal of the courts will be assessed and addressed as more flood project details are known.

Earth fill costs are included in the current flood project cost estimates because fill would be needed to offset inundation impacts from creation of flood detention. The city Utilities

Department does not own the land or have utility easements for the proposed flood project. As such, the city and university agreed to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan [Guiding Principles in 2017](#). The final cost and funding sources for earth fill will be the subject of further evaluation and negotiation as the project proceeds.

Are the City of Boulder and its residents being asked to pay \$66 to \$99 million for CU South?

No. City stormwater and flood fees will be used to pay for [South Boulder Creek Flood Mitigation](#) – not a CU South Campus - at a total estimated project cost of \$66M. The \$99M figure is inaccurate and related to a previous project that is no longer being considered as of June 2020. Flood mitigation is aimed at preserving life safety in a currently at-risk area. The university currently owns the land needed to build the flood mitigation project, hence the related but separate annexation. Further information on costs is described in the flood project FAQ located [here](#).

Will the cost of the South Boulder Creek Project be added to my monthly water bill?

Yes. A portion of monthly utility bills will be used to pay for South Boulder Creek Flood Mitigation in partnership with the Mile High Flood District. Each year, utility rates are considered for Boulder’s three utilities (water, wastewater and stormwater & flood) through the annual Capital Improvement Projects process and ultimately determined by city council through the annual budget process. The 2021 rate increases resulted in an approximate total monthly increase of about \$8 for the average single-family residence, of which about \$2 is attributable to the Stormwater and Flood Utility portion of the utility bill that is used to fund a range of improvements throughout the city.

Why should the city pay for access and egress road improvements at CU South?

The city intends to mitigate any damage resulting from the flood mitigation project, including impacts to the existing access road S. Loop Drive. The city’s flood mitigation project assumes that the city will reconstruct the existing access and specific costs will be determined when an adequate level of design work is complete to inform cost estimates.

9. Recreation and Public Access: Will people still be able to recreate on the site if it is annexed (hike, run, walk dogs)?

Public recreation access is expected to remain, if not enhanced, though it may change in type and location. Several of the proposed annexation terms outline public access and recreational amenities such as hiking trails and possibly a dog park.

10. Environmental and Habitat Considerations: How are environmental impacts being considered?

Elements of the flood project may provide opportunities to improve wildlife habitat and natural resources in the area as part of project mitigation. For example, removal of the existing levee and subsequent reconnection with the South Boulder Creek floodplain would provide an opportunity to reduce fragmentation in the area and restore a natural floodplain enhancing the ecosystem benefits of adjacent open space. More specific environmental mitigation measures could also be determined as a condition of the Open Space Board of Trustees and City Council or as determined in the preliminary design and permitting phase of the flood mitigation project.

11. Fire Station: Will the Table Mesa – Darley Ave. Fire station be moved to CU South?

Not necessarily. The addition of a new fire station on the CU South campus does not commit Boulder to closing Station 4 (Table Mesa – Darley Ave.). More analysis is needed on public safety needs to know what coverage is needed. Regardless of the final decision, the city's objective would be to maximize all-hazards coverage for all citizens. It is too soon to understand what response times will look like under a CU South scenario and any projections on impact are premature. Station 4, along with Station 2 at Baseline and Broadway, are both in serious need of upgrades and relocation because of service challenges and existing property constraints. To prepare location recommendations, staff models current and expected demand, types of risk, and response time as the main factors.

12. Land Swap: Can the city exchange land it owns in the planning reserve north of town for CU South?

City Council had an initial discussion about a potential "land swap" during a study session in early 2020. That discussion focused on an area known as "Area III – Planning Reserve", which is about 500 acres of land in North Boulder on the north side of US 36 (area north of and including Atlas Flooring and the Gateway Park Fun Center). The city owns some of this land but much of it is privately owned.

Although council recognized that the Planning Reserve concept might have potential when looked at separate from other factors, when considered alongside impacts to the flood mitigation timeline, the university's interests, and impacts to other city priorities, the idea seemed less of a viable option. Specifically, the university indicated that they are unable to realistically consider the Planning Reserve as a potential alternative without the land first becoming eligible for annexation (which could take several years). The Planning Reserve was not deemed a realistic alternative because of related delays to the flood mitigation process and the numerous unknown factors in the review process for the Planning Reserve.

13. Flood Mitigation: Where can I find information about the flood mitigation project?

See South Boulder Creek Flood Mitigation Website FAQ: [South Boulder Creek Flood Mitigation Project \(boulder.colorado.gov\)](https://www.boulder.colorado.gov/2020/06/24/south-boulder-creek-flood-mitigation-project-faq)