



Boulder's New 'East Edge'

A vision for transportation, mixed-use and sustainability around 55th and Arapahoe



Report from a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)
of ULI Colorado

December 15-16, 2016

Supported by:



**Urban Land
Institute**

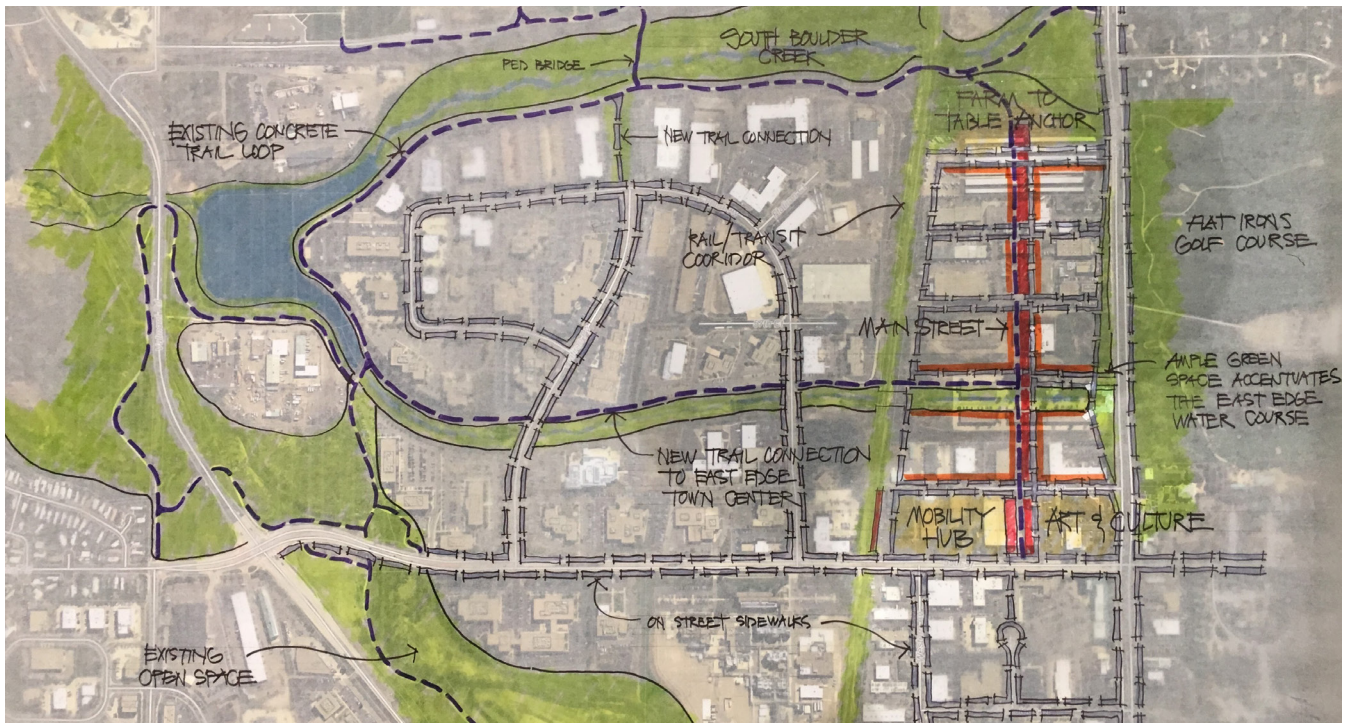
Colorado

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Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs)

Technical Advisory Panels bring Urban Land Institute (ULI) Colorado expertise directly into communities to address tough real estate problems. TAPs provide advisory panels composed of ULI Colorado members who volunteer their time to offer unbiased, disinterested professional advice. Each are leading experts in their fields. Since 2004 ULI Colorado has been invited to conduct more than 50 TAPs throughout Colorado. TAP findings and recommendations are nonbinding and solely intended to advise communities with strategic recommendations and best practices on sustainable land use.



The panel suggested creating a mixed-use housing/retail district with an interior "Main Street" running parallel to Arapahoe, anchored at the east end by a food hub and at the west end by a mobility hub with an arts and culture focus. Overlay showing district boundaries and new connections.

I. Overview and Vision

In December 2016, a multidisciplinary team of leading design and development professionals volunteered their time for an Urban Land Institute Colorado (ULI Colorado) Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to create a vision for redeveloping a 325-acre office park/light industrial site in the 55th and Arapahoe Avenue area of East Boulder. The Boulder Chamber and the Boulder Area REALTOR Association (BARA) asked the panel to consider how this study area, part of the city's largest employment area, could accommodate much-needed workforce housing.

The ULI panel envisioned a strategy to create not just housing, but an entirely new type of place. This new "East Edge" (a kind of complement and bookend to downtown's West End) could become an innovation and creativity hub linked by new transit options. The East Edge would support existing and new businesses and allow them to grow within the context of three walkable mixed-used residential and commercial districts.

Boulder is renowned for its entrepreneurial spirit. An innovation and creativity hub would support existing businesses and attract the next generations of start-ups. The addition of housing and convenient services linked to jobs and transportation transforms this office park/light industrial study area into a new "15-minute" mixed-use neighborhood consistent with the city's goals for infill development.

The ULI panel's vision calls not just for "adding housing units," but creating a special place with:

- a range of housing types, sizes, formats, and pricing
- convenient services in a walkable setting
- retention of existing businesses, allowing them to grow in place

ULI's principles of Building Healthy Places (<http://uli.org/research/centers-initiatives/building-healthy-places-initiative/>) are relevant to the proposed transformation of the East Arapahoe study area into Boulder's new "East Edge." Since 2013, ULI has partnered with the Colorado Health Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation on the Building Healthy Places Initiative, which studies ways to transform auto-centric, single-use places into vibrant, walkable, mixed-use districts. With a focus on compact land use, active transportation, and access to natural amenities, healthy food, and economic opportunities, Building Healthy Places links the design of places to the health of individuals, communities, and the environment. ULI Colorado has worked directly with eight Colorado communities on this initiative.

- spaces to incubate innovative and creative businesses and culture
- new transportation options, including a walkable/ bike-friendly connected network
- public spaces that celebrate art and culture
- a market and urban agriculture focus with fresh and healthy local food



The TAP study area is roughly equal in size to an existing mixed-use wedge of downtown Boulder. The panel envisioned this area for innovation, creative enterprise, housing, new transit, connections to natural systems, and a food hub.

- celebration and integration of greenways, waterways, open space, mountain views, and other natural features
- amenities that enhance the area for all of East Boulder

This vision focuses on creating a lively sense of place, where people want to be, and where employees will choose to arrive early or stay late not because of hard-to-find parking, but because they are meeting friends and colleagues for coffee, a hike or bike ride, or happy hour. Some employees will walk or bike to work from new homes in the study area. The architectural style and vibe could be “modern industrial,” to take advantage of existing buildings and uses.

In cities and towns across the nation, industrial/employment areas similar to East Arapahoe are being enriched with urban planning and design, infrastructure improvements, public art and amenities, and new investments. The City of Boulder could lead a similar transformation by working with local landowners and businesses to transform this dated suburban office park/industrial landscape. The study area could become a multi-dimensional asset, while addressing key housing and transportation issues that affect the entire city. The concept is similar to RiNo in Denver, but fitting Boulder’s intimate scale, natural context, and outdoor culture.

The TAP site is Boulder’s eastern gateway: Arapahoe Avenue historically was the main east-west route into Boulder from the metro Denver region. Today this corridor is impacted by up to 25,000 commuter vehicle trips per day. The ULI TAP vision provides new infrastructure that encourages the use of public transit and alternate modes. A multi-modal mobility hub would serve as a station and transfer facility for East Boulder, including future bus rapid transit (BRT) on Arapahoe, bike share, car share, private vehicles, emerging transit technologies, loop shuttles, and enhanced use of the city’s trail and open space system.

The panel saw strong potential to benefit both the large employers and the small businesses Boulder seeks to retain. Many companies, such as Avery Brewery and Celestial Seasons, launched start-ups from this East Boulder location but moved away when they needed to expand. More than 250 businesses located onsite now provide nearly 10,000



Detroit’s Brush Park provides an example of a new Main Street that combines existing buildings and new construction.

primary jobs that are national or international in scope. The study area hosts a broad range of industries, including aerospace, biotech, natural foods, healthcare, IT, and online merchandising. The area’s light-industry businesses provide Boulder residents essential services, such as auto repair, an animal hospital, storage units, and thrift stores. Entrepreneurial local investments are represented by new companies and businesses including Blackbelly, Bru, Pica, Shinesty, and Wild Woods Brewing.

“Preservation of the existing job base is definitely a big part of the idea.”

—John Norris

The area’s natural topography and natural amenities, including open space, trails, and a north-south flood-greenway corridor through the site, provide the framework for an urban design vision connected to the landscape. The TAP vision extends this green infrastructure with new multi-use trail connections to the South Boulder Creek open space on the east side of the study area and Boulder Creek open space on the north side. A new multi-use trail through the flood-greenway corridor provides a pedestrian-bike connection through the site while retaining the function of managing flood water.

The TAP vision offers a strong Boulder-based sense of place in three newly envisioned districts:

- 1. Neighborhood Mixed-Use/Industrial District:** The panel’s strategic vision proposes about one-third of the study area be redeveloped as a new mixed-use neighborhood—a residential-commercial district spanning about 10 blocks between Arapahoe and the

BNSF rail line, a future FasTracks rail-transit corridor. This neighborhood features a small-scale, pedestrian and bike-friendly, east-west “main street” with two anchors:

- To the west near 55th and Arapahoe’s Boulder Dinner Theater, a “mobility hub” with development oriented to arts and culture, and
- To the east, a farm-to-table hub with a market, restaurants, roof-top greenhouses, and community gardens next to South Boulder Creek open space.

Housing and retail/services fill in the blocks in between. The panel saw ways to add between 1,200 to 2,400 new homes throughout the study area, primarily in this mixed-use district.

- 2. Innovation Mixed-Use District:** Located north of the BSNF tracks in the Flatiron Business Park and some light-industry businesses, this district focuses on retaining existing businesses and allowing for growth while also attracting new entrepreneurial/start-ups. The focus of this part of the study area is an innovation and creativity hub. This district is enhanced with new live-work housing and some services. A new north-south multi-use trail, as well

“The bigger concept is for Boulder to facilitate the next generation of technology and innovation.”

—Renee Martinez-Stone

as the existing street network, connect the district with more housing and services along the East Edge Main Street with the mobility hub. An environment of innovation and creativity is enhanced by interesting new architecture and public art extending from an arts and culture focus around the mobility hub. The panel suggested preserving as many buildings, uses, employment locations, and investments as possible. Strategies include introducing housing to Flatiron Business Park by adding stories to existing buildings, and by redeveloping parking lots and other underused spaces for more housing.

- 3. Office Mixed-Use District:** Located west of 55th Street, this district remains a commercial zone but with retail added to serve the major employers located nearby. This portion of the study area comprises the Ball Aerospace campus and other businesses. Retail services and parking can be added to ground floor development, but because of the nature of this high-tech industry, onsite chemical processes, and security needs, the panel did not recommend housing.

II. Study Area Context and Goals

The boundaries of the TAP study area are Arapahoe Avenue on the south, Commerce on the West, Pearl Parkway on the north, and the South Boulder Creek open space on the east.

TAP goals included how multimodal transportation infrastructure and connections could be improved within the context of these plans and the draft East Arapahoe Transportation Plan, a long-range transportation improvement plan for 4.5 miles of Arapahoe Avenue between Folsom Street and 75th Street. The TAP study area is located midway within this planning segment. The East Arapahoe Transportation Plan considers potential improvements for walking, biking, BRT, local bus service, and automobile travel to address existing and future transportation needs, including local and regional travel, safe travel and access for all modes, and support for existing and

future land use in the corridor.

Other goals included how to serve existing and new businesses with housing and amenities that allow employees and others to live near their workplace. Among key businesses in the study area, Ball Aerospace has roughly 1,300 employees in 18 manufacturing and office space buildings on a campus that extends four blocks west of 55th and north of Arapahoe. Ball has discussed a site plan for expansion and redevelopment. Boulder Community Health/Foothills Community Hospital campus, located just west of the study area, employees 2,200, and the University of Colorado/UC Health has a new primary healthcare facility at 55th and Arapahoe. Offices for KBI Biopharma and Clovis Oncology are a short walk from the FedEx ship center and the Boulder County Sheriff Office. IMM digital marketing

is here, New Hope Media moved here from downtown, and Active Interest Media moved *Yoga Journal* here from San Francisco. Upslope Brewery, Chocolove, and the hip Blackbelly restaurant all have chosen to locate here.

Key development and mobility characteristics within and near the TAP site area include:

- light industry, low-rise, suburban patterns of development with surface parking lots
- affordable service-industrial businesses and places for storage units
- nearby institutions, including CU East Campus, with

expansion plans for research, teaching facilities, and housing; Naropa’s Nalanda Campus with expansion plans; the new Jewish Community Center; Boulder Valley School District central offices

- Flatirons Golf Course across Arapahoe to the south, used for recreation and flood mitigation
- quiet suburban neighborhoods to the south
- few places to eat or shop
- people generally drive for daily needs
- pedestrian and bike infrastructure and improved transit are needed
- the area is separated from other parts of the city

City Plans for East Arapahoe

The intersection of 55th and Arapahoe is at the heart of the City of Boulder’s Envision East Arapahoe project, a community planning effort initiated in 2014 to illustrate redevelopment choices such as adding new housing, retail, infrastructure, public spaces, and improved multimodal transportation. In late 2014, the City suspended the project to consider other transportation planning efforts in the corridor including Boulder’s Transportation Master Plan. The City also wanted to consider the recommendations of the Regional Transportation District’s (RTD) Northwest Area Mobility Study, which identified the Arapahoe/ State Highway 7 corridor between Boulder, Lafayette, and Brighton as a candidate for an arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) line. The transportation scenarios also will reference a future State Highway 7 BRT study that will be led by Boulder County.

III. TAP Process

Briefing, Tour, and Interviews

The ULI panel first studied a detailed briefing book containing previous plans, demographic data, and maps, and then toured the study area and surrounding area to understand the context. The tour began on East Arapahoe, and included a vantage point at Legion Park, looking west down into the valley near the TAP study area. This part of the tour allowed the panel to appreciate the agriculture, recreation, and natural preserve lands located east and north of the site and existing housing south of Arapahoe, which includes multi-family apartment buildings closer to Arapahoe and single-family neighborhoods further south.

The tour included sites such as Boulder Junction, 29th Street retail district, 28th Street commercial development, new Google headquarters construction, new hotel

development at 28th and Canyon, and Boulder Community Health’s Foothills Community Hospital, as well as the study area itself.

The panel reviewed comments from hundreds of community members who participated in the 2014 Envision East Boulder process and interviewed dozens of stakeholders, including representatives of local businesses, institutions, and nonprofit organizations, affordable housing and transportation agencies, current and former public officials, and City of Boulder planners and transportation staff.

The panel also considered how a vision for East Arapahoe could fit into the larger context of transportation and other planning efforts in Boulder, including the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, which is now being updated.

Problem Statement for ULI Colorado TAP

The intersection of 55th and Arapahoe is located in the heart of the City of Boulder's former Envision East Arapahoe project. The area is now the focus of the City's current East Arapahoe Transportation Plan focus area, which is examining transportation choices along 4.5 miles of the corridor. The City of Boulder is also in the process of reviewing redevelopment opportunities as part of its five-year update to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan. As input to these planning efforts, this corridor needs concrete examples of attractive and appealing subarea plans that would allow the community to visualize what is possible, redefine the concept of density, and offer ideas for redeveloping an area of light industry.

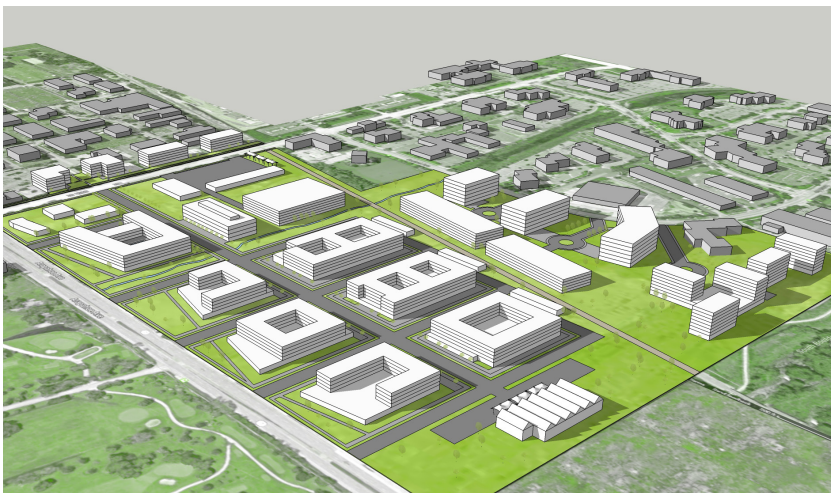
The TAP panel was asked to consider concepts such as the following:

- Arapahoe transformed into a safe and attractive multimodal boulevard with street trees, noise buffering, slower speeds, and pedestrian and bike improvements
- Enhanced eastern gateway to city
- Mixed retail, dining, office space along 55th and Arapahoe
- More activity on the street and easier travel by foot, bike, transit
- Improvements to sidewalks and intersections for safety and convenience
- Public spaces for people to recreate and relax, such as pocket parks, plazas, interior streets

- More pedestrian-bike network options, such as an east-west connecting street
- Affordable service-industrial options along Arapahoe at the east edge
- Housing within a 15-minute walk from work, shopping, dining, everyday needs
- Workforce affordable housing north of Arapahoe near 55th and near South Boulder Creek
- Highest level of street improvements, ecological restoration, and connections to open space
- Health district around Boulder Community Health with medical-related office spaces
- Arts and entertainment area near 55th and Arapahoe/ Boulder Dinner Theater
- Development within natural systems, such as rain and snow-melt-irrigated street trees, landscapes, and gardens
- Sustainable development with possibility of net-zero-energy neighborhood
- City services near housing, such as access to parks, trails, nature

"Companies here started in Boulder, which has a very strong brand, and they outgrew their first office spaces to move here. But employees want more. This could have a cool industrial vibe and be an innovation hot spot, where little companies go to grow up."

—Chris Achenbach



Sketchup drawing showing the three new districts: Foreground is mixed-use district adding housing and convenient services clustered around a new Main Street. To the west around Ball Aerospace: a mobility hub. North of BNSF tracks: live-work housing added to Flatiron Business Park.



King of Prussia (Pa.) District provides example of housing and streetscapes added to an industrial/office park.

IV. Key Findings, Assets, and Challenges

1) The study area is ideal for redevelopment into an innovation hub and sustainable neighborhood—a new “East Edge” that is both gateway and destination.

The study area offers an opportunity to redevelop using concepts of sustainable neighborhood development with housing and services. Its location on a transit corridor at the eastern gateway to the city (the new “East Edge”) could capture some of the 60,000 daily commuters to Boulder who might like to live in Boulder but currently can’t afford a home here.

The study area location and topography, at a low point in the Boulder/South Boulder Creek watershed, is favorable to greater height and density. The impact to mountain-view corridors from the east and low-density residential development to the south is not as great as it would be in other Boulder locations. To the east of the site is city open space, the Stazio ballfields, Valmont Reservoir, the Xcel power plant, Western Disposal’s trash and recycling facilities, and a large mesa around 75th Street.

2) Despite the study area’s 10,000 primary jobs and an in-commuting problem, there is no onsite housing for employees.

The Arapahoe corridor has 25,000 in-commuters a day in terms of car counts. Many work around 55th and Arapahoe. Given this large number of commuters, Boulder’s critical need for workforce housing, the lack of available land in East Boulder’s low-density residential areas, transit possibilities, and the aging of the site’s infrastructure and buildings, this study area offers great potential for redevelopment with between 1,200 and 2,400 homes of various types and sizes. With Boulder’s average single-family home price topping \$1 million, new housing could include a variety of more-affordable housing types and sizes, such as for-sale rowhouses and condominiums, rental apartments, and live-work studios. Attention to affordability for lower and middle-income households, and especially for on-site employees and their families, will be critical.

"This is a car-centered area. One goal we heard was to reduce the use of cars, traffic congestion, and impact to the environment--80 percent of employees drive to work, and of the employees who previously worked in downtown/central Boulder, 80 percent used to take transit."

--Renee Martinez-Stone

3) Mixed-use/industrial zoning is needed to allow housing and services, at a height and density that reduces commuting and supports walkability and BRT.

Mixed-use/industrial zoning would allow for housing and retail services in the same zone, as well as office buildings with retail shops or cafes at ground-floor level. This would be a good place for the City to study relaxing the 55-foot height limit. Given the study area’s relatively low ground elevation and other mitigating factors, the panel thought this could be achieved to support the mixed-use districts without damaging Boulder’s viewshed.

However, there is more than one way to achieve the desired amount of housing. Even within Boulder’s current height limits, densities may be achieved from 18 to 28 homes per acre (townhomes) to 50-70 per acre (podium apartments in a variety of formats). If concentrated in a district, these densities will support a walkable environment, transit services, and local retail.

4) The study area has inadequate transportation connections, and many employees now feel forced to drive. Planned BRT and potential last-mile connections can transform the area with better service and could reduce the City’s traffic congestion and carbon footprint. A new mobility hub could anchor redevelopment and increase transit options and connectivity.

One goal for the study area is to reduce traffic congestion and impact on the environment. Stakeholders told the team that this is a car-centered area not well served by transit. Some 80 percent of employees drive to work, including the vast majority (80 percent) of employees who previously worked in downtown/central Boulder and used to take transit.

The lack of adequate transit services in this study area is a big factor in the high number of workers commuting by private vehicle along the Arapahoe corridor, according to City of Boulder Transportation Master Plan. The Northwest Area Mobility Study, completed in 2014, identified

Arapahoe/State Highway (SH) 7 between Boulder and Brighton as a candidate for an arterial BRT route. On Arapahoe, the City of Boulder is supporting efforts to fund the next steps of

work toward implementing arterial BRT. Boulder County is conducting a SH 7 BRT Transit Study to address current and future traffic issues on SH 7 and develop a BRT system before build out of the area is complete. Boulder's East Arapahoe corridor is the western segment of this study area. The TAP vision discusses the need for transit improvements and other transportation modes to, from, and within the study area.

The TAP vision's element of a mobility hub with pedestrian and bike connections to trails, bike-share, on-demand services, and electric shuttles, could improve last-mile connections to workplaces within and near the site and to destinations such as Boulder Junction, the CU East Campus, Naropa's Nalanda Campus, and new and existing homes in the area.

5) The study area has very few places to eat and no convenient services.

One restaurant, a deli, and limited food-truck service are the only sources for lunch. Many employees drive offsite to get lunch and do errands, adding to corridor congestion. Some fast-food cafes and convenient services exist along the south side of Arapahoe near the study area, but they have limited capacity. The intersection at 55th and Arapahoe is perceived as unsafe for walking or biking. Employees tend to drive to the Meadows Shopping Center, 29th Street, Whole

Foods at 28th and Pearl, or further into downtown Boulder to get lunch, buy groceries, and do errands. Employees often "double commute" as they need to drive an additional trip or two offsite during the work day for work meetings or personal matters. Others simply stay at their desks to keep their parking spaces. Residents living south of Arapahoe also have specified the need for a nearby food market and other convenient retail.

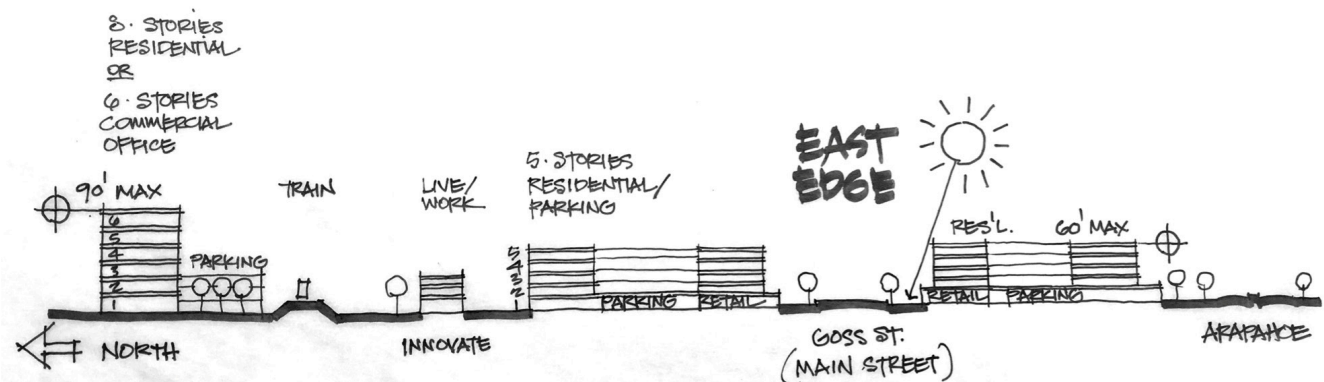
6) Businesses don't have adequate space to expand.

The study area has historically been an innovation hub for Boulder. Keeping businesses and allowing them room to grow is important to the goal of incubating the city's innovative and creative industries and culture. Many existing businesses got their start onsite or gravitated here because they had outgrown their start-up space downtown, on University Hill, or in other central Boulder locations. Some companies find they are limited by their one and two-story outdated buildings; others have invested millions in renovation. Office users want to stay here, innovate, and grow but generally are forced to consider moving out of Boulder when their staffs exceed several hundred employees. Larger buildings with three stories or more are needed to keep these Boulder businesses. Light-industry businesses wish to maintain



Plan (above) and section below showing the new Main Street

Open space and greenway connections will provide a key transportation and recreational element linking all three districts. (Main Street highlighted in red.)



affordable work space, and some also want the ability to expand. Innovative young companies like Shonesty, the on-line clothing designer and retailer, like the area but may not stay in Boulder unless housing and amenities are provided.

7) Flood plain issues need mitigation to allow for the East Edge plan, or really any improvements, to ensure the continued viability of this area for businesses.

The panel recommends that the City implement a flood control plan using the Flatirons Golf Course for mitigation efforts. Currently almost all buildings in the study area are located in the flood zone. This issue must be resolved before implementing the East Edge vision, or really for any future redevelopment in the study area.

Assets

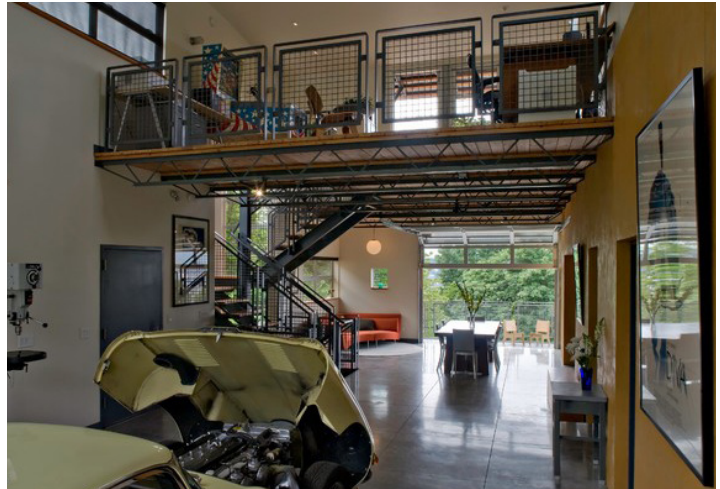
- Land Area of East Arapahoe:** The north side of the Arapahoe corridor is primarily employment-oriented. Residential uses are concentrated in the south side of the corridor between Foothills Parkway and 55th Street. East of 55th Street, land use in the corridor is a mix of commercial and institutional uses and low-density residential areas. The City-owned Flatirons Golf Course is located due south of the study area on Arapahoe. City open space wraps around the study area to the north and east.
- Infrastructure:** Both 55th Street and Arapahoe Avenue are major city arterials. Within the Flatiron Business Park, Central Avenue and Flatiron Parkway form intersecting loops that connect to 55th Street. Multi-use trails connect open space on the north to Valmont City Park, the Goose Creek path, Boulder Junction, and other City parks and trails. Green infrastructure includes: the Boulder Creek open space and multi-use path on the north; South Boulder Creek open space on the east; and a north-south flood-greenway corridor through the center of the study area that channels intermittent flood waters.
- Employment Base:** The East Arapahoe corridor has a high concentration of regionally significant employers, including six or seven of Boulder’s top 10 employers. About 40 percent of the City’s jobs are located within a half-mile of the corridor. Employment in the corridor is generally concentrated north of Arapahoe Avenue.
- Housing and Population:** The TAP study area itself currently has no housing. The East Arapahoe corridor’s population is small relative to the number of jobs, meaning that most workers commute into the corridor. Beyond the site, within the boundaries of Foothills Parkway, Jay Road, 75th Street, and Baseline Avenue, the estimated 2016 population was 8,341 residents, according to an ESRI market study based on American Community Survey data. Two-thirds of the 3,879 households in this larger area have two or three residents, and slightly more than half are families. Some 565 homes were built after 2000, and none have been built since 2010.
- Services:** The study area includes affordable service industrial and storage units, but has limited convenient daily services, such as a food market, cafés/coffee shops, pharmacy, dry cleaner, or salon.
- Landowners and Key Stakeholders:** The study area has more than 270 businesses and 88 owners of 132 properties. The Flatiron Business Park, developed from the 1970s to 1990s, has larger lots and more consolidated ownership. Key landowners and stakeholders in the TAP study area include: Ball, Boulder Community Health, Unico, W.W. Reynolds Companies, Westland Development Services, CU Boulder, Crescent Real Estate, Colorado Landmarks, Boulder Housing Partners, Thistle, Corden Pharma, Premier Credit Union, Elevations, Stok, Upslope Brewery, Blackbelly, Boulder Humane Society, Sea to Summit, and Shonesty. Key stakeholders are listed at the end of this report.

“Businesses could stay in Flatiron Park in a six-story commercial building instead of a two-story building--or they could be residential, with cool studios and lofts, the next generation of an innovation hub, rezoned to allow for the next iteration and to allow companies to grow up.”

—Renee Martinez-Stone

Challenges

- No housing and great need for homes for employees with average \$15 starting hourly wages
- Few lunch options and no convenient services within study area
- Auto-dependent development with inadequate transit and transportation network
- Low level of pedestrian and bicycle activity
- Traffic congestion on Arapahoe Avenue during commute and lunch times
- Inadequate parking for commuting employees
- Few nearby outdoor public spaces to relax or recreate besides open space trails
- No sense of place or community, affecting employee satisfaction and retention
- Inefficient land use with many one-story buildings surrounded by parking lots
- Low floor-area ratio impedes possibilities for walkability, mixed uses, and businesses growth
- Many buildings are located in a defined flood zone
- Cost of flood control, new streetscapes, pedestrian-bike improvements
- Study area disconnected from other parts of City



Example of “industrial modern” live-work architecture that could add housing to Flatiron Business Park.



Made from custom-assembled shipping containers, the Gravitas development at 25th and Larimer in Denver is an example of “industrial modern” retail/office architecture.



In Atlanta and other communities, greenways similar to South Boulder Creek are attracting new workforce housing projects near trailheads. Here’s an example along the 33-mile Belt Line.

V. Summary of Recommendations

1. Working with property owners, the City should be bold and create a master plan for developing an innovation hub linked to a sustainable neighborhood that includes housing and services.
2. Rezone the study area into three new districts to allow for mixed-use/industrial as well as business retention/expansion.
3. Implement flood control measures that use the Flatiron Golf Course for flood retention/filtration so buildings north of Arapahoe can be removed from a redrawn flood map.
4. First priority: Redevelop the land between Arapahoe and the BNSF rail corridor into a pedestrian and bike-friendly mixed-use residential and commercial neighborhood with an interior main street and convenient services.
5. Create anchors for the new interior street that support innovative-creative companies and other businesses, their employees, and residents, such as an arts and culture focus on the west end and a food market, farm-to-table dining, and urban agriculture focus on the east.
6. Increase the maximum building height to allow taller buildings to accommodate new mixed-use housing, commercial development, or business expansion.
7. Develop a variety of housing types and sizes for local business employees and their families, including apartments, townhomes, and live-work studios.
8. Develop a multi-modal mobility hub at 55th and Arapahoe to provide “last-mile” connections for current and future transportation options, such as bus rapid transit (BRT), bikes, bike-share, car-share, electric vehicle charging, on-site shuttles, as well as parking.
9. Develop new transportation connections within the study area’s green

“If the zoning were written in an open enough way, it would allow for housing but also denser office and industrial as well, and let the market determine what gets built.”

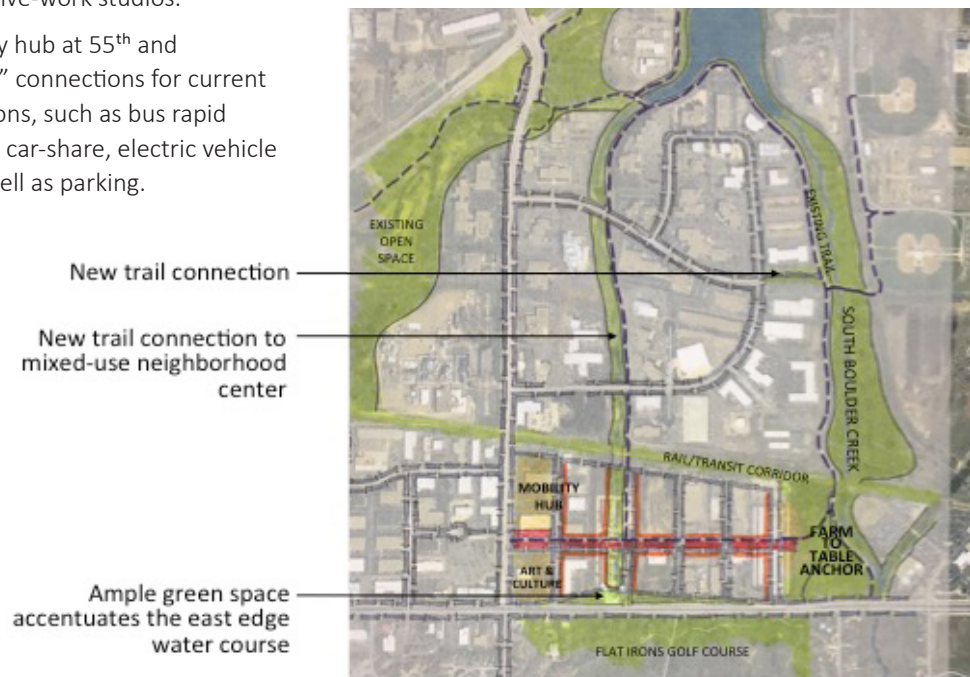
– John Norris



The panel advocated for the addition of sustainable technologies and urban agriculture, such as this rooftop greenhouse.

infrastructure, including multi-use paths that link people to transit, workplaces, services, and open space.

10. Create a transportation management association (TMA) to manage transit incentives and alternatives to private vehicle use for commuting, such as car pools, car sharing, bus passes, staggered work schedules, and shared parking.
11. Develop the study area incrementally to achieve a much more sustainable urban neighborhood, in keeping with the Boulder Valley Comprehensive plan and the City’s goals for infill development.



VI. Vision in Greater Detail

The ULI TAP's vision and recommendations reflect policies and core values of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP). These BVCP policies include:

- using sustainability as a unifying framework to meet environmental, economic, and social goals;
- evolutionary redevelopment toward a more sustainable urban form;
- environmental stewardship and climate action; and
- an all-mode transportation system to make getting around without a car easy and accessible for everyone.

The TAP vision and Boulder Community Cultural Plan also align in their focus on public arts and culture as a vital element of Boulder's identity and economic development focused on innovation and creativity.

This 325-acre study area offers potential for a compact transit-linked neighborhood similar to a development pattern found in central Boulder, in the wedge of mixed-use residential development framed by 28th Street on the east and 9th Street on the west, between Arapahoe and Pearl. This wedge of urban land has a variety of land uses and densities within a walkable and bikable network linked to transit. With the addition of an interior street, small blocks of residential and commercial development, and pedestrian and bike connections, the study area would reflect the diverse and walkable urban pattern of central Boulder.

The innovation hub and mixed-use/industrial neighborhood provide a campus scale for sustainability, with the street network and multi-use paths connected in loops. Innovative companies can be part of the sustainability discussion: The study area offers great partnership opportunities for campus-wide scale and collaboration with the adjacent power plant and recycling/composting sites.

Land Use and Zoning

The vast majority of the East Arapahoe study area is zoned light-industrial, with a small community-zoned portion at the southwest corner. The TAP team recommends rezoning the study area into three new zones to allow for redevelopment with housing and services to create a mixed-use innovation zone for business, a sustainable mixed-use

residential/industrial neighborhood zone, and a mixed-use/industrial office zone. The zones can be connected by localized transportation such as bike share and a circulator bus, as well as a new multi-use path. Zoning incentives should reward such sustainable technologies as solar/wind farms, naturalized stormwater management, and water conservation/recycling.

"One goal is to reduce the number of people who feel they have to drive to this site – 80 percent do. We'd like employees to arrive early or stay late not because they want to snag a parking stall, but because they want to be there."

—Ann Bowers

The TAP panel recognized the limitations and political realities of Boulder's height limit, but still recommends exploring increased building height maximums to allow taller buildings in all three zones to accommodate new mixed-use/industrial housing and commercial development. The panel estimated living space for 1,200-2,400 homes ranging in size from micro units for single residents to townhomes for families. At 60 feet in height, five-stories of a housing-retail building would allow for podium parking and/or first-floor

retail with appropriately higher ceilings, and four floors of apartments with stick-built construction. It is important to note that the TAP's redevelopment recommendations are not conditioned on breaking the 55-foot height barrier, but the panel agreed strongly that this option was well worth exploring.

The three zones could offer opportunities such as the following:

A. Innovation Zone with Office and Live-Work Space

- Flatiron Business Park
- Light industry service businesses
- Redevelopment opportunities for office, commercial, and residential loft/studio space
- Not a clean sweep of site, but adding housing and new development incrementally

Located north of the rail-transit corridor, the Innovation Zone encompassing the Flatiron Business Park and light-industrial area should retain existing large and smaller-scale businesses and allow for expansion. Connections to transit and amenities such as restaurants and services in the mixed-use areas, as well as the focus on arts and culture, provide a creative environment and welcoming sense of place that supports an innovative and entrepreneurial culture.

Incubator space, perhaps in smaller more affordable

residential lofts and live-work studios, is located throughout the Innovation Zone, as well as on the north side of the mixed-use neighborhood. The Innovation Zone is connected to transit via the street network and new multi-use trails that also link to the open space/trail system. About half of the 2,400 homes envisioned in the study area could be accommodated in this zone while maintaining the current business base.

B. Mixed-Use/Industrial Neighborhood Zone

- Redevelopment opportunities for housing and convenient retail services
- New east-west main street with "Boulder-size" blocks
- Anchors focused on mobility hub with arts and culture at west end and farm-to-table food at east end

Located between Arapahoe and the Innovation Zone, the Mixed-Use/Industrial Neighborhood Zone includes land redeveloped for residential and commercial uses. Existing lots are superblocks and extend from Arapahoe north to the rail tracks. The panel recommended dividing them into 10 blocks to provide a more livable urban scale, with lots divided into 300-foot blocks, similar to downtown Boulder.

A new walkable and bikable east-west street connects the mobility hub anchor on the west end to the farm-to-table anchor on the east end. Ground-floor retail services and businesses related to arts and culture are located near the mobility hub. About half of the 2,400 homes envisioned in the study area could be accommodated in this zone. Homes flanking this street are located on floors above retail space



In Washington, DC, Union Market recast a decrepit wholesale warehouse as a new food hub that has revitalized an industrial section of New York Avenue NW.

and in separate rowhouses and multifamily apartment buildings. Homes at the north edge of the zone near the rail corridor could provide live-work opportunities.

There is some on-street parking for retail services, offices, and homes, though most parking is accommodated in multifamily podium structures and in a parking facility near the mobility hub. This zone is connected to transit via 55th and Arapahoe, the mobility hub, and the existing interior street network, with new pedestrian and bike connections linking to the innovation zone and open space.

C. Mixed-use Office Zone

- Office buildings with ability to expand
- Retail services on ground floor

Located west of 55th, this portion of the study area comprises land used by Ball Aerospace and other businesses. Retail services and parking could be added to ground floor development, but because of the nature of this high-tech industry, onsite chemical processes, and security needs, housing is not recommended. Buildings are four or five stories, up to 60 feet in height, following the example of an existing Ball building next to the study area.

Mobility Hub, Transportation Options, and Connectivity

The goal of the Mobility Hub, transportation options, and connectivity is to reduce the number of people who drive to and within this site—as 80 percent do. This would be a great place for innovative “last-mile solutions” connecting to employment throughout Boulder.

Similar to a Superstop and complementary to the Boulder Junction transit hub, the East Edge’s mobility hub provides short, mid, and long-term transportation opportunities. Commuters and residents could arrive in the Innovation Hub by bus, bike, on-demand car service, or other modes. They could get to their workplaces, homes, or services by walking, biking, or taking a shuttle or other alternative mode through the study area. They could also drive, though alternative modes would be encouraged. The mobility hub includes bus/BRT platforms, van pools, bike parking, bike sharing, real-time transit information, on-demand rideshare, car-share, electric vehicle charging, shuttles, neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs), smart parking, and pedestrian facilities. A potential structured parking facility near the mobility hub could accommodate some commuter vehicles, parking for retail services or offices, and additional parking for homes in the neighborhood.

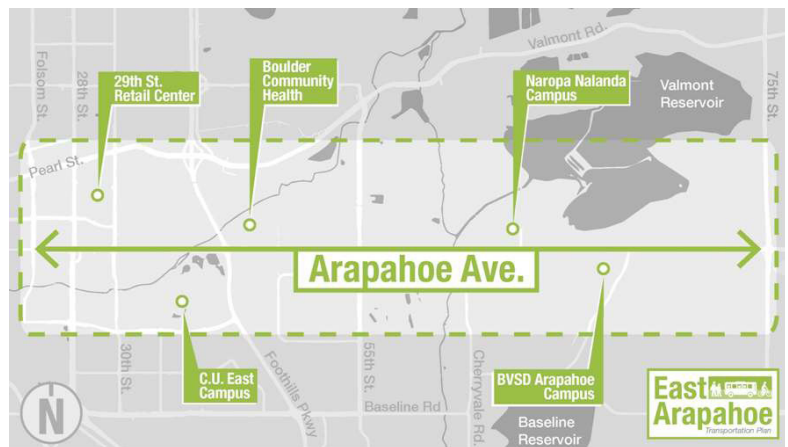
Transportation demand management (TDM) encourages the use of modes other than the single-occupant vehicle. A TDM plan managed by a transportation management association could provide EcoPasses and other transit incentives, as well as car pools, car sharing, staggered work schedules, and shared parking. The panel's strategic TDM plan includes:

1. Neighborhood site enhancement: connections to existing and future transportation options

2. Mobility hub: transportation zone for all transportation modes and parking
3. BRT corridor on Arapahoe: inviting BRT access

The TDM plan should include parking management, with a parking ratio maximum as a trade-off for higher densities to encourage alternative mode use. If needed, a new parking structure could be flexibly designed for future uses (such as office or housing) if autonomous vehicles and Uber/Lyft-type demand options reduce the need for private vehicle use.

"Strong sustainability options include a solar garden array, wind energy, a campus-wide energy monitoring program, and geothermal energy," as well as multi-modal transportation, a community garden showpiece, composting with Western Disposal, and zoning incentives for green buildings.
– Chris Achenbach



Draft East Arapahoe Transportation Plan overview.

VII. Next Steps

The “East Edge” vision could be realized through one of several strategic development scenarios. Depending on property acquisition, financing, zoning, transit decisions, and other considerations, redeveloping the site with an innovation hub, new mixed-use/industrial neighborhood, and mobility hub could require five to 20 years. Redevelopment could be achieved through urban renewal efforts or by a developer assembling and developing the privately owned lots.

The infrastructure framework and the mixed-use district, mobility hub, and housing throughout the study area could be developed in total by a master developer or by multiple developers, possibly partnered with the City. Financing could be accomplished through a special district, such as a business improvement district (BID) or a tax-increment financing district (TIF). The vision could be accomplished in phases, perhaps following a pilot project.

The Boulder Chamber and Boulder Area REALTOR Association will present this ULI TAP report and recommendations to the Boulder Planning Board and City Council. The goal is to facilitate discussion toward a more sustainable East Boulder—our new “East Edge.”



VIII. Key Stakeholders Interviewed by the ULI panel

Kai Abelkis, Boulder Community Health; Suzy Ageton, former Boulder Deputy Mayor, Better Boulder, Open Boulder; Peter Aweida, President and CEO of Westland Development Services, Inc.; Adam Block, Shinesty; Kathleen Bracke, GO Boulder; Daryll Brown, Boulder Community Health; Matt Cutter, Upslope Brewery; Shelley Dunbar, Sea to Summit, Open Boulder; Karl Gerken, Ball Aerospace; Christina Gosnell, Environmental Advisory Board, Clean Energy Action, BoCHA, Better Boulder; Bill Holicky, former Boulder Planning Board and Boulder Downtown Design Advisory Board, Better Boulder; Ken Hotard, Boulder Area REALTOR Association, Better Boulder co-chair; Kristin Hyser, Affordable Housing, City of Boulder; Jonathan Lind, Corden Pharma; Deborah Malden, Arts Liaison, Boulder Chamber; Betsey Martens, Boulder Housing Partners; Mimi Mather, BMBA, Root House

Studio, Better Boulder; Gavin McMillan, Element Properties; Andrea Meneghel, Public Affairs Director, Boulder Chamber; Ben Molk, Golf Capital Partners; Jens Nicolaysen, Shinesty; Francoise Poinsette, former Boulder City Council, Better Boulder; Sue Prant, Community Cycles, Boulder Junction TDM Commission, Better Boulder; Matt Rarden, Premier Members Credit Union; Hosea Rosenberg, Blackbelly; Jean Sanson, Senior Transportation Planner, City of Boulder; Zane Selvans, Clean Energy Action, BoCHA, Better Boulder, Transportation Advisory Board; David Scott, Colorado Landmarks; Adrian Sopher, Boulder Planning Board, Better Boulder; Jay Sugnet, Senior Housing Planner, City of Boulder; Mike Tressler, Elevations Credit Union; Peter Vitale, stok; Chris White, Shinesty; Jeff Wingert, WW Reynolds Company, David Workman, Unico

IX. Stakeholder Interview Comments

“The site is a wasteland now, a hostile environment for human beings, with a lot of surface parking. Having housing there could help with regional and intra-city commutes, and could create an urban environment that’s nice to hang out in. It would be another core corridor that is self-sustaining and more diverse. I’d love substantially more housing on Arapahoe, which is regional connector.”

—Multimodal transportation advocate

“We have 25 white-collar employees in addition to warehouse staff. No one can afford to live in Boulder. We’re a start-up, which brings amazing energy, and if [the city] can’t provide affordable places to live, we’ll leave, we’ll go to Longmont.”

—Start-up business owner

“We have 250 employees and have discussed moving to I-25 and US 36, near Westminster. We lose employees because they can’t afford to live here. We have trouble keeping lower-wage employees.”

—Financial institution executive

“The vibe of the corridor is pretty lame--traffic, noise, businesses with big parking lots, curb cuts. It’s not pleasant for walking or biking because distances between attractors are too great. But it has good potential, with lots of single-story buildings surrounded by parking that could be much better. It has more potential than any other corridor in Boulder.”

—Director of nonprofit organization



“We need another walkable mixed-use environment like downtown Boulder. I love open space and don’t want to create a sprawling environment. I want a walkable urban place that creates an opportunity for young people to live here. If not, this place will stagnate and die.”

—Start-up business owner

“People want lifestyle where they can walk from their office to get a beer and some food.”

—Planning board member

"Most employees live in Longmont or other places because they can't live here. We need housing less elaborate than Boulder Junction, like the micro unit idea."
—Financial institution executive

"We obviously have a problem with housing at \$1-million-plus here. We have a lot of entry-level early career employees, and that presents a problem for recruiting and creates long commutes. It's a bit of a challenge for us. There's a lot of discussion about land use and housing, and how we facilitate that in a politically charged environment."
—Start-up business executive

"I love the idea of residential, maybe on top of warehouses or office buildings....also townhomes and apartments and mixing them between buildings. [We need] that energy you can feel on the Hill....Our employees are young."
—Start-up business owner

"A lot of businesses need incubator work space. We want to keep incubator companies and allow them to expand."
—Local business owner

"How do we stitch residential into these new use areas? That would go a long way to making a neighborhood."
—Former planning board member

"I have a general concern about replacing services and industrial and small businesses, things like a car wash and upholstery shop. This discussion about displacement was exactly what we had for Boulder Junction, because there we lost services that got replaced by housing. So there are plenty of opportunities here for housing, but I would register my concern that we pay attention to smaller businesses."
—Former city council member

"I'd hate to see [the study area] redeveloped in a way that would displace its industrial edginess, but I could see making it work for more intense use on site and have cheaper spaces for affordable businesses as well as housing."
—Alternative transportation advocate

"I would be cautious about total redevelopment of the area. North of the tracks, there are big buildings with primary jobs. South of tracks, the buildings themselves aren't as substantial."
—Architect

"Make a big bold statement—lots of housing, different sizes and types, for all stages of life."
—Housing advocate

"Multifamily housing could work here, as we have good transit and transportation corridors to get to Denver."
—Landowner

"We need more density, and four-to-five-story buildings" to create more affordable housing as well as efficiencies in the cost of construction."
—Affordable housing advocate

"Boulder needs a willingness to experiment more. We need freedom to make a mistake or two. We have a lot of two and three-story flat-roof buildings."
—Affordable housing advocate



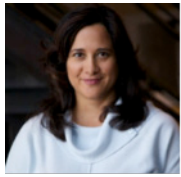
Local business leaders being interviewed by the panel.

"There aren't that many neighborhoods around [the study area] that will object, so this could be a real opportunity to experiment... We've been talking for some time about changing the height limit as we go east, and here is where it might be easier to protect the views."
—Former city council member

"I have 20 employees, and about half make \$30,000 average annually, and half make \$15 per hour median. Our people who live in town generally have a spouse who makes more or has been here a long time. Younger staff have a hard time staying in Boulder. This affects hourly workers because they commute from so far. As an employer, I'd like more housing, not necessarily all affordable, but rentals that are inexpensive enough that they are affordable. Most service jobs are filled by people in their 20s."
—Director of nonprofit organization

"How can we provide more housing types for more different types of lifestyles? Also how do we create a place along East Arapahoe with 15-minute neighborhoods for people to live and work there? That's the opportunity for East Arapahoe. It could become an amazing place."
—Transportation planner

X. ULI Volunteer Panelists and Acknowledgments



Renee Martinez-Stone is the Director of the West Denver Renaissance Collaborative (WDRC), an initiative of the Denver Housing Authority (DHA), City and County of Denver, and several local non-governmental organizations. The mission of the WDRC is to foster equitable revitalization in West Denver, advance the livelihood of existing residents, leverage local partners and community leaders, and help neighborhoods to preserve and amplify their existing multicultural character. At the WDRC, Renee is working to align resources, critical assets, leaders, and investments in West Denver with the goal of moving community priorities and investment opportunities from concept to implementation. Renee’s prior work includes many Denver metro infill redevelopment projects 1996 to present, where she has provided master planning, site development studies, and revitalization strategies for more than 20 years as a private consultant. Renee’s “community-based” approach has creatively incorporated community stakeholders into plans and award-winning built projects with meaningful outcomes. Renee is a fifth-generation Colorado native, wife, and mother of two daughters.

Chris Achenbach is founder of Urban Roots Development Company, and is committed to crafting sustainable, profitable, outside-of-the-box, mixed-use development projects. As a licensed Architect and Class A General Contractor, Chris brings technical know-how together with extensive development experience delivering some of the most sustainable and successful projects in the Denver region. Before Urban Roots, Chris co-founded Zocalo Community Development, Inc where he served as Principal for 12 years, overseeing the design, development, and construction of numerous signature mixed-use and residential projects throughout the area. These projects helped shape the character of Denver’s redeveloping neighborhoods, and delivered record breaking financial returns while redefining the role of sustainability in large scale, institutional sized development projects. Chris’s project experience includes Solera, downtown Denver’s first LEED Gold high-rise apartments; 2020 Lawrence, 231 units and LEED Gold in the ballpark neighborhood; Cadence, a pioneering 13 story LEED Gold apartment building in the heart of Denver Union Station; Coda Cherry Creek, 12 stories and 182 units of LEED Gold high-style living in Denver’s finest urban neighborhood, and The Grove Stapleton, 160 LEED Gold apartments for residents 55 and older. Chris served as Chair of ULI Colorado’s Executive Committee from 2011 to 2013.



Ann Bowers, Principal and Project Manager in Fehr & Peers’ Denver office, has over twenty-five years of comprehensive transportation engineering and planning experience. Ann has a keen understanding of the dynamic between land use and transportation in the often challenging environs of the Greater Metro Denver area and the Rocky Mountain region. Her areas of expertise include the most advanced, state-of-the-practice transportation analysis techniques and working with clients to achieve positive and sustainable transportation solutions that improve communities. This has led her to work with clients as diverse as small landowners, large developers, consulting firms, city agencies, and state and local agencies. Ann is a registered Professional Engineer in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Idaho and is also a certified Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE).

Dr. Glenn Mueller teaches investment, development and real estate capital markets (REIT & CMBS) courses at the University of Denver. He chairs the school’s Appointment, Promotion & Tenure (APT) committee & is a member of Daniels College APT committee. Dr. Mueller provides Real Estate Market Cycle Research and Investment Strategy for Dividend Capital and Black Creek’s Institutional Real Estate Investment Groups, Non-Traded and Public REIT groups. He was also investment committee chairman of Dividend Capital Investments from 2005 to 2008 when the fund was sold. Dr. Mueller has 40 years of real estate industry experience, including 32 years of research, with 100 published articles in areas of real estate market cycle analysis, real estate securities analysis (REITs), public and private market investment strategies real estate capital markets, portfolio,



investment and diversification analysis. Dr. Mueller received the Richard Radcliff Award for Groundbreaking Research in Real Estate Market Cycles by The American Real Estate Society in 2010, the Graaskamp Award for Research Leadership from the American Real Estate Society in 2004 and the Graaskamp Award for Research Excellence from the Pension Real Estate Association in 2001. He was the Co-Editor of the Journal of Real Estate Portfolio Management 2000-2014. Prior to DU and Dividend Capital, Mueller was a professor at Johns Hopkins University and Colorado State University. He has held top research positions at Legg Mason, Price Waterhouse, ABKB/LaSalle Investment Management, and Prudential Real Estate Investors. He was also a developer/builder in New England. Mueller holds a B.S.B.A. from the University of Denver, an MBA from Babson College, and a Ph.D. in Real Estate from Georgia State University.



John Norris formed The Norris Design Company in 1985 to provide comprehensive professional services in land planning and landscape architecture. He has worked with both the private and public sectors, and throughout his 32 years of practice has been responsible for planning and landscape architecture of new and renovated campus projects as well as educational, health care, athletic facilities, parks and recreation, community planning, commercial and institutional projects. His ability to quickly grasp the complexities of a project has resulted in John's recognition locally and nationally for his creative, dramatic and functionally sound design solutions. A meticulous and conscientious project administrator, he works well as a team leader and as a contributing team member.

With more than three decades of design and project management experience, **Terry Willis** serves as principal and leader of KTG Architecture and Planning, guiding the design and implementation of a wide variety of high-profile developments. His skills and considerable expertise include creative planning, architectural design, technical and management leadership in the design and construction of residential, commercial, institutional, hospitality, transit-oriented and mixed-use developments throughout the U.S. and internationally. Mr. Willis' LEED accreditation and experience in designing sustainable buildings, both as a way to reduce client operating costs, and as a function of corporate citizenship, are a tremendous long-term benefit to clients. With extensive mixed-use and residential experience across the Rocky Mountain region, Mr. Willis has worked to create both Stapleton's E. 29th Ave. Town Center in Denver, and the master plan for Forest City Enterprise's Central Park Station project at the Stapleton community's only rail stop. In addition, he has led the design team for the St. Julian Hotel and the 900 West Pearl projects in Boulder. Known for providing design solutions and strategy that root his projects to their context, Mr. Willis is at the forefront of some of Colorado's most forward-thinking architecture. Mr. Willis is a graduate of The Ohio State University with a Bachelors and Master of Architecture degree, followed by leadership positions at SOM and Urban Design Group/4240 Architecture prior to joining KTG as principal of the Denver studio.



Acknowledgments

Boulder Chamber: John Tayer, Elisabeth Patterson, and Andrea Meneghel

Ken Hotard and Boulder Area REALTOR Association

Clif Harald, Boulder Economic Development Council

City of Boulder Comprehensive Planning, Go Boulder/Transportation, and Affordable Housing Staff

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ULI Colorado TAPs Committee Co-Chairs: LaDonna Baertlein and Al Colussy

Additional research: Joan Campbell, Urban Land Institute, and Ellen Dunham-Jones, Georgia Tech

Writer: Kathleen McCormick, Fountainhead Communications, LLC

VI. Overview of ULI Colorado Advisory Services



Overview of ULI Advisory Services: Since 1947, the national ULI Advisory Services program has assembled 400-plus ULI-member teams to help sponsors find solutions for issues including downtown redevelopment, community revitalization, and affordable housing, among other matters. In Colorado, ULI Advisory Services have provided solutions for such key sites as the Colorado Convention Center, Coors Field, Fitzsimons, and the Denver Justice Center. ULI Colorado’s Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs) offer the same expertise at the local level. Each panel is composed of qualified and unbiased professionals who volunteer their time. Panel chairs are respected ULI members with previous panel experience. Since 2003, ULI Colorado has completed more than 50 TAPs leading to positive policy changes and built projects.

The Colorado District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Colorado) is the 1,400-member field office of the global ULI, a 501-c-3 nonprofit dedicated to best practices in land use. ULI Colorado mobilizes the volunteer skills of members from 26 different professions for the betterment of careers and communities. ULI’s key issues included affordable housing, building healthy places, diversity, economic revitalization, transit-oriented development, and compact, walkable development. ULI Colorado is led by volunteer chair Amy Cara, a partner in East West Denver. The staff includes executive director Michael Leccese, director Eric Swan, manager Sarah Franklin, and associate Charles Allison-Godfrey. ULI Colorado conducts 40+ programs a year including panel discussions, project tours, advisory services, mentoring and leadership, community service and publications.

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The Shinessy clothing retailer, Blackbelly restaurant and Wild Woods brewery are three examples of creative and economic energy coming into the district.