



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

November 23, 2012

Purpose

These Guiding Principles...

- ✓ Have been approved by City Council on November 1, 2012;
- ✓ Signify a shared statement about the Boulder Civic Area;
- ✓ Are consistent with and build on Project Assumptions;
- ✓ Carry forward significant community and board/commission input to date;
- ✓ Will guide further development of a comprehensive vision for the Boulder Civic Area as well as the definition and evaluation of options during the next project phase; and
- ✓ In general, are not intended to be statements about particular new uses or specific programs for the area; those will be developed in options and evaluated in the next stage.

Introduction

Boulder’s Civic Area will be a place for everyone—a lively and distinct destination that reflects our community’s values, where people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds feel welcome to recreate, socialize, deliberate, learn and access city services. The green space and beauty along Boulder Creek will provide significant open space and park spaces and will be the spine of a unifying design theme that weaves existing and potential new facilities with a rich diversity of civic, recreational, artistic and cultural amenities and programs, creating a true civic heart for the Boulder community.

The Guiding Principles

1. The Civic Heart of Boulder

The Boulder Civic Area has symbolic, geographic, and functional importance and should serve as an inclusive place for people to interact with each other and with government. The area should be complementary to Pearl Street (the commercial heart) and downtown. In the future, the Civic Area will:

- a. Serve as the primary location for city management and government, including functional and interactive places for the community to interface and conduct city business and be creative;
- b. Represent the cultural richness, history, and diversity of our community;
- c. Continue to be one of the major centers for art in Boulder;
- d. Allow for phasing, with flexibility for new ideas to be ever-evolving and incorporated over time;
- e. Be maintained as the largest thematically cohesive, unified public outdoor space in Central Boulder;
- f. Be a model of design excellence with compelling architecture and design reflecting forward thinking;
- g. Be an enjoyable destination for the community and visitors;
- h. Be an integrated place that blends “natural” and “built” environments;
- i. Be designed to be welcoming, accessible, comfortable, clean and safe;

- j. Foster programming and design of spaces and facilities to encourage use and participation by all age groups, income levels, and visitors and locals, avoiding the predominance of any one group of people;
- k. Complement and link with surrounding neighborhoods and destinations, including downtown, Goss-Grove, CU and University Hill, and Boulder High School; and
- l. Include a new urban design and streetscape character for Canyon Boulevard – to make it more of a “boulevard” with attractive landscaping that is comfortable for pedestrians, bicycles, and accessible by transit.

2. Life and Property Safety

The Boulder Civic Area is located within the 100-year floodplain, and much of the land lies within the High Hazard Zone (HHZ). The city will meet or exceed existing flood standards, including avoiding placing new structures and parking in the HHZ and will be proactive about planning for and educating about floods. Specifically, the city will:

- a. Ensure any proposal meets or exceeds all current flood-related codes and regulations, which prohibit new development and substantial improvement to existing facilities in the HHZ;
- b. Proactively develop a plan for removal of surface parking and structures that are in the HHZ and plan how to relocate facilities and uses after a flood;
- c. Educate the public and Civic Area and building users about safety and risks associated with flooding and natural and public values of water (e.g., through public art, landscape elements, and interpretive signage);
- d. Create future landscape plans that enhance public safety and orientation of visitors to flood egress routes, while also enhancing the aesthetic or artistic character of the area; and
- e. Ensure that any new facilities (e.g., residential, lodging, public assembly, emergency services, and critical government operations) will be in compliance with a potential Critical Facilities ordinance, if adopted.

3. Outdoor Culture and Nature

The Boulder Civic Area is a central place to enjoy the outdoors in the middle of the city. The linear “green” along Boulder Creek will be a unifying focus, providing natural beauty, ecological function, flood safety, recreational, art, and cultural opportunities. The city will:

- a. Maintain or expand the green, open space (no net loss), particularly in the High Hazard Flood Zone – as a blend of natural, restored creek, urban parks and playgrounds, and community gardens;
- b. Create a unifying “linear green” theme and cohesive outdoor spaces – uniting the parks south of downtown as a significant asset to the city’s overall park system;
- c. Protect existing significant trees and shrubs (taking into consideration their anticipated lifespan) and maintain an ecologically healthy creek channel;
- d. Blend public art into outdoor spaces to attract, inspire, educate, and encourage exploration and play;
- e. Allow safe access to Boulder Creek in locations that will not damage ecological value;
- f. Provide and maintain views and breathing room;
- g. Improve the park-like quality and linear connections along the Farmers Ditch; and
- h. Make outdoor spaces feel safe and welcoming (e.g., through lighting, seating, strategic landscape and design, programs and activity, and enforcement).

4. Celebration of History and Existing Assets

The Boulder Civic Area has a historical focus and many long-standing functions and facilities highly valued by the community, such as the library, Sister City Plaza, and Farmers’ Market. Existing community assets will continue to play a vital role in the area. The community will:

- a. Continue and expand the Farmers’ Market as a vital component of the area, source of community pride and economic benefit, and source for local and healthy food. Partner to expand the Farmers’ Market extent and function as an outdoor market, and possibly expand it as a year-round (or extended season) local foods marketplace;
- b. Encourage sharing of information about local food and farms and regional relations (e.g., Farmers Ditch);
- c. Preserve, reflect and celebrate the area’s fully inclusive history (e.g., indigenous populations, mining, the railroad, Olmsted’s linear park and landmarked structures);
- d. Preserve historic structures in accordance with city policies and regulations;

- e. Provide interpretation, and integrate history with arts, culture, local food, and any new structures or designs; and
- f. Ensure that existing assets contribute positively to the area and are vital and useful (e.g., address Bandshell use, access and delivery/noise; increase enjoyment of Sister City Plaza) and explore a full range of options, such as programming, improving, relocating, or partial change, etc.

5. Enhanced Access and Connections

The Boulder Civic Area has well-used bicycle and pedestrian amenities and convenient transit connections, serving as both an important destination and connector. Travel and access to the area will continue to be improved. The city will:

- a. Continue to improve the pedestrian and bicycle experience and amenities;
- b. Continue to improve connections and wayfinding to/from downtown for those on foot or bike or using transit;
- c. Explore replacement of surface lots with structured parking;
- d. Assess the parking needs for proposed new uses to address the carrying capacity for all modal access and potential for shared parking;
- e. Address conflicts and connectivity along the Boulder Creek Path, which is a significant transportation route and recreational amenity (in and through the area);
- f. Reduce the barrier-effect of major thoroughfares (e.g., Canyon Boulevard, Arapahoe Avenue and Broadway) and improve their aesthetic quality; and
- g. Explore feasibility of shared, closed, or events street(s) (e.g., 13th Street).

6. A Place for New Community Activity and Arts

The Boulder Civic Area may offer potential to expand civic services or cultural, arts, science, educational or entertainment amenities that are otherwise lacking in the community. Any new facilities will provide a high level of public benefit and:

- a. Increase the area's potential for great beauty and attention through artistically compelling architecture and site design;
- b. Elegantly blend indoor and outdoor spaces to encourage movement and gathering;
- c. Provide a vibrant mix of uses to encourage activity and inclusiveness throughout daytime and evening hours and around the year; and
- d. Fit the area's overall public purpose and be harmonious with (but not a replication of) activity on Pearl Street and downtown.

7. A Viable and Sustainable Future

All future uses and changes in the Boulder Civic Area's public properties will exemplify the community's sustainability values (i.e., economic, social and environmental) and will:

- a. Rely on and encourage partnerships in which key roles, such as administrative, financial and program services, are collaboratively but formally shared between the city and other entities;
- b. Demonstrate consideration of sound financial analysis, including likely capital and ongoing operations and maintenance costs for public and private uses;
- c. Prove community benefit, increase inclusiveness, and minimize impact to like-uses, venues and nearby neighborhoods;
- d. Conserve energy, consider the use of renewable energy, minimize waste and carbon emissions, conserve water and improve water and air quality; and
- e. Provide an educational and experiential component.