



Community Planning & Permitting

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BOULDER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

July 21, 2026, 1:00 p.m.

All public hearings and meetings will be offered in a hybrid format where attendees can join through **Zoom** or **in-person** at the Boulder County Courthouse, 3rd Floor, 1325 Pearl Street, Boulder.

Staff: Hannah Hippely, Long Range Planning Division Manager

Docket BVCP-25-0001: Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Major Update

Revisions to the recommended ten-year major update to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan.

Public testimony: The Board of County Commissioners may decide to take public comment on the proposed changes made by the other bodies only.

Action Requested: Decision

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND	1
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR RECONSIDERATION	2
CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY CITY COUNCIL	4

BACKGROUND

The recommended Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan has been deliberated on by all four bodies: Planning Board on June 16, Planning Commission on June 17, Board of County Commissioners on June 25, City Council on June 25. This second round of considerations will attempt to rectify the various changes proposed to reach agreement by all four bodies.

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) deliberations resulted in an approval with a number of conditions. City Council was the last of the four boards to deliberate on the plan so they were able to consider all of the recommended changes and conditions of approval that were applied by Planning Board and the BOCC. City Council accepted a number of the BOCC's conditions of approval but not all of them. In order to obtain the necessary four body approval (County Planning Commission, City Planning Board, Board of County Commissioners, City Council), the BOCC is asked to reconsider their conditions of approval that were not accepted by City Council.

Planning Commission and Planning Board are asked to reconsider their approvals on July 15 and July 21 respectively.

Claire Levy County Commissioner **Marta Loachamin** County Commissioner **Ashley Stolzmann** County Commissioner

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR RECONSIDERATION

P. 14-17 50 Years of Planning: Looking Back and Moving Forward

The BOCC conditioned their approval of the plan on this section being deleted as they found it to be missing relevant pieces of history and included unsubstantiated claims. Broader concerns regarding who decides history and how certain versions of history may be sanctioned were raised during the BOCC's discussion.

City Council did not accept the condition and expressed the following during discussion:

- *appreciation for BOCC conversation,*
- *pride in telling a more well-rounded history of planning decisions including a more diverse perspective,*
- *no significant concerns were raised by any of the bodies at the 4-body meeting at East Rec Center in April,*
- *desire to provide an overview of context and common understanding for all readers,*
- *could be hosted elsewhere by the city if resolution cannot be reached.*

P. 70 Policy 82 Housing Diversity and Supply The city and county supports increasing the housing supply by promoting a full spectrum of more affordable housing types and price points, including prioritizing middle housing and middle income opportunities throughout the city, that enable people to remain in and join the community as their needs, incomes and household compositions change over time.

This policy was amended by the BOCC to add the county, highlighting county support for the city to increase housing supply, affordable types and prioritize middle housing types and units affordable to middle income households.

City Council did not accept the condition and expressed the following during discussion:

- *some members expressed interest in stating goal of prioritizing middle income housing,*
- *the addition of "the county" in this policy is inconsistent with the BOCC approach to changing all of Area 2 to the Rural Lands future land use designation which limits the ability to add housing diversity and supply,*
- *did not accept the Planning Board condition either and voted to maintain the original language.*

P. 69 Policy 79 Municipal Airport: The city maintains the Boulder Municipal Airport as a safe environment for aviation, aviation-related businesses and special events, aviation-related research and education, and business-related travel, scientific and research flights, recreation and tourism, flight training and vocational education, aerial fire-fighting, emergency medical flights, and medical and disaster-related support for the city and

county. The city ~~will help manage~~ **strives to minimize** and mitigate noise and other impacts of airport operations **via methods such as noise abatement procedures**, land use **tools, controls** and partnership with the State and fuel providers to offer unleaded fuel. The city **promotes the adoption of electric aircraft technology**. ~~is also forward-looking as aircraft electrification becomes reality. The city will continue to build relationships that allow the airport to be a valuable resource for a wider range of people in the Boulder community. The city will coordinate with the county to understand and address inequitable impacts of airport operations on the population that lives, works, plays, and goes to school in proximity to the facility. The city will coordinate with the county to provide education and outreach to residents most impacted by aviation lead, and to provide consistent regulations addressing noise and other airport influences, where possible."~~

City Council did not accept the condition and expressed the following during discussion:

- *the original language was thoroughly vetted by staff and community members,*
- *the operational and specific nature of Planning Board's proposed amendments are not appropriate at the plan level,*
- *the potential that the proposed amendments could lead to unexpected fiscal commitments and/or legal concerns,*
- *openness to removing references to the county to help reach resolution.*

The BOCC determined that the policy included the county to enough of a degree that other bodies should consider the policy. The last sentence was understood to require action from the county. For example, at this time there is not an educational outreach program run by the county relating to the airport and this appears to create a new obligation for the county coordinate with the city to provide such a program. This policy could be redrafted to be more clearly a city only policy which is reasonable since the county does not have authority over the airport or its operation (i.e. mitigation of noise or other impacts stemming from airport operations).

P. 121 Future Land Use Map

The BOCC included changing all areas designated as Neighborhood 1 within the Area 2 - Urban Edge planning area to the Rural Lands future land use designation as a condition of approval. (This also requires minor edits to the Rural Lands designation description (p.118) to reflect that the lands in Area 2 - Urban Edge may be annexed and that their applicable city future land use would be designated at that time).

City Council did not accept the condition and expressed the following during discussion:

- *concern that the change removes important guidance to the community and policy makers about expectations for future land use if annexations were proposed,*
- *finding the change overly broad, particularly as applied to enclaves and properties close to the city,*
- *consideration of a potential alternative to apply the change to Gunbarrel only as the community members who shared concerns with BOCC were Gunbarrel residents.*

If the city and county cannot agree on a future land use designation, these Area II Urban Edge properties will not have a land use designation. Although there would not be a land use designation in the BVCP, the land would remain part of Area II Urban Edge, and the City would apply a land use designation at the time of annexation. It is preferable to have a future land use designation in the BVCP to provide the community with an understanding of what the future could hold upon annexation and as a basis for the city to forecast future needs for services and facilities. If agreement is not obtained during the current update, discussions on this topic could occur in the future.

CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY CITY COUNCIL

City Council was the final body to hold initial deliberations on the recommended plan and they proposed two non-binding recommendations that the BOCC have yet to see:

P.36 The Future of Housing

Context-specific infill and change in neighborhoods can sensitively introduce opportunities for various housing forms, such as duplexes, triplexes, rowhomes, **small houses on small lots**, cottage courts, backyard cottages (ADUs) ~~and as well as~~ multi-unit buildings **near transit** in areas like Neighborhood 1.

This recommended language builds on an edit that was proposed by Planning Board, and accepted by Planning Commission and the BOCC, which read:

Context-specific infill and change in neighborhoods can sensitively introduce opportunities for various housing forms, such as duplexes, triplexes, rowhomes, **small houses on small lots**, cottage courts, backyard cottages (ADUs) and multi-unit buildings in areas like Neighborhood 1.

The proposed edit is in the Future of Housing section and City Council intended to provide more context through an example of where a multi-unit building might be appropriate in Neighborhood 1. This edit does not change a policy or land use classification.

P. 72 Policy 89 Fire Adapted Communities The city and county are committed to creating and sustaining a fire adapted community through a coordinated, region-wide approach to fire and wildfire resilience and prevention throughout the Boulder Valley. Strategies will address the full spectrum of fire and wildfire risk, including urban conflagration, while enhancing public safety, promoting equitable protection and supporting efficient and effective response and recovery. **The city considers an integrated approach to wildfire risk, including emergency management planning and egress capacity, when evaluating development that affects residential density within mapped wildfire ignition zones.**

This recommended language adds wildfire risk as a consideration for city decision makers to include when they are considering residential density in wildfire zones. Since this addition is a city only element, the BOCC does not need to make a decision regarding this change but, we are bringing it to you as the county is referenced in the policy overall.