



Land Use

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BOULDER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, September 20, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

Commissioners' Hearing Room, Third Floor
Boulder County Courthouse, 1325 Pearl Street, Boulder, CO

Consideration of Planning Commission Input for the Draft Regional Affordable Housing Strategic Plan

Staff: Nicole Wobus, Long Range Planning and Policy Manager, Land Use
Amy Oeth, Planner II, Land Use Department

AGENDA

1. Staff presents a summary of outcomes from the PC Affordable Housing Subcommittee meeting
2. Planning Commission questions of staff and PC Affordable Housing Subcommittee members
3. Public Comment (3 minute allowance per individual speaker)
4. Finalization of PC comments on the draft Boulder County Regional Affordable Housing Strategic Plan

SUMMARY AND MEETING OBJECTIVES

Planning Commission (PC) was presented with an overview of the draft Boulder County Regional Affordable Housing Strategic Plan in May. The plan is undergoing revision based on input from stakeholders. At its August meeting, PC determined it would like to submit comments on the draft plan as an entity and decided to hold a subcommittee meeting to discuss topics in greater depth. A subcommittee meeting was held on September 7 (please visit <https://www.bouldercounty.org/government/boards-and-commissions/planning-commission/> for more information). At the September PC meeting, the subcommittee will report back on outcomes and provide a draft of comments for PC to finalize for submittal.

Action Requested: *Finalize PC comments on the draft Boulder County Regional Affordable Housing Strategic Plan.*

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Key Links

- 9/7/17 Affordable Housing Subcommittee meeting information, materials, and recording: <https://www.bouldercounty.org/government/boards-and-commissions/planning-commission/>
- PC May Meeting Minutes: <http://bit.ly/2vOBmdg>
- PC May Meeting Recording: <http://bit.ly/2hK3Dw1>
- Regional Affordable Housing Draft Plan: <https://assets.bouldercounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/affordable-housing-draft-plan.pdf>
- Boulder County Housing Website: <https://www.bouldercounty.org/families/housing/housing-energy/>

I. AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

The Affordable Housing Subcommittee meeting was publicly noticed and held on Sept. 7, 2017. Seven PC members attended the meeting: Mark Bloomfield, Sam Fitch, Lieschen Gargano, Ann Goldfarb, Natalie Feinberg Lopez, Gavin McMillan, and Sean Stewart. The following county staff members attended the meeting: Dale Case, Kim Sanchez, Nicole Wobus (facilitator), Amy Oeth (co-facilitator), Steven Giang, and Anna Milner from the Land Use Department, and Kathy Parker and Kate Burke from the County Attorneys' Office.

The meeting started with each PC attendee stating his or her top priorities and concerns related to affordable housing in the county, with a focus on the draft Regional Affordable Housing Strategic Plan (the plan). Staff made note of themes and areas of common ground that emerged from the statements. Staff also recorded topics raised through the PC members' statements that would be best addressed at a future time as part of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (BCCP) Housing Element update when a broader discussion of affordable housing issues takes place. Next, staff worked with PC members to determine the format for their comments on the plan, and to clarify and supplement the set of themes identified.

Section II of this staff report includes a draft set of comments from PC for the plan. Staff structured and streamlined the comments based on discussion at the subcommittee meeting.

Following is the list of topics individual PC subcommittee members flagged for further consideration as part of the BCCP Housing Element update:

- The role of county-regulated land
- Boulder County as a haven for those seeking an accepting community
 - Many newcomers to the community experience housing struggles.
 - Do Boulder County initiatives build on the community's reputation as a supportive community?

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- Addressing TABOR limitations
- Need for a living wage
- Employers taking responsibility when hiring new staff (e.g., including a budget line item for housing support)
- How the unincorporated community can grow slowly?
- How can the community grow in the best way for the community?
- How communities are changing with regard to affordable housing needs (e.g., the role of job centers, etc.)
- Housing as a component of community resiliency

II. DRAFT COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BOULDER COUNTY REGIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGIC PLAN

PC members who participated in the affordable housing subcommittee meeting drafted an introductory paragraph and discussed areas of common ground among the comments PC members shared at the meeting. The following material represents staff's effort to organize the content into a format suitable for comment submittal. Further discussion and refinement of the draft comments is intended to take place at the September 20 PC meeting by the full Planning Commission. PC will also take into consideration public comments they may receive in writing advance of or through oral testimony at the meeting.

Draft Comments

Affordable housing is an issue that affects all communities in Boulder County. The Boulder County Planning Commission appreciates the direction and the establishment of measureable goals provided by the Boulder County Regional Affordable Housing Strategic Plan Draft and appreciates that the plan allows for each community to implement the goals using the methods most appropriate for their community. Since residents throughout the incorporated and unincorporated parts of the county are already connected by jobs, transportation, air quality impacts, and more, Planning Commission also recognizes the importance of addressing affordable housing at a county level. Finally, Planning Commission values the plan's recognition of the relationship affordable housing has to both health and community resiliency.

Planning Commission has the following specific suggestions for the draft plan:

- The plan should be bold.
 - The plan should reflect that affordable housing is the issue warranting the most attention in our community.
 - Goals should be reviewed to ensure they fully capture the need for affordable housing in the community, recognizing that even if the goals in the draft plan are met, the region will still fall short of replacing all of the market-rate affordable homes that have been lost through appreciation and rising rental costs.
- The plan should include more detail on the need for affordable housing, with clear goals and information about the basis for the goals set forth.
 - PC recognizes the need for affordable housing may be greater than the goals in the draft plan currently reflect.
 - The plan should more clearly articulate goals regarding redevelopment vs. new builds, including the basis for those goals (e.g., the appropriate ratio between rental and ownership units).
 - The plan should include more detail on the types of affordable housing that are needed and the tiers that are being served by these housing types. The need for affordable housing exists for people of all ages, life stages, and family sizes.

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- Planning Commission believes a strong emphasis should be placed on the following:
 - Preservation of existing affordable housing units;
 - Reuse of existing structures and infill to maximize resource efficiency, preserve the county's limited remaining developable land, and lower the cost of living for residents (i.e., locating close to existing services);
 - Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy production in developments to help address affordability and sustainability goals (e.g., striving to make affordable housing developments net energy producers);
 - Prioritizing housing close to transportation and services (including consideration of what transportation services could be added);
 - Creating walkable neighborhoods;
 - Decentralizing affordable housing by incorporating many smaller developments throughout the community;
 - Providing a diversity of housing types, including market-rate affordable housing and housing that is affordable to middle income families and individuals;
 - Providing housing for those who work in and serve the community (e.g., ensuring sufficient funding for workforce housing for teachers, emergency workers, government employees, etc.).
- Provide specific guidelines for developers.
 - Ensure developers are held accountable for delivering affordable housing in the quantities expected and developments that provide real benefits to the community.
 - Provide opportunities for developers to take advantage of incentives, such as fee waivers.
- The plan should recognize the important role of corporate responsibility and the jobs-housing balance.
 - Highlight the integral relationship between affordable housing needs and the decisions of large employers within the community.
 - Discuss goals in the context of the jobs-housing balance.
 - Highlight the importance of employers paying a living wage for the community, and other ways employers can contribute to addressing housing issues in the community.
- Messaging and education for the public is important, including the following types of messaging:
 - Highlighting how affordable housing benefits the community as a whole, and fits within the context of broad community needs;
 - Describing the magnitude of the community's need;
 - Discussing that change and growth are happening and a plan is needed for how to adapt in the best way possible for the community;
 - Highlighting success stories;
 - Defining the range of types of affordable housing needed;
 - Considering linkages between the need for affordable housing and the community's role in supporting basic human rights.
- The plan should provide creative strategies and methods for implementing goals.
 - Provide examples of successful strategies from other jurisdictions.
 - Leverage funding to achieve the greatest "bang for the buck" (i.e., the greatest number units in the best locations given the funding available).

III. NEXT STEPS

Following discussion and refinement of the draft comments at the Sept. 20 PC meeting, staff will submit the comments via the Regional Affordable Housing Strategic Plan website on behalf of PC. The comments, along with additional topics raised during the subcommittee meeting, will form the basis for a broader discussion of the community's affordable housing policy needs as part of a future

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update to the BCCP Housing Element. The timing of that update process is not yet determined. It will take place following the completion of the Boulder County Regional Affordable Housing Strategic Plan, and pending availability of both Land Use and subject matter expert staff.

Planning Commission Affordable Housing Subcommittee Meeting September 7, 2017

Objectives

- **Primary:** Craft PC comments on the draft Regional Affordable Housing Plan that reflect the common ground among PC members' priorities related to affordable housing.
- **Additional:** Other issues may be identified that warrant more careful review and discussion when Planning Commission addresses the update to the BCCP Housing element.

Agenda [11:00 – 1:00 pm]

- I. Introduction (5 min)
 - Review expectations, meeting format and meeting materials.
- II. Participant statements of key priorities and concerns (30 min)
 - Provide each PC member an opportunity to briefly state their key priorities and concerns related to affordable housing, ***and specifically in terms of comments for the plan.***
 - In the interest of time we ask that each PC member limit their comments to no more than 5 minutes.
 - Note: No comments have been received from PC members in advance of the meeting as of yet.
- III. Open discussion, honing in on key themes (35 min)
 - Identify areas of common ground based on statements of priorities; probe further to clarify points, or spur further discussion to shape ideas into a form that relates to the draft plan. Additional ideas for later consideration will be noted in a "parking lot."
 - As the discussion progresses, staff will note if there are points from May PC discussion or topic areas from the draft plan that have not yet been addressed in the discussion.
 - Staff will flag items with broad consensus and potential for inclusion in the comment language as we go.
- IV. Craft comment language (45 min)
 - Staff will record comment language on screen.
- V. Meeting wrap-up and review of next steps (5 min)

Meeting Materials

- Comments from public
- Minutes from May PC meeting
- Staff report, presentation and draft minutes from August PC meeting
- Responses to questions raised at August meeting
- Draft Regional Affordable Housing Strategic Plan

Note: There will be no public comment at the subcommittee meeting. There will be public comment at the September 20 PC meeting.