

MATTERS FROM THE CITY MANAGER – ITEM 6A



**CITY OF BOULDER
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
MEETING DATE: November 3, 2010**

AGENDA TITLE: Direction and next steps for the South of Downtown Area (SoDA), Downtown Zone Districts, and Height Modifications Citywide

PRESENTERS: Jane S. Brautigam, City Manager
Paul J. Fetherston, Deputy City Manager
David Driskell, Executive Director of Community Planning and Sustainability
Susan Richstone, Comprehensive Planning Manager
Louise Grauer, Senior Planner
Sam Assefa, Senior Urban Designer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This memo provides an updated summary of the proposed next steps for the South of Downtown Area (SoDA), Downtown Zone Districts, and Height Modifications Citywide based on the August 24, 2010 City Council Study Session. The objective of the study session was to provide City Council with an update on the work completed based on City Council direction from Dec. 2008 and the Planning Board recommendations from April 1, 2010, and to obtain feedback from council for the next steps.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Suggested Motion Language:

Staff requests council consideration of the proposed motion to accept the short term and long term items and action in the form of the following motion:

Motion to accept the recommended next steps for short and long term work items on the South of Downtown Area (SoDA), Downtown Zone Districts, and Height Modifications Citywide.

BACKGROUND:

City Council held a study session on Aug. 24, 2010 on a range of issues related to recent council-directed work on SoDA, the downtown zone districts, and height modifications city-wide. As a result of the council discussion at the study session, staff is recommending the following short and longer term work items. In addition, council requested that staff involve the greater public

and also meet with SoDA property owners. Staff presented the SoDA concepts to a PLAN-Boulder lunch on Sept. 17 and has since met with Jack Stoakes of Liquor Mart, the James Brothers of James Travel, and Rich Majors (1580 Canyon).

Short Term

Staff will work on the items described below to provide guidance to development projects that might move forward in the short term. Staff will bring any proposed changes to the code or to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines (Guidelines) to Planning Board for a recommendation and to City Council for action.

- Setback from Centerline of Canyon Boulevard

The Guidelines recommend a consistent setback along Canyon. The Guidelines still include reference to a 78 foot setback from centerline for properties fronting on Canyon. However, that requirement (which also included other major street setbacks) has since been taken out of the code. Staff is analyzing the conditions along Canyon to determine the minimum setback from centerline, which will likely be less than the current guidance of 78 feet, needed to accommodate the future vision of Canyon Boulevard. The future vision of Canyon would include the following possible elements and the final design will be determined later in the larger project:

- On-street parking
- Separated bike lanes
- Landscaped medians, and
- A possible local street separated by a median.

The proposed setback will provide guidance to applicants coming in for project review to ensure that a future vision for Canyon, however the final design is configured, could be achieved.

- Fourth Story Setback

The Guidelines currently specify that upper floors should be stepped back a minimum of 15 feet. Also, the code requires a 20 foot setback for a third story and above in the Downtown (DT) zones as well as most of the city's mixed use zone districts. Staff will bring forward options on the third and fourth story setbacks in the DT-5 zone and the Guidelines for review and consideration by the Downtown Design Advisory Board (DDAB), Planning Board and action by City Council.

Longer Term

Staff will work on the longer-term items described below:

- An interdepartmental analysis and study focused specifically on the city-owned properties south of Canyon.

Staff is proposing that a number of the elements of this work be folded into a study to encompass a larger area including the civic complex from 9th to 14th Streets, and options for the future of the Farmers' Market. The Farmers' Market has seen significant increase in demand and is beginning to outgrow its current space. The city-owned properties in this area provide the opportunity for expansion of the market space and creation of a

year-round facility. Proximity to Central Park, downtown, and the CU campus also provides the opportunity to define a new vision and function for the area as the heart and soul of the city's civic life.

It is proposed that these opportunities be prioritized relative to other items on the 2011 work program. Subsequent to Council direction on these issues, further study of Canyon Boulevard would be coordinated with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) because Canyon Boulevard is a state highway.

- Longer term projects would also include proposed changes either to the code or to the Guidelines that would require additional analysis, such as a "cash-in-lieu" option for providing community benefit for height modifications city-wide.

DIRECTION AND NEXT STEPS:

Staff will work on the following **short term** items for Planning Board consideration and City Council action based on further analysis of options:

- Establish a minimum setback from centerline for Canyon Boulevard in the area from 9th to 16th Streets for reservation of right-of-way to implement future enhancements to Canyon Boulevard.
- Bring back options to change or eliminate the third and fourth story 20 foot setback.
- Eliminate the requirement to include 50 percent below grade habitable floor area in the overall floor area (FAR) calculation.
- Change the by-right height in the downtown zones from 35 to 38 feet and from two to three stories except in the Historic District.

Also, the following potential change to the Guidelines will be prepared for consideration:

- Add an interface area on the south side of the property in the 1500 block of Canyon Blvd. to be consistent with the application of interface areas elsewhere in the downtown.

Staff will work on the following **longer term** items based on the priorities determined in the 2011 work program:

- Schedule a study session to discuss initiating a public visioning process and interdepartmental planning effort focused generally on a larger area, from 9th to 16th Streets south of Canyon. This would include city-owned properties in this area and the potential to create a year-round farmers' market facility, improved public spaces and other facilities that build on this area's role as a cultural and civic center. The following items will be included in this effort:
 - The feasibility for the design of Canyon Boulevard to include possible on-street parking, on-street bike lanes, and future bus loading locations. This includes working with CDOT.
 - A Connections Plan for this area to include streets, alleys, and multi-use paths.
 - Green areas and public open spaces along the North Boulder & Farmers Ditch as part of an open space plan for this area.
 - Streetscape improvements along 13th and 15th Streets.
 - Enhanced street intersections and pedestrian crossings at 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th Streets.
 - Potential options for workforce housing on city-owned land.

- Potential civic facilities, including community meeting space, city office space and / or new or enhanced cultural facilities.
- Possible changes to the process and charge for the Downtown Design Advisory Board.
- To provide public benefit for height modifications city-wide, consider additional open space standards and a “cash-in lieu” option, in situations where an adopted open space plan exists.

ATTACHMENTS

- A:** Chart showing the original staff recommendations, Planning Board recommendations from April 1, staff revisions based on input from Planning Board and property owners, and City Council comments from the August 24 study session.

Staff Recommendations	Planning Board Recommendations- Apr 2010	Staff Revised Recommendations/ Issues Identified	City Council Comments- Aug 2010
Canyon Boulevard and the Public Realm			
Canyon Boulevard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boulevard concept with additional local road, on-street parking, separated bike lanes, landscaped medians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New work since PB meeting 		General support for the boulevard concept: concerns about implementation costs, and phasing.
Setbacks on Canyon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building setback: 78 feet from Canyon Blvd. centerline Fourth story setback: 20 feet from third story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) Supported (5-2) the ability to go to four stories with 20 foot setback. Supported unanimously (7-0) to direct staff to identify ways to reduce perceived mass of buildings. 	<p>No change</p> <p>Fourth story setback: 15 feet from third story. The design of the space (in a 4th story) works better with a 15 foot setback. Explored ways to reduce perceived building mass- see Zoning Options Chart, page 16.</p>	<p>Support if economics work. Concerns include: it may be too much. May impact property owners.</p> <p>General support for 15 foot 4th story setback. Support for no 4th story setback.</p>
Pedestrian Crossings on Canyon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade pedestrian crosswalks at 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th streets, similar to the treatment at 13th Street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	No change	Support
Bike Lanes and Parking on Canyon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore on-street bike lanes and on-street parking on Canyon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	A proposed new streetscape for Canyon Blvd. See Figures 3 and 4 on page 9 for the proposed section and plan views.	Some support. Concerns about on-street parking and bike lanes.
The Ditch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore east-west multi-use path along the North Boulder & Farmers Ditch (the Ditch). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0); suggested there could also be a footpath. 	No change	General support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore creation of additional green spaces along the Ditch. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	No change. Staff suggests exploring a cash-in-lieu fee for open space that could provide additional funding for these open spaces/ courtyards.	Support
15th Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a pedestrian-friendly streetscape along 15th Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	No change	Support
Bus Loading Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate expanded bus loading along 14th and Canyon streets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	Will need to analyze further the bus loading needs with the proposed new streetscape plan for Canyon Boulevard.	Support
Building Form, Scale and Character			
Interface Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an interface area in SoDA in the 1500 block of Canyon where the existing DT-5 zone abuts RH-2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	No change; interface areas are described in the <i>Guidelines</i> . Add new interface area on the 1500 block of Canyon adjacent to RH-2 zoning.	Some support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce a three-story maximum height in interface areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	No change; suggest including in the code	Some support
Rezoning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rezone the two half blocks in the Downtown-3 (DT-3) zone to Downtown-4 (DT-4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	After review of the allowed uses in DT-4 compared to DT-3, staff does not recommend moving forward with a zone change for the DT-3 blocks.	Support but look at difference in by-right uses in both zones.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rezone the two and a half blocks of the Downtown -5 (DT-5) to a new DT-3 zone with 2.0 FAR and no FAR bonuses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voted 4-3 to retain the existing DT-5 zone south of Canyon. 	Three zoning options for the DT-5 zone south of Canyon are presented and analyzed in the Zoning Options Chart, page 16	Mixed: support for keeping DT-5 (4); support for option 1 (1); support for option 2 (1)

<i>Staff Recommendations</i>	<i>Planning Board Recommendations- Apr 2010</i>	<i>Staff Revised Recommendations/ Issues Identified</i>	<i>City Council Comments- Aug 2010</i>
Design Review Process			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the process for the Downtown Design Advisory Board (DDAB) and Planning Board review: A DDAB member should attend PB meetings to present its findings on a project being considered by Planning Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0), and suggested that DDAB be involved earlier in the development review process. 	No change	Support; look at possibly changing to mandatory compliance. Review only based on adopted guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage DDAB earlier in the process for the review of downtown projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0). 	The details of the development review process when DDAB is involved will need to be further analyzed.	Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDAB should review development projects elsewhere in Boulder that are within an area that has adopted design guidelines. The name DDAB should be changed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	DDAB supports the recommendation to expand their role where guidelines are in place.	Support; where there are adopted guidelines
Community Benefit for the Residential Density Bonus			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a maximum unit size for bonus units downtown; <u>or</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported unanimously (7-0) 	Staff is not recommending this option.	Some support for a maximum unit size.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require an additional affordable housing benefit to be assessed on 10 percent of the total bonus floor area square footage. 		Staff is not going to recommend a code change to require an additional 10 percent affordable housing for bonus units.	Minimal support for additional 10% IZ for bonus units. Important to have a diversity of incomes downtown. The City should look at the possibility of developing affordable housing on its property in SoDA.
Two Additional Code Changes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the by-right height from 35 to 38 feet, and the number of stories from two to three in the downtown zone districts except for properties in the Downtown Historic District. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported 4-3; two members asked for more information about impacts. 	Add: Change 2-stories to 3-stories by right. Does not apply to the Downtown Historic District. Add key guidelines to the code.	Support, but should include additional benefit or project review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate below-grade floor area from the FAR calculation in downtown zones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported 5-2. 	No change	Support
Community Benefit for Height Modifications City-Wide			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide community benefit for height modifications over 40 feet by enhancing the existing requirements for open space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Board supported the other option (6-1) to explore additional site review criteria such as economic vitality, more than 20 percent IZ, increased architectural and design materials, public/private partnerships. 	Staff recommends adding criteria to the existing open space requirements for height modification as a more straightforward and more equitably implemented approach. Study a possible provision for a cash-in-lieu option for open space.	Support for the "cash-in-lieu" for open space where adopted plans identify community locations for open space.