From "Brown, Reegan <BrownR@bouldercolorado.gov>" <BrownR@bouldercolorado.gov>
Subject **Downtown Development Authority efforts**
To "nicole.rajpal@bvsd.org" <nicole.rajpal@bvsd.org>, Rob Anderson <rob.anderson@bvsd.org>
Cc "Woulf, Mark" <WoulfM@bouldercolorado.gov>, "Rivera-Vandermyde, Nuria" <Rivera-VandermydeN@bouldercolorado.gov>, Brad Segal <brad@pumaworldhq.com>
Date June 24, 2026 2:07:26 PM MDT

Hi Nicole and Rob,

I wanted to follow up regarding the city's ongoing exploration of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA). We would still welcome the opportunity to connect with you and your team to share information, answer questions, and hear any perspectives BVSD may have as this work continues.

I've attached the draft Plan of Development, which would serve as the broad investment framework for the DDA should voters ultimately approve its formation. I'm also reattaching the assumptions and impacts to BVSD. These assumptions anticipate that any BVSD revenue connected to bonds would not be captured by TIF, plus a majority of TIF (i.e. 56%) is anticipated to be collected in the later years of the DDA (i.e. after Year 20). Most importantly, the projections are predicated on the assumption that the DDA will be able to help turn downtown's fortunes around, reversing nearly 20% erosion in the property tax base since 2020.

I also wanted to note that Boulder High is located within the proposed DDA boundaries. This could create opportunities for the school and surrounding area to benefit from future public investments made by the DDA, particularly those related to infrastructure, public spaces, accessibility, and overall district vitality.

We recognize that BVSD has many competing priorities, but we would appreciate the opportunity to maintain an open line of communication as this effort moves forward. If a meeting would be helpful, I am happy to work around your schedules. Alternatively, if there is another member of your team who would be more appropriate for these discussions, please let me know and I would be glad to connect with them directly.

Best,
Reegan

From: Brown, Reegan
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2026 11:32 AM
To: nicole.rajpal@bvsd.org; Rob Anderson <rob.anderson@bvsd.org>
Cc: Woulf, Mark <WoulfM@bouldercolorado.gov>; Rivera-Vandermyde, Nuria <Rivera-VandermydeN@bouldercolorado.gov>; Brad Segal <brad@pumaworldhq.com>
Subject: RE: Downtown Development Authority efforts

Hi Nicole and Rob,

I wanted to follow up on Nuria's email below regarding the city's ongoing exploration of a DDA for Boulder. I would love to set up time to connect with you to share more information, answer questions, and hear your thoughts as this work continues.

We have the following availability over the coming weeks:
Wednesday, July 8th, between 2-5pm
Thursday, July 16th, between 9am-1pm
Monday, July 20th, between 9-11am
Thursday, July 23rd, between 1-5pm

Please let me know if any of these times work for you and your team, and I'll send a calendar invite. I'm thinking we can meet at our city offices for about an hour.

Thank you, and looking forward to connecting.

Best,
Reegan

Reegan Brown
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From: Rivera-Vandermyde, Nuria <Rivera-VandermydeN@bouldercolorado.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 7:15 PM
To: nicole.rajpal@bvsd.org; Rob Anderson <rob.anderson@bvsd.org>
Cc: Woulf, Mark <WoulfM@bouldercolorado.gov>; Brown, Reegan <BrownR@bouldercolorado.gov>
Subject: Downtown Development Authority efforts

Nicole and Rob -

I wanted to reach out personally to make sure you were aware of the city's ongoing planning efforts related to a potential Downtown Development Authority (DDA) for the downtown area. We are expecting to receive City Council policy direction on Thursday, May 28, and are inviting your input as we continue to plan for a potential November ballot issue. We've attached a memo prepared by our consultant team, Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA), with additional information specific to your organization.

The city has been working with PUMA and a group of community stakeholders to explore whether a DDA could help support long-term economic vitality, reinvestment, and infrastructure improvements in the downtown area. A strong and vibrant downtown is important to the long-term economic health of the entire community, including our partner agencies, and the intent of this effort is to explore strategies that can help stabilize and strengthen the area's economic base over time. At this stage, we are evaluating a potential ballot measure for the November 2026 election and are focused on early information sharing and coordination with our partner taxing entities.

We recognize the importance of keeping our community partners informed throughout this process and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you over the coming months, alongside the PUMA team, to answer questions, share additional detail, and hear your thoughts as the planning work continues.

Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde
City Manager
(pronouns: she/her/ella) What's This?

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The City of Boulder acknowledges the city is on the ancestral homelands and unceded territory of Indigenous Peoples who have traversed, lived in and stewarded lands in the Boulder Valley since time immemorial. Those Indigenous Nations include the: Di De'i (Apache), Hinono'eiteen (Arapaho), Tsétsêhéstâhese (Cheyenne), Nʉmʉnʉʉ (Comanche), Caiugu (Kiowa), Čariks i Čariks (Pawnee), Sosonih (Shoshone), Oc'eti S'akowin (Sio ux) and Núuchiu (Ute).

We honor and respect the people of these Nations and their ancestors. We also recognize that Indigenous knowledge, oral histories, and languages handed down through generations have shaped profound cultural sustained and celebrated to this day.

The City of Boulder recognizes that those now living and working on these ancestral lands have a responsibility to acknowledge and address the past. We must not only acknowledge our past but work to build a more just future. We are committed to taking action beyond these words. We pledge to use this land acknowledgment to help inspire education and reflection and initiate meaningful action to help support Indigenous Nations, communities and organizations.

READ THE FULL STAFF LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT: https://bit.ly/staff-acknowledgment

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Attachments:

- DDA First Draft Plan of Development.pdf
- Letter Boulder Valley School District Boulder DDA 04.20.26.pdf

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Boulder DDA Plan of Development

First Draft - May 18, 2026

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1. Executive Summary

A Call to Action for Boulder's Core Districts

Nearly 50 years ago, the City of Boulder and downtown stakeholders invested in an innovative approach to turn around the declining economic fortunes of the central business district. The Pearl Street Mall came to life, general improvement districts were formed to create shared parking, and other visionary investments contributed to decades of prosperity in Boulder's core districts.

Today, Boulder's core districts face another generational challenge and decision point. Similar to other cities, post-pandemic recovery of Boulder's core districts has been sluggish. Office vacancies remain high, many small businesses struggle with increasing costs and stagnant sales, and lingering perceptions of a lack of safety limits visitation. A 2025 analysis found that sales and property tax revenues had flatlined since 2019. Adjusting for inflation, values and tax revenues were eroded by more than 20%.

To overcome these challenges and usher in a new era of vitality for Boulder's core districts, the community is coming together in new ways. Property owners, businesses, residents, city and University of Colorado officials have unified over a vision of Boulder's core that brings Downtown, University Hill, and the Broadway corridor together as one. Acknowledging their interdependencies, these areas seek a new method to drive revitalization into the next investment cycle.

A Downtown Development Authority offers the tool to guide the next generation of core district leadership, management, and catalytic investment.

Why a Downtown Development Authority?

Used effectively in more than two dozen Colorado downtowns for the past 40 years, Downtown Development Authorities (DDA) offer clear advantages that are well matched to advance Boulder's core districts. Key benefits of DDAs include the following:

- **Flexibility:** DDAs can address a variety of challenges simultaneously, guided by a Plan of Development that is tailored for each community. Options include supporting public and private project investments, infrastructure that ranges from parking to parks, and holistic management of a central business district's evolution.
- **Financial Tools:** DDAs offer access to tax increment financing (TIF) and an optional mill levy. TIF is not a new tax, but allows the DDA to utilize future increases in property and sales tax revenue to reinvest in implementing the Plan of Development. The mill levy can offer additional revenue to create more DDA impact in the near-term, plus support its ongoing operations.
- **Leadership, Accountability and Partnership:** Per Colorado's state statute, DDAs are governed by a board of directors comprised of property owners, businesses, and residents from within the DDA. These same stakeholders vote on DDA financial matters, from the initiation of the DDA, to consideration of any future tax increases or bond issuances. An ongoing partnership with the city is cemented through City Council appointments to the DDA

board, approval of annual work plans, and authorization of any future bonds and tax increases.

Examples of successful DDAs abound in Colorado, including long-time stewards of downtown vitality in Fort Collins, Longmont, and Colorado Springs.

Investment Strategy

Boulder's core districts are long on vision, but they lack the implementation structure and financial capacity to act on one.

The Investment Strategy offers the policies within the Plan of Development that will guide its ongoing programming and use of its financial tools. The Investment Strategy is intentionally high-level, offering a menu of general investment goals, strategies, and options for the DDA. It does not identify specific sites or projects – these decisions are left up to the DDA Board and its partners.

Five policy areas drawn from existing plans are the pillars for organizing revitalization and long-term prosperity strategies for Boulder's core districts, including:

1. Catalyze Redevelopment at Strategic Sites
2. Strengthen Commercial Corridors & Support Business Investment
3. Grow Mixed-Use Development and Amenities Throughout the Core
4. Partner with the City on Signature Public Spaces
5. Invest in a Connected, Accessible District

In the near-term, the DDA will need to leverage its own financial tools with partners to create impactful investment. Since TIF relies on capturing future increases in property and sales tax, it takes time to build and is usually limited in the DDA's early years. TIF can be helpful to support new development on a site-by-site basis. In Boulder, existing parking assets and capabilities in the core districts offer an immediate opportunity to help incent new development at key sites.

Within five to ten years, and as property and sales taxes grow in the core area, the DDA is expected to have the capacity to generate substantial investment capital through the bonding of TIF. Any future bonds will require approval by the DDA board, City Council, and a vote of DDA electors.

DDA Operations

In 1970 the City of Boulder, using an innovative approach at the time, created the General Improvement Districts (GIDs) that have guided the evolution of Downtown and University Hill to this day. The GIDs were originally chartered to focus on creating shared parking, provide flexibility in land use regulations, and fund mobility innovations such as EcoPasses available to all employees. Anchored by the GIDs, Boulder is nationally recognized for its parking and mobility programs.

However, the GIDs are restricted by governing legislation to build and maintain infrastructure. DDAs, on the other hand, are flexible, add self-generated financing through TIF, and their work program is tailored by a Plan of Development that addresses multiple opportunities. Given these advantages, the Plan of

Development envisions a consolidated core districts management structure under the umbrella of the new DDA.

Implications of this structure include the following:

- The DDA becomes the central coordinating entity to guide revitalization and new investment for Downtown, University Hill, and the Broadway corridor that connects them.
- The existing mill levy within the Central Area GID is replaced in the same amount by a mill levy in the DDA. 70% of electors within the DDA would not see a tax increase, and the remainder that do would now be availed the advantages of the new DDA.
- Boulder's parking system would be integrated within the overall economic approach of the DDA, and parking could be utilized as a valuable incentive to create desirable investment.

The end goal is to replace a structure focused on parking management with a state-of-the-art organization and set of financial tools that can be a transformative change agent for Boulder's core districts.

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2. Introduction

Background & Context

Boulder's civic, cultural, and economic life converges in a central area that includes Downtown, University Hill, the Civic Area, Boulder Creek, and the corridors that connect them. Together, these places function as the city's primary center of activity and identity. While each area has a distinct role and character, their long-term success is increasingly interconnected. Economic activity, mobility, public space quality, housing, and reinvestment conditions in one part of the district directly influence the performance and perception of the others. They are where residents gather, visitors orient themselves to Boulder, local businesses establish roots, and public life becomes visible.

For decades, Boulder's existing district structure helped support that success. The GIDs and Downtown Boulder Partnership created an innovative framework for parking management, district stewardship, and economic vitality that helped shape one of the country's most recognizable downtown environments.

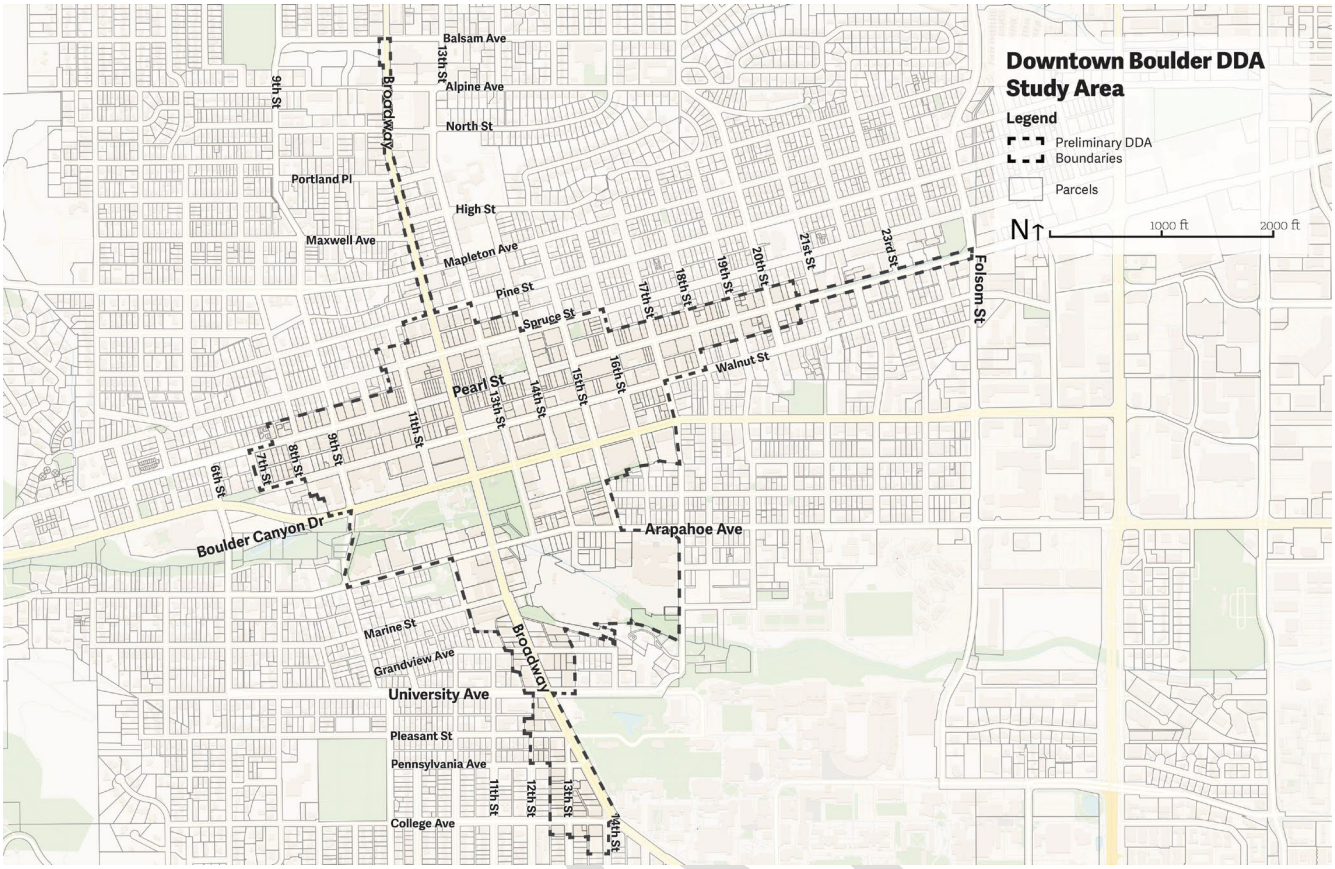
Today, however, the district faces a different set of conditions. Office demand has shifted. Commercial vacancies have increased in some areas. Infrastructure and public realm reinvestment needs continue to grow. At the same time, Boulder's core districts face increasing competition for investment, residents, visitors, talent, and cultural activity.

In response to these conditions, Boulder is pursuing the formation of a DDA to strengthen the city's ability to support long-term reinvestment, coordinated implementation, and strategic public/private partnership within its core districts. The DDA is intended to build upon the success of Boulder's existing district structure while providing additional tools and funding capacity to address redevelopment, infrastructure, public realm, mobility, and economic needs that existing mechanisms cannot fully support on their own. The Boulder DDA study area is pictured in the map below.

Boulder's challenge is not a lack of vision or planning guidance. Over decades, the city and its partners have produced extensive plans, investments, and district improvements that continue to shape the core today. The challenge is implementation capacity: aligning funding, governance, and long-term investment tools at a scale sufficient to respond to changing economic conditions and support the next generation of reinvestment in Boulder's core.

This Plan of Development establishes the long-term policy and investment framework that will guide DDA priorities and decision-making over time. Rather than creating a new vision for Boulder's core, the Plan organizes and advances priorities that have consistently emerged through prior planning efforts, district analysis work, and community engagement.

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Process & Key Takeaways

This Plan builds upon decades of planning, engagement, and investment focused on Boulder's core districts. Rather than creating a new vision from scratch, the Plan consolidates and advances the most consistent themes that have emerged across prior plans, stakeholder conversations, technical analysis, and public engagement.

Key themes consistently identified throughout the process include:

- The importance of Boulder's core as the city's economic, civic, and cultural center
- The need for stronger implementation capacity and coordinated investment
- The importance of supporting local businesses and maintaining district distinctiveness
- The need for reinvestment in public spaces, infrastructure, and multimodal connections
- The importance of sustainability, climate responsiveness, arts, and inclusion in future investment decisions
- The opportunity to better connect Downtown, University Hill, and adjacent districts into a more cohesive whole

A recurring conclusion throughout the process was that Boulder's challenge is not a lack of vision. The challenge is implementation. Existing district structures were not designed to support the scale of reinvestment, redevelopment partnerships, and long-term funding now required to sustain Boulder's core competitiveness over time.

3. Physical Framework

Alignment with Boulder's Core Values

The investment strategy for Boulder's DDA is grounded in the core values that have long shaped the city's approach to growth and change, as reflected in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) and the city's Sustainability, Equity, and Resilience (SER) Framework. Together, these guiding documents emphasize a future that is environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, economically vital, and rooted in a strong sense of place.

For the purposes of this Plan, the "district" refers to Boulder's central business area, including downtown, University Hill, and the areas that connect them. Across prior plans and community input, there is a consistent expectation that improvements within the district reflect and reinforce Boulder's commitments to sustainability, equity, stewardship, economic resilience, and the distinct character of the core.

This means creating places that are connected and accessible, lively and arts-filled, supporting local businesses and everyday needs, and ensuring that public spaces feel welcoming to all community members. It also means designing with care through investments that respect Boulder's natural environment, reinforce its historic character, and prioritize high-quality, lasting improvements.

Together, these values set a clear direction for how investment in the district should occur. Improvements should not only address immediate needs but also advance long-term community goals. Aligning future DDA investments with these priorities will help ensure that reinvestment strengthens the district's long-term vibrancy, character, and sense of place.

Places and Connections

The physical framework for Boulder's core identifies where change is most likely to occur and where the DDA could lead, support, and coordinate that work. It focuses on the district's structure: its key places and the connections between them where targeted investment and reinvestment can have substantial positive impact.

Sub-Areas

While this Plan applies to the full area within the proposed DDA boundaries, Boulder's core does not function as a single uniform district. It is made up of distinct sub-areas, each with its own character, role, and set of opportunities.

Downtown Core

The Downtown Core is where Boulder's civic, cultural, and economic life is most concentrated. Centered on Pearl Street Mall and the blocks around it, it remains the district's primary destination and its most active urban setting. Pearl Street continues to draw residents and visitors with its pedestrian character, concentration of retail and dining, cultural activity, and network of gathering spaces. Activity drops off across secondary streets, alleys remain underutilized, and many upper-floor spaces are not contributing

fully to the district's daily activity and mix of uses. At the same time, shifts in office and retail demand are contributing to vacancies and a less consistent pattern of use throughout the day and across the year. The downtown core remains strong at its center, but that intensity diminishes quickly beyond the Mall and surrounding blocks.

The opportunity in the Downtown Core is to build outward from what already works. This includes extending the activity and pedestrian experience of Pearl Street into adjacent blocks, improving the role of alleys as active public and commercial spaces, supporting use of upper-floor spaces that strengthen activity and foot traffic, and fostering a stronger mix of uses, including additional housing and everyday services. It also includes addressing aging streetscapes, lighting, alleys, and other shared infrastructure that shape how the core functions and feels.

University Hill

Shaped by its historic character and immediate adjacency to the University of Colorado, University Hill has long been a center of student life and local, independent businesses. Its position between the university and downtown should make it one of the most dynamic parts of the core. Instead, that advantage has been difficult to translate into long-term stability. Storefronts have seen high turnover, the business mix has remained relatively narrow, and activity often fluctuates with the academic calendar rather than holding steady throughout the year. The public realm, including streets, sidewalks, and gathering spaces, does not yet reflect the Hill's importance within Boulder's core. Its proximity to downtown has not yet translated into the kind of continuity or shared identity that would allow the two areas to function more fully as one district.

At the same time, there are signs that the Hill may be entering a different phase. Recent redevelopment, including new hotels and the conference center, is introducing new activity and a more diverse range of users. The Hill has been studied extensively, and its challenges and aspirations are already well understood. Those efforts have consistently pointed to the need to diversify uses, improve the quality and consistency of the public realm, and support revitalization beyond a primarily student-oriented district.

The opportunity now is to build on this momentum by aligning investment and implementation with these long-standing priorities and translating past planning efforts into visible, lasting change.

Civic Area

The Civic Area is where Boulder's core meets Boulder Creek, civic institutions, and the district's most expansive public spaces. It holds an important place in the city, but it is not woven into the core with the same strength as the areas around it. Its open spaces, civic uses, and creekside setting give it a character unlike any other part of the district, but its edges, connections, and daily role within downtown remain less fully defined. Maintenance challenges and safety concerns have contributed to declining use in parts of the area and weakened connections to surrounding destinations.

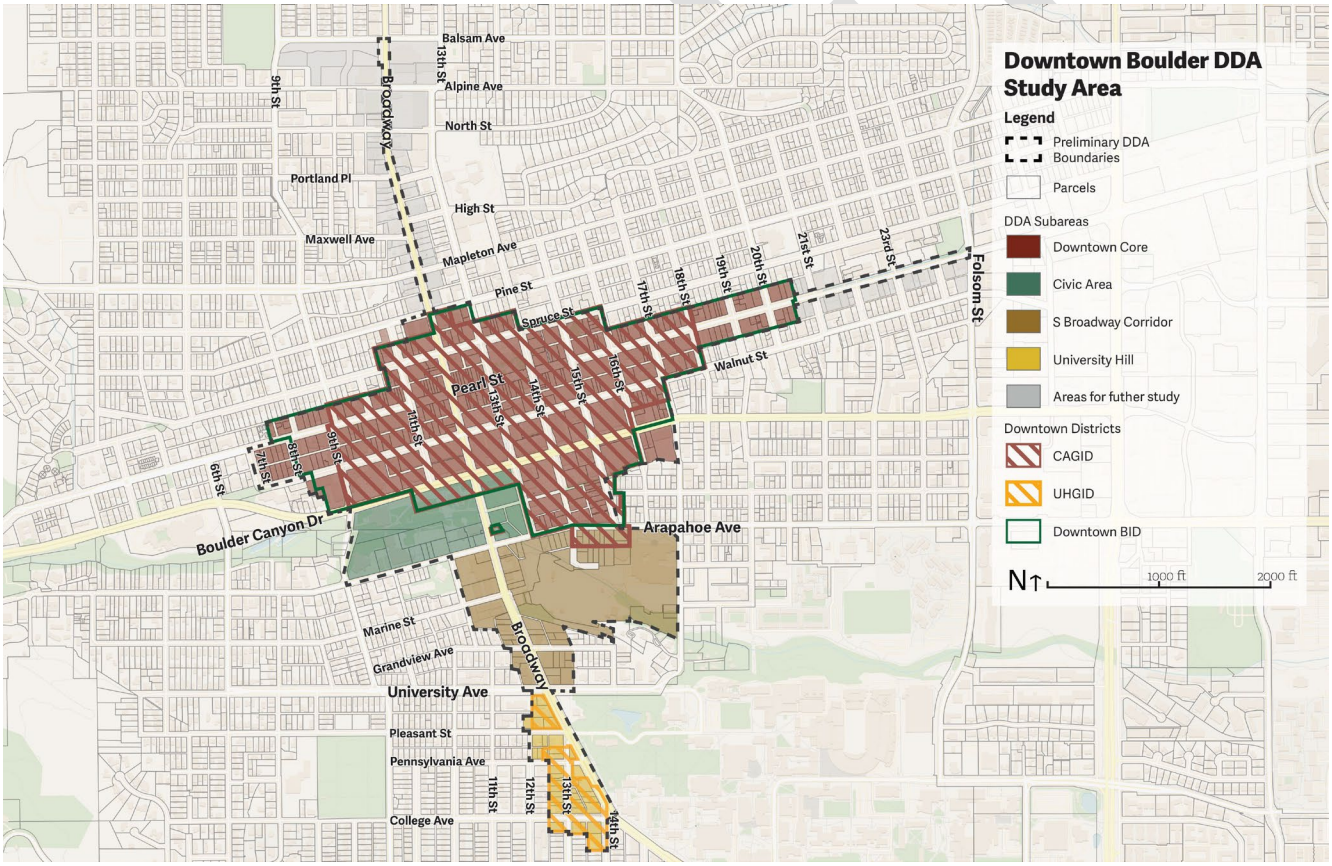
Current planning efforts build upon prior work and continue the long-term transformation of this important public space into a more active and connected civic destination. Community members envision a lively, safe space with additional programming and recreational opportunities. It also includes the longer-term redevelopment potential of adjacent sites and the chance to strengthen how this area connects to the rest of the core. Over time, the Civic Area can support a stronger mix of gathering,

recreation, cultural activity, and redevelopment, while reinforcing Boulder Creek and the public realm as central features of Boulder's core. A thriving Civic Area can strengthen both the cultural and economic vitality of Boulder's core by serving as a hub of civic life, recreation, and public gathering within the district.

Adjacent Mixed-Use Areas

Several areas just beyond the core, including the Broadway corridor north of the Downtown Core, Alpine-Balsam, and Pearl Street east of 21st Street, are also positioned to play a larger role in Boulder's long-term evolution. They include sites and corridors where additional housing, employment, and mixed-use redevelopment could extend district activity and strengthen relationships to surrounding neighborhoods.

These areas are positioned to become more closely tied to the district over time as redevelopment occurs and property owners choose to participate. This creates a more flexible framework for growth and allows the district to respond to redevelopment opportunities as they emerge. Over time, these adjacent mixed-use areas could help create a more complete mixed-use core while allowing the district to expand incrementally and in step with property owner interest.



Boulder DDA Study Area Sub-Areas

Connections and Corridors

Boulder's core is shaped not only by its key places, but by how people move between them. The routes that link Downtown, University Hill, the Civic Area, and surrounding areas shape how people experience movement, access, and connection throughout the district.

Some of those routes already function as active and recognizable parts of the district. Others function more as barriers or through-routes, even when they sit between some of the district's most important places. The corridors that follow highlight where stronger connections could help the core function more fully as a single district.

Broadway Corridor between Downtown and University Hill

The Broadway corridor is the major north-south spine between Downtown and University Hill, but today it is experienced more as a route between destinations than as a place in its own right. Even though the distance between the two sub-areas is relatively short, the transition can feel longer and less comfortable than it should, particularly for people walking or biking. While there are alternative routes, including 11th Street and the Arboretum path, these connections are not always intuitive or consistent, and could benefit from enhancements that create a clearer and more seamless connection between the two areas. As a result, Broadway plays an important role within the district without yet contributing the same sense of continuity or identity as the areas on either side of it.

That position gives the corridor a distinct role in Boulder's future and presents a meaningful opportunity for DDA investment. In the near term, Broadway can be strengthened as a safer, more comfortable, and more coherent multimodal connection between Downtown and the Hill. Over time, it may also take on a more defined role of its own, shaped by changes along the corridor and by a stronger relationship to the sub-areas it links.

Pearl Street

Pearl Street is the defining corridor within Boulder's Downtown Core and the place most closely associated with its identity. The Pearl Street Mall has long anchored downtown as one of the city's most enduring public spaces. As the pedestrian Mall approaches its 50th anniversary in 2027, that milestone serves as a reminder not only of its longstanding importance, but of the need to carry its role forward with the same care and ambition that shaped it in the first place.

Pearl Street's importance does not end at the pedestrianized blocks. It continues east and west with a different rhythm and character, particularly in the segments beyond the Mall that are not defined by the same pedestrian experience or public realm. Over time, the corridor can do more to function as a continuous spine through downtown, extending the distinct qualities of the Mall into surrounding blocks while allowing each segment to retain its own identity. The opportunity is not simply to reinvest in a beloved public space, but to strengthen Pearl Street as a more cohesive corridor.

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Boulder Creek Corridor

Boulder Creek is a key regional corridor for walking, biking, and recreation, and a defining shared asset within Boulder's core. It strengthens downtown's multimodal connections while reinforcing one of the qualities most central to Boulder's identity: its close relationship to landscape and nature.

That relationship is not consistent along the corridor. In some places, the creek is closely tied to nearby streets, public spaces, and destinations. In others, access is less visible, edges are less defined, and the transition between the corridor and surrounding blocks is weaker than it could be. The result is a part of downtown that is widely used and highly valued, but not always fully integrated into the district around it. Moving forward, clearer access and better links to nearby destinations can help the creek play a more consistent role in how downtown functions and connects to the city and region.

East–West and North-South Connectors

In addition to Pearl Street, Canyon Drive, Arapahoe Avenue, Spruce Street, and Walnut Street serve as key east–west routes through the district, carrying much of the daily movement between Downtown, University Hill, the Civic Area, and surrounding neighborhoods. They accommodate a wide range of travel modes, including driving, transit, biking, and walking, and play an essential role in how different parts of the district relate to one another.

North–south connections are equally important to how the district functions and how people experience movement between Downtown, University Hill, Boulder Creek, and surrounding neighborhoods. In addition to Broadway, corridors including 11th Street, 13th Street, and 14th Street each play a distinct role in connecting activity centers and shaping multimodal access through the core. Together, these routes help distribute pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicle movement across the district while providing important alternatives and complementary connections to Broadway.

13th Street functions as a major north–south bicycle connection linking Downtown to North Boulder and the larger regional network, while 14th Street and the Downtown Boulder Station area serve as an important multimodal hub connecting transit, biking, walking, and surrounding destinations. On the west side of Broadway, 11th Street has become an increasingly important pedestrian connection between University Hill and Downtown, supported by improved sidewalks, the bridge crossing at Boulder Creek, and planned Civic Area improvements that will further strengthen this route over time.

Each corridor serves a different function, but all face a similar challenge: balancing the need to move people efficiently with the need to support a safe, comfortable, and inviting environment. In some segments, that balance is working well. In others, the emphasis on through-movement can make the streets feel less welcoming for pedestrians and cyclists. Investments that better balance travel modes, strengthen multimodal access, improve crossings, enhance streetscapes, and reinforce a sense of arrival into Boulder's core can help these corridors function more effectively as part of the district while continuing to serve their broader transportation role.

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4. DDA Investment Strategy

The following investment strategy for Boulder's DDA translates the physical framework into an actionable set of priorities for reinvestment, partnership, and implementation. Together, they describe how the DDA can support coordinated investment across the district over time, building on the places, corridors, and connections outlined in the preceding section. The strategy is intended to focus DDA resources on the types of district-scale investments and long-term implementation efforts that existing funding and governance structures are not positioned to fully advance on their own.

The strategy is organized into five interconnected **policy areas**. Each policy area is structured around a clear direction and a set of **goals** that describe desired outcomes for Boulder's core. **Strategies** within each goal outline how those outcomes can be advanced through coordinated investment, public/private partnership, and long-term implementation efforts. These strategies are focused primarily on catalytic reinvestment, infrastructure and public realm improvements, redevelopment and adaptive reuse partnerships, and other long-term investments that can strengthen the district's economic health and competitiveness over time. **Place-based considerations** highlight the sub-areas, corridors, and connections where each policy area has the most distinct geographic implications and where these strategies may take shape in different ways across the district.

Together, the policy areas are intended to provide a flexible framework that can guide future DDA priorities and decision-making as market conditions, redevelopment opportunities, and community needs continue to evolve over time. In addition to larger capital and redevelopment initiatives, the DDA may also support enhanced maintenance, activation, programming, and district management efforts that help ensure Boulder's core remains vibrant, welcoming, and well cared for over time.

Policy Area 1: Catalyze Redevelopment at Strategic Sites

Some of the most significant challenges facing Boulder's core, including elevated office vacancy, underutilized properties, aging building stock, and changing market conditions, will require more coordinated and long-term reinvestment over time. This policy area focuses on the types of redevelopment, adaptive reuse, infrastructure investment, and public/private partnership opportunities that a DDA is uniquely positioned to help advance. The goal is to support strategic reinvestment that strengthens economic resilience, improves district continuity, and reinforces the long-term health of Boulder's core.

Goal 1: Unlock redevelopment and reinvestment at priority sites

Strategies

- Establish a clear framework for how the DDA evaluates, structures, and participates in redevelopment partnerships that support long-term district priorities.
- Use tax increment financing and other implementation tools to help fund public infrastructure, streetscape, mobility, utility, and public realm improvements that support redevelopment in strategic locations.

- Support gap financing for projects that advance district goals but face financial barriers related to site conditions, market challenges, infrastructure needs, or the cost of providing broader community benefits.
- Prioritize projects that introduce housing, neighborhood-serving retail, hospitality, employment, cultural activity, and other uses that strengthen the district's economic base and support more consistent year-round activity.
- Establish clear public benefit criteria to guide DDA participation, including considerations related to mix of uses, design quality, ground-floor activation, multimodal access, and contributions to the public realm.

Goal 2: Prepare and position strategic sites for long-term reinvestment

Strategies

- Develop and maintain a district-wide opportunity site strategy that identifies long-term redevelopment constraints, infrastructure needs, ownership patterns, and emerging reinvestment opportunities across Boulder's core.
- Coordinate with the City on publicly owned and strategic sites where early planning, infrastructure coordination, or site preparation efforts could help advance adopted plans and improve long-term implementation readiness.
- Work with property owners, institutions, and the development community to better understand site-specific barriers related to access, infrastructure, configuration, entitlement, or market conditions.
- Engage owners of chronically vacant, underutilized, or aging commercial properties about long-term reinvestment opportunities, changing market conditions, and potential pathways toward future reuse or redevelopment.
- Monitor changing market conditions, redevelopment trends, and emerging opportunity areas to help position Boulder's core for long-term economic growth and reinvestment.

Goal 3: Support office conversion and adaptive reuse opportunities

Strategies

- Support office-to-residential, office-to-hospitality, and other adaptive reuse projects that help address elevated vacancy while introducing a more diverse mix of uses and activity within the district.
- Provide feasibility support, pre-development assistance, and targeted financing tools for conversion projects in buildings where reuse may be technically complex, financially challenging, or difficult to advance through conventional financing alone.
- Prioritize conversion and adaptive reuse opportunities in locations where reactivated upper floors and underutilized buildings can strengthen surrounding street-level activity and contribute to a more active year-round district.

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- Coordinate with the City on zoning, permitting, design review, and implementation processes that can help facilitate adaptive reuse and conversion projects over time.
- Encourage reuse strategies that improve building performance, extend the life of existing structures, and support long-term reinvestment within Boulder's core.

Place-Based Considerations

- **Downtown Core:** Focus on upper-floor reuse, office conversion opportunities, aging commercial buildings, and reinvestment that extends activity beyond the strongest blocks of Pearl Street into surrounding streets, alleys, and secondary corridors.
- **University Hill:** Support reinvestment and adaptive reuse that broadens the district's mix of uses, strengthens year-round activity, and improves connections between the Hill, Downtown, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Broadway Corridor:** Encourage redevelopment, infill, and public realm improvements that strengthen continuity, multimodal access, and the relationship between Downtown and University Hill.
- **Civic Area & Boulder Creek:** Support reinvestment that improves adjacent edges, strengthens connections to surrounding destinations, and reinforces the Civic Area and Boulder Creek corridor as integrated parts of Boulder's core.
- **Adjacent Mixed-Use Areas:** Coordinate with emerging mixed-use and redevelopment areas that may strengthen long-term district connectivity, housing opportunities, and economic activity over time.

Policy Area 2: Strengthen Commercial Corridors and Support Business Investment

Commercial spaces shape both the economic health and everyday experience of Boulder's core. Storefronts, upper floors, and underused buildings influence whether corridors feel active and welcoming, whether local businesses can remain and grow, and whether the district continues to reflect the mix of businesses, services, and cultural activity that define Boulder today. This policy area focuses on supporting reinvestment in commercial spaces, reducing barriers to occupancy and tenant improvements, strengthening corridor continuity, and helping local businesses adapt and remain competitive as market conditions continue to evolve.

Goal 1: Improve the condition and market readiness of existing commercial spaces

Strategies

- Support exterior improvements to storefronts, façades, signage, and lighting that strengthen the appearance and function of commercial corridors.
- Support interior improvements that help address functional barriers to occupancy in older tenant spaces, particularly where building conditions or layout constraints make leasing, adaptation, or long-term maintenance more difficult.

- Encourage the retrofit of large or difficult-to-fill commercial spaces into smaller, more flexible units that are better aligned with current demand and more accessible to local and independent businesses.
- Target reinvestment in clusters of aging or underperforming commercial spaces where coordinated improvements can strengthen surrounding blocks, reinforce corridor continuity, and create more visible district impact.

Goal 2: Reduce visible vacancy by activating underused commercial spaces

Strategies

- Support temporary activation of vacant storefronts and underused commercial spaces in prominent or high-visibility locations throughout the district.
- Work proactively with property owners, brokers, and business organizations to identify and address barriers preventing vacant spaces from being leased, reused, or temporarily occupied.
- Support readiness improvements that make vacant commercial spaces easier to show, market, subdivide, or occupy.
- Prioritize activation and re-leasing efforts in locations where renewed occupancy can reinforce surrounding businesses and strengthen commercial continuity.
- Support arts-based and creative enterprises such as maker spaces, artist studios, galleries, pop-ups, and cultural retail that contribute to the district's character, activity, and long-term business diversity.
- Encourage a mix of tenants and business types that strengthens the district's economic competitiveness and supports activity throughout the day and year.

Goal 3: Make it easier for small businesses to stay, improve, and navigate change

Strategies

- Provide direct assistance to help small businesses navigate permitting, approvals, and design review tied to tenant improvements or storefront changes and other commercial reinvestment efforts.
- Offer materials and application support in multiple languages so district programs are more accessible to a greater range of business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Connect existing businesses and prospective tenants to practical information about available spaces, buildout considerations, occupancy conditions, and district improvement programs.
- Coordinate retention support with the City, BID, property owners, and other partners where local businesses or entrepreneurs from Boulder's diverse communities face barriers to staying, expanding, or relocating within the district.

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Goal 4: Strengthen the district's storefront mix through market coordination, targeted recruitment, and strategic redevelopment

Strategies

- Provide market information to property owners, brokers, and prospective tenants so leasing decisions are better aligned with district conditions and opportunities.
- Identify gaps in the storefront mix and support the types of uses, services, and amenities that are missing or underrepresented in different parts of the district.
- Proactively recruit district-serving businesses and services that broaden the range of offerings, strengthen day-to-day vitality, and support a more diverse and multicultural small business community.
- Support selective commercial reinvestment in underutilized corridors and clusters where new investment can strengthen street-level activity, improve district continuity, or help deliver a more diverse mix of uses.

Place-Based Considerations

- **Downtown Core:** Focus on storefront reinvestment, upper-floor occupancy, reducing visible vacancies beyond Pearl Street Mall, and strengthening the range of local-serving retail, food, and cultural offerings.
- **University Hill:** Support a broader business mix, improve aging storefront conditions, and strengthen year-round commercial activity, including opportunities for new concepts and businesses that broaden the district's appeal beyond its current base.
- **Civic Area:** Support adjacent commercial reinvestment and active ground-floor uses that can help extend activity around civic and cultural destinations.

Policy Area 3: Grow Housing and A Mix of Uses Throughout the Core

Boulder's core is the city's commercial, civic, and cultural center, but its long-term resiliency depends on more than destination activity alone. A stronger district needs a diverse base of daily life: more residents, more neighborhood-serving uses, and a mix of activity that extends beyond peak hours and peak seasons. That mix matters not only because it makes the district stronger day to day, but because a larger residential population and more vibrant pattern of activity also support a more diverse economic base. Housing, everyday services, and mixed-use development can help strengthen that foundation over time, supporting a core that functions not only as a destination, but as a more complete and active neighborhood.

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Goal 1: Support housing as part of a more economically resilient district

Strategies

- Support housing in locations where it can add to the district's day-to-day activity without displacing core commercial activity while reinforcing surrounding commercial areas, public spaces, and multimodal connections.
- Encourage a broader range of housing options that can serve different household types and life stages, including opportunities for workforce, senior, and artist housing where feasible.
- Align DDA participation with projects that introduce housing in ways that reinforce active ground floors, support surrounding businesses and services, and contribute to activity beyond peak periods.
- Coordinate district reinvestment with City housing policies and programs so new residential development contributes to a more balanced and diverse pattern of use in appropriate parts of the district.

Goal 2: Expand access to everyday goods, services, and neighborhood-serving uses

Strategies

- Identify gaps in everyday offerings, including food access, childcare, health services, pharmacy, and other daily needs that support a more complete district.
- Support the attraction and retention of neighborhood-serving uses, food access opportunities, and everyday services that help meet those needs within walking distance of housing, employment, and major destinations.
- Attract uses that support residents, employees, and visitors in the course of daily life, not only during peak periods or seasonal activity.
- Strengthen the district's ability to function as a more complete neighborhood by supporting a diverse mix of everyday services and amenities over time.

Goal 3: Support mixed-use redevelopment that helps create a more complete neighborhood

Strategies

- Focus on underutilized and mixed-use opportunity sites where additional housing and neighborhood-serving uses can help strengthen consistent foot traffic.
- Ensure that redevelopment strengthens the district beyond the site itself by reinforcing surrounding streets, public spaces, multimodal connections, and nearby destinations.
- Direct DDA participation to projects where coordinated public support can help unlock redevelopment with wider value to the district and improve long-term connectivity between sub-areas.

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- Encourage mixed-use development patterns that support a more active and balanced district throughout the day, evening, and year.

Place-Based Considerations

- **Downtown Core:** Focus on upper-floor housing, mixed-use infill, and neighborhood-serving uses that extend activity beyond the strongest commercial blocks.
- **University Hill:** Encourage a broader mix of housing options and daily-serving uses that support year-round activity and a more balanced district.
- **Civic Area:** Support adjacent mixed-use development and uses that strengthen the area's role within a more complete district while respecting its civic and open-space character.
- **Broadway Corridor:** Encourage reinvestment that improves continuity between Downtown and the Hill while introducing additional housing and neighborhood-supporting activity.

Policy Area 4: Partner with the City on Signature Public Spaces

Public spaces are central to how Boulder's core is experienced. They are where people gather, linger, and experience the district beyond movement or commerce alone. From Pearl Street Mall and the Civic Area to alleys, creek edges, and smaller shared spaces, the public realm helps shape how downtown feels, whom it welcomes, how clearly it reflects Boulder's identity, and how successfully the district supports surrounding businesses, activity, and civic life. For the DDA, this is an important area of focus because these spaces require not only thoughtful design, but sustained investment, care, and coordination over time. The goal is to invest in memorable, climate-responsive public spaces that reflect Boulder's natural identity, creative culture, and commitment to inclusion, stewardship, and long-term care. The DDA's role is intended to supplement and help accelerate public realm investment, activation, and stewardship efforts in partnership with the City, rather than replace the City's baseline responsibilities for public space maintenance and infrastructure.

Goal 1: Strengthen the quality, comfort, and climate responsiveness of public spaces

Strategies

- Improve the comfort, usability, and year-round functionality of plazas, parks, alleys, and shared spaces through seating, shade, lighting, weather protection, and other public amenities.
- Reflect Boulder's environmental values through planting, water-wise landscaping, expanded tree canopy, and public space design that responds to climate, season, and long-term resilience.
- Upgrade materials, furnishings, and landscape elements so public spaces feel more durable, cohesive, and welcoming over time.
- Provide essential amenities such as public restrooms, drinking water, seating, and shade where they can support more use of public spaces.

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- Support long-term reinvestment in Pearl Street Mall and adjacent public spaces, including infrastructure, accessibility, furnishings, landscaping, lighting, and public space enhancements that reinforce the Mall's role as Boulder's signature civic space.

Goal 2: Expand the role of public spaces as places for gathering, culture, and belonging

Strategies

- Create more opportunities for informal gathering, recreation, performances, cultural activity, and flexible public use across the district.
- Integrate art, culture, and creative expression into plazas, alleys, civic spaces, and other shared environments.
- Support public spaces that feel welcoming to a broad range of users and foster a stronger sense of inclusion and belonging.
- Build on existing programming, partnerships, and public space infrastructure in ways that support more regular activity, community use, performances, and seasonal activation throughout the year.
- Invest in public spaces for performances and cultural activities, including exploring an Entertainment District and Common Consumption Area.

Goal 3: Support long-term care, safety, and stewardship of public spaces

Strategies

- Coordinate public space improvements with City capital projects, Civic Area implementation efforts, redevelopment activity, and other district investments to strengthen connectivity and maximize long-term public benefit.
- Establish a long-term approach to maintenance, operations, stewardship, and reinvestment that supports a higher level of public space quality and care over time.
- Support efforts that improve safety, cleanliness, and overall comfort in the public realm.
- Partner with the City, service providers, and community organizations to connect unhoused community members with appropriate services, outreach, and support.
- Prioritize civic spaces, creek-adjacent areas, plazas, alleys, and other high-visibility public spaces where stronger stewardship and activation can have broader district impact.

Place-Based Considerations

- **Downtown Core:** Focus on extending the quality, comfort, and activation of public spaces beyond Pearl Street Mall, including alleys, secondary streets, and smaller gathering areas.
- **University Hill:** Improve the comfort, usability, and character of the public realm so the district better supports activity throughout the year.

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- **Civic Area:** Support the area's role as a major civic and cultural gathering space while aligning with planned public investments.
- **Boulder Creek Corridor:** Strengthen the quality, safety, and usability of creek-adjacent spaces and their relationship to nearby destinations.

Policy Area 5: Invest in a Connected, Accessible District

How people move between destinations shapes how Boulder's core functions as a whole. Downtown, University Hill, the Civic Area, and surrounding areas sit in close proximity, but the experience of moving between them is not always as direct, comfortable, or intuitive as it could be. Improving those connections is foundational to how the district functions economically, socially, and physically as a cohesive whole. Clear, safe, and reliable movement supports access to businesses and destinations, strengthens activity across the district, and helps ensure that Boulder's core functions as a more connected and economically resilient district. A key focus of the DDA is to support a seamless, safe, people-first multimodal system that links destinations and creates a more consistent experience across the district.

Goal 1: Make movement safer, more comfortable, and more intuitive throughout the district

Strategies

- Improve safety at high-use crossings and conflict points throughout the district.
- Upgrade the pedestrian experience through lighting, visibility, tree canopy, and accessibility improvements.
- Introduce a consistent wayfinding system that helps people navigate between destinations and parking.
- Improve how people of all abilities access and move between key destinations in ways that support active storefronts, major institutions, and a stronger day-to-day district experience.
- Support transportation demand management programs that make it easier for employees, residents, and visitors to use transit, biking, walking, and shared mobility options as part of everyday trips.

Goal 2: Strengthen multimodal connections between the district's key destinations

Strategies

- Close gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network to improve continuity between destinations.
- Prioritize improvements along Broadway and other corridors that link the Downtown Core, University Hill, the Civic Area, Boulder Creek, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Support improvements to the Arboretum Path and other complementary pedestrian and bicycle routes that strengthen connections between Downtown, University Hill, and surrounding destinations.

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- Support mobility hubs and shared transportation facilities that better integrate transit, biking, walking, micromobility, rideshare, carshare, parking, and district wayfinding.
- Align transportation investments with adjacent redevelopment and public realm improvements.

Goal 3: Support long-term function and stewardship of the district's mobility system

Strategies

- Coordinate with the City and regional partners on corridor improvement efforts that strengthen multimodal safety, access, and connectivity throughout the district.
- Establish a long-term approach to maintenance and reinvestment for district mobility infrastructure and related public improvements.
- Support phased implementation to build toward larger capital improvements over time.

Goal 4: Manage off-street parking as a shared district asset

Strategies

- Manage parking supply, pricing, and operations to support customer access, business activity, turnover, and overall district vitality.
- Integrate parking strategy with shared mobility goals, including transit, biking, shared micromobility, and walking.
- Improve the parking and mobility user experience through clearer information, better wayfinding, and technology that helps people navigate the district more efficiently.
- Plan for and coordinate parking needs as new development and redevelopment occur, while evaluating opportunities for shared parking, more efficient land use, and long-term evolution of district parking assets over time.

Place-Based Considerations

- **Downtown Core:** Focus on safer crossings, better wayfinding, and improved access between destinations, storefronts, and parking so movement more directly supports storefront activity, access, and overall economic vitality.
- **University Hill:** Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and shared micromobility access, especially along the routes that connect the Hill to the Downtown Core.
- **Civic Area:** Strengthen access to and through the Civic Area, with clearer links to Boulder Creek and surrounding destinations.
- **Broadway Corridor:** Prioritize improvements that make the route between Downtown and University Hill safer, more comfortable, and easier to navigate for all modes.
- **Boulder Creek Corridor:** Improve access points and links between the creek corridor and adjacent streets, paths, and public spaces.
- **East–West and North-South Connectors:** Balance through-movement with safer crossings and better conditions for people walking, biking, and using transit.

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5. Implementation & Governance

Implementing the recommendations in this Plan will require a governance and funding structure that is clear, accountable, and built for the long term. At its core, that structure centers on an ongoing cycle of planning, investment, and oversight, anchored by an annual operating plan and budget that sets near-term priorities, programs, and investments. This section outlines how that structure comes together, including the roles, tools, and partnerships needed to align resources, coordinate action, and track progress across Boulder's core.

This Plan of Development is intended to provide a durable long-term framework, but it should be revisited periodically to reflect changing conditions, priorities, and opportunities. Major updates should occur through a collaborative public process to ensure the DDA's work remains grounded in the district it serves over time.

Oversight & Operations

DDA Board

The Boulder DDA would be governed by a board of directors appointed by City Council and responsible for guiding investment priorities and overseeing implementation of this Plan. Under Colorado statute, the board must consist of five to eleven members, with a majority required to live in or own property within the district and with at least one City Council member serving on the board. Members would be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council, providing a direct link between district leadership and city oversight.

For Boulder, board composition should reflect both the geography of the district and the range of interests tied to its future. That should include representation from both Downtown and University Hill, along with a mix of property owners, business owners, residents, and other stakeholders with a direct relationship to the core. The DDA should also aim to reduce barriers to participation so that opportunities to serve, engage, and lead are broadly accessible. That includes promoting board openings widely and considering meeting practices, communications, translation, and other supports that make participation more feasible across languages, cultures, ages, and abilities. Hyper-local governance by those most directly affected by the DDA is central to this model and is what allows the authority to remain responsive, grounded, and accountable over time.

The DDA Board may also choose to establish advisory committees to broaden participation and support more focused work on specific issue areas. Those committees could align with the four core policy areas in this Plan where DDA investment decisions are most likely to benefit from ongoing stakeholder input and coordination: Connect People, Destinations & Experiences; Create Great Public Spaces Inspired by Art & Nature; Revitalize Commercial Spaces & Support Small Businesses; and Support a Mix of Uses & Everyday Necessities. This structure could provide a consistent way to bring additional expertise and stakeholder perspectives into the DDA's work while keeping decision-making authority with the Board itself.

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City Council Role

City Council would retain an ongoing oversight role through appointment of the DDA board, approval of the DDA's annual budget and operating plan, and authorization of any future ballot measures related to funding or bonding. That structure pairs hyper-local governance with clear public accountability, giving the DDA the district-level leadership needed to guide reinvestment while maintaining alignment with broader city priorities.

DDA Operations

The DDA would operate as a standalone entity, providing the focus, capacity, and accountability needed to manage district investments and implementation. While the City plays a critical role in setting policy, stewarding public funds, and delivering core services, the scale, pace, and specialized nature of downtown reinvestment often exceed what can be sustained within existing municipal structures alone. City processes, annual budgeting cycles, and the breadth of responsibilities across departments can make it challenging to maintain the consistent, dedicated attention required for district-scale economic development and place management.

A standalone DDA structure is designed to address these gaps. With a dedicated revenue stream and a governance model focused specifically on the district, the DDA can take a more proactive and consistent role in implementing capital improvements, supporting economic vitality, and maintaining the public realm. This model also enables more direct accountability to district stakeholders including property owners, businesses, and residents, whose assessments fund much of the work.

Importantly, a standalone structure does not mean operating in isolation. The DDA would function as a partner to the City, aligning with adopted plans and policies while providing the implementation capacity to advance them. Clear intergovernmental agreements, regular coordination, and defined roles would ensure that the DDA's work remains consistent with community goals and public oversight expectations.

The DDA would not function independently from the outset. A one- to two-year transition period would allow it to establish governance, financial systems, and core operating capacity with support from City staff and, where appropriate, outside expertise. This phased approach would provide continuity and give the organization time to put an operational foundation in place before moving into a standalone structure. Following this transition, the DDA would work through dedicated capacity of its own, in close coordination with the City and other district partners.

Partnerships & Coordination

The DDA would work in partnership with City of Boulder departments, the Downtown Boulder Partnership, property owners, businesses, and other community and institutional partners with a role in the district. Its purpose is not to duplicate the work of those organizations, but to provide a clearer structure for aligning priorities, coordinating investment, and carrying out the long-term reinvestment strategy outlined in this Plan.

That coordinating role is especially important in relation to Boulder's existing GIDs. The long-term aim would be for the DDA to potentially become the district's primary entity for asset management,

reinvestment, and coordinated implementation, with existing GID assets and responsibilities transferred through a phased transition. That would include parking infrastructure, allowing parking management to be integrated into the larger strategy for district access, vitality, and long-term economic resilience rather than treated as a standalone function. If the DDA is approved, the specific structure, sequencing, and operational arrangements for that transition would continue to be developed during the one- to two-year ramp-up period.

Under that structure, parking would continue to operate as a self-supporting system, with revenues supporting operations, maintenance, and reinvestment in the system itself. The broader advantage is that asset management, capital planning, and district revitalization would be more closely aligned under a single entity with clearer accountability for the district's long-term performance.

The DDA boundary could also evolve over time. Under state law, property owners adjacent to the district may petition for inclusion, allowing the DDA to respond to redevelopment opportunities and changing district conditions as they emerge. In Boulder, that could create a path for future expansion into adjacent mixed-use areas where stronger physical, economic, or governance connections to the core become more important over time.

Financing Tools

The DDA's recommended financing approach is intended to provide both near-term stability and long-term reinvestment capacity. If approved by voters, a combination of TIF and a mill levy, supported over time by district revenues and other funding sources, would allow the DDA to support early implementation while building the capacity for larger, longer-term investments.

TIF would serve as one of the DDA's primary funding mechanisms. By capturing growth in property and sales tax revenues within the district and reinvesting that growth locally, the DDA would be able to fund public improvements, support redevelopment, and, when appropriate, leverage future revenues for larger capital projects. This is what allows the DDA to operate at a different scale than the city's existing district tools.

A mill levy would provide a more stable annual source of funding, particularly in the early years while tax increment revenues are still building. There is a potential to decrease the existing mill levies of the GIDs to account for a mill levy assessed by the DDA. However, as the GIDs are separate entities, City Council sitting as the GIDs' boards would need to take action to allow for any decrease in mill levy. The GIDs could agree to a cooperation agreement with the DDA to decrease the GIDs' mill levies if the DDA were formed and took over some or all of the GIDs' operations. This approach would allow the DDA to receive mill levy revenue to support operations, maintenance, and early implementation while remaining responsive to stakeholder concerns about cost.

Additional funding sources could also support the DDA's work. If governance of GID assets transitions to the DDA, this may include parking system revenues, which would continue to function as a self-sustaining system, with revenues supporting operations, maintenance, and reinvestment in those assets. Other sources, including grants, partnerships, and earned income, may also play a role as opportunities arise.

Bonding could be considered for larger projects if future conditions warrant it, though that would require voter approval. The goal is to establish a flexible funding framework for the DDA that can support both steady reinvestment and, when appropriate, larger catalytic projects.

Monitoring Progress

The DDA should track a focused set of indicators to understand how the district is performing and to inform future priorities and investment decisions. These measures should be consistent over time, easy to understand, and tied to the outcomes the DDA is intended to achieve. Key indicators may include:

Economic Activity

- Sales tax revenue
- Commercial occupancy and vacancy
- Business retention and turnover
- New businesses and expansions

Investment & Development

- Assessed property values
- Private investment and redevelopment activity
- Public investment in infrastructure and public space
- New housing units
- Resident population growth
- Housing vacancy rate
- Change in housing unit type

District Use & Experience

- Pedestrian activity and foot traffic
- Parking utilization and turnover
- Use of public spaces and civic assets
- Cleanliness and maintenance conditions
- Perceptions of safety and comfort

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PROGRESSIVE URBAN
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES

P.U.M.A.

TO: Boulder Valley School District

FROM: Brad Segal, President, P.U.M.A.
Amanda Kannarde, Vice President, P.U.M.A.
Ethan Greene, Associate, P.U.M.A.

CC: Reegan Brown, City of Boulder

RE: **Proposed Boulder Downtown Development Authority**

With support from the City of Boulder and a planning group comprised of community stakeholders, a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is being considered to help finance improvements in Downtown Boulder. This memo provides a summary of the proposed DDA and its potential implications for Boulder Valley School District.

Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.) is a Denver-based consulting firm that has been retained by the City of Boulder to evaluate the pros and cons of forming a DDA. P.U.M.A. specializes in downtown management and development and brings 33 years of experience across 40 states and more than 300 cities. P.U.M.A. has assisted in the planning and formation of DDAs in Aurora, Denver, Englewood, Lafayette, Littleton, and others.

Why a DDA in Boulder?

For the first time since the 1980s, downtown Boulder is experiencing significant economic challenges. Mirroring trends found in other cities, downtown Boulder's post-pandemic recovery has been sluggish, resulting in stagnant property values and sales tax collections. When factoring inflation, tax revenues have eroded. Reversing these trends is complex, requiring a variety of approaches to rethink vacant office space, update infrastructure, and diversify land uses. As proven in cities throughout Colorado, a DDA can offer leadership and incentives to reverse economic decline, enhance vitality, and increase future tax revenues.

What is a DDA?

A DDA is a quasi-governmental entity that provides both financing and leadership for improving central business districts. DDAs have existed since the 1980s and currently operate in more than two dozen cities including Fort Collins, Lafayette, Longmont, Loveland, Greeley, and Golden.

A DDA can utilize tax increment financing (TIF), a mechanism that allows future growth in property and sales tax revenue to be captured and reinvested into projects within the DDA boundaries. TIF is not a new tax. DDAs can also seek authorization from voters for up to a five mill increase in property taxes to fund DDA operations. A DDA mill levy is being considered as part of this process in Boulder. It is important to note that DDAs do not have the power of eminent domain and do not require a finding of blight in order to utilize TIF. A DDA can only be formed by a vote of stakeholders within the proposed district (i.e., property owners, businesses, and residents), and once formed it is governed by a board made up of these same stakeholders.

The City of Boulder is considering DDA formation in order to provide the long-term funding, governance, and implementation necessary to create an economically vital downtown. The DDA is on track to be considered for a vote this coming November, 2026.

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Implications for Boulder Valley School District

There are two implications for BVSD arising from the formation of a Boulder DDA: first, the benefits from a vibrant Downtown Boulder, and second, the fiscal impact from TIF.

Community Benefits from a Vibrant Downtown Boulder: The proposed DDA boundary (see page 3) includes the downtown core as well as University Hill. There are several compelling community benefits for BVSD to consider:

- Utilization of TIF to foster a more family-friendly downtown by reinvesting in aging public spaces and infrastructure, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle connections within and between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, and incentivizing residential construction.
- Creating a more vibrant downtown economy by supporting small businesses, driving catalytic redevelopment, and enhancing the look and feel of downtown. A critical goal of the DDA is to reverse recent erosion in property and sales tax revenues.
- A unified voice representing the greater downtown area that can advocate for changes in policies and investment.

Fiscal Impact: Tax increment financing (TIF) would limit future revenues to BVSD from property tax growth within the DDA boundary. If a DDA is formed, BVSD would not receive future property tax revenue resulting from new investment in the DDA. This "increment" would instead be reinvested in public infrastructure and other capital improvements, commercial space, housing, programming, and maintenance within Downtown Boulder. These activities will be identified in the DDA's Plan of Development—a document that provides a list of improvements that are eligible for TIF investment.

BVSD would, however, continue to receive revenue from both the base valuation of properties in the DDA and natural appreciation. Currently, the DDA study area accounts for an estimated $510 million in taxable property value.

For calculating the potential impact on BVSD, only the general operating mill levy is considered. Consistent with TIF policies from other DDAs, our calculations do not include mill levies committed to bond repayment and other special funds. Based on the existing general mill levy of 27 mills, BVSD is currently entitled to approximately $13.8 million in annual revenue from within the proposed DDA area. This estimated $13.8 million constitutes the base that would continue to flow to BVSD through the 30-year term of the DDA. Importantly, this base will be re-evaluated every two years during the County's property valuation process, and revenue to BVSD will increase as properties appreciate. **Based on our experience from throughout the state, base appreciation can account for up to 50% of an area's total growth in value.** In addition, appreciation will be aided by the financial stimulus and supportive policies driven by the DDA. The following table summarizes the projected tax increment the proposed DDA would receive from BVSD's mill levy.

Projected BVSD annual TIF contributions to the Boulder DDA, plus an equal amount would be added to BVSD base revenue from appreciation. These estimates account for real growth beyond inflation.

	Slow-Growth Scenario (1%)	Fast-Growth Scenario (2.5%)
Year 1	$ 68,800	$ 172,000
Year 5	$ 351,000	$ 905,000
Year 10	$ 720,000	$ 1,930,000
Year 20	$ 1,515,000	$ 4,400,000
Year 30	$ 2,390,000	$ 7,560,000

The City of Boulder would also financially participate in the DDA through both sales and property tax increment. Increment from the City's sales tax, an amount in excess of the sales tax base established after the DDA is formed, would be reinvested into downtown improvements. The City would also contribute its share of property tax increment that amounts to an additional 8.748 mills. Downtown stakeholders will also consider a mill levy to provide the DDA with consistent and reliable funding.

Direction Sought from Boulder Valley School District

At this point in the process, P.U.M.A. and the City of Boulder are seeking to provide information to and receive input from BVSD on whether it is supportive of the creation of the Boulder DDA. No formal action is required.

We would be pleased to answer any questions BVSD may have, plus P.U.M.A. has retained independent legal counsel that can respond if needed. Thank you for reviewing this opportunity for Downtown Boulder and Boulder Valley School District.

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Boulder DDA Study Area

