



Colorado

14TH STREET LOT UNIVERSITY HILL GENERAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (UHGID)

CITY OF BOULDER



About the Urban Land Institute (ULI)

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. Established in 1936, ULI has more than 46,000 members worldwide representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. Since 2003, ULI Colorado has completed more than 60 TAPs, leading to positive policy changes and built projects across the state.

What are Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs)?

The Technical Advisory Panel program is an advisory service available to a community, nonprofit, public entity or private enterprise that is facing real estate or land-use issues. Typically, a two-day session, the TAP program brings together a cross-section of experts who do not have a vested interest in the project to examine the issues from multiple angles and produce recommendations and implementation strategies based on market conditions, sound information, community realities, and best practices.

The District Council assembles a panel of ULI members chosen for their knowledge of the issues facing the client. The interdisciplinary team may include land planners, architects, market and financial analysts, developers, engineers, appraisers, attorneys and/or brokers who are well qualified to provide unbiased, pragmatic advice on complex real estate and land-use issues.

To ensure objectivity, panel members cannot be involved in matters pending before the client, currently work for the client or solicit work from the client during the six months following the TAP program. In addition, they are not compensated for their time, but they are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, such as overnight lodging and transportation to attend the TAP.

How Does the Program Work?

TAP members are briefed on the issues facing the client and receive detailed information relevant to the assignment including project history, detailed maps of the study area, relevant demographics and other relevant data necessary for an understanding of the task at hand. During the two-day program, TAP members tour the study area, interview stakeholders (business owners, city council members, etc.), and work collaboratively to produce preliminary findings and recommendations which are presented at the end of Day 2 to the client. A complete report follows within about six to eight weeks with detailed recommendations.

ULI Advisory Services identify creative, practical solutions for complex land use and development challenges.

CONTENTS

TAP Scope	8
Panel Process	9
Executive Summary	12
Background	14
Recommendations	19
Conclusion	24
About the Panel	25



IMAGE: 14th Street Lot



IMAGE: TAP Panelists touring University Hill

Sponsor and ULI Participants

Sponsors

City of Boulder – Community Vitality

Denver Regional Council of Governments
(DRCOG)

ULI Colorado

Ferd Belz
President, Fulenwider
ULI District Council Chair

Rodney M. Milton
Executive Director
ULI Colorado

Hannah King
Director
ULI Colorado

Kaylee Lino
Senior Manager
ULI Colorado

Tangela Wilhite
Senior Associate
ULI Colorado

Technical Assistance Panel

Jariah Walker
Executive Director
Colorado Springs, Urban Renewal Authority
ULI TAP Committee Chair

Keith Borsheim
Transportation Planner
HDR
Denver, CO

CarloMaria Ciampoli, Assoc., AIA, LEED
Studio Director, Experience Design
RIOS
Boulder, CO

Matt Chiodini
Principal
OZ Architecture
Denver, CO

Amy McCann, LEED
Architect, Associate
SAR+
Denver, CO

TAP SCOPE

The Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) was asked to examine the University Hill district (“The Hill”) and specifically the 14th Street lot, in an effort to create tools and strategies to enhance the sense of place, economic vibrancy, and cultural legacy the district historically celebrates. Leveraging new developments including The Hill Hotel and the Limelight Conference Center and Hotel, the 14th Street lot could serve as a catalyst for knitting the neighborhood back together with new amenities and a shared vision. Specifically, the TAP was asked to consider the following key issues:

- In consideration of contextual challenges and regulatory barriers in the University Hill district, what is the current highest and best use of the 14th Street lot?
- How are current regulatory barriers impacting the vitality of the University Hill district and the development potential of the 14th Street lot and which barriers should the city reconsider in its

effort to empower positive transformation within the district as a whole?

- For successful redevelopment to occur on the 14th Street lot, what funding sources and mechanisms should the city be considering?
- What is the optimal partnership structure for successful redevelopment of the 14th Street lot?
- How might a 14th Street lot development be configured to best mitigate some of the multimodal connectivity challenges to the site and throughout the University Hill district?
- How can future use and design of a 14th Street lot development complement the anticipated anchor developments taking place on the Hill?
- What is the most efficient path to implementation and redevelopment?



IMAGE: TAP Panelists & Stakeholders touring 14th Street Lot

PANEL PROCESS

ULI Colorado assembled a group of accomplished ULI members with expertise in urban design and landscape architecture, real estate development, land planning and zoning, and place-making for an intensive two-day workshop to address the challenges facing the city of Boulder.

Prior to convening, TAP members received information on the University Hill district, including demographics, neighborhood characteristics, retail and market trends, area plans, and the most recent market report specifically for repositioning the 14th Street lot.

Day 1 included a kick-off with The City of Boulder Community Vitality staff, led by their Director, Cris Jones and Senior Project Manager, Reegan Brown. The panel was provided greater context and background regarding the history of the Hill, its character, and the underlying causes of its decline and current state.

The panelists spent the first day engaged in candid stakeholder interviews which comprised of perspectives from city officials including Andrew Shoemaker, UHCAMC Commissioner; Trent Bush, UHCAMC Commissioner; Tara Winer, Councilmember; Aaron Brockett, Mayor; business owners including Cheryl Liguori, CEO of Z2 Entertainment; Mark Heinritz, Owner of The Sink; residents of the University Hill neighborhood including Nancy Blackwood, President of University Hill Neighborhood Association; representatives from CU Boulder including Ted Rockwell, Representing as a UHCAMC Commissioner with connections to CU; Tom McGann, CU Director of Parking and Transportation Services; d'Andre Willis, CU

Campus Architect and Director of Planning; and local developers including Jean Coulter, Limelight Hotels; Kevin Eronymous, Principal at SAR Architects.

The interview process allowed for an in-depth discussion of the real challenges on the Hill, the origins of the neighborhood divide between the nature of the activities in the retail district and the desires of the surrounding residents. The panelists probed each stakeholder guided by the questions from the city while allowing each to share their own ideas, goals, and unique prospective. Most importantly, the panel sought consensus and ownership for implementation on any specific recommendations to ensure buy-in.

The panelists regrouped after each interview to discuss what they heard. Recurring themes noted from the first cohort of stakeholders acknowledged the challenge of creating a year-round commercial basis of activity on the Hill that balanced the student-centric activities with the needs of the broader neighborhood. The sub-culture that made the Hill an attractive and unique destination had been lost. The principal cause, as told from this group, was the failure to effectively solve the balancing act. The regulatory barriers imposed on the district have proved to be too heavy-handed. Moreover, the center of gravity has shifted away from the Hill and to other areas of the city making opportunities for adaptation and growth even more challenging. The panelists also unveiled the irony that the Hill is the most studied area but least prioritized in terms of resources. Parking was also a central theme and one that was consistently brought up in each of the stakeholder interviews.

The second cohort consisted of business owners and property owners with long ties to the cultural and economic vitality of the Hill. Common themes arising from this cohort included parking both for customers and for staff, public safety, the lack of capacity for investment through the GID, and overall fatigue given the grind related to the issues on the Hill. While the group was generally optimistic, the panelists could sense a profound feeling of exhaustion. The remaining stakeholders included Hill residents, representatives from CU-Boulder, and the leadership of the Downtown Boulder Partnership and the Director of Policy Programs at Boulder's Chamber of Commerce.

By the end of Day 2, the ULI panel synthesized the background information provided, insights from the tour, stakeholder interviews, and intense internal deliberation to create a cohesive presentation of their recommendations.

What We Heard

- 1. Once the hotels are complete, people will choose to go right or left...**
- 2. Funding for the district is limited and capacity for general improvements like lighting, cleanliness, and safety patrols impacts The Hill's overall viability**
- 3. The Hill's challenges have been a political grinder and run good people out of the district**
- 4. The Hill should be at the center of up-coming elections**
- 5. Parking is a necessary evil**
- 6. There's a real desire for neighborhood-centric retail and commercial options**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University Hill commercial district has been a challenge for the city of Boulder for several decades. Despite its prime location and adjacency to the vibrance of the University of Colorado's main campus, the area has not seemed able to balance the needs of the surrounding neighborhood with the dominant student-centric energy. Over time, this push-n-pull has prompted the surrounding neighbors to create barriers and regulations to curb the excesses of student night-life. The consequence has been to push that energy into the residential sections of the neighborhood and away from the commercial district.

With new investments tailored to a broader audience, the Hill has an opportunity to restore the balance and provide a mix of activities and amenities that appeal to students, non-student residents, and regional visitors. This approach must be intentional and the recommendations from the ULI Colorado panel reflect several action steps that speak to immediate activation of the 14th Street Lot along with longer-term uses that restore the sense of place and unique character that is the Hill.

In addressing the core questions posed by the city of Boulder, the panel distilled several desired outcomes that shape their proposed strategies and tools. These include:

- Enhance connection to the broader community
- Celebrate the Hill's uniqueness and history
- Bring a diverse range of people back to the Hill
- Serve as a complementary use to the two new hotels and conference center
- Generate new revenue for UHGID
- Spark change

Immediate Action Plan

Priority areas identified by the ULI Panel:

1. Choose and implement short-term lot activation opportunity(s)

- **Micro-mobility Hub**
- **Food Trucks**
- **Pop-up Market**
- **Music Festival**

2. Deregulate moratorium and current liquor and cannabis license rules

3. Initiate neighborhood rebranding campaign

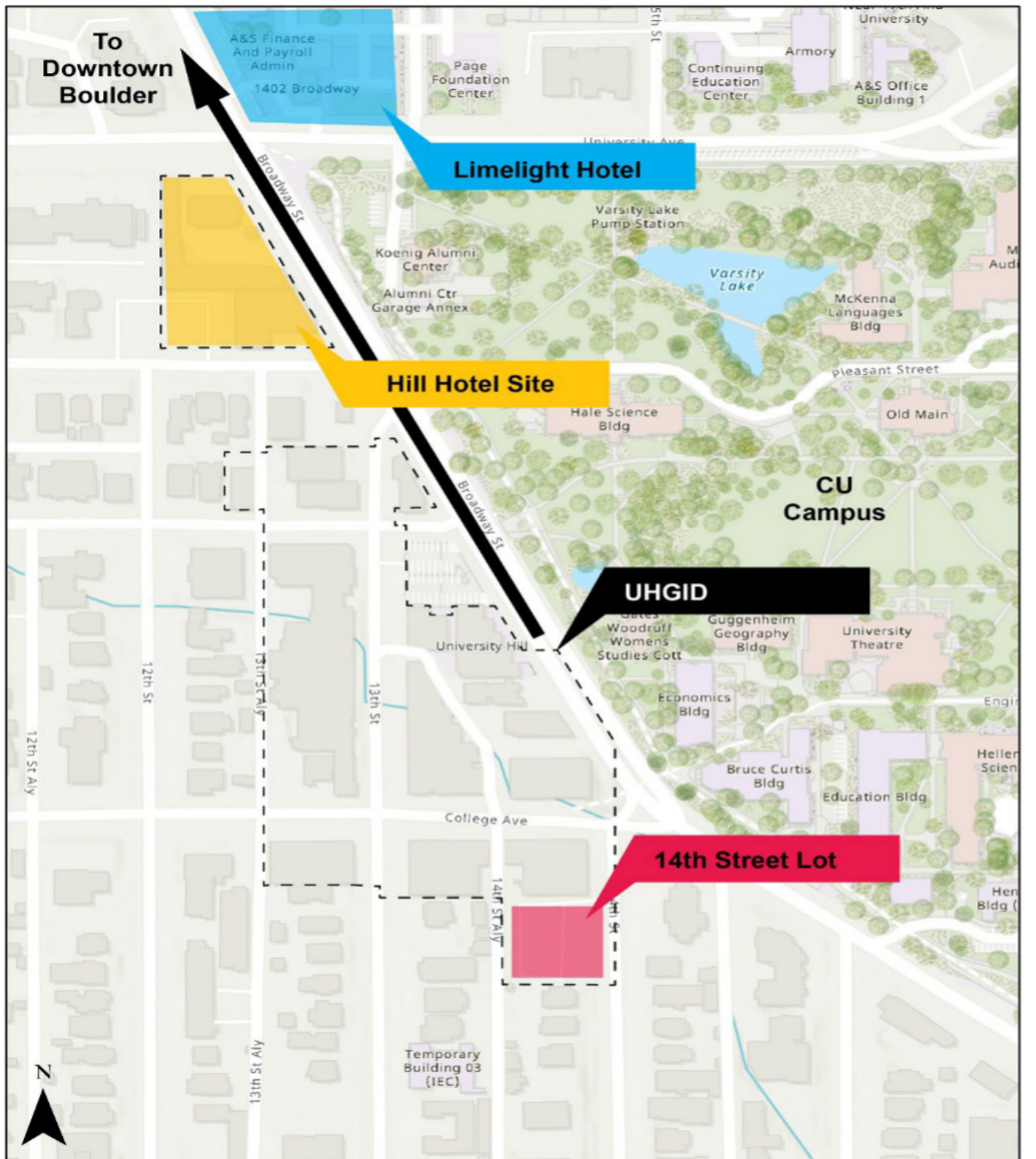
4. Explore TIF(URA/DDA) funding mechanism to improve district security, facade improvements, site specific public improvements

5. Initiate long-term lot redevelopment

- **Parking Facilities**
- **Grocery/Bodega**
- **Faculty Housing**
- **Boutique Hotel**
- **Artists in Residence/Music Studios**
- **Food & Community Hub**

6. Improve/enhance entrances & gateways; explore greater connectivity along 13th Street corridor

Urban Context



BACKGROUND

Study Area General Description

University Hill is a quintessential college adjacent district that combines the energy and activity of the CU student population with the richness of an established neighborhood and commercial corridor. The University Hill General Improvement District (UHGID) was established in 1970 at the request of property owners who wanted to tax themselves to purchase land that could provide customers with additional public parking spaces.

The 14th Street lot (see map right) represents the last remaining parking asset of the GID and therefore serves as a prime opportunity to leverage the new Hill Hotel and conference center and revitalize the district through intentional programming and activation.



IMAGE: Street into the Hill commercial district

Study Area Demographics 2017 - 2021

MEASURE	UHGD	UNIVERSITY HILL SUBCOMMUNITY	CITY OF BOULDER
POPULATION	66	10,938	108,995
HOUSEHOLDS	29	4,133	43,989
MEDIAN AGE	22.1	23.7	30.3
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$5,648	\$39,621	\$53,866
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$14,500	\$42,201	\$82,407
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$15,767	\$103,111	\$131,623
HOUSING UNITS	45	4,421	46,868
OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS	0%	27.9%	45.2%
RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS	64.4%	65.6%	48.7%
VACANT HOUSING UNITS	35.6%	6.5%	6.1%



“The Hill is the most studied area in the state of Colorado!”

– Anonymous

Summary of Previous Planning Efforts

The Hill’s importance as a distinct place within the city of Boulder is not only evident in its legacy and lore but perhaps more in the intensity of focus on its improvement through the many studies, plans, and recommendations over the past several decades. The list below is not exhaustive but highlights several efforts that contributed to the current ULI TAP and ensured the panelist recommendations were informed and respected past efforts. Moreover, while the 2-day process included specific stakeholder interviews, it did not undertake a full community engagement effort. Full consideration of the recommendations and implementation will include community engagement lead by the City. The ULI TAP takes into consideration previous public engagement in the section to follow.

ULI City of Boulder TAP, 2011 – Key Recommendation(s)

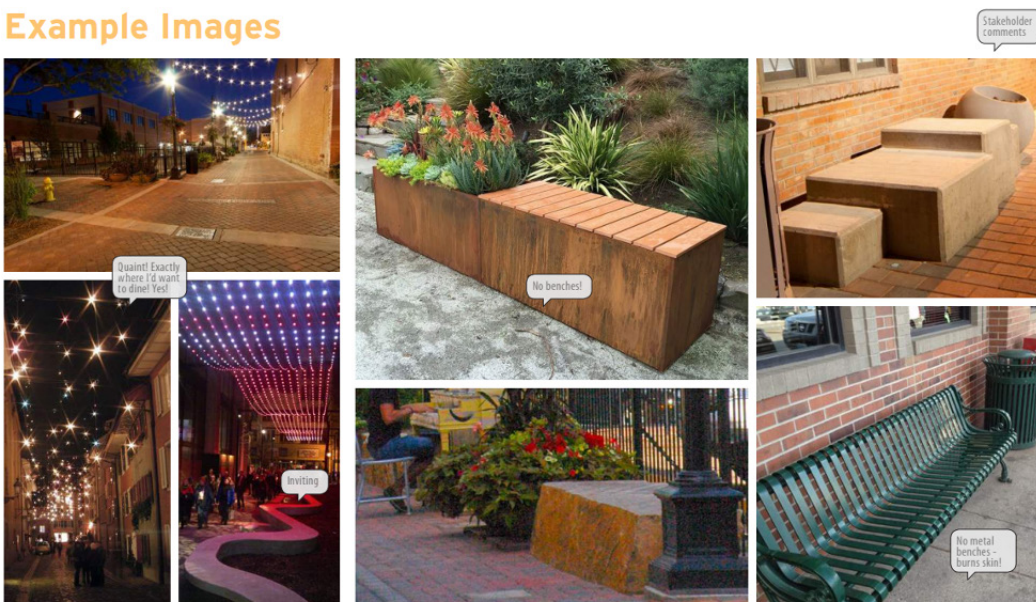
Recommendations fell into three areas: **Governance, Programming, and Bricks & Mortar.** Generally the panel urged “Revitalize, Don’t Reinvent.” The Hill is not completely broken and does not need a sweeping fix. The panel also stated the concept of a Creative Innovation District is promising but needs more thought and clearer definition. “This needs to be a strategy, not just a name,” said one panelist.

University Hill Alley Enhancements Plan, 2018 – Russell Mills

Goals & Objectives:

1. Create a safe pedestrian/bike network of alleys that complements circulation between key destinations in University Hill
2. Develop concepts for activated, engaging alleys that help stimulate business activity
3. Integrate operational needs of alleys including service, waste disposal, parking/vehicular access and emergency vehicles
4. Build upon and continue to establish the unique “Hill” identity

Example Images



Traditional (top) and artful (bottom) Tivoli lighting

Benches, clockwise from top left: wood/Corten steel, concrete, steel, and stone

UHGID 14th Street Lot Asset Strategies, 2022

A detailed summary of previous planning efforts related to the 14th Street Lot can be found on page 9 of the Asset Strategies study.

Summary of Findings:

1. Two components of any strategy that are most impactful on the primary goals for UHGID are being able to significantly increase the amount of parking spaces provided and being able to monetize the value of the land the 14th Street Lot is located on.
2. The Market Rate Housing P3 Strategy is only strategy that was both financially feasible and addresses the primary goals of UHGID.
3. The Office P3, Self Develop, and CU Partnership strategies are also potential options to considered further despite the fact they do not achieve multiple goals.

Regulatory Background

At the cutting edge of Boulder's music and outdoor scene, the Hill was a critical place for innovation, spontaneity, and convergence. This legacy is embedded in the remaining businesses fighting to weather what has been a difficult economic environment. Like many commercial districts fueled primarily by university students, the Hill has experienced the fallout out from the excesses of nightlife activities and all of its accompanying outcomes. In response, the community placed several restrictions and regulations targeted at both the commercial and residential activities within the district that have severely impacted the overall economic vitality of the Hill.

Per B.R.C. 9-6-5 (B): Within UHGID and applied to restaurants, brewpubs, and taverns, no less than fifty percent of the gross income from sales of food and drink of the establishment over any thirty-day period must be from sales of food. Additionally, restaurants, brewpubs, and taverns within the District shall close no later than 11:00pm.

Per B.R.C. 9-6-3 (B): Use standards for residential uses, attached dwelling units located in the Business Main Street (BMS) zoning district within UHGID must be entirely permanently affordable units.

For greater context and comparison, there are no requirements regarding minimum level of food sales outside of UHGID within Boulder. It has been stated by businesses and other community members in UHGID that the requirement specific to the district is difficult for businesses to achieve and ultimately impacts their sales and growth. See B.R.C. 9-6-5 (B).

Note:

Since the convening of the TAP, great progress has been made on The Hill. On the November 16, 2023, City Council held a Public Hearing related to the second reading and consideration of a motion to approve Ordinance 8590 amending Title 9, "Land Use Code", B.R.C. 1981, to update the use table and use standards related to walkable neighborhood centers, including changes to the standards for restaurants, brewpubs, and taverns within the Business Main Street (BMS) district and UHGID. Council voted unanimously to approve Ordinance 8590. The adoption of Ordinance 8590 went into effect in December 2023 and will have impacts on The Hill commercial district. The code change eliminates the unique standards for restaurants, brewpubs, and taverns on The Hill and instead consolidates standards for the BMS district with other similar commercial or mixed-use districts that interface closely with residential areas. These uses will be allowed by right if they are under 4,000 square feet and close by 11pm; alternatively, larger sites and/or later operating hours could be considered and allowed through the Use Review process. Additionally, the requirement for restaurants that "no less than fifty percent of the gross income from sales of food and drink of the establishment over any thirty-day period must be from the sales of food" has been removed. Per liquor licensing rules and like other commercial districts in the city, the new requirement for restaurants on The Hill is that no less than twenty five percent of their sales come from food.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations reflect what the panelists heard, the history and culture of the Hill, and the market realities of revitalization given the barriers previously noted. Focusing holistically from a place-making and keeping perspective, the panelist address activation of the 14th Street Lot with the goal of leveraging both short and longer-term strategies that recapture the Hill's significance as an active annual destination. The first recommendation is for the City to reconsider the regulatory barriers and therefore send a strong market signal that the district is in fact open for business.

14th Street Lot Activation Opportunities

The panel recommends engaging in short-term opportunities before committing to the long-term in order to generate community excitement and engagement and to create test cases for revenue streams.

1. Implement more from the Alley Plan
 - Create a safe pedestrian/bike network of alleys that complements circulation between key destinations in University Hill
2. Pedestrianize or partially pedestrianize 13th Street Corridor
 - Develop concepts for activated, engaging alleys that help stimulate business activity
 - Integrate operational needs of alleys including service, waste disposal, parking/vehicular access and emergency vehicles
 - Build upon and continue to establish the unique "Hill" identity



IMAGE: Olde Town Arvada



Micro-Mobility Hub

Short Term (1-3 years)

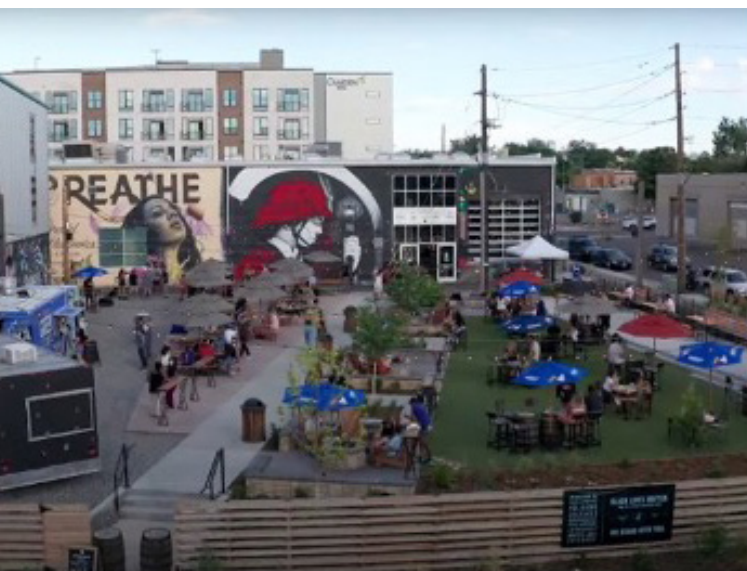
1. Utilize the parking lot as a mobility destination taking advantage of its connectivity to Chautauqua Park. Constructing light bike and other multi-modal infrastructure to create a place where people can connect to multiple modes of transportation.
2. Mobility hubs promote economic development, improve pedestrian experiences, and enhance public spaces.



Pop-up Activation

Short Term (1-3 years)

1. Utilize the lot for recurring pop-up activities to generate energy, place-making, and year-round revenue.
2. Activities could include weekly farmers markets, food trucks, retail and/or art markets, and music festivals.
3. Pop-up activities could create opportunities for small business exposure, incubator spaces, and a pipeline for entrepreneurs to occupy longer-term retail spaces on Hill.



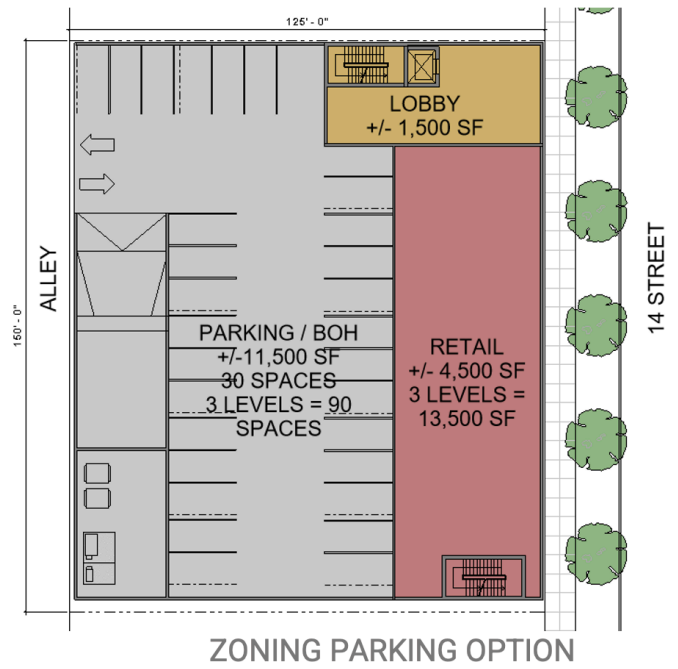
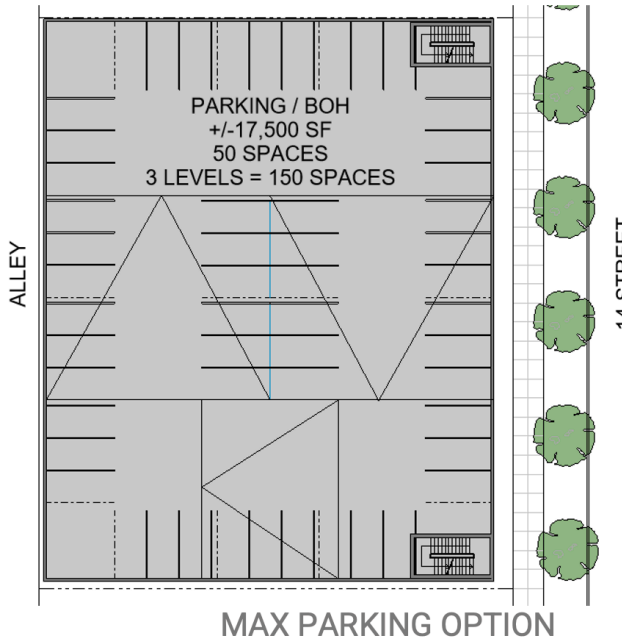
14th Street Lot Redevelopment – Parking Facility

Long Term (3-5 years)

Parking remains a critical need and the panel heard several stakeholders emphasize the desire for more parking options. On the next page are illustrations of parking options that either maximize parking, incorporate retail opportunities within the parking structure, or explore combinations of residential, retail, and business incubator spaces.

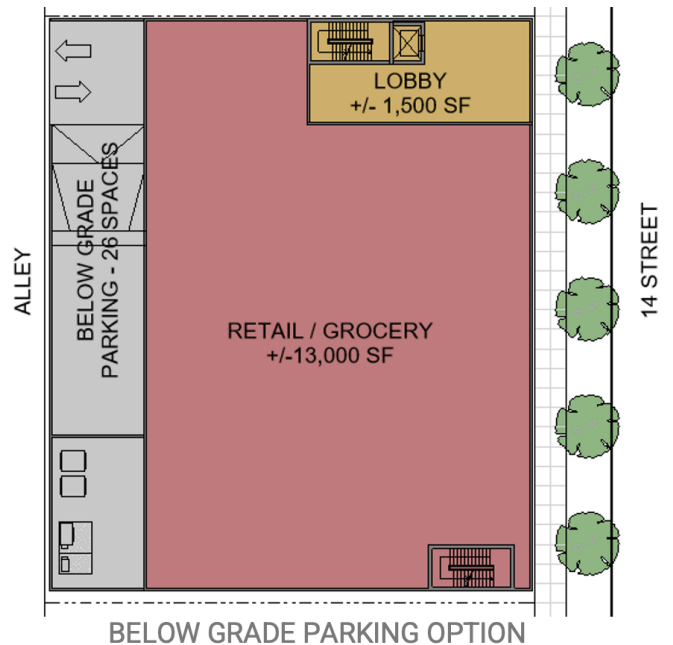
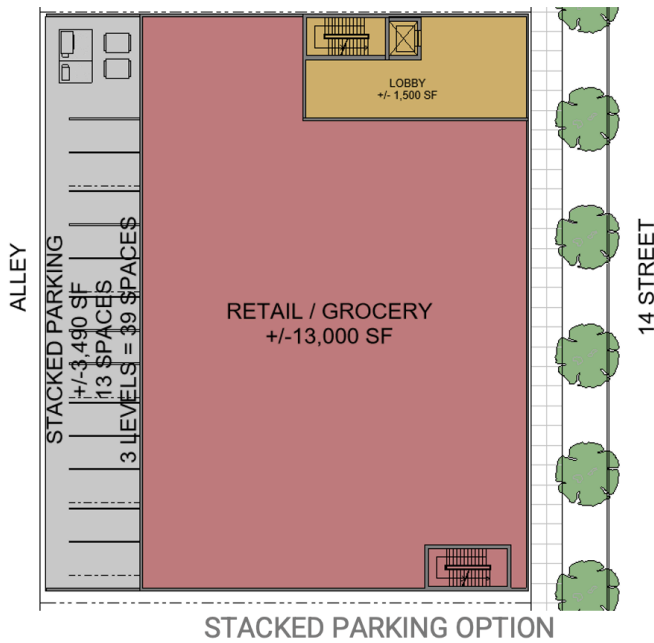
Long-Term on the 14th Street Lot

Parking Garage Options: Increased Revenue



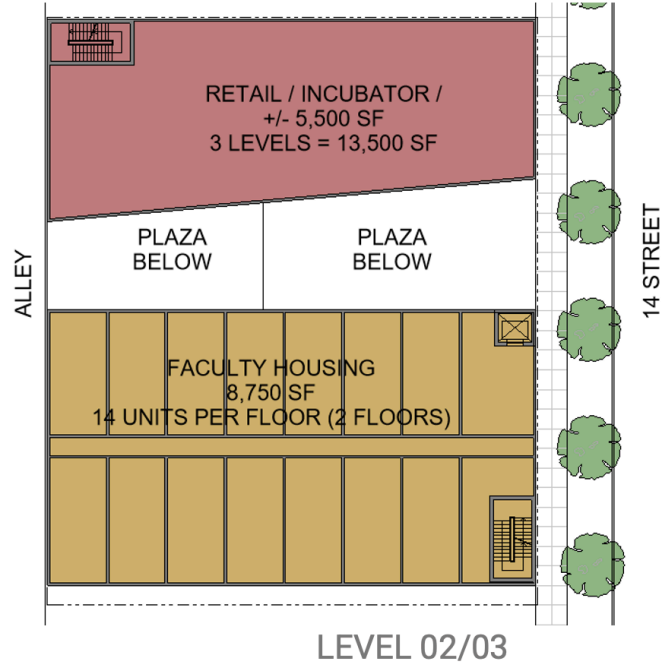
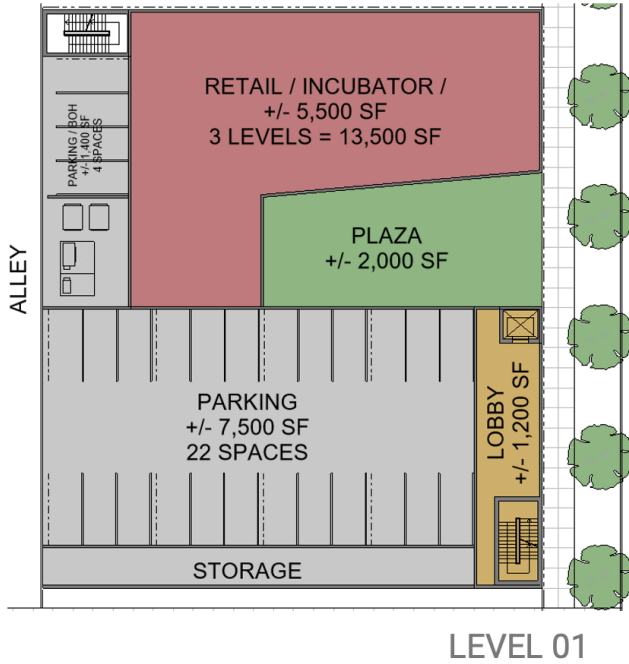
Long-Term on the 14th Street Lot

Grocery / Bodega: 15-minute Neighborhoods



Long-Term on the 14th Street Lot

Faculty Housing: CU Collaboration



14th Street Lot – Faculty Housing/Artist in Residence

Long Term (3-5 years)

Below are illustrations of parking options incorporate residential options, specifically, collaborations with the CU for faculty housing or housing for artists/ musicians, retail, and business incubator spaces.

14th Street Lot – Boutique Hotel

Long Term (3-5 years)

Given the footprint of the 14th Street Lot, the panel recommends exploring a boutique hotel with unique programming similar to other social clubs such as the Edison House, Catbird in Lower Downtown Denver, or Gravity Haus in Breckenridge and Aspen.



IMAGES: Boutique hotels and social clubs

Financing needed improvements and expanding opportunities for reinvestment were prominent themes emerging from the panelist's engagement. Both impact public safety and the overall aesthetic of the Hill. The following provides some detail on existing tools that should be explored further and in tandem with the preceding activation strategies.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Long Term (5+ years)

Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, is a financial tool primarily used to encourage development and address blight. TIF is a mechanism for capturing the future tax benefits of new development in order to pay for the present cost of that development. Tax increment financing can be requested for property tax, sales tax, or both. Each taxing entity (county, library, school district, etc.) must approve or deny the use of TIF.

Urban Renewal Authority (URA)

Urban Renewal is a tool that is designed to drive private sector investment to blighted areas and revitalize local economies. Through the use of tax increment finance (TIF) the UHGID could attract the private sector to the site while capturing net new tax generation to fund broad area improvements over 25 years. Additionally, the URA approach naturally has a broad community outreach component built in since all of the taxing entities would need to vote on if they would support the pledge of all (or a portion) of TIF to the area.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

Downtown Development Authorities are the only other entity that is allowed to use TIF as a tool. They also have the added ability of taxing themselves (up to 5 mils) for the funding of area public improvements. It should be noted that the current DDA expressed an interest in further exploring the possibility of extending boundaries to cover the Hill.

Either of the options should be strongly considered as they have the ability to capture new development that otherwise wouldn't occur to fund future improvements that can have needed catalytic affects.

CONCLUSION

The city of Boulder has a unique opportunity to recapture the vibrancy and cultural importance of The Hill through thoughtful implementation of the aforementioned recommendations. Balancing student and neighborhood amenities requires acknowledging the impact of the regulatory barriers imposed on The Hill while respecting the original rationale.

The 14th Street Lot's ability to serve as a catalyst for an activation strategy for The Hill will depend in large part on the market signal the removal of the regulatory barriers will most certainly send. As the recommendations suggest, a phased and multi-pronged approach that involves all stakeholders will be critical to The Hill's success.

It is our hope that this process will advance an already focused and informed effort for revitalizing The Hill. The recommendations put forth by the panelists reflect a genuine desire to respect the needs of each stakeholder group while placing emphasis on implementation and the market realities that are present for the district.



IMAGES: Character of the Hill Commercial District

ABOUT THE PANEL



Jariah Walker, Executive Director, Colorado Springs, Urban Renewal Authority, ULI TAP Committee Chair

Jariah Walker is the CSURA Executive Director where he leads the Urban Renewal Authority focused on revitalizing communities and driving economic growth with the use of TIF and districts. Before serving as acting director of CSURA, Walker worked as senior economic development analyst for the city. Prior to going to work for the city, Walker was a senior partner with Walker Asset Management Realty Inc. He served in that position for seven years.

Jariah stays involved in the community and sits on many boards and committees. He currently serves as co-chair of ULI Southern Colorado.



Keith Borsheim, Transportation Planner, HDR

Keith Borsheim, HDR, is a multimodal planner with two decades of broad-based experience. He is a life-long learner, striving to be current with the state of the practice in all aspects of transportation planning, from travel demand modeling where he started his career to complete street design, where he has recently helped the cities of Littleton and Denver update their guidelines and standards for designing streets.

Keith has the ability to speak the language of planners, engineers, developers, and stakeholders and works on all phases of project development. As one of HDR's Denver Office municipal complete streets practice leaders, Keith has helped many cities along the front range plan and design better streets for people of all backgrounds.



CarloMaria Ciampoli, Assoc., AIA, LEED Studio Director, Experience Design, RIOS

CarloMaria is an expert at creating unique and memorable environments. CarloMaria leads teams to elegant design solutions, working beyond boundaries to exceed the aspirations and expectations of clients globally. His ideas are driven by his passion to create meaningful human interactions and authentic experiences that span cultures, markets, and geographies.

Trained in architecture, he's adept at thinking across a spectrum of design disciplines and scales to devise solutions that inspire people to connect with their surroundings. His invaluable perspective and wisdom have been instrumental in a variety of mixed-use, retail, entertainment, and public spaces, as well as projects in China, India, and Mexico.

CarloMaria has lectured at the Center for Architecture in New York, industry events, and at universities across the US, Europe, and Asia. He's based in Boulder, Colorado, where he cultivates his passion for board sports and the great outdoors.



Matt Chiodini, Associate Principal, OZ Architecture

Matt is an Associate Principal at OZ Architecture, a 150-person firm based in Denver that serves clients around the globe. Matt is a leader in the firm's Multi-family practice area. He has been with OZ and in the industry for over 23 years. Matt has found that pursuing advanced delivery, including volumetric modular and prefabricated panelized work, is his passion and where he can deliver the most significant impact.

His work strives to balance social, environmental, and economic sustainability while creating beautiful, creative spaces that are lasting assets to their neighborhoods. He recognizes that housing development affects the entire community, providing affordable and attainable housing in dense urban environments. He also prioritizes sustainable design in his work and is helping to lead OZ in the 2030 Commitment.

As Matt leads his projects, he facilitates a truly integrated design process by enabling an open exchange among designers, engineers, consultants, and clients.



Amy McCann, LEED, Architect, Associate, SAR+

Amy McCann is a Denver native with a passion for cities and the urban environment. During her career, she has worked with large, multi-office architecture firms on diverse project types within both the private and public sector. Most recently, Amy has focused on hospitality, student housing, and higher-education projects, playing a key role in community outreach and entitlements. Amy is a licensed architect in Colorado, has a strong graphic design eye, and is an advocate for historic context and preservation within architecture.



The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide