

Dear Gold Hill Community,¹

June 2009

Please review the following **draft** Vision Statement proposed for inclusion in Boulder County's Comprehensive Plan as part of our Community Planning Initiative process. The impact of this would be that the County would need to take our vision statement into account when considering actions that could affect Gold Hill (e.g., road paving, zoning changes, open space development). Currently, the Comprehensive Plan has no specifics about Gold Hill.

The Gold Hill Community Vision Statement DRAFT

Twenty years from now (2030), we envision a community that has:

Preserved and enhanced its strengths (not necessarily in order of priority):

- The long-running institutions of the community, including the Gold Hill School, the Museum, the Gold Hill Town Meeting, the Fire Department, and the private businesses (the General Store, the Red Store, the Colorado Mountain Ranch, and the Gold Hill Inn/Blue Bird Lodge).
- The historic platted townsite, through continuation and improvement of the Historical Zoning Process.
- The historic character of the whole community, including the platted town site, other historic structures in the area, the mines, the trails, and the historic landmarks like Mt. Alto, the Crow's Nest, the marker on Horsfal, the Cemetery and People's Park, the Fen out west, and the Town Meadow.
- The largely undeveloped nature of the public and private lands in and around the community.
- The wildlife habitats in and surrounding the community.
- The largely unrestricted views of the landscape in and around Gold Hill.
- The access to the landscape through historically established public trails, pathways, etc.
- The community's sense of independence and separation from Boulder, as marked by our dirt roads, our relative lack of traffic and noise pollution, and our dark skies at night.
- Recognition of and respect for individualism, privacy, and property rights.

And

Addressed many of its weaknesses and threats to its quality of life by achieving the following (not necessarily in order of priority):

- Reduced wildfire risk and improved forest health through wildfire mitigation efforts.
- Improved fire department water supply and firefighting capability leading to improved insurance rating. **(continues on next page)**
- Sufficient water supply and water quality for all residents.

¹ Gold Hill's Community Planning Initiative currently includes the following areas as part of "Gold Hill": the townsite, subdivision, Gold Run Rd, Rim Road, Horsfal, Snowbound, Lickskillet and along Gold Hill Road west of town before the Switzerland Trail.

- Affordable sewage treatment that does not threaten water supplies.
- Environmentally responsible mining activities, improved communication with ownership, and improved regulatory oversight.
- Reduced reliance on fossil fuels through the use of renewable resources for energy supply and transportation.
- Zero waste generation through community composting and recycling.
- Increased alternative transportation to alleviate speeding issues, congestion, parking problems, and fugitive dust problems.
- Affordable high-speed internet connectivity and cell phone functionality for all.
- Increased food self-sufficiency with a community garden and greenhouse.
- Ongoing community planning process to proactively work on our vision for the future of the community with due recognition of the differences between the historic townsite and rural community needs.

Here is what we'd like you to do:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please rate each bullet point in the vision statement above on a scale of 1) Very Important to Me, 2) Somewhat Important To Me, or 3) Not Important To Me 2. Make any edits to the bullet points that you'd like to see. 3. Suggest additions and/or deletions. 4. We want and need everyone's input. Silence will be taken as tacit approval, so please speak up now! We will incorporate comments we receive and circulate the vision statement one more time for community approval. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Let us know if you are a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Renter, or <input type="checkbox"/> Property owner (resident), or <input type="checkbox"/> Property owner (non-resident) 6. Let us know how long you've lived here: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than one year <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 years 7. Let us know if your Gold Hill address is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In the platted townsite <input type="checkbox"/> In the subdivision <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
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Signature (voluntary) _____

Please respond either by email or regular mail **by July 13, 2009**, to Gretchen Diefenderfer at gretchend@mac.com, 9147 Sunshine Canyon, Gold Hill, CO 80302, 303-442-3847.
The next Community Planning Initiative meeting will be July 13, 7 pm, Fire Barn.

The remainder of this letter contains background material on the Community Planning Initiative Process.

Background

Gold Hill has begun a Community Planning Initiative in response to Boulder County's Townsite Planning Initiative process http://www.bouldercounty.org/lu/townsite_planning/. This process is being offered to historic communities in Boulder County so that they can choose to take more control of their future in terms of County regulations such as land use planning and building codes and not be subject to County-level, one-size-fits-all planning guidelines and regulations. The opportunity is for Gold Hill to propose changes to the County's Comprehensive Plan and/or to County Land Use Code regulations such as Site Plan Review, and BuildSmart (green building), transportation planning, and the historic zoning process. We can also have a greater influence on Parks and Open Space development in and around Gold Hill by participating in this process.

At a Gold Hill town meeting last fall, a vote was taken to enter into this process with the following general goals:

1. Get educated about the current County regulations (or lack thereof) as they apply to Gold Hill.
2. Understand how current regulations either do or do not protect what we care about in Gold Hill.
3. Understand our opportunities to affect the County Comprehensive Plan and/or County Land Use Code regulations.
4. Decide if we want to propose changes to the County Comprehensive Plan and/or County Land Use Code regulations affecting Gold Hill.

To address goal 1, we held two, day-long educational sessions in February during which county staff made presentations on the following topics:

- Building/addition size restrictions (*there are none now in the historic townsite*)
- Site Plan Review and Transferable Development Credits program
- Historic Zoning
- Septic requirements
- Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (*there is nothing specific about Gold Hill in the current plan*)
- Green building requirements
- Sustainability goals
- Parks and open space
- Demographics and census data

These sessions provided us with a huge amount of information to digest. Before moving forward as a committee on goals 2-4 focusing on particular issues, we decided we should try to reach a broad community consensus on a vision for the future of Gold Hill.

Reasons to have a vision statement and participate in the Community Planning Initiative:

“Reaching consensus on our vision statement gives us the opportunity to have our ideals, goals, and objectives for the future adopted as part of the County Comprehensive Plan. The Comp Plan is an advisory document for residents, landowners, and decisions makers, which outlines broad-based goals and policies that apply to future needs and issues. This is a great opportunity to act proactively in guiding county planners, the public, and landowners in making future land use decisions that will be in line with our collective vision.”

"Participating in CPI with the County gives us the chance to formalize Gold Hill historic zoning objectives for the historic townsite into the County Land Use Code, do away with historic zoning, or something in-between. Do you think the current historic zoning process is acceptable or should we try to make it better? Should we do away with it?"

"Over the next 10-20 years, Boulder County Parks and Open Space intends to buy or achieve through land swaps all the public, non-USFS land surrounding Gold Hill to create a contiguous swath of open space to the north, south and east of town. Effectively, this means that almost all the non-private land north, east, and south of Gold Hill will be owned by the County. The County will be required to "improve" a good portion of this land with trails, parking, etc. This could mean more traffic, more dust, more bikes, more people and dogs, more fire risk, and more damage to the landscape. CPI gives us the chance to have an official say in the goals for this land and requires the County to address those goals in the development of this land. Do you want to have some control over the development of open space around Gold Hill?"

"Last summer the County adopted regulations providing more predictability in defining neighborhood size compatibility. The presumptive compatible size is the larger number of either 125% of the median residential floor area for the defined neighborhood or 2,500 square feet. A neighborhood is defined as a platted subdivision with more than 7 lots, a mapped townsite, or the area within 1,500 feet of the subject parcel (excluding parcels in a townsite, municipality or subdivision). The one exception is the Gold Hill Townsite. Because Site Plan Review is not required in Historic Zoning, there are no neighborhood size compatibility requirements in the townsite. For the Gold Run Subdivision, the presumed maximum residential floor area size limit is 3,619 square feet. In order to build an addition or build a new house above this size you would have to overcome the presumptions such as being minimally visible. Do you think the size presumptions are appropriate? Should there be house size limits in the townsite? In the subdivision? In other areas?"