



*Making an Innovation
District work for
University Hill*

*Report of the Technical Advisory
Panel (TAP)*

*Prepared by the Colorado District
Council of the Urban Land Institute
(ULI Colorado)*

Sponsored by:
City of Boulder: Downtown and
University Hill Management Division
and Parking Services
Arts Commission
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Based in Washington, D.C., the Urban Land Institute is a 501-c-3 nonprofit dedicated to leadership in responsible land use. District Councils are ULI at the local level in 65 regions worldwide serving more than 30,000 members. The Colorado District Council supports best practices in land use through Smart Growth programs, advisory panels, seminars, and project tours. By offering nonpartisan, unbiased

expertise to community leaders, ULI Colorado positively influence land use issues while engaging its 900 members to participate in their community. Based in Denver in the historic Equitable Building, ULI Colorado's leadership includes William E. Mosher, Chair; Chris Achenbach, vice chair; Michael Leccese, executive director, and Kacey Wilkins, director.

Special thanks to:

Molly Winter, Director, Downtown and University Hill Management Division and Parking Services, City of Boulder
Frank Bruno, Vice Chancellor for Administration, University of Colorado-Boulder
Pastor Ron Roschke, Grace Lutheran Church Grace Foundation
ULI Colorado TAPs co-chairs: Al Colussy and Arleen Taniwaki
Dan Cohen, Boulder ULI
Lane Landrith and Ruth Weiss, City of Boulder

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1) Executive Summary

On March 14-15, 2011, the Colorado District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Colorado), at the request of the City of Boulder, CU Boulder, Grace Lutheran Church Foundation, and other stakeholders and sponsors, convened a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to review and assess revitalization strategies for the University Hill commercial district (“the Hill”).

A TAP consists of professionals drawn from the 900 members of ULI Colorado who volunteer their time to help a community address a problem or issue. Panel recommendations are unbiased, strategic and non-binding. Panel bios are located in the back of this document.

Located across Broadway from the main campus of the University of Colorado, the Hill district has a storied history in Boulder but today serves primarily as a place for students to shop for conveniences or go to bars.

Although that sounds innocuous, it is not always. In the last 20 years, the Hill has been experienced incidences of crime and violence. Students interviewed at the TAP reported they felt unsafe on the Hill.

Longtime Boulder residents remember days when the Hill was a place to buy a fashionable outfit, hear a fledgling music act “break out” at Tulagi’s, or meet casually with professors to continue classroom conversations. Can the days of a diverse Hill district serving and inspiring all of Boulder be reclaimed?

Vision. Building on the Hill’s (and CU’s) creativity, youthfulness, and energy, transform the Hill from a student-services center to an Innovation District focused on creativity in the arts, technology and design.

Goals:

--Establish a new Innovation District in the Hill commercial area to capitalize on the Hill's energy and assets, including CU, to rebrand the Hill to express its full potential as a district of creativity, entrepreneurship, and cutting edge culture, to become a “magnet” for all things creative.

--Create a zipper rather than a divide: a place where the university interacts in a positive and productive way with the community.

--Increase the Hill’s economic viability by expanding the types of businesses and commercial uses.

--Re-enforce and re-invent the Boulder Brand.

Challenges:

--Loss of cultural focus and diversity of uses. Uses on the Hill have atrophied from a diverse mix of entertainment (music and film), CU facilities, venues for the World Affairs Conference, stores and restaurants, to a narrow offering of convenience stores, fast food restaurants and T-shirt shops.

--*Lack of physical presence of the University.*

--*Small size, large neighbors.* The Hill is quite small with only 10 block faces. It is bounded by sizable neighbors – the CU main campus and the Hill neighborhood – each with their distinct character and needs, which can conflict. Within that small area, all the needs and wants of these large markets cannot be met by physical limitations of the Hill commercial area and hence cannot be all things to all people. The Hill needs a practical and realistic vision.

Strategies for ULI's evaluation

--Collaboration with the University's entrepreneurial, cultural, scientific and arts program to improve the Hill

--Create a public-private "power partnership" to foster an arts, cultural and community center as a venue for University programs such as film studies, the Conference on World Affairs, and an arts cinema. These types of uses would attract diverse audiences essential to the Hill's rebirth.

--Incentives for businesses and redevelopment for facilities that fit the district criteria

Summary of ULI Recommendations

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.

- 1) Governance: Create a properly authorized legal entity to advance common interests, manage and program public spaces and promote the Hill to new users. This may be a separate nonprofit organization, a Business Improvement District or another appropriate entity. While it appears to the panel that a nonprofit corporation or a Business Improvement District would be the best entity to serve as a governing entity for the Hill, determining the appropriate entity requires further discussion and analysis.

This governing body must be authorized and financed to coordinate and oversee parking, safety, traffic, waste management, maintenance,

public spaces, marketing, and advocacy. It must include as stakeholders the City, CU, neighbors, arts and community organizations, landlords, and local business owners.

- 2) Programming: Placemaking efforts must celebrate local vendors, products, talent, assets, inspiration and potential. Simply "marketing" the Hill will not work. The enhanced district must be nurtured and grow from within. Gear programming to attract residents, families, students, visiting faculty, shoppers, dog-owners, cyclists, artists, and many others.

Recent examples to build upon: The opening of a quality sit-down restaurant by a CU grad who spent less than \$100,000 to renovate the space; opening of a successful poetry bookshop by a long-time Hill resident; and the success of the Hill Flea farmer's/curio market.

3) Bricks and Mortar:

--Preserve the Hill's historic Main Street character and scale

--Pursue incremental change at key, catalyst sites to introduce new uses

--Key sites may include publicly owned parking lots, alleys, and the upper stories of commercial buildings

--Encourage the development of commercial (probably office space) rather than housing above commercial storefronts

--Improve the Hill's urban design to create circulation that makes it easy, comfortable and enticing to cross Broadway and to circulate on the Hill

*"We need an attitude of shared ownership among students, the university, owners and developers"—
Craig Karn, ULI panelist*

II) Questions for the TAP

The City asked the panel to address the following questions:

1. What types of innovative industries and activities are appropriate for the University Hill Commercial Area?
2. What are the market demands and financial feasibility for creating and nurturing an innovation district at here?
3. What is the appropriate scale to focus and unleash the creative energies of the city and university in this small piece of real estate (University Hill Commercial Area)?
4. How would these uses fit into the neighboring communities, and complement the surrounding businesses, students, residents and the greater Boulder area?
5. Do we achieve these goals more with "bricks and mortar" or by programming? What are pros and cons for each of these approaches?
6. What specific space requirements are needed to incubate and grow innovative industries that are appropriate to the Hill?

7. Can an existing building or buildings be renovated in a cost effective manner to incubate an innovation industry?

8. What are the steps that need to be taken to create, implement and nurture such a district, including marketing, financing and other incentives, such as a business rebate for locating innovative businesses on the Hill or a public improvement fee for district wide creative, innovative programs or infrastructure?

9. What are the mechanisms, including governance and board structure, for establishing and managing an innovation district?

These are answered in the "Findings" and "Recommendations" sections that follow.

"Preserve the Hill's scale and keep the spaces small. You don't need big spaces to incubate ideas and this will keep the Hill's character"--

Paul Tamburello, ULI panelist

III) Challenges, Opportunities and Findings

a) Challenges

--Other than streets and sidewalks, the Hill lacks a true public gathering space such as a plaza or promenade. One panelist commented, "I bought coffee and walked for some time looking for a place to sit outside. I never found one."

--A plethora of fast-food restaurants and a dearth of sit-down restaurants, which flourish elsewhere in Boulder

--The University's perspective that the Hill may not "show well" to prospective students and faculty

--A lost connection between CU and The Hill. Aside from the Pennsylvania and Broadway parking lot, the University has no physical presence on the Hill. In the past, the University had staff and faculty offices and conducted classes at the Fox

--A sense that long-time Boulder residents have given up on the Hill. Typical comment: "I haven't even been there in 10 years. If I went I could not park and there's nothing to attract me anyway."

--Some unsightly, deteriorating and perhaps unsafe properties

--Boulder residents' frustration that the Hill "has been studied to death" with little measurable progress in 10 years

--A conundrum created by the economic success of buildings (most are fully leased at fairly high rents) that discourages building owners from new investment in their properties.

b) Opportunities

At the time of this TAP the Hill finally seemed primed for change. Several conditions make this possible:

--Professional developers are moving onto the Hill with three major redevelopments planned or underway

--The Hill Ownership Group has reached consensus and rallied around the Innovation District concept

--Backed by private developers, a cultural group is interested in creating a \$6 million Innovation Design Education Arts ("I.D.E.A") Center, potentially using a CU parking lot on the Hill. While not yet committing, CU is engaged in this concept, which would support the Innovation District idea by providing flex space for all kinds of creative activities, from music rehearsals to seminars

--Boulder City Council has made Hill revitalization a "priority"

--Special events like the Hill Flea have started to draw a new audience to the Hill

--New businesses like Café Aion and the Innisfree poetry shop (one of three in the nation) are building on this momentum

--The Hill extremely well served by transit (including the Skip bus and one of the busiest bus stops in the entire RTD system) and strong pedestrian/bike connections

--Throughout Boulder almost 40 percent of city land is owned by public entities (including streets, parking lots, and alleys). This presents a resource that can be leveraged.

Key findings

--Preserving the Hill's scale is essential. Lifting the current FAR from 1.85 might generate more redevelopment, but this might be generic (eg, national chain stores), rather than indigenous new businesses

--The Hill's economic conditions remain challenging. Rents are relatively high while sales tax revenues remain stable even during the recession. Retail spaces are so easy to rent that owners simply put signs in windows without using commercial brokers

--Small commercial spaces like those available on the Hill can be friendly for creative start-up businesses and artistic enterprises, but the Hill's relatively high rents (comparable to Pearl Street) are a deterrent

--The University has a major stake in the Hill but is not likely to acquire more property or develop a CU facility there

--Films are not coming back to the Flatiron Theatre. Even small art-house theaters like the Esquire and Mayan in Denver require multiple screens to make the economics work

--The Hill's small size is a strength. You don't have to change the entire Hill; improving 15 or 20 percent of the Hill's properties and public spaces can change the feel and function of the entire neighborhood

--The seeds of the Innovation District exist in the Hill today. The Hill does not need to be reinvented or replaced, but enhanced

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IV) Recommendations

a) Governance

Thesis:

Achieve a multi-faceted approach to design and management of the neighborhood to broadly benefit Hill community and broader Boulder community.

Actions:

Create a properly authorized legal entity to advance common interests, manage and program public spaces and promote the Hill to new users. This may be a separate nonprofit organization, a Business Improvement District or another appropriate entity.

This governing body must be authorized and financed to coordinate and oversee parking, safety, traffic, waste management, maintenance, public spaces, marketing and advocacy. It must include as stakeholders the City, CU, neighbors, arts and community organizations, landlords, and local business owners.

- b) See the sidebar on page XX for a summary of commonly used governance entities. While it appears to the panel that a nonprofit corporation or a Business Improvement District would be the best entity to serve as a governing entity for the Hill, determining the appropriate entity requires further discussion and analysis. **Programming**

Thesis:

Placemaking efforts must celebrate local vendors, products, talent, assets, inspiration and potential. Simply “marketing” the Hill will not work. The enhanced district must be nurtured and grow from within. Gear programming to attract residents, families, students, visiting faculty, shoppers, dog-owners, cyclists, artists, and many others.

Recent examples to build upon: The opening of a quality sit-down restaurant by a CU grad who spent less than \$100,000 to renovate the space; opening of a successful poetry bookshop by a long-time Hill resident; and the success of the Hill Flea farmer’s/curio market.

Sidebar: How marketing places differs from marketing products (from panelist Hilarie Portell, PortellWorks)

Places are much more dynamic, than say, tennis shoes. They have layers of history, culture, people—a unique blend of past and future. You can't just slap a “swoosh” on them and tell everyone to come live, work and visit here.

In thinking about community branding, we came across the following quote from the Project for Public Spaces:

Place marketing is not product marketing.

Placemaking is both a process and it is a philosophy. It takes root when a community expresses needs and desires about places in their lives – even if there is not a clearly defined plan of action.

Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration and potential. We think this applies very well to community branding too. It's not really branding, it's teasing out the unique identity of a place, staking a claim on a future vision and building on the past. The creative identity should resonate with the local community and appeal to visitors and prospective investors (business owners, developers and others). It is essential that it be authentic and believable. If not, everyone will know and marketing efforts will ring hollow. People yearn today for authentic places, not the manufactured ones created by marketers. So be who you are, and build on that.

So how does this play into the Hill as an “Innovation District”? At first the panel did not know what was meant by this. And most of the stakeholders had different opinions on it. To some it meant the “Big Ideas” such as the outdoor Maymester event, or the proposed IDEA Center. To others it meant a spirit of creativity or interesting new businesses and restaurants. “Innovation” often refers to high-tech initiatives or incubators, and the Hill seems an unlikely location for this. So finally we looked up “innovation.” It means, generally, “doing things in a new or different way.”

Now that resonated. And it's certainly consistent with what is “bubbling up” in the community in terms of event ideas, popular new spots such as the poetry book store and nearby café, the new spirit of collaboration among stakeholders and the “big ideas” under consideration. It also makes sense. One would expect new and different experiences in a university district, as opposed to a shopping district or mall. The experiences might be small, such as discovering a poem on your café napkin or turning the corner and finding a colorful “alley walk.” Or they might be large, like an outdoor design or world forum event. They might even be brilliantly simple ways to bring people together, like the biannual town/gown flea market. Conventionality is out the door at the Hill! Thank goodness.

A new logo, tagline and some large events like Maymester will be a great start. (In light of the recent tragedy, Maymester will be an excellent way for the community to “reclaim the streets” in the Hill. Keep doing it.) The more you draw new audiences to the Hill, the more you are building new markets for Hill businesses. And some new businesses will come because of that.

But programming alone won't be enough. You should have a targeted business development strategy too. Go out and recruit creative businesses, too. Interview the successful new businesses on the Hill, like we did. Who else do they know that is doing something interesting? What other businesses

would complement their efforts? Talk to other locally owned, creative businesses in town and see if they'd be interested in locating another shop on the Hill. Look for the types of retail uses requested again and again in community surveys (sit-down restaurants, hardware store, etc.)

Find out what is keeping local businesses from coming to the Hill, and see what you can do about it. Could you work with the City, Small Business Development Center, economic development council or local banks to offer basic incentives, such as low interest loans to cover start-up costs tenant finishes? Other communities do, using Community Development Block Grant, Community Reinvestment Act, TIF and other funding sources.

Could you work with some of the property owners to improve their building street appeal and help them find desirable tenants? Perhaps a "carrot" of matching grants for façade improvements combined with a "stick" of a minimum maintenance ordinance would be an effective strategy. Could developers be required set aside new, affordably priced commercial space via some kind of "inclusionary housing ordinance"? You may have to be innovative in your business development efforts, too.

You must proactively build the Hill as a destination, in addition to promoting it as a new innovative district. In other words, walk your talk. Do things in an innovative way. Try out new ways of doing things, go after innovative businesses and tell your story to everyone. Don't wait for it to happen—or the results may be what you already have.

Program ideas

Car share location	In-residence program for visiting scholars
B-cycle location	Virtual classroom
Storyteller and poetry events	Pop-up retail (one storefront shares shelves for different local start-up products)
Soapbox for political speeches	Urban agriculture
Walkable mural district	Faculty club
Dog events	Bike corral
Kid events	

c) **Bricks and Mortar**

Thesis:

The Hill's appealing scale, historic character, and many connections to transit, walking and bike paths are huge plusses. The Hill does not need to be physically reinvented but incrementally improved. If you can seed successful changes to 15 or 20 percent of the Hill, the entire character of the Hill will change. Thus the Hill needs addition by addition, not subtraction.

Actions:

--Preserve the Hill's historic Main Street character and scale

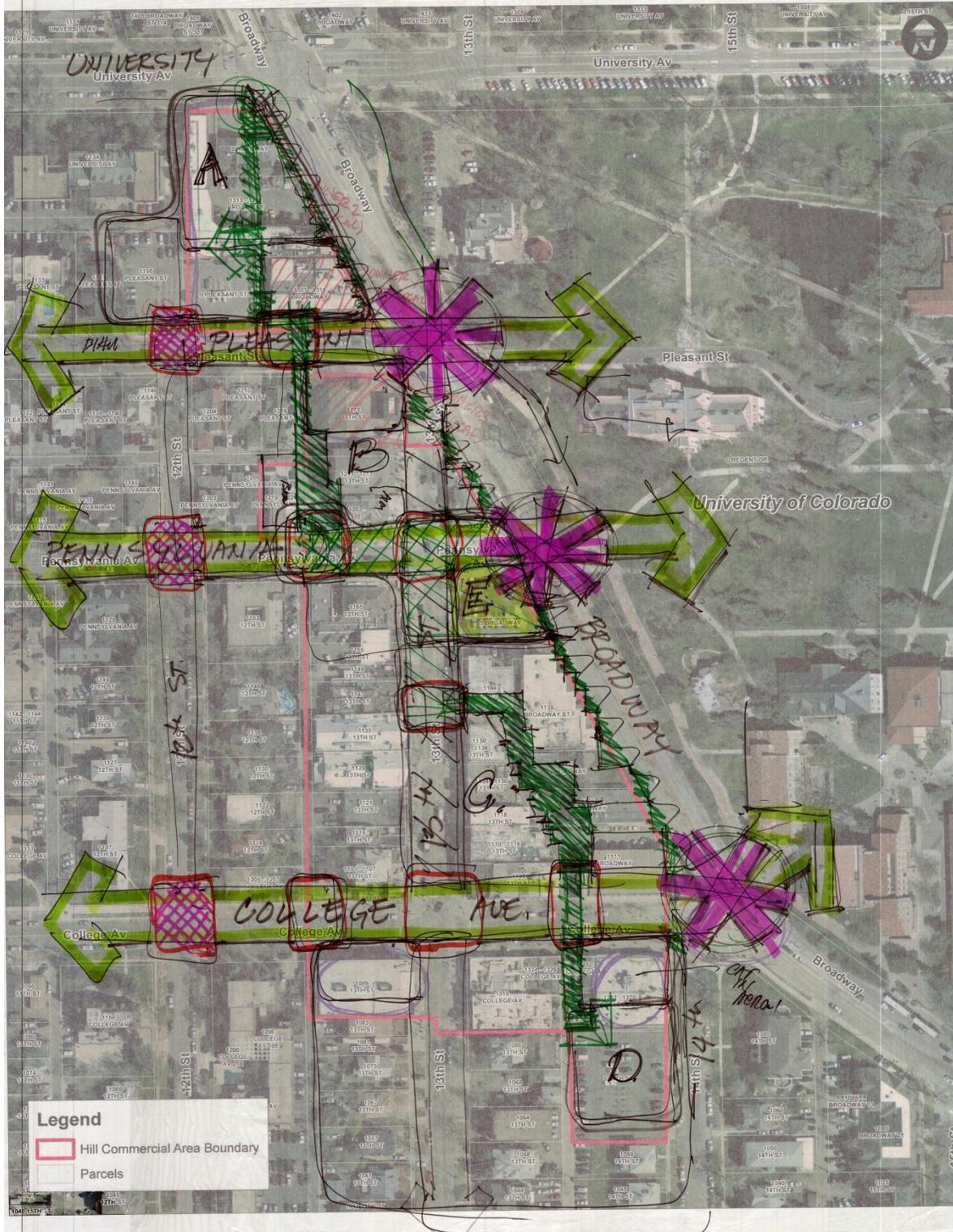
--Pursue incremental change at key, catalyst sites to introduce new uses

--Key sites may include publicly owned parking lots, alleys, and the upper stories of commercial buildings

- Examples (keyed to plan):
Redevelop shopping sites on west side of Broadway between Pleasant and University and Broadway [Zone A]
- Intensify City owned parking lots (in a consolidated fashion) [Zones A and D]
- Add levels of parking and wrap/top with commercial uses
- Redevelop gas station [Zone B]
- Create CU Event/Community Center on Penn lot (gathering, event, and meeting spaces) [Zone E]
- Promote upper floor commercial (rather than residential)
- Create an overlay or PUD for redevelopment sites.

--Improve the Hill's urban design to create circulation that makes it easy and comfortable to cross Broadway and to circulate on the Hill

University Hill Commercial Area Boundary



Overlay drawing by Craig Karn, ASLA

V Panelist bios



Sarah Rockwell, panel chair, attorney, Kaplan Kirsch and Rockwell, Denver. Ms. Rockwell’s practice emphasizes land use and environmental law and public sector negotiations. Having practiced in both Colorado and California, Ms. Rockwell has represented both public and private sector clients in land use, environmental and municipal law issues associated with complex, large-scale development projects, including airports and residential, industrial and commercial development projects. Ms. Rockwell advised the redeveloper of the former Stapleton International Airport in Denver on land use, real estate and environmental issues associated with one of the largest urban redevelopment projects in the country. She has prepared, negotiated and implemented agreements related to a variety of public/private sector development projects. She has advised the developer chosen to redevelop Denver's Union Station. She has published many articles on land use topics and holds degrees in from Stanford University (BA, 1980), Boston University (J.D., 1985) and MIT, (Master’s in City Planning, 1985). She also serves on the Management Group of the Downtown Denver Partnership and on the Board of Directors of the Lowry Redevelopment Authority.

“We heard from a half-dozen different interest groups. The clear message is that efforts are fragmented with different groups doing different things. This limits effective change. You need a single voice to advocate. The GID has limited powers and authority.”—Sarah Rockwell

Tim Bour, executive director, Boulder Innovation Center. Before taking the helm of BIC in August of 2007, Tim Bour successfully grew or developed business and sales, generating and managing finances exceeding \$100 million. Most recently, Tim was executive vice president of engineering and manufacturing at Circle Graphics, the leading manufacturer of wide format digital printers for outdoor advertising. As founder and CEO of Cielo Communications, 1997 to 2001, Tim not only secured over \$45 million in capital, he did this while overseeing the development of the first gigabit optical transceiver used by Cisco Systems. During 13 years at Hewlett Packard he worked as marketing manager for the fiber optics components business. During that time sales grew from \$20 million to \$200 million annually. Tim was an Ernst and Young Finalist “Entrepreneur of the Year” in the Rocky Mountain Region in June 1999 for his work at Cielo Communications. Tim holds a BS in Chemical Engineering (magna cum laude) from University of Cincinnati and an MBA from Ohio State University.



“You want to do a business plan for this district. Start by defining the results you want and then go to the tactical level.”—Tim Bour

Ellen T. Ittelson, senior city planner, City and County of Denver, Community Planning & Development. Ittelson’s responsibilities include: managing 17 professional planners; staffing Planning Board and the Landmark Preservation Commission; managing projects; and integrating land use and transportation planning through large and small projects. She co-managed the award-winning Downtown Area Plan and serving on the 2027 Implementation Committee; co-managed the award-winning Blueprint Denver Land Use and Transportation Plan; implemented Blueprint Denver recommendations; co-authoring the Mixed Use Zoning, including the Transit Mixed Use Zoning. She participates in the Denver Union Station Multimodal Transportation Center project as a member of the Project Management Team, representing the City in detailed discussions and approvals. She had degrees in architectural history and planning from the University of New Mexico and art history from University of Wisconsin.



Craig L. Karn, ASLA, Principal, Consilium Design. With more than 28 years of practice in landscape architecture and land planning, Craig Karn, Principal and founding partner of Consilium Design, Inc. brings a wealth of experience in community design and real estate development to his work. Craig’s experience includes large-scale land development planning, golf communities, mixed-use master planned communities, and the design of neighborhoods and urban spaces. Craig has been involved in the master planning and design of several communities throughout Colorado, the US, and internationally.



“Keep the spaces small. You don’t need big spaces to incubate ideas and that keeps the character”—

Craig Karn

Jack D. Pappalardo, president, Art District on Santa Fe. Jack Pappalardo earned his Juris Doctor at Syracuse College of Law and his Master’s in Public Administration at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. In 2004 Jack joined the Denver law firm Otten Johnson’s commercial real estate practice group and is now establishing his own practice. In 2004 Jack became president of Denver’s Art District on Santa Fe, a nonprofit corporation then consisting of 17 creative industry members with a mission to promote awareness of Santa Fe Drive between 6th and 10th Avenues as an art and cultural district. Since then Mr. Pappalardo has established partnerships to expand the Art District to 60 members including art galleries, artist studios, theatre, state college visual arts center, restaurants, coffee shops, designers, branding and marketing companies, architects, martial arts, dance and yoga studios, brewery, urban winery, distillery, and other creative organizations. The monthly “First Friday” art walks in the Art District draw up to 7,000 patrons to 40-plus galleries and artist studios. In 2008 Jack was a mayoral appointee to the advisory board of Create Denver, an economic development division of the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs. Jack and his multi-media artist wife Georgia Amar have owned and operated Habitat Gallery & Studio and lived in the Art District since 2003.



Roger Pecsok, development director and principal, Continuum Partners. Roger joined Continuum in 2001 where he was responsible for coordinating financial analysis, construction, budgets, design, entitlements and other development activities. He works extensively on most aspects of the 3.5 million square foot Belmar mixed-use development and manages most aspects of the horizontal and vertical development activity, which among other things include the pro forma analysis, entitlements, design and master planning, putting in a place a residential development program and coordination of land sales to third party developers. Roger is currently responsible for all ongoing development activities at Belmar. Roger provided development oversight for the Art House Condominium project, a complex mixed-use project that includes 13 high end townhomes, a mid-rise building with market rate and affordable housing components and a contemporary art museum. Roger also has overall responsibility of the Bellevue Station mixed-use and transit oriented development. Before joining Continuum, he developed commercial properties in the Seattle area with Opus Northwest and prior to that two years construction experience with Morrison Knudsen Corporation. Roger has worked on over a dozen real estate development projects totaling several million square feet. He has undergraduate degrees in Economics and Political Science as well as a Master’s Degree in Civil Engineering with an emphasis in construction management.



Hilarie Portell is the principal and owner of Portell Works, a consulting firm advancing urban neighborhoods, districts, downtowns and small communities. With nearly 20 years of experience on staff and as a consultant for public and private sector firms, Portell has worked

on a variety of complex projects. Portell and her team work with community and economic development organizations and their private sector partners, providing strategic communications, marketing and grant writing. She served on the executive team of the Lowry Redevelopment Authority from 1996 to 2006. Current and recent clients include the Brighton Urban Renewal Authority, Castle Rock Downtown Development Authority and Denver Housing Authority. She has a bachelor's in political science from the University of Utah and a master's in public administration from the University of Colorado at Denver. She's active in Downtown Colorado Inc. and the Urban Land Institute, and is a graduate of the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts.

“Don’t just think you can build the Innovation District and they will come. You have to manage and program it, too.”—Hilarie Portell



Paul Tamburello, Realtor/Developer, Red Chair Realty, Lo Hi, Denver. Paul was born at Denver’s St. Joseph’s and grew up near the Bluebird Theater. After high school, he studied theology, concentrating on adolescent spiritual development. He sat with kids and parents, talking about pregnancy and drugs. He worked on the pope’s 1993 visit to Denver, worked with Up With People — and then, finally, found himself in real estate through Red Chair Realty. With Stephanie Garcia, he is developing Denver’s landmark Olinger Mortuary as a mixed-use complex and is a development partner at the Root Down restaurant in Denver’s Highlands Neighborhood. He also founded the landmark Little Man Ice Cream in Denver’s Lo Hi district of the Highlands neighborhood.

“It’s a misconception that 2,500 square feet is not big enough for a restaurant. A great chef with a great idea will make it happen in 1,500 square feet.”—Paul Tamburello

Susan Hebel Watts, executive director, CU Real Estate Center. Susan Watts is a national leader in sustainable development with 25 years in senior management for development industry leaders Bonita Bay Group, Collier Enterprises, WCI Communities, and Westinghouse Communities in California, Arizona and Florida, as well as academic experience teaching at the University of Arizona’s School of Renewable Natural Resources. Watts has addressed real estate and sustainability trends at national conferences including the Urban Land Institute, National Association of Home Builders, Audubon International and American Institute of Architects. She currently serves on the advisory board of the 1,100 acre Maryland Creek Ranch in Silverthorne, Colorado. Watts holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biological Sciences from Goucher College and a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Illinois. She is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, American Planning Association, Association of Florida Community Developers, and serves on the Community Development Council of the Urban Land Institute.



“We came up with some things you can do now. You can easily enhance the East-West street connections and strengthen the connection to Chautauqua.”—Susan Watts

Appendix

b) Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

Over two days the ULI panelists interviewed stakeholders in groups for 15 minute segments

Group One: University Hill Commercial Area Management Commission (UHCAMC), represented by Bonnie Dahl, Bill Shrum, Ron Mitchell, Jyotsna Ray

- UHCAMC consists of five members appointed by Council
- Two FTEs that take care of trash, maintenance, lights, snow removal
- Biggest challenge: diversity of business landlords, not very progressive, don't want change.
- Spaces are too small for quality businesses
- Increase of fast food retailers has led to increase in trash in the neighborhood. Should consolidate trash units.
- Perceived parking shortage needs to be addressed. Studies have shown there is adequate parking except for very limited times.
- Not all businesses believe they benefit from events – some feel it impedes their business.
- Neighboring businesses don't know one another and have limited interest
- Would like to have a staff person act as the Hill rep, like Sean Maher, to be a merchant advocate
- Would like to see more community space, indoor and outdoor.
- Would like a faculty club on the Hill for interfacing faculty-students
- Entrepreneurial, cultural, arts combined to promote reinvestment – their idea of an Innovation District

Group 2: University Hill Ownership Group represented by Jane Stoyva (neighbor), Caldwell Sullivan (property manager), Mark Heinritz (Sink owner), Callie Weiant (neighbor)

- Goal is to bring students, older folks, workers, and young families together – an impossible task. Want to avoid potential for violence.
- Supportive of an innovation district. Willing to assist to make it happen.
- Came up with the idea of a residential service district – cleaning, maintenance.

- Hill is no longer a part of the broader Boulder fabric. The Hill brand no longer has any value.
- More people would come if there was a destination use like a quality grocery store.
- Of the 66 storefronts in the area, 44 are food (mostly quick)
- Sees art component as a component of the Innovation District.

Group 3: University of Colorado, represented by Ken Renaud (professor of Architecture and Planning conducting Maymester program on the Hill this spring), Jen Korbelik (City liaison to CU), Allison Rae Wenlund (CU planning student), Courtney Goertz (CU planning student), Sam Assefa, City of Boulder urban designer

- Ken Renaud: Maymester will happen this May for CU's Environmental Design students. Will install projects in the Hill, including furniture, choreographing events. A catalyst for an urban laboratory. Do experimental temporary projects, like public furniture in public squares. University should provide academic and financial support like these types of projects.

- Jen: CU needs more music and dance venues of 500-2,000 seats. Flatirons had 400 seats when a theater.

-- Students: It's almost two cultures on the Hill: Study and eat during day and lively at night. Female students would not go to the Hill at night alone; always in groups. Feel more safe on 13th Street and less so on side streets. The threat is from drugs, alcohol, parties and fights. If had to choose the Hill or Pearl Street, would visit Pearl. Don't want the Hill to feel like campus; it's a place to escape and should have a different atmosphere.

Group 4: City of Boulder City staff represented by Molly Winter, Kurt Matthews, Lane Landrith

- Parking: there are always spaces available, but not free spaces. Two lots owned by the City. Employees can buy permits at City lots. There are also commuter permits for on-street parking in the neighborhood parking permit zones.

- Residential has to provide 1 space per unit. New commercial in the district does not require additional spaces.

- There is a car storage issue – students leave their cars for long periods.

- A lot of the owners own the buildings free and clear and so are not motivated. Need an incentive to do improvements or to sell.

- There is a use review requirement for certain size businesses, which requires a neighborhood meeting.

- Urban renewal – never did a blight study. Not compelling evidence for blight.

- No grant or loan programs for façade repair.

- Want more of a balance of uses, more neighborhood serving

Group 5, Hill Ownership Group, represented Frank Bruno, CU Boulder, and by: Andrew Shoemaker, Mike Boyers, Del Mar Interests; Eduardo Illanes, OZ Architecture; and David Ehrlich, Denver Theater District. This group presented concept of a \$6 million I.D.E.A (Innovation Design Education Arts) Center that could potential be built on the site of CU's parking lot at 13th and Pennsylvania, built through private fundraising, and operated through funds generated by an electronic billboard on the side of the building. This concept is being used in Denver's Theater District. The I.D.E.A. Center would provide flexible space for all kinds of creative activities, from rehearsals to small seminar and conferences.

- Frank Bruno: CU has a vested interest for CU in seeing this change. If the Hill were to deteriorate further, this would create a significant disadvantage for CU recruiting. The University should have a vested interested in seeing the Hill change.

-- Don't see Hill as a fundamental part of the campus. Would like to see it serve not just students, but faculty, staff, and permanent residents

- Could potentially be financial resources available – would be for a discrete, finite project rather than an ongoing effort. Something with real potential, needs to be constantly used. We've gone through \$23 million in budget cuts but we're a \$2 billion institution. The panel could give added weight to help me make a case for investing on the Hill

- Mike Boyers (also developer of three buildings on the Hill): Saw a lot of opportunity because poor quality of businesses and space – saw an economic opportunity to reinvest. When my wife went to school here the Hill was a lot more vibrant. Even now the Hill serves only some of the students. It would be nice if my granddaughter, a CU freshman, had more to do here on the Hill

- Excited by the idea of an innovation district.

- David Ehrlich: Need a building that starts an art and innovation district. How do you create reasons for people to stay out longer and spend more money?

- In Denver, did an overlay district. Put local artists and musicians on the street after other events ended. Programmed spaces in downtown (i.e. at Hotel Teatro).

- In Denver, District gets 15% of the time on the signs, as well as a portion of the revenue. Paid for and maintained by private companies, but results in a public purpose. Governed by a board with community and landlord reps. Structures and content don't go to planning until receive recommendation from board.

- Generated \$400,000 for arts and culture.

- He thinks the opportunity here exceeds Denver. Here there could be a distinct place (I.D.E.A. Center) and capture student energy too.

-- This probably won't happen at Flatiron Theater. Pennsylvania and Broadway site is another feasible location

- Andrew : if you could provide new media signage (big digital billboard) that also displays art, would that fly with the City? Potentially, yes, but only on the Hill. Would bring new foot traffic to Hill. Would serve CU.

- Want something complementary to BMOCA, Dairy Center, etc.

- Mike: building could be funded entirely by charitable donation. So, zero debt. Signage District would fund operations. 40% of sign revenues would go to district, 60% to sign company.

- CU would control land on a land lease.

- New building development cost: \$6 million.

-- A high-tech building of contemporary design to set itself apart from rest of the Hill

- Uses: Rehearsal, traveling exhibitions, classrooms, retail, rooftop space for special events, parking, rehearsal space, gallery for student work, meeting space, films, World Affairs Conference, underground parking.

--Managed by quasi-public board to approve all events to be held in center

Group 6, local business owners represented by Dakota Soifer (Café Aion owner), Steve Moyski (Urban Frontier, owner of Flatiron Theater), Brian Carp (manages Fox Theater)

- Brian: Fox has become a specific destination, but no longer any passer-by sales because there is not adequate foot traffic.

- Dakota: Space was priced right for that size. Liked building's funky feel, was able to renovate for less than \$100,000. Saw it as an opportunity because there are so many people coming to the hood but limited places to sit down and eat. Was an architecture student at CU.

- Has turned out to be much more of a restaurant than a café with good food and bar. 20% of night business comes from outside Boulder.

- Steve: bought note on Flatirons property in 2008, took title in 2010. Marketing the property for lease. Have a 25' high, 8,000 SF space. There are not venue users out there for film or performances. Office market is not viable. Conversations: regional quick-serve, sit down Asian restaurant; Sonic café concept; national convenience chain. Hill perceived as unfriendly to families by one retailer and so didn't want to be there. Foot print is 9,750 square feet, could go to 1.7 FAR. Zero lot line.

- Currently no market for the second floor space (at cost of \$50/sf).

- Brian: City treats Hill as second class citizen. We get last response to complaints.

- Ownership is a big problem: national chains don't care, dispensaries don't care

- Zoning issue of no liquor after 11 (for new business) is a problem. More sit-down restaurants would come if could get liquor license or later license.

- Neighborhood and city don't want to see more liquor after 11.
- One solution: Could close 13th at night to make it more of an attraction. Some businesses don't like street closure because makes parking more difficult.

Group 7, Steve Sparn (architect/developer, Downtown Boulder Business Improvement Board, Nancy Geyer (director, Boulder History Museum), Richard Turbiak (Boulder Arts Commission)

- Sparn: Owns a building downtown. When a vision is in place, more Hill owners would be willing to join BID.
- Nancy Geyer: Limited interaction with Hill. Have activities and events with residential neighborhood. Working on a new museum for Boulder – would like to move to a more central location in town. Want to be about Boulder and its brand – including science and technology innovation. Challenging here because people don't like coming to the Hill. Need about 25-30k SF. Annual visitation is 12,000.
- Richard: Arts Commission budget is \$668,000. Focused on economic vitality – measure their econ impact. Sponsor with grants to local orgs.

Group 8, Ron Roschke (Grace Church pastor), David Zeckser (Grace Church Foundation), Seth Larson (Cheba Hut owner, Hill business)

- Seth: 1,250 SF, 300 customers per day. Went zero waste. Tried to get the entire Hill do it, but not everyone on the same page. Abundance of quick service restaurants impact Cheba – too much competition. Wouldn't come to Hill if didn't work here, other than the Fox.
- Ron: music program draws many people here, interesting performance space with good acoustics (CU does recitals here), active with neighborhood concerns. Membership is 150 and about 70 come to worship on typical Sunday. Only a few live on the Hill, rest come from Boulder, Louisville, and Longmont.
- David: Foundation provides 40% of operating funding for church. Owns parking lot and two residential properties across the alley. Very lucrative. Healthy stock portfolio, but cash strapped now.
- Neighborhood Association and Ownership Group meets here. Music and dance groups meet here at very little charge.
- Seth: Innovation District would be great. Willing to spend some money to make something happen.
- Ron: it's a puzzle that this area is not thriving. Need an appropriate mix of retail and cultural resources.
- David: should embrace the area as an alcohol entertainment district. Embrace nightlife. Loves idea of innovation district.

Group 9: Steven Walsh (New Hill Co), Nancy Blackwood (urban design/landscape architecture), Matt McMullen (architect, former UGID director), Caroline Clark (student, grew up on Hill)

- Walsh and Gordon Riggle started company to do major redevelopment on the Hill. Hired EDAW and OZ. Did equivalent of an area plan, three year process, 9 stakeholder groups (5 CU groups, faith, neighbors, Greeks, business). Recommended existing zoning plus overlay that incented property aggregation, underground parking, slightly higher density,
- Evaluated plan for LEED ND pilot program and it could qualify for platinum
- Council tasked staff with moving forward with the Hill as a priority, but this plan got shelved.
- Can't take advantage of 1.85 FAR with narrow 50' wide lots. Need 1/3 to 1/2 block scale to get the efficiency.
- - Some feedback is that people think the plan wanted to scrape the Hill and so they reject it.
- High demand for second floor R&D office space, which would give quality jobs to students.
- Need a draw. Steve thinks it is quality, high density urbanism with 24/7 life.
- The plan included higher density faculty housing so they could afford to live here, done in partnership with CU.
- Matt: focus on a Private Public Partnership
- Caroline: Students complain about high priced condos going here. Don't want luxury uses. Open to redeveloping buildings. Hang out, community spaces are lacking here. Outdoor dining spaces.

Group 10: Hillary Griffith, UHCAMC and Hill property owner; Tracy Weil, co-founder of the River North (RiNo) Arts District, Denver; Weilworks Gallery; artist; Brian Buckley, owner, Innisfree Poetry Bookstore.

- Brian: people are coming in saying they haven't been on the Hill for years. Only fast food and poor parking. People come from all over the state. One of only three poetry bookstores in the country. Got a walk-up window for coffee. Located here because small space (465 SF), cheap, good location. Will be doubling their size. Pays \$28/SF gross.
- Bike corral would be great.
- Would like more happening in summer to sustain our business—summer business generally drops dramatically
- Desired co-tenants?: more quality restaurants; CU meeting space for communal activities; a health food store in a small space, Brainwash, international newsstand/store, local designers clothing store
- Hillary: would like to see the whole Hill be more of Innisfree. Historic building, Boulder tailored. Could the bike routes be linked through the Hill so people don't bypass.
- Create outdoor space where art events can happen. Alleyways can be those raw types of public spaces.

- Would like to see a giant archway or art feature at Pleasant with a sustainable theme. Create a monument.
- Should be taking advantage of Chautauqua, BMOCA, and CU with linked walkways (i.e. Freedom Trail).
- Should have more of a link with new media, film, etc. Could use some for advertising. Could be an interactive screen.
- Find ways to create educational, environmental/resource management spaces.
- Should foster entrepreneurial culture – doing with flea market.
- Started flea market. Wants to do an experimental urban living room that would close Penn for a few months.
- Tracy: RiNo started in 2005. Heavy marketing campaign -- Logos, branding, maps, website, e-newsletter. Membership driven organization.
- Advocate that local businesses support the arts: 1% for the arts, using local artists for designing fences, etc.
- Created a neighborhood association, promoted artists purchasing their spaces.
- Rents can be \$1-2/ SF for artist studios, photographers, digital and graphic artists.
- Redline in RiNo is a good model. Artists pay \$130/month for their space. Have to apply for it, for limited periods.
- Green Spaces CO is in RiNo -- they provide free incubator and meeting spaces for groups working on related issues.

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Since 1947, the national ULI Advisory Services program has assembled more than 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. ULI Colorado's Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs) offer the same type of national ULI expertise at the local level through our 900-member District Council. Each panel team is composed of qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure objectivity. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. At the sponsor's request ULI will prepare a written report.

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