

# Boulder Chamber

# 2017

# Policy

# Agenda



**BOULDER CHAMBER**

# Guiding Principles

**What:** Our Policy Agenda identifies the issues most critical to our member businesses and organizations, and to advocating for economic interests in balance with the social and environmental values that make Boulder a great and unique place to live, work and play.

**How:** The long term economic stability of Boulder requires good governance coupled with broadly representative and inclusive civic participation. We work to convene and collaborate with community groups and local and regional leadership for solutions. In all instances, we support policies informed by proper data and analysis.

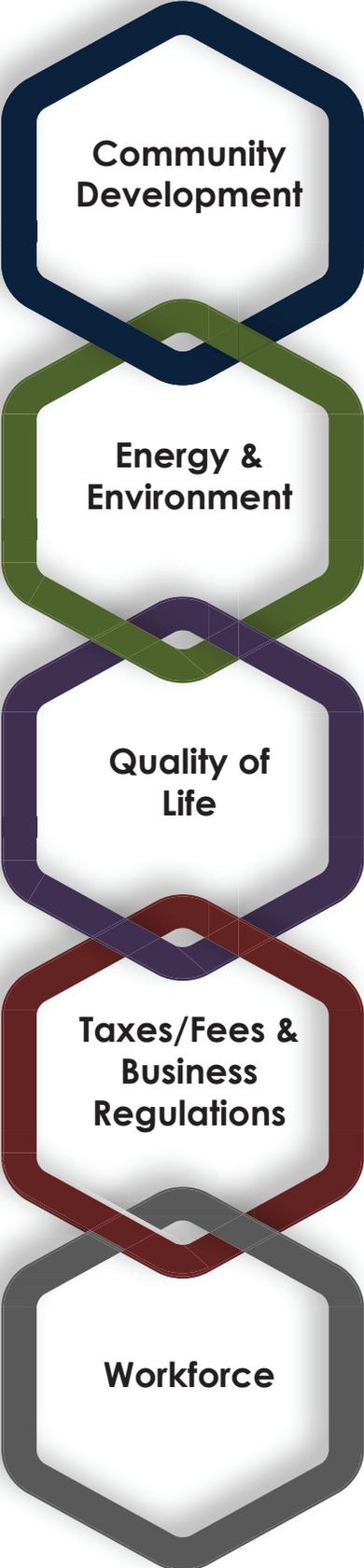
**Why:** Our goal is to advance the Boulder Chamber's mission, ensuring that the Boulder area remains a hub for leadership in innovation and entrepreneurship, economically vibrant, competitive and attractive to businesses now and into the future. For this reason, the Boulder Chamber advocates for policies which support:

- Business formation, recruitment, retention and relocation within our region
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Quality of life assets including but not limited to environmental conservation, cultural amenities, infrastructure investments, educational system, workforce housing – that support a thriving economy
- Key primary industries:
  - Aerospace
  - Bio-Science
  - Clean-tech
  - IT/Software
  - Natural Products
  - Outdoor Recreation
  - Tourism
  - Research (including CU Boulder and the federal labs)

## Focus Issues:

- Local & Regional Transportation
- Workforce Housing Diversity
- Boulder Valley Comp Plan Update
- Cost of Doing Business in Boulder
- Electric Utility Municipalization





**Community  
Development**

We support policies to improve comprehensive infrastructure planning and community enhancements that take into account regional needs to inform our local decisions.

**Energy &  
Environment**

We recognize the economic benefits of effective energy efficiency retrofits, sustainable business operations, and responsible growth in all energy sectors, and encourage reasonable incentives and education efforts to implement those goals.

**Quality of  
Life**

The Boulder Chamber advocates for a vibrant economy in balance with our community's social and environmental values. We value diversity and inclusiveness as fundamental in all aspects of public policy.

**Taxes/Fees &  
Business  
Regulations**

Appropriate taxes, fees and regulations maintain important public services and infrastructure. We favor levels that carefully balance the community benefits with the cost and associated impacts to taxpaying businesses and individuals.

**Workforce**

The Boulder Chamber will take a lead role in our community's effort to address federal, state and local policies that effect our workforce.



# Community Development

We support policies to improve comprehensive infrastructure planning and community enhancements to address business and community needs, while always taking into account economic impacts and regional needs to inform our local investment decisions.

Effective regional and local transportation networks, accommodating all travel modes, are key requirements for our community's economic, social and environmental health.

Achieving our housing goals will rely on diverse financing for affordable housing as well as supporting creative strategies, programs and no-cost policy options to meet the needs of an economically diverse workforce.

Land use decisions should meet a variety of social and environmental goals in a sustainable manner while always considering the community's economic vitality as a key factor.

## Pending Issues and Positions

### Transportation

- **Local Transportation** - ensure balanced planning for all modes of travel and broad range of users to address the impacts of greater density, parking availability and complementary land uses.
- Plan for efficient streets and safety. Key initiatives include supporting the Eco-Pass program for our member businesses; the East Arapahoe Transportation Plan; Quiet Zone Study; Access Management and Parking Strategy; and achieving the City's Transportation Master Plan goals.
- **Regional Transportation** - Collaborate on regional transportation initiatives to ensure our area receives its fair share of effective investment. Key efforts include Bus Rapid Transit studies for SH 7 & Hwy 119, investments into US 36 first & final mile connections, and continued support for the delivery of FasTracks.

### Housing

- Support regional and local housing strategies, programs and funding to meet the supply needed by an economically diverse workforce. Economic information and data should drive the decisions.
- Development and re-development opportunities that can provide diverse housing choices to support our workforce are critical to meet our community goals. Incentivize innovative housing solutions that are in proximity to supporting services such as transit, commercial/retail, parking and recreational opportunities.
- **Construction Defects Bill** - Support State-level efforts to remedy a significant challenge that limits the ability to provide for more diverse housing stock.



# Community Development

## Land Use

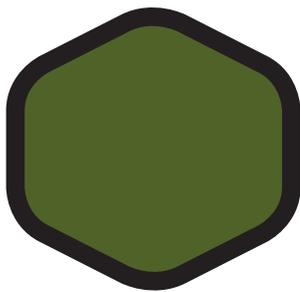
- Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Update: informed input on Housing, Transportation and Space for Business; sustainable solutions related to commercial and residential zoning balances with a focus on existing transportation corridors.
- Support for mixed-use high density development/redevelopment served by transportation facilities to promote walkable access to housing, employment and commercial services.
- Promote flexible use of industrial areas for innovation hubs with mixed uses and flexibilities in height and density requirements. Promote incubators and innovation hubs in mixed use areas.
- Areas of focus include 55th and Arapahoe, Gunbarrel and areas along Foothills Pkwy.

## Projects of Community Significance

- Advocate for development projects, zoning and land use initiatives that support the economic vitality and quality of life of the community and respond to the needs of local businesses. Examples of the type of projects that fit community significance include the Boulder Community Hospital redevelopment, the former Pollard site and planning for a Conference Center, in addition to other impactful residential/commercial developments.
- **Community-wide Broadband:** Communication infrastructure is vital to support our economic, educational and social needs; it also creates jobs. We support the City's effort to partner with public institutions and the private tech sector to establish this infrastructure.

## Other Elements of Community Development:

- Our public educational institutions and federal labs are included in all considerations.
- Incorporate arts & culture into planning to create a vibrant community. Consider performance spaces, live/work housing options for artists and art as a public benefit in site reviews.
- Promote development for livable, walkable neighborhoods & access to businesses.
- **Spaces for Business guided by Economic Sustainability Strategy.**
  - Diversify employment centers – Incubators and innovation hubs are essential in mixed use developments.
  - Class A office space to help keep Boulder companies in Boulder.
  - Commercial & Industrial Zoning Update; include flexibility for non-profit uses and shared spaces.



# Energy & Environment

**We recognize the economic benefits of effective energy efficiency retrofits, sustainable business operations, and responsible growth in all energy sectors, and encourage reasonable incentives and education efforts to implement those goals.**

**The Boulder Chamber supports sustainable energy and natural resource management strategies that respond to both short and long term necessity, including the risk of climate change, enhancing community resiliency and promoting innovation that benefits economic vitality.**

## Pending Issues and Positions

### **Boulder's Electrical Utility Discussions on Municipalization**

We believe clean energy powers the future of business. Boulder's innovation economy depends on new developments in clean energy industries like wind, solar and smart-grid applications. At the same time, advancements in all types of research and technology rely on competitively priced, reliable, high quality electricity.

The potential for Boulder to municipalize its power utility presents exciting opportunities, and significant risks. With our diverse membership we strive to balance the pursuit of clean energy goals with risk mitigation.

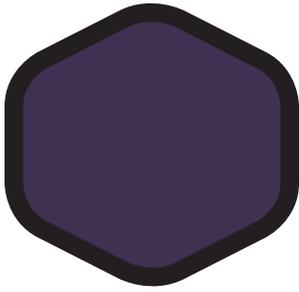
- **Our current posture with respect to municipalization is one of a 'skeptical neutral' with the following specific principles:**
  1. We encourage Xcel and the City of Boulder to pursue all possible avenues for a negotiated resolution that is consistent with Boulder's clean energy goals;
  2. We want to make sure any resolution is protective of business electric utility rates and current or better reliability thresholds (which include adequate redundancies and back up power systems); and,
  3. We believe a public vote is appropriate, once all costs and risks are known, on any final decision to municipalize.

### **Colorado Clean Energy Cluster & Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy**

The Boulder Chamber is on the board of local and national clean energy associations which aim to grow jobs in the clean energy sector as well as establish partnerships for furthering clean energy initiatives. We will continue to engage in associations that facilitate best practice sharing to advance our community's clean energy and climate protection goals.

### **Other Issues of Importance – Positions Pending**

- Waste management, composting and recycling strategies.
- Implementation of the Boulder County Sustainability Tax Programs.
- City of Boulder's 2050 carbon reduction goals: The Boulder Chamber supports exploration of strategies that help to achieve the renewable energy goals.
- We support efforts at the State and Federal levels that reduce the barriers to transition to clean energy systems.
- Electric Vehicles – We support incentivizing electric vehicle usage.



# Quality of Life & Good Governance

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Many decades of planning and effort have made Boulder a great place to live, work and play. The Chamber is committed to Boulder being a welcoming place for all members of our community.

The Boulder Chamber advocates for a vibrant economy in balance with our community's social and environmental values.

Balancing these priorities advances the Chamber's mission to ensure that the Boulder area remains economically vibrant, competitive and attractive to businesses now and into the future.

We value diversity, inclusiveness and equity as fundamental in all aspects of public policy.

## Pending Issues and Positions

### **Livable Neighborhoods**

- Support the type of community planning initiatives that create compact, affordable, walkable/bikeable, mixed use, high quality connectivity for our neighborhoods and residents.

### **Arts and Culture**

- Support the creation of art districts; include programs and planning that increase access to arts and culture in the neighborhoods and engage the business community. Support funding options to increase affordable studio space, display and performance venues.

### **Good Governance**

- Advocate for diverse leadership and representation that can provide a balance of perspectives on local boards, committees and governing institutions.

### **Social Safety Net & Human Service Programs**

- Collaborate with local leaders, organizations and governments to preserve and increase the safety net of services and funding depended upon by many members of our community.

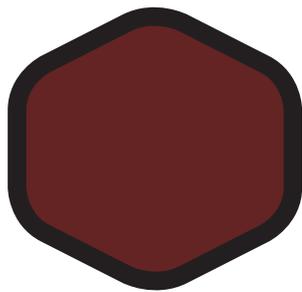
### **Federal and State Healthcare Insurance Reform**

We will assume a leadership role in local efforts to shape national and state measures aimed at improving health care plans and coverage mechanisms that impact our employers and workforce.

We are supportive of collaborative and inclusive efforts to engage a wide array of stakeholders with multiple perspectives in the on-going dialogue to improve our system without interruption of coverage to those that desperately rely on it, nor any period of unpredictability for our providers.

### **Other Issues of Importance – Positions Pending**

- Support the preservation of Open Space as a community asset.
- Address the ongoing challenges of affordability and income inequality. Promote initiatives that address the socio-economic gap in Boulder.
- Work in partnership with community leaders and partnering organizations to support initiatives that address the impacts of homelessness on the community.



# Taxes, Fees & Business Regulations

Appropriate taxes, fees and regulations maintain important public services and infrastructure. We favor levels that carefully balance the community benefits with the cost and associated impacts to taxing businesses and individuals.

We seek clearly delineated rates that will not inhibit businesses in any sector. We support ample notice, measurable goals, clear explanations, and adequate input opportunities for affected businesses whenever the City or State consider new and/or renewing taxes, fees and regulations.

We expect transparency in analysis and decision-making processes, along with regular accounting of expenditures.

Our local economy is affected by the cumulative impacts of rising taxes, fees and other costs of doing business in Boulder; small businesses, startups and non-profits often experience the effects disproportionately.

## Pending Issues and Positions:

### Head Tax

- Concern about additional costs of doing business in Boulder, both for employers and employees.
- Inappropriate to pursue additional tax, particularly a new taxing mechanism without clear goals and need for revenue.

### Development Impact Fees (implementation)

- Maintain the decision reached by Council to maintain a reasonable Affordable Housing Linkage fee of \$12/sq. ft. which strikes the appropriate balance between the revenue that is necessary to meet specific affordable housing needs, while holding the line on greater impacts to our local business community.

### Sugar Sweetened Drink Tax (implementation)

- Minimize the impacts on local businesses, particularly those unintentionally affected or impacted, including but not limited to Boulder's natural foods industry, health products, manufacturers of containers or our small businesses such as restaurants and retailers. Prior to drafting ordinance language, address the uncertainties in the regulation through a stakeholder engagement process that includes key sectors affected. Many unintended consequences give our members concern.

### City of Boulder Living Wage

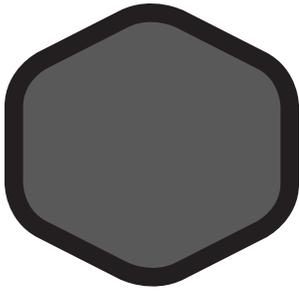
- Abstain from any action on this until the full benefits and impacts of the statewide minimum wage increase are understood.

### TABOR Reform

- Support the separation of the Hospital Provider Fee from the TABOR constraints.
- Support efforts to provide relief from the tangle of constitutional tax and revenue provisions.

### Other Issues of Importance – Positions Pending

- City of Boulder Utility Rates Study.
- City of Boulder Transportation Maintenance Fee.
- City of Boulder Community, Culture and Safety Tax (2A).
- State Transportation Funding Initiatives.



# Workforce

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**The Boulder Chamber will take a lead role in our community's effort to address federal, state and local policies that effect our workforce.**

**We support strong schools and educational systems for developing an educated and highly-skilled workforce, and as a foundation to a functioning society.**

**We support an effective, financially sound public education system as well as a robust private education sector to develop the potential of our future workforce, including all of Colorado's diverse students, from early childhood learning through higher education.**

**We support opportunities and partnerships to address the need for quality education as critical to developing an inclusive workforce with the required skills to succeed in tomorrow's job market and to create the much needed jobs of the future.**

## Pending Issues and Positions

### **Education & Workforce Training**

- Support a State level budget fix to provide sustainable and stable funding for K-12 and higher education.
- Act in partnership with Boulder's educational institutions to protect and promote state investment.
- Advocate for state and federal reforms to be reflective of business needs and those of our partnering institutions.
- Provide support and partner with educational institutions and private organizations that provide effective technical workforce development and training.

### **Wages, Recruitment and Retention**

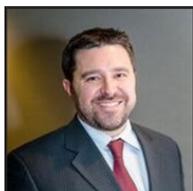
- Participate in wage increase implementation discussions and work to reduce adoption impacts.
- Support programs and policies that ensure our economy and employers can access the kind of talent they need to grow.
- Support the ability to attract a diverse talent pool to meet employment needs and goals for a diversified workforce, and to retain Colorado's top talent.
- Ensure attractive elements for recruiting top talent such as high quality schools, job opportunities for other family and a variety of housing choices.

### **Immigration**

Immigration is a key economic issue for Colorado, especially for tech and business development, filling workforce requirements, and retaining educated and trained international students. Our high-tech, agricultural and hospitality sectors are particularly impacted by our broken immigration system; we support the viable solutions they have been involved in creating.

# Questions?

Please contact the Boulder Chamber Public Policy and Advocacy Team



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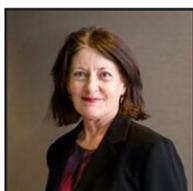
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The nonprofit Boulder Chamber is the region's flagship business support and advocacy organization. With more than 100 years of experience, our innovative programs support businesses through professional education, advocacy, networking, research and economic development.

Together with 1300+ member organizations, the Boulder Chamber is building a smarter, more vibrant economy – establishing the region as a global capital of innovation and an economic powerhouse.

**We're ready to support your success.**



**BOULDER CHAMBER**

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