

# BOULDER JUNCTION

# TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

## BOLD VISION

Boulder Junction in Colorado may be a model for suburban communities in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region served by Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and commuter bus service. Sustained planning, regulations, and coordinated public and private investments are supporting transformation of the area from its automobile-orientation into a higher density, mixed-use, and walkable place.

Boulder Junction is a 160-acre redevelopment district. It is anchored by Depot Square Station, a multi-modal transit hub owned by the Denver [Regional Transit District \(RTD\)](#). [Flatiron Flyer](#) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service at the station connects Boulder residents and workers with the City of Denver and points in between.

## FASTRACKS

The vision for Boulder Junction began in 2004 with a voter-approved sales tax increase to fund FasTracks, a transit expansion project that included 122 miles of new rail transit, 18 miles of bus rapid transit (BRT), station parking, and improvements to bus routes. In 2015, Depot Square Station opened near the intersection of [Pearl Parkway and Junction Place](#), serving local and regional express routes. Flatiron Flyer BRT service began a year later in 2016. Bicycle sharing at the station supports first- and last-mile connections on multiuse paths.



Boulder, Colorado. Looking southeast toward multi-modal transit center and plaza, Boulder Junction at Depot Square Station. (Photo courtesy of RTD).

Commuter rail is part of the long-term vision for the district. RTD identified a nearby location for a potential commuter rail station, but higher than expected construction costs and lower than expected FasTracks revenue have delayed this project.

## DEPOT SQUARE

In 2004, the City and Regional Transportation District (RTD) bought 11.2 acres of land from the Pollard Friendly Motor Company. RTD developed a transit station within a mixed-use development on 3.2 acres of the site, called [Boulder Junction at Depot Square Station](#). The City leased land back to the car dealership until coordinating its eventual relocation.

## FAST FACTS

### TRANSIT

Flatiron Flyer BRT  
Regional and local bus service

### STATION DEVELOPMENT

Depot Square Station  
386 parking spaces  
71 affordable housing units  
150-room Hyatt Hotel

### DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

160-acres  
1,000 units built / proposed  
175 affordable units (60% AMI)  
1.8 million sq. ft. commercial

### DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES

Boulder Commons  
Google Campus (adjacent)  
Nickel Flats  
Solana Apartments  
S'PARK

### PUBLIC INVESTMENT

\$23 million transit station  
\$12 million public infrastructure

### TIMELINE

2004	Pollard Motors acquired
2007	Transit Village Area Plan
2010	City revises Plan
2015	Depot Square Station
2016	Form Based Code
2016	Flatiron Flyer BRT

The development includes a transit facility under a parking structure that is wrapped by affordable housing on three sides. Adjoining uses include a Hyatt Place hotel and a relocated historic rail depot that operates as a restaurant. A public plaza adjacent to the hotel overlooks the [Goose Creek Greenway](#) and includes a relocated historic rail depot.

## REGULATIONS

The City began with a vision to create a new transit-oriented district with a sense of place. After adopting the [Transit Village Area Plan](#) (later rebranded Boulder Junction) in 2007, the City made initial regulatory changes. After concerns over the quality of early redevelopment, and with the uncertainty and expense of the review process, the City adopted a pilot [Form Based Code](#) in 2016.

## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Major public infrastructure investments in Boulder Junction have supported implementation of the vision for the area, including the following:

- **Pearl Street Multiway Boulevard:** Reconstruction between 30th Street and the railroad to the east included medians to protect pedestrians and bicyclists from traffic, underground systems to support boulevard trees, and permeable pavement for on-street parking. It was funded by \$3.3 million federal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) grant with a \$1 million match from the City.
- **Junction Place:** A new north / south street connects the district to Depot Square and was funded by developers. The City contributed \$800,000 in enhancements.
- **Junction Place Bridge:** A new bridge over Goose Creek included a multiuse-path connection to the Goose Creek Greenway below. This \$5 million project was funded from a 2011 voter-approved \$49 million Capital Improvement Bond.
- **Pocket park:** A developer, in conjunction with the City, will construct a public park south of Goose Creek and west of Pearl Street Multiway Boulevard.

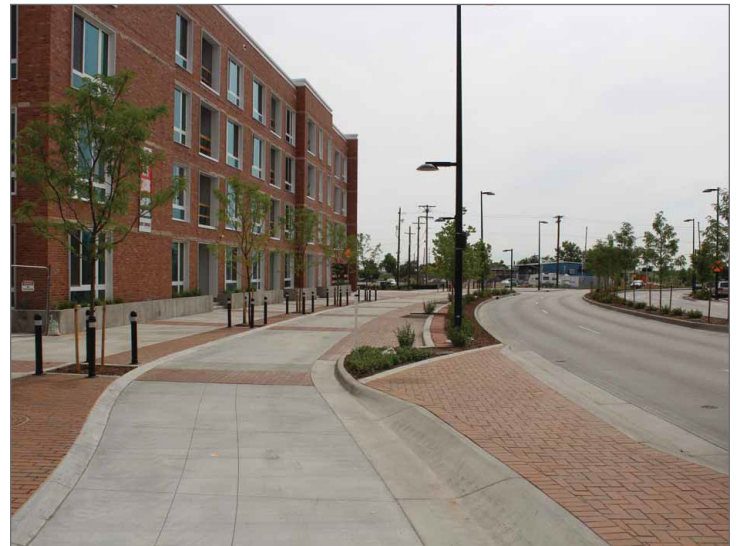
## TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT

The City created two overlapping improvement districts to encourage non-automobile travel options and to help manage public parking. The [Transportation Demand Management \(TDM\) District](#) pays for transit passes, car sharing, and reduced-cost bike sharing programs for people who live or work in Boulder Junction. Development fees and property taxes fund the TDM district. The parking district manages on-street and off-street parking, which works in combination with zoning regulations for parking maximums.

At Depot Square Station, the district manages shared spaces in the parking facility for residents, the hotel, transit users, and RTD employees. Seventy-five of the 386 spaces are reserved for transit users, parking is free for those who live in the parking district, and paid parking is available to the public.



[Click on image for aerial view of Boulder Junction.](#)



Boulder Junction. Looking east along Pearl Street Multiway Boulevard. (Photo courtesy City of Boulder).



Boulder Junction. Looking east along Goose Creek Greenway toward Junction Place bridge. (Photo courtesy City of Boulder).

## DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE

The pace of redevelopment during the first phase of Boulder Junction has exceeded the City's expectations. Infill development is achieving the City's goals of improving its jobs-housing balance and increasing workforce and affordable housing within walking distance of the area's amenities and transportation choices. The City's plan ultimately supports the addition of 1,400 to 2,400 new housing units, 2,800 to 5,000 new residents, and 2,900 to 4,300 new jobs. In 2017, the first phase of a new Google campus opened at Pearl Place and 30th streets, adjacent to Boulder Junction. The 330,000 sq. ft. campus will have 1,500 employees when completed.

## HOW DOES THIS PLANNING SUPPORT TOD?

**Connect:** New streets, multiuse paths, and transit services connect people with both local and regional destinations via transit, walking, and bicycling.

**Intensify:** Boulder Junction is evolving from a low-density and auto-oriented landscape into a district that includes multi-story buildings with homes, businesses, and services.

**Demonstrate:** A commitment to planning and public investment can transform a place over time with patience and market support. Incorporating a transit station into a mixed-use development with improved public spaces set the tone for the rest of the district.

## CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The transit station and hotel created a hub of activity, and Boulder Junction's location attracted market interest. Development has mostly included one and two-bedroom rental units, reflecting market conditions and demand for workforce housing in the City. Outside of the immediate Depot Square area, multi-story commercial and retail buildings, such as Boulder Commons, are contributing to a mix of uses within the district.

The City is better able to control outcomes in terms of affordability and unit size on property that it has acquired. The City is seeking a developer to redevelop a 4.3-acre site it owns. The site will include a majority of affordable rental and for-sale units, as well as commercial space. The City's housing authority will apply for Low Income Housing Tax Credits to help fund the project's affordable units.

## LEARN MORE

[City of Boulder - Boulder Junction Redevelopment](#)  
[City of Boulder - Form Based Code](#)  
[Transit Village Area Plan \(later rebranded Boulder Junction\)](#)

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Boulder, Colorado. Boulder Junction. Phase 1 shown in brighter colors and phase 2 in grayer colors. (Image courtesy City of Boulder).

## FEEDBACK

Did you find this information useful? Do you have questions or suggestions for improvement? Contact us at [TODGuide@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:TODGuide@metc.state.mn.us)

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