**Instructions and FAQs for “Let Boulder Voters Decide on Annexation of CU-South”**

**What Are We Doing**?

We are collecting signatures to “Let Boulder Voters Decide on Annexation of CU South”.

If we collect 3,336 valid signatures, this petition will put a measure on the November 2021 ballot requiring that any annexation agreement between the City of Boulder and the University of Colorado-Boulder regarding the CU-South property must be approved by Boulder City voters**.**

**The petition specifies that no city services other than a flood mitigation project** may be implemented on the property unless and until city voters approve an annexation agreement. Furthermore, the annexation agreement must contain specific details designed to identify, and protect against, expenses and risks the annexation would create for the residents of Boulder.

**Who Are the Sponsors of This Petition?**

The organizational sponsors are Save South Boulder and PLAN-Boulder-County.

**Why Are We Circulating This Petition?**

CU wants the City to annex CU-South so it will provide the water, sewer and flood mitigation services that CU needs to develop the property into its “third campus.” Our petition says that the City shall not provide ANY city utilities and services other than flood control facilities to any portion of CU-South, unless the voters of Boulder approve a binding, public annexation agreement. This is because CU so far has refused to provide the details needed to identify grave threats to the environment and neighborhoods surrounding its property. This is dangerous, because CU’s status as a “sovereign state entity” means that unless such a limiting agreement exists, CU can build or do anything whatsoever it wants with the land, regardless of the impact on adjacent neighborhoods.

**Why can’t we just sign the petition via the Internet?**

Alas, we can’t. We have to use the official paper signature sheets that Marki LeCompte has. This is because of rules the City set up. While a group CAN collect signatures via internet, but they have to choose to use either paper or electronic signatures. If they do choose electronic signatures, they cannot also collect them on paper. If they try to do both, they have to choose which ones they will submit to the City Clerk--paper OR electronic.  Not both. We assume they’d pick the ones they had the most of. But they can't count both. The City has forced us to make a choice.

We decided to go with paper because there were so many problems with the electronic signatures. It was the first time electronic signatures were being used and even the City didn't know how it worked. The system had to be submitted on a cell phone (and wasn't easy to use for many of the people we know wanted to sign. We know; we tried!) The system also does not work with any unlisted number (and lots of Boulder folks have them), and the Bedrooms Are For People group, which did decide to use electronic signatures, found there were lots of problems, and their signatures came in slowly.

We also felt that the in-person signature process would give us a chance to explain to folks what we were doing and why. We thought this was a both good PR gambit, and one that enabled us to refute some of the incorrect information and rumors abounding.  It proved to be so last year!

**"I signed the petition last year.  Can I still sign this petition?"**

THe answer is YES.  This petition is completely new.  It's a bit simpler, but it would accomplish the same thing as our last attempt would have:  Require that any annexation agreement negotiated between the City and CU must be voted on by Boulder City residents.  We want the voters to decide whether they want to assume the many risks and costs imposed by CU's desire to develop its property.

**Does This Petition Impede Implementation of a Flood Mitigation Project?**

No. This petition specifically says that a flood mitigation project can and should begin BEFORE annexation can proceed. This is because flood mitigation is the priority. Annexation and CU’s development plans will only increase the costs and complicate the design and execution of a cost-effective and feasible flood mitigation project.

**How Many Signatures Do We Need?**

We need 3,336 signatures, or 5% of the total number of eligible voters who voted in the last Boulder City election to get on the November 2021 ballot. We actually need an additional 30% of that total number of signatures to compensate for any that are declared invalid by the City Clerk’s office.

**How Do We Make Sure That Each Signature Counts?**

Signature gatherers should make sure that, for each person who signs:

1. The information required is **complete and LEGIBLE!**
2. Each signature is checked to make sure that the person signing is :
* At least **18 years of age** by election day on November 2, 2021.
* A **registered voter** in the State of Colorado

A Resident **within the city limits** of the City of Boulder

**What Are the Risks and Consequences of CU South Annexation?**

Our petition lists the following details that an acceptable annexation agreement must address. Explained below are the reasons why these as-yet unresolved details pose risks to Boulder residents. [You can then go on to talk about any of the following risks and their consequences:]

(a) CU Refuses to Provide a Site Plan: A site plan for the property that specifies zoning, allowed uses, location, height, and square footage for all development including dwelling units, classrooms, other non-residential buildings and facilities, and recreational fields and associated facilities must be required.

Without a site plan, there’s no way to know even how many facilities CU will build, much less their size, location, height and purpose. CU-South is almost the same size as the CU Main campus. CU has intimated that it wants to build an equivalent to Main campus at CU-South.

 (b) No Cost Estimates Have Been Provided: Financial projections of all publicly paid costs associated with development and use of this property, including utilities, transportation, flood control, pollution control measures, and any other costs of both facilities and services, on or off site must be provided.

So far, the lack of a site plan and vagueness from CU over its intentions have made impossible any cost projections for the projects. The cost estimates for the critical flood mitigation project have been nearly doubled by CU’s demands that the City provide earth fill to raise portions of its property above the 500 year flood plain so that they can be developed. Cost estimates for road access, utility services, removal of CU’s levee, and other issues have not been provided. These must be made public before the City agrees to impose them on taxpayers.

(c) Specification of Financing and Payment Procedures: Who will pay for all the projected costs for development and use of CU-South and how and when such payments will be made must be made public.

If Boulder residents are going to have to pay for these projects, they should be able to say if they are willing to do so. As currently planned by the City, ALL residents in Boulder will pay for these projects, directly or indirectly. The City has stated that the cost of flood mitigation, including the costs added by CU’s annexation demands, will be paid for by increases in the utility bills paid by ALL Boulder City residents. These increases will be substantial and they may violate the state TABOR regulations that such increases must be voted on by taxpayers. Additional costs for flood mitigation infrastructure may, according to the Director of Utilities, come from bond issues. These also will increase residents’ taxes.

 (d) Transportation plan is needed: A transportation plan that includes street, bike, and pedestrian facilities and layout, transportation access points, and that specifies projected traffic levels, traffic mitigation options, and shuttles or other means to transport students, faculty and other employees to and from the site. So far, the information provided has been vague, inadequate, and incorrect as to increased traffic burdens.

Without an accurate transportation and traffic plan, there’s no way to estimate the increased impact on already congested streets and intersections in South Boulder. These will be overwhelmed by the projected more than 2000 new residents at CU-South, plus spectators and participants at sporting events and parking needs of visitors, employees, students and staff. There also is no way of estimating how students and staff will travel to and from CU-South and other CU campuses and facilities. CU’s recent proposal to build a 3000 seat recreational facility (equivalent to Potts Field on Main Campus) at CU-South would impose insurmountable traffic, parking and public nuisance risks.

 (e) Permits: Agreements with and necessary approvals from City, County, State and Federal agencies must be obtained.

Many local, state and federal agencies must approve aspects of the flood mitigation project and also agree to how annexation and development will affect the South Boulder Creek floodplain. So far, none of these permits, approvals and agreements have been obtained. No annexation or flood mitigation can or should go forward until they have been obtained and a clear way forward for flood mitigation has been achieved.

(f) Environmental Impacts: Plans for preservation and restoration of environmental assets in the South Boulder Creek floodplain on CU South, and adjacent Open Space.

None of the required permits needed to ameliorate negative impacts to the South Boulder Creek floodplain and CU-South have been obtained, in part because no plan has been developed to protect, preserve, or restore the environmental assets of the floodplain, its wetlands, the threatened species and habitat existing there, or the many varied plant and animals species that occupy the space. No annexation agreement should be approved that does not include such a plan and the needed permits.

(g) Pollution Controls: Controls to minimize air, water, light, and noise pollution must be specified.

Increased building and vehicular density will increase both runoff of polluted waters into South Boulder Creek and its associated wetlands and pollution of the air surrounding the property. Light pollution from buildings and spectator sports and recreational activities will destroy the existing dark sky conditions, disturbing adjacent neighborhoods and the plant and animal species living within and nearby the property. Noise pollution from student and employee activities will increase and pose a significant diminution of the quality of life in nearby neighborhoods. Without a detailed agreement to eliminate or diminish these risks, life within the entire south portion of Boulder will be adversely affected.

(h) Future Owners: Terms that will bind future owners to the obligations in the Annexation Agreement.

In the event that CU decides that it no longer wants to pursue development at CU-South, or simply wishes to deaccession it, it can sell the land to any willing buyer. Any restrictions on use of the land that applied to CU’s ownership would be transferred to the future owner, including, if not limited by a binding annexation agreement with the City, the “sovereign status” held by CU which imposes no limits whatsoever. To forestall a future owner from being able to build thousands of high-rise residences or a shopping mall—or whatever—in the South Boulder Creek floodplain on CU-South, any annexation agreement signed now must require future owners to adhere to the agreement with the City that was in effect at the time of annexation and which had been approved by Boulder voters.

For Further Questions, Please Contact Marki LeCompte, margaret.lecompte@gmail.com or Allyn Feinberg, feinberga@comcast.net