



PLAN-Boulder County

planboulder.org

P.O. Box 4682 Boulder, CO 80306

November 15, 2011

Re: Congregate Care Definition and Use Standards

Dear Members of the City of Boulder Planning Board and Planning Staff:

PLAN-Boulder County has reviewed staff's [proposed amendments](#) to Title 9, "Land Use Code," Boulder Revised Code, 1981, regarding definitions and use standards for congregate care facilities (11/17/11 Public Hearing Item 5C). We support staff's proposals with three changes, two to the definition and one to the use standards, all of which work to ensure that the congregate care density bonus is applied to facilities that are genuinely intended to serve the needs of seniors and not used to develop high-priced, luxury condos at triple the density allowed by zoning.

PBC's Proposed Congregate Care Definition Change

The typical [objective](#) of congregate care is to provide, "companionship, organized social activities and, in the event of a health related event, some personal care of a temporary nature. Congregate care facilities typically assist residents with the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs): these may include preparing meals, doing housework and outside the facility shopping and health care appointments."

Few, if any, 60-year-old Boulderites are looking for congregate care and the transportation, meals and housekeeping assistance that come with it. Few, if any, will seek congregate care before retiring. The [Social Security Administration](#) currently defines retirement age as 65-67.

According to [LongTermCareEducation.com](#), congregate care is usually targeted at people aged 75-82. The real estate research firm [Danter Company](#) reports that, "[T]he median age for people moving into a congregate development is 74, with 75% of all residents moving in at age 71 or over." They also characterize congregate care facilities as providing services for older adults: "The services usually provided include meals, housekeeping and/or linen service, and organized activities."

Leaving the minimum age at 60 in Boulder's congregate care definition will encourage, rather than discourage, the development of luxury condos instead of true congregate care facilities. PBC proposes raising the congregate care residents' minimum age from 60 to at least 65. We also propose that at least *four* services be offered to ensure that the facility

meets the needs of seniors. Our proposed changes to the congregate care definition are highlighted below:

"Congregate care facility" means a facility for long-term residence exclusively by persons ~~sixty~~ **sixty-five** years of age or older, and which shall include, without limitation, common dining and social and recreational features, special safety and convenience features designed for the needs of the elderly, such as emergency call systems, grab bars and handrails, special door hardware, cabinets, appliances, passageways, and doorways designed to accommodate wheelchairs, and the provision of social services for residents which must include at least ~~two~~ **four** of the following: meal services, transportation, housekeeping, linen, and organized social activities.

PBC's Proposed Congregate Care Use Standards Change

According to Building Type Basics for Senior Living by Bradford Perkins, congregate care units range in size from 600 sq. ft. for one bedroom units to 1050 sq. ft. for two bedroom-plus units. Numerous other sources (e.g. [here](#) and [here](#)) back up this range. Again in an effort to prevent the congregate care density bonus from being used to develop luxury condos at triple the zoned-for density, PBC recommends that the maximum unit size —*not the average*— be set at the staff's recommended 1,200 sq. ft. Our proposed change to the congregate care use standard is highlighted below:

B.R.C. 1981, Use Standards, 9-6-3(f) Residential Care, Custodial Care, and Congregate Care Facilities:

*(4) Congregate care facilities utilizing the occupancy equivalencies found in 9-8-6(g), B.R.C. 1981 must include a minimum of 10 congregate care dwelling units. The **average** dwelling unit size for congregate care facilities shall not exceed 1,200 square feet per unit. Such congregate care dwelling units and square footages may be configured in any way which does not to exceed the densities prescribed in Section 9-8, B.R.C. 1981.*

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on this issue. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ruth Blackmore
Chair, PLAN-Boulder County