

City of Fort Collins Neighborhood Meeting

DATE: February 25, 2014

PROJECT: Capstone Cottages

PROJECT PLANNER: Courtney Levingston

The meeting began at 5:30 with the project planner giving a brief overview of the City's development review process, including information that this project has not yet been formally submitted, and there may be an additional neighborhood meeting held.

Question (Citizen): Will this project be processed as a Type 1 or Type 2?

Response (City): The decision maker for this project will be the Planning & Zoning Board (Type 2). Prior to the Public Hearing, another neighborhood notice will be sent out.

Applicant Presentation / Project Summary

This is a student-oriented housing, meaning the project is designed for and marketed towards students, however by law, the project is not restricted to students only.

The project site is located east of Lemay Avenue and north of Lincoln Avenue, surrounding the existing bank. The project site is slightly larger than 23 acres. A total of 182 dwelling units are proposed.

Ripley Design Inc. has represented many multifamily residential projects over the years, and we typically hear concerns in five areas: the density is too high, the buildings are out of scale, the buildings are too tall, there is not enough parking, and that the project increases traffic. We plan to show how this project addresses these common concerns.

The site currently sits on two zoning districts; Medium Density Mixed-Use Zoning on the western portion of the site and Industrial to the east. Our intention is to rezone the Industrial portion to Medium Density Mixed-Use.

The Medium Density Mixed-Use Zone District requires a minimum density of 12 dwelling units per acre. The project we're showing tonight is proposing 9 dwelling units per acre. This is below the City's requirement, requiring a modification of standard. We feel the reduced number of dwelling units is appropriate at this location.

The site plan shows lots of small buildings, rather than several larger structures. This particular developer builds what they call cottages, some single-family, some are duplexes such as two cottages building together, and some are townhomes. Many of the units have different architectural looks. The smaller scale units surrounding the project, and the 3-story townhomes are oriented and located towards the interior of the project site. All of the buildings have individual front doors and face onto

streets or greenspace. It is very much like an old town neighborhood, you do not see parking/garages from the edges.

There are a total of 841 bedrooms proposed and there is 1 parking space for each bedroom, with an additional 21 spaces beyond this. It is well parked. Parking is screened from public view.

The project contains amenities such as a clubhouse, swimming pool, and volleyball court. Walking spaces and paths are spread throughout for connections. A City sidewalk will be located around the project to connect to the rest of the community. It is easy for the residents to get to the stores and multifamily housing located south across Lincoln Avenue.

The cottages are designed to look like a single-family house. They offer a pedestrian scale, and will not dwarf the nearby neighborhoods. It will look like a single-family development in addition to the many amenities offered on-site. The buildings are not more massive than a single family home or neighborhood. There is plenty of parking for this project; students will not need to park in adjacent neighborhoods.

This project should not create additional traffic through neighborhoods. Current estimates are that 40% of the traffic generated will head west on Lincoln, 45% south on Lemay, 5% on 12th street, 5% east on Lincoln and the remaining 5% north on Lemay.

Comments, Questions & Responses

Question (Citizen): With the 5-bedroom house, how does that correlate with the Fort Collins “you plus two” rule?

Response (Applicant): The product is offered as a different lifestyle opportunity, with friends living together. Here they can do that in a controlled environment with management staff on-site. This has been popular and successful in other communities.

Response (Applicant): These have to be developed as single-family and duplex units first; after they are constructed the developer will have to apply for an extra occupancy rental license. They have to meet the requirements such as parking spaces and square footage.

Response (City): The rental license is done through Zoning with the City.

Question (Citizen): Will you be charging for parking?

Response (Applicant): Parking is typically included in the rent.

Question (Citizen): What is the rent for parking?

Response (Applicant): Rents are on a per-bed or bedroom basis, parking is included with this.

Question (Citizen): Will the parking always be with the property? Down the road will you start charging for parking spaces?

Response (Applicant): The parking will stay with the property, and be used for each bedroom rented.

Comment (Citizen): I have seen in districts around CSU that parking is being pushed further and further out into the neighborhoods.

Question (Citizen): Do you plan to add covered parking?

Response (Applicant): We do not have plans right now, but we’re always looking at the market.

Comment (Citizen): I’d like for the parking to always stay with the facility, so it won’t be of additional concern to the nearby neighborhoods.

Question (Citizen): You have to be able to rent to anyone, but you're marketing towards students. In your traffic study, do you factor in or account for non-student users and residents? Does this change the traffic study and will it reflect this? Will this be marketed equally to students and non-students?

Response (Applicant): The project is really designed and marketed towards students, especially as we rent on a per bedroom basis. People get keys to individual bedrooms, which include a bathroom, and then a fab to the unit itself. Typically, our marketing strategies are towards students. By charging on a per bedroom basis, it appeals to students. There will also be a shuttle service to campus. These characteristics and marketing – we predominately see from our other developments that these are for students.

Question (Citizen): This is open to non-students, but you're staying it's primarily student by design.

Response (Applicant): Anyone can rent here; it is not precluded, but given the type of housing we're providing, it's primarily students that would rent here.

Comment (Citizen): I think what they mean is that by law, the project cannot exclude non-students, even if it is designed and marketed towards students themselves.

Comment (Citizen): By function, it's excluding non-students anyway.

Response (Applicant): Given that nearly 99% of the residents will be students, the distribution we're working with in the traffic study is appropriate. If those demographics changed, you're right we would need to look at the traffic study.

Question (Citizen): Is the project going to be paying for the future Lemay rerouting?

Response (Applicant): This is not contributing towards that more than any other project that pays towards street oversizing fees.

Response (Applicant): Each of the developments pay into the City's funds for roadway work and expansion. Provision for adequate public facilities does not take away from this; it's more a policy of adequacy than adding funds to anything.

Question (Citizen): So this will not be helping pay and promote the Lemay reroute/overpass?

Response (Applicant): In the aspect that the fees collected from building permits helps, but how that is divvied up is not specific.

Question (Citizen): Will the traffic study glean some of these details?

Response (Applicant): Yes

Comment (Citizen): I have the same concern with traffic. If this project comes before the bypass over the train tracks, this is going to be a nightmare. We already have traffic accidents on a weekly basis and backups on a daily basis. This is a huge concern. Traffic needs to be alleviated.

Question (Citizen): Will the pool be available to those outside the development?

Response (Applicant): Usually it's limited to residents and their guests.

Comment (Citizen): We're trapped in Andersonville right now, and we have huge concerns with additional traffic coming in, especially with the recent Woodward project. I don't know how we're going to get out of our neighborhood. I really want to bring that to the attention of everyone here.

Comment (Citizen): I feel like the traffic situation has been largely ignored. I remember coming to a meeting when I first moved to the area 7 years ago, and traffic was brought up as a serious issue, and here we are at this time, still continuing to develop, the issue is still being brought up, and I'm not seeing that it is going to be addressed.

Question (Citizen): You talk about traffic on Lemay and Lincoln, but what about on Duff, International and Webster?

Response (Applicant): International and Duff will be extended into the site. We can't connect it over to Lemay now because of the planned swing of Lemay. The City may require an escrow for the extension. This is an interim solution. The rest of Duff Drive will likely be funded by this development. We will be required to pay our local street frontage.

Question (Citizen): What will be the impacts to the businesses?

Response (Applicant): What will happen is the western portion of the Industrial park currently has to go east or south to eventually head west. With the new connections, a portion will have the opportunity to use these new road extensions and that is included in the traffic study. We estimate how much traffic will do that, such as for those segments of International.

Question (Citizen): I am a business owner in the business park. Webster and Duff drive, they will be connected to this development?

Response (Applicant): Yes.

Comment (Citizen): The businesses in the area just collected a quarter million ourselves to fix the streets, and we have concerns over the increase in traffic. We have people showing up and we don't know who they are or what they're trying to access, this was a frequent occurrence after the Bull Run Apartments were constructed. People are going to go through our area; it's the path of least resistance. This is concern for many business owners in the area. We paid for these streets, and now the traffic is going to tear them up.

Response (Applicant): The expectation is that Duff and Webster will likely help the business park more than hurt, because the people working in the western portions will not have to take Link to get to Lincoln. The residents of this development, the students, will find it time-consuming to go east, to eventually go west. It's going to be easy to go down the extended International and take a right turn to go to campus.

Comment (Citizen): I was late for the first part of the meeting because I was sitting in traffic. It's bad right now, what is it going to be like when we put another 800 people and cars out there?

Response (Applicant): The traffic study takes into account current conditions.

Question (Citizen): Are you going to put a light in there at International?

Response (Applicant): No

Comment (Citizen): They will use our access because we have the stoplight.

Comment (Citizen): Duff is a failed intersection. That traffic light gets wiped out at least once a year from the trucks trying to make the turn. The trucks will see an easy way out through the apartments; you may have a lot of truck traffic coming through.

Question (Citizen): What is the future of east/west Vine, and how will that shape the future?

Response (Applicant): The future plan is that Vine will be downgraded after the overpasses and New Vine are built. Lemay will also be altered, although final details are not yet set. Connectivity from anything east of Lemay and Timberline is hard to say due to the ground characteristics, such as wetlands.

Question (Citizen): What do you think will come first? Lemay or Vine improvements?

Response (City): They are tied hand-in-hand, each affects the other.

Question (Citizen): Why would you not complete the traffic study prior to the neighborhood meeting? When it's presented at the public hearing, people have no time to assimilate that information on the spot.

Response (Applicant): The traffic study is underway.

Comment (Citizen): That doesn't help the people who came down tonight with all these questions if the traffic study isn't completed.

Response (City): The neighborhood meeting is a required step prior to formal submittal, which includes the traffic study. The meeting is held early in the process to hear neighborhood concerns and solutions and give the developer opportunity to make changes.

Question (Citizen): If the traffic study is already underway, share it with the public.

Response (City): Once the project is submitted, the public can look at the traffic study; there will also likely be another neighborhood meeting.

Response (City): Matt is out gathering data and background statistics right now, and we will sit down and scope the project for the information we need; we still need to do that.

Question (Citizen): When you reviewed the traffic study for Woodward Governor, what was the service level for Vine and Lincoln and Vine and Lemay?

Response (Applicant): Vine and Lemay is operating at level of service D.

Response (City): Lincoln and Lemay is a B condition, overall.

Comment (Citizen): I represent some applicants on Vine and Lemay. He told me it will remain a local street, and that's in the master street plan. They are planning on pulling traffic away from the existing Vine with the New Vine buildout. They are going to go hand-in-hand with one another (overpasses over the railroad tracks).

Question (Citizen): What is the frequency of the shuttle going to be?

Response (Applicant): Typically 20 to 30 minute headways, but still working on final details.

Question (Citizen): How late will it run?

Response (Applicant): Typically it runs from 7am to 5pm or 7am to 7pm, and sometimes there are night shuttles to downtown.

Comment (Citizen): The best model to look at is Ramblewood near Poudre High School. They started I believe in 1971 and it's the most successful one. You will want to look at their model and really focus on it. The neighbors are right that you are going to have spillover traffic into this neighborhood. There is some opposition because neighbors are worried about gentrification of the neighborhood, and the traffic. I had to wait at the same intersection for two light cycles to get here; it took me 20 minutes to get here and I don't live that far away. This development compounds all the traffic, especially with Woodward coming in. Vine and Lemay need to get done, but we don't know when those improvements are going to come in. I recommend you include the neighborhoods as much as possible, the earlier speaker asking for this to be opened up to the neighborhoods is correct.

Question (Citizen): It seems like traffic is on the minds of many here. Is Capstone planning to have a direct transportation pathway from the project straight to CSU?

Response (Applicant): Yes, there will be a private shuttle that goes from the development to CSU.

Question (Citizen): Are you improving Lincoln Avenue, like they are planning?

Response (Applicant): Any improvements that will be needed will come after the traffic study is completed.

Response (Applicant): Lincoln will not look like it does right now.

Comment (Citizen): With traffic going through the industrial area, I know students normally wouldn't go through there on the way to CSU, but consider Miramont gym and their heavy use of that facility.

Response (Applicant): There will be a full-service gym in the clubhouse, including tanning, sauna, study rooms, computer rooms for the residents to use. Hopefully this will keep that type of traffic down as the amenities are already located on site.

Question (Citizen): How does student housing affect property values for nearby neighborhoods?

Response (Applicant): I do not know the effect of property values. I would encourage you to ask real estate professionals. My own experience is that something brand new and new development in an area can raise property values.

Comment (Citizen): I am a real estate agent and it can go several ways – values can go down if the property isn't properly maintained. I'm going to guess it will be neutral for now, because we don't have a strong community experience with this kind of development. One worry could be gentrification for the nearby areas. If Lemay is built, you will have some buffering, and as long as traffic quality and quantity is maintained it could help.

Comment (Citizen/Consultant): The cottages are a night and day difference versus one or two large multifamily buildings that you typically see. The company has a reputation for maintaining their developments.

Comment (Citizen): There is another project similar to this called Aspen Heights. I have listings over there; Aspen Heights is the nearest comparable example to this project. They will follow a similar pattern. Look at Aspen Heights if you want to see something similar. It's about 650 bedrooms plus or minus, and this is 841, so this is about 25% larger.

Comment (Citizen): The community missed an opportunity with Aspen Heights for multi-modal transportation opportunities. Right now is the time to enhance these transportation opportunities for this part of town. I encourage the community to get involved early and create pathways to help alleviate and motivate people to stay out of their cars.

Question (Citizen): Are there other communities you have building around the country?

Response (Applicant): We have developed about 14 cottage-style communities throughout the country.

Question (Citizen): What have you learned? What mistakes did you find and what adjustments did you make as you built these communities? Where are these communities?

Response (Applicant): Our website has a full list of all our communities, but they are everywhere from New Hampshire to Florida to Texas.

Response (Applicant): The unique thing about cottages is the sense of pride in ownership that students take versus the typical flat-style apartment complex. If a bush dies in front of their cottage, we hear about it immediately and they call us to come fix it. This helps the development stay looking nice. We also enforce things, such as fines for trash left out; because we also have an interest in keeping it look nice.

Response (Applicant): The site plans have improved over time. Our first community we didn't have things like parallel parking, and now we make sure we have enough parking along the roads. We also create the sense of community and connectedness by creating the grid through the development to connect with the rest of the community. You're creating the neighborhood and a sense of place.

Question (Citizen): How are your utilities handled?

Response (Applicant): Typically we sub-meter for water. Utilities usually are paid by the resident. Sometimes we provide it as a package, but with a cap or limit on the amount.

Question (Citizen): What is your onsite management like?

Response (Applicant): We will have five full-time employees, and one of those individuals typically lives on-site. We also try to work with local police departments to try and have more of a presence on site, sometimes even having a police officer live in the development and ask them to patrol at night. Then if there are complaints there is someone already on site.

Response (City): We will need to follow-up with the police about patrolling/an on-site officer and update that in these neighborhood meeting notes.

Response (Applicant): Some jurisdictions don't like that arrangement; in that case we would still have a courtesy manager to serve as the first point of contact if someone were to occur in the evening.

Question (Citizen): Is there any environmental or sustainable design elements? I don't see south-facing windows, or solar panels on the clubhouse. These are things that are going to make you look good in this community. If it's just a place to make money off people living in your houses, if you really show the Fort Collins community that something is progressive and provides value to them and the community they can support this.

Response (Applicant): Our target market cares about sustainability. There are lots of practices we put into the cottages to make sure they're sustainable, such as the way they are constructed, the insulation used, the appliances are efficient. We want to make sure they're energy efficient, even from just an operating standpoint.

Comment (Citizen): I'd like to see something more. If you look at something perhaps like carports with solar panels.

Comment (City): Another trend we're seeing is room and space for community gardening efforts.

Question (Citizen): Are you leasing per unit or per bedroom?

Response (Applicant): Per bedroom.

Question (Citizen): How does the future Lemay Avenue connect into old Lemay?

Question (Citizen): How far are they moving Vine ("New Vine")?

Response (Applicant): New Vine will be about 1,000 feet to the north of existing Vine Drive.

Response (City): The realignment of Vine starts east of Timberline and goes past Lemay and then will connect over to College. There will be a new alignment, a jog, of Lemay Avenue. The current roadway is straight, and with the realignment it will curve and begin to rise in elevation for an overpass over the train tracks. The existing section of Lemay will be downgraded to a local street. The existing portions of Vine will become local and collector designations.

Comment (Citizen): The existing connections will change, but there are no concrete details of designs yet.

Comment (Citizen): The Andersonville community was under the impression that with the overpass, the old Lemay would dead-end at the tracks. We would like that to happen so that trains are not actually crossing a street and so there is no need to use their horns.

Response (City): The purpose is ultimately mobility. There has been nothing officially determined or set at this point. Final determinations still need to be made.

Comment (Citizen): The honking is really loud and definitely a concern for the neighborhood.

Question (Citizen): When is the City going to deal with the train? They're allowed to carry stuff through town that isn't allowed on roads. The noise is related to the fact they're still coming through. They don't even have a stop in town except for Budweiser. Why don't we use our strength as a community to effect change and ensure our safety?

Comment (Citizen): A lot of this has to do with the power railroads have, starting with the Railroad Act of 1847. There have been previous discussions to move the tracks and routes east of the Front Range, but all the communities north of Denver would have to agree and help pay for the move.

Comment (Citizen): I would like to hear from the City. What we're talking about in Fort Collins, is a reasonable expectation of safety for its citizens. I don't want to see anyone hurt from a spill or derailment. Things could be wiped out in an instant. We need to have a conversation to help them (railroads) become more efficient. We need some leadership in transportation.

Response (City): Conversations have been ongoing, but we have to win the political fight first, and then pay money to help the railroads move. This is a very large discussion.

Question (Citizen): This area is a floodplain, and we've had to address drainage and other issues ourselves, has any study been done to make sure this won't negatively affect surrounding neighborhoods?

Response (Applicant): There is a comprehensive drainage study and report that is required for the project. The Lincoln channel has had some drainage difficulties. The City has exhaustive stormwater requirements that will have to be satisfied as it progresses through development review.

Response (City): We typically require onsite detention and LID to be incorporated into projects.

Comment (Citizen): If you compare this project to the District at CSU or The Summit, I like what they have done compared to previous student housing projects. Parking is a big thing – you are taking into account you need to provide more parking compared to some of the problems we've seen at other student housing developments. I recommend working with the neighbors and their residents, you definitely have some folks with concerns.