



Redtail Ponds Permanent Supportive Housing July 8 Neighborhood Meeting Response

Dear Neighbor,

Thank you for attending the July 8 Neighborhood Meeting about the proposed Redtail Ponds Permanent Supportive Housing Development. Overall, we heard that people are supportive of ending homelessness in Fort Collins, and the major concerns are around safety and neighborhood character. As a result, we will be hosting a series of public meetings which will help us address these concerns moving forward. The dates are pending, but we will use this email distribution list to distribute information about the meetings and how you can participate.

Project Summary

Redtail Ponds is a mixed-income 60-unit development with 40 units designated as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). The program is designed to meet the special housing needs of homeless individuals with disabilities, homeless veterans, and other low-income individuals. Onsite supportive services will be provided to help promote independence.

The program, design, location, and financing for Redtail Ponds are modeled on national best practices and based on the concept that combining services with housing for homeless individuals with disabilities will help promote stability and independence. The permanent supportive housing model is supported by local, state, and national funders because it has proven effective. Studies show that approximately 80 percent of homeless people with disabilities who are given the opportunity to move into supportive housing stay for a year or more, and many who leave progress to independent settings. Studies have also shown that supportive housing performs well compared to other Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects, and the model is financially solid according to Enterprise Community Partners, Inc and the Corporation for Supportive Housing.

Success of Permanent Supportive Housing

What is the success rate of supportive housing?

<http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/HousingRetentionFAQFINAL.pdf>

A number of research studies have demonstrated the positive effect that supportive housing has on residential stability among formerly homeless individuals. Approximately 75-85% of those who enter supportive housing are still housed after one year. In addition, many of those who leave supportive housing do so for positive reasons – often to enter more independent settings after they have stabilized. However, others leave for less positive reasons and some research exist that may give practitioners clues as to why these people may not be as successful in supportive housing.

Studies show that those who are not successful end up in more structured settings such as hospitals, correctional facilities, shelters, or return to their homeless community – not to nearby residential neighborhoods.

Please explain the history of this project

In 2007, various sectors of the Fort Collins community began discussion regarding the development of a Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. A new collaborative initiative, Homeward 2020, was formed in 2009 and charged with the following tasks: 1.) Convene the local community to catalyze opportunities for positive change in homeless services delivery, 2.) Develop a Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness (Ten-Year Plan) in Fort Collins. Throughout the Ten-Year Plan's development, extensive studies of best practices to end homelessness around the nation were conducted; additionally many public opportunities for local service providers to share their experiences unique to our area were made available. Both nationally and locally, it was established that providing permanent supportive housing for the area's homeless population was a top priority. As the Ten-Year Plan progressed, the need for permanent supportive housing was identified as critical to the successful implementation of the Ten-Year Plan. In 2010, the Ten-Year Plan was published with broad community representation in its authorship. FCHA has taken a leadership role in this effort from early on, including current representation on the Homeward 2020 Board of Directors, Executive Committee, chair of the Supportive Housing Task Group, representation on other ad hoc committees and provider of technical assistance. Given FCHA's development skills, expertise in LIHTC development, property management and compliance history and commitment to comprehensive resident services, the collaborative partners agreed that FCHA would take the lead in bringing the first Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) project to Northern Colorado.

Please provide examples from other cities *(please contact FCHA for additional information on permanent supportive housing examples from around the country)*

Supportive Housing programs across the country have shown that this approach is both cost effective and highly successful at keeping people off the streets. Some of the examples FCHA visited, researched, and considered include:

- **Colorado Coalition for the Homeless** - For over 25 years, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless has developed a variety of supportive affordable housing developments in Colorado. They currently have over 15 supportive housing developments and are a national model for permanent supportive housing.
- **Longmont Housing Authority**- The Suites (70 units)
- **Home Forward (Portland Housing Authority)** - numerous supportive housing developments of varying scales (20 units – 150 units)
- **DESC Opening Doors to End Homelessness (Seattle)** – another national leader in supportive housing and a model for reducing homelessness
- **Fargo Housing Authority** – Cooper House Apartments (42 units)
- **Boulder Housing Partners** – 1175 Lee Hill (30 units, under construction)
- **Minneapolis** – an experienced leader in addressing the wide spectrum of homelessness with housing and supportive services

Link to A Compilation of Supportive Housing Research: <http://shnny.org/research-reports/research/>

There is concern that the type of population living in Redtail Ponds will be dangerous to the community.

FCHA understands the negative perception of the homeless population in Fort Collins when in actuality there is a dramatic spectrum of homeless individuals with disabilities locally. In order for Redtail Ponds to be successful, selecting appropriate tenants for the program is critical.

The forty units of supportive housing are for homeless individuals with disabilities. It is not exclusive to chronically homeless. The postcard sent out to property owners included misleading and misinformation. The statistics were used to create fear and concern, and they only referenced the 153 chronically homeless individuals, which is actually just a small portion (11%) of the homeless population locally. Nationally, chronically homeless typically comprise of about 19% of the homeless population. We know that in 2011 alone, the Murphy Center served 1,387 homeless individuals in Fort Collins, including many veterans.

There are many reasons why people become homeless, especially with job losses due to the economic downturn and lack of affordable housing. Declining wages have put housing out of reach for many workers. Chronic health conditions and mental health issues combined with the lack of affordable healthcare are also significant contributors

FCHA will not house individuals that pose a threat to themselves or the community. Like all property owners FCHA will be evaluating potential tenants in order to build a safe community and occupy apartments with tenants who will pay their rent and maintain their lease agreement; however, FCHA employs even tighter screening policies than most multi-family landlords and has a higher level of accountability.

How much do residents pay to live there? How do they get their funds?

The average rent in FC for a 1-bedroom apartment is \$800. People living on SSI receive \$674. Our homeless are not income-less, but they are priced out of the market. Many have suffered a job loss or life event that has forced them to lose their housing.

FCHA is project basing 40 vouchers for this project (15 Veteran Administration Supportive Housing vouchers and 25 Housing Choice Vouchers) where residents pay no more than 30% of their income and the voucher covers the remaining balance. Resident income comes from a variety of sources, including employment, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Aid to the Needy and Disabled Program (AND), unemployment, and US Veteran benefits.

How will screening work to ensure success?

Resident eligibility and screening criteria are primarily determined by rules associated with the funding agencies involved in this project as well as relevant FCHA policies. The funding sources may include: the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (McKinney-Vento Act funding as amended by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher funds), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program, and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program.

Resident selection will be a two-step process, as described below. First, the referring agencies will identify potential residents and assess their suitability and ability to benefit from Permanent Supportive Housing. Then FCHA will screen recommended candidates for eligibility and conduct background checks. Some candidates may be disqualified from Permanent Supportive Housing based on the findings of FCHA's screening.

Screening for Suitability as a Tenant

Like all property owners we are evaluating potential tenants in order to build a safe community and occupy apartments with tenants who will pay their rent and maintain their lease agreement. The intention is to prioritize individuals who are living, working or accessing services in the City of Fort Collins who, first and foremost, want to be housed and, second, can and want to be successful in permanent supportive housing, which includes evaluating an individual's willingness to be lease compliant and engage with case managers to receive support services.

Due to the significant need for this type of housing in Fort Collins, nearly all of the potential residents will be referrals to FCHA from Fort Collins service agencies. There will simply not be room for individuals who apply without any track record of service cooperation. Local service agencies include, but are not limited to Catholic Charities, Fort Collins Rescue Mission, Touchstone Health Partners, Disabled Resource Services, Murphy Center, Crossroads, Homeless Gear, and Hand Up Cooperative.

Screening for Eligibility

The baseline for eligibility will be defined by the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, which requires that the applicant document citizenship or legal resident status, have an income at or below 30% of the area median income, and consent to collection of personal background information

FCHA will run criminal background checks on all applicants before admission, and annually for participants in the program. This review of criminal background will assist FCHA in complying with HUD requirements to deny assistance to applicants who are engaging in or have engaged in certain criminal activities.

Reasons for Denial of Assistance

In some circumstances, FCHA will be required to deny admission and assistance to potential residents.

Grounds for denial

Based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines, FCHA must deny assistance to applicants who:

- A. Do not meet any one or more of the eligibility criteria;
- B. Do not supply information or documentation required by the application process;
- C. Fail to respond to a written request for information or a request to declare their continued interest in the program;
- D. Fail to complete any aspect of the application or lease-up process;

- E. Have a history of criminal convictions by any household member involving crimes of physical violence against persons or property, and any other criminal convictions including drug-related criminal convictions that would adversely affect the health, safety, or well-being of other tenants or staff, or cause damage to the property.
- F. Currently owes rent or other amounts to any housing authority in connection with the public housing or Section 8 Programs.
- G. Have committed fraud, bribery, or any other corruption in connection with any Federal housing assistance program, including the intentional misrepresentation of information related to their housing application or benefits derived there from;
- H. Have a family member who is illegally using a controlled substance or abuses alcohol in a way that may interfere with the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. The Fort Collins Housing Authority may waive this requirement if:
 - 1. The person demonstrates to the Fort Collins Housing Authority's satisfaction that the person is no longer engaging in drug-related criminal activity or abuse of alcohol;
 - 2. The person has successfully completed a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program;
 - 3. The person has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully; or
 - 4. The person is participating in a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program.
- I. Have engaged in or threatened abusive or violent behavior towards any Fort Collins Housing staff or residents. Such behavior would include using profane, racially or sexually abusive language towards Housing Authority employees.
- J. Have a family household member who has been terminated under the Voucher Program during the last three years;
- K. Have a family household member who is currently a registered sex offender.
- L. **Denied for Life:** If any family member has been convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine on assisted housing premises;
- M. **Denied for Life:** If any family member has a lifetime registration under a State sex offender registration program.

What is required to maintain residence after initial acceptance and how long does it take to evict someone?

Initial acceptance will require a willingness and motivation to participate in the supportive services program. Once accepted, residents must pay their rent and maintain their lease agreement. FCHA adheres to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development "One Strike and You're Out" Screening and Eviction Guidelines for Public Housing Authorities.

Lease violations are grounds for eviction. Lease violations will be discussed with the property manager, case manager, and the resident. A problem-solving model will be followed to the maximum extent feasible. Repercussions will be determined on a case-by-case basis advised by FCHA's existing policy. If a lease violation ultimately results in eviction, state eviction regulations will be followed.

The following is an example of behaviors which would be unacceptable and would be grounds for eviction:

- Not paying their portion of the rent
- Making excessive noise
- Not keeping apartment or common areas clean
- Disturbing other tenants
- Moving someone else into the apartment
- Participating in illegal activities
- Harassing building staff for unnecessary repairs
- Damaging property
- Not returning keys when moving out
- Not adhering to a move-out date

How can current area residents be assured that the issues which caused the ultimate closure of the Linden Street unit will not recur at this complex?

The issues at the Linden Street Single Room Occupancy (SRO) were predominantly due to the problematic location next to Jefferson Park, the ownership structure where FCHA was an operator but not an owner of the building, and the building itself was deteriorating and problematic. This has been demonstrated by the success of our other two SRO properties that serve the same population but are located outside of the downtown vicinity and have not experienced similar issues. In addition, the success of supportive housing is largely based on the availability of onsite supportive services and greater staffing levels that promote stability and independence. The Linden Street SRO did not have the supportive services or the benefit of a newly constructed building with amenities and features that promote health and livability. A single room occupancy situation is quite different from independent apartments, and the design of Redtail Ponds incorporates best practices for management, security, and sustainability.

Are there other alternatives than a single-site development?

Multiple housing options are needed to make homelessness rare, short-lived, and non-recurring--from prevention, to temporary re-housing assistance, to on-going support through permanent supportive housing. This is one component of a well-developed plan to end homelessness that relies on matching people, with their diverse needs, to the best housing option and the best services available. There are other programs and housing options out there that meet some people's needs, including Transitional housing, Single Room Occupancy, Shelter Care, Community Dual Disorders Team, Rapid Re-Housing, and Outreach and Prevention, but there is a lack of permanent supportive housing that is the right solution for this particular portion of our community.

The size of the development is a concern. Why 60 units and mostly 1-bedrooms?

Currently the identified local priority is to house homeless individuals (men and women), and Redtail Ponds was specifically designed to address this priority. There are other local initiatives to help homeless families. There is significant need for more of this type of housing for both families and individuals, and we hope to be able to continue to address this need.

The size, density, and use of the development are allowable under the multi-family land use designation in the Fort Collins Land Use Code. Many of the goals and policies of the City of Fort Collins promote higher density housing within close proximity to transit. As stated in City Plan

Fort Collins (2011), the TOD Overlay zone is intended to incentivize higher density development and encourages affordable housing.

The 60-unit size also allows us to create a mixed-income community, which is a national best practice. Twenty units are for people who are low income (earning 40% - 50% of Area Median Income). People who are working and stable but not able to afford market rents provide stability and role models for others. The Low Income Housing Tax Credit funding mechanism requires that all of the units, including the 20 that are not targeted to people experiencing homelessness, be extremely marketable and competitive in the rental market. One-bedroom units are currently the biggest gap in the affordable housing market, and we see the longest wait lists and greatest demand for these units.

What will be the supervision of the development and what services are provided?

The building will be staffed twenty-four hours a day by staff that are trained and have the authority to identify emergency situations, intervene in disputes, identify lease violations, recognize potential problems, and connect residents with the appropriate resources.

Once a resident is selected for the program, he/she will be assigned a case manager. Tenants have choices in the support services that they receive. They are asked about their choices and can choose from a range of services and different tenants receive different types of services based on their needs and preferences. Many services will be provided on-site and many more are offered within the community. The services planned to be offered on site include: comprehensive case management, mental health counseling, employment readiness classes, substance abuse counseling, education counseling, health and wellness classes, nutrition and health cooking classes, financial budgeting, recreational activities and groups.

Safety and Security

In order to assure the residents' safety and well-being, the property will incorporate the following features:

- One main entrance for clients and guests;
- 24-hour locked exterior doors with restricted access;
- Surveillance cameras;
- 24-hour on-site trained staff;
- Random security patrols of the building's exterior and interior; and
- A screened, private outside courtyard.

The rigorous resident selection process and background checks are additional security measures. In addition, FCHA will provide residents with contact information to use if they have any security concerns, as well as instruction regarding emergencies.

What will be the impact on neighborhood schools and parks?

It is doubtful that residents of Redtail Ponds would walk over 1 mile (Google Map) on the trail either under Highway 287 or across the railroad tracks to an elementary school, especially since it would not lead them to services or transportation. However in the unlikely event there is any issue of a resident loitering at a neighborhood school or park, we would work directly with

Police Services to remove these individuals. We can also include rules in our resident guidelines about loitering and trespassing, but we have not experienced these issues at other properties.

FCHA has reached out to the School District to ensure coordination and to confirm that there have not been any issues at schools located near other affordable housing developments or homeless service centers. The Murphy Center of Hope in north Fort Collins, a day resource center for the homeless, is located 1.5 miles from Tavelli Elementary School and despite preliminary fears; there has not been any issues there. The population drawn to the Murphy Center does not have stable housing and the individuals visiting there are not screened as they would be at Redtail Ponds. The Suites in Longmont (70 PSH units) and 1175 Lee Hill in Boulder (30 PSH units, under construction) are also located just over 1 mile from elementary schools. Just as FCHA will be, both Longmont and Boulder are committed to a rigorous screening process and ongoing communication with the community.

Complaint Process

In the event of a problem, neighbors and residents of Redtail Ponds will be asked to call or email the property manager. FCHA will respond to, or acknowledge, complaints within 24 hours or the next business day. The property manager will work with the individual to address the issue in as timely a manner as possible, and the property manager is expected to resolve the majority of issues. If the property manager cannot resolve the problem, the complaint will be elevated, in a timely manner, through supervisory levels, on up to and including the Executive Director.

How do you foresee the ongoing relationship with the neighborhood?

We foresee a strong relationship with all of the surrounding neighborhoods as we have in all of our apartment communities in Fort Collins. The property manager will act as the community liaison who will be present on site and dedicated to promoting positive interaction with the community and respond to any issues.

What is the definition of permanent supportive housing (as opposed to homeless shelter, halfway house, or mental health hospitals)?

Like other apartment lease arrangements, housing is permanent as there is no time limit on residency. Residents receive supportive services to achieve stability and personal goals. Emergency shelters provide overnight sleeping arrangements but most clients cannot remain during the day and tend to spend time in public places. They do not have any private space. Halfway houses typically do not use leases or support services. There are other programs for people with severe mental health and severe substance abuse issues in our community. People living in permanent supportive housing will have a certain level of independence and stability.

Location

Why is this location appropriate for this type of housing/use?

The site is zoned General Commercial in the TOD Overlay District, and multi-family housing is an allowable use per the Zoning Code. Higher density development and affordable housing are encouraged in the TOD Overlay District. The site is surrounded by mostly commercial and office uses. There are only four single-family homes within 800 feet of the development, and they are separated by the railroad and US 287.

The southern location of Redtail Ponds may have come as a surprise for some who associate homeless services and the homeless population with Downtown and north Fort Collins. Besides the convenient access to a high frequency transit system (1 block) and the majority of supportive services being provided onsite, FCHA , along with local service providers, strongly believe the project location is ideal to promote independence and livability for residents. FCHA has sent staff and partners to visit best practice models in permanent supportive housing around the country. FCHA has seen firsthand examples of centralized and non-centralized developments, and the non-centralized model is strongly preferred for our community. Although metropolitan areas with extensive services in a concentrated location may not have the same benefits from separation, FCHA has learned from experience that providing a separation from the homeless concentration in our particular community has proven to be a healthier environment for the residents.

Although much of the homeless population congregates in the downtown area in Fort Collins, many of the service providers are actually scattered throughout the City. For example, some critical services for our residents are located in north and south Fort Collins and will be directly accessible from Redtail Ponds by trail and transit. In an effort to support and promote the City of Fort Collins goal to avoid concentration of poverty and services, FCHA chose to avoid northern and downtown locations and instead locate the permanent supportive housing development in a healthy stable neighborhood where the residents have access to transit, employment, goods, and services, thereby promoting a healthier community.

