

Community Q&A with Sun Communities

Meeting Date: July 23, 2020
Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

City Staff Attendees:

Alyssa Stephens, Neighborhood Services
Meaghan Overton, Planning
JC Ward, Neighborhood Services

Applicant: Sun Communities

Summary

On July 23rd, more than 50 community members joined virtually for a Community Q&A with Sun Communities, the applicant for a potential new mobile home park in south Fort Collins. This Community Q&A was meant to provide a supplemental opportunity for residents to engage with Sun Communities in addition to the code-required neighborhood meeting. Over the course of 90 minutes, Sun Communities shared updated site plans and responded to detailed questions on site management, potential amenities, site design, and affordability. Detailed responses from the Q&A are available below.

Notice was provided to a wider range of stakeholders, including residents of existing manufactured housing communities in the City. Notification was shared through the weekly development review newsletter and other relevant email lists, posted on several City sites, shared on NextDoor, and mailed to neighbors in the surrounding area. Unfortunately, a delay with the printer led to late delivery of the mailed notice to some neighbors. The meeting was recorded and made available online for anyone who was unable to attend the meeting.

Management and Amenities

Sun Communities shared updated site plans that proposed 204 units with 14 acres of open space and an amenity center (playground, pool, etc.).

- **Question: Will you comply with Colorado's laws, including the updated Mobile Home Park Act, and the protections for home-owners through the Dispute Resolution and Enforcement Program?**
 - Applicant: Yes.
- **Question: Will you have an on-site resident manager with the authority to deal with issues on a timely basis, including quick responses to any Fort Collins and Larimer County agencies with local concerns regarding your community and its residents?**
 - Answer: Yes, we prefer to have a manager that lives on-site. We provide free housing for our manager on-site.
- **Question: What guarantees on owner rights will be made to ensure community management, access to affordable maintenance, etc?**

- Applicant: Maintenance and reinvestment is an important part of our business. Residents are our most important stakeholders. We want to have vibrant communities that residents are proud of.
- **Question: Do you intend to provide electric, basic WI-FI, cable, etc.?**
 - Applicant: Yes, we will provide all utilities.
- **Question: Colorado law states that you may not require purchase from a particular seller. How do you intend to comply?**
 - Applicant: We will comply with the law. We also want to maintain the character of the neighborhood and would like to see new homes and homes that fit within the design of the site.
- **Question: Are the utilities individually metered?**
 - Applicant: Yes.
- **Question: Is the land lease inclusive of everything, or do you add maintenance fees to monthly bills?**
 - Applicant: The site rent is all-inclusive. Residents are required to do their own lawn maintenance. Sun Communities does not charge additional fees for site maintenance.
- **Question: Sun Communities owns properties in Fort Collins, some of which have maintenance issues. You have suggested that we drive to Granby to look at existing properties. Why are the Fort Collins ones not a good example of your company and your work?**
 - Applicant: We acquired those properties and did not build them. We have reinvested over two million dollars in these properties over the past five years. These are not a good example because we didn't build them.
- **Question: Is there a cap on the number of units that can be purchased as investment properties and rented out?**
 - Applicant: That doesn't typically happen on our properties. We rarely see that in our communities.

Costs and Affordability

- **Question: In addition to monthly rents, what fees do you anticipate?**
 - Applicant: Utility costs. Units are individually metered and pay their own water, sewer, electricity, etc. No additional fees on top of the lot rent.
- **Question: Do you anticipate an HOA on this property?**
 - Applicant: Yes, we think it's important that residents have a voice. We will continue to reinvest in this property over time (clubhouse, roads, etc.). HOAs help guide these changes over time and help us provide the right amenities. That dialogue is vital to the success of the community as long as there is interest and participation from neighbors. In other communities, we provide funds for community activities. It helps build community.
- **Question: What common costs would be borne by the HOA versus Sun Communities?**

- Applicant: Any common amenities (pools, courts, etc.), the costs would be paid by Sun Communities. Something like a community garden could be a joint project. Sun Communities could provide money to the HOA to use at their discretion.
- **Question: Will you have multiple options for financing for prospective home buyers?**
 - Applicant: One of the great benefits of our community is a lower barrier to entry to get into a home. Down payments are much lower than for a traditional single-family home.
- **Question: What are the policies or options for sale/re-sale of a home in this community?**
 - Applicant: We have a very vibrant sale/re-sale program. Residents are not required to sell through Sun Communities. Because we are reinvesting in the communities, our average broker re-sale price increases every year. Residents live in the community for 14 years on average, but they are getting value out of their home at the end of that.
- **Question: What happens if someone wants to sell and Sun Communities won't accept the buyer?**
 - Applicant: We do a credit check on buyers to make sure they can afford to purchase. We also do a criminal background check to maintain safety. Anyone who wanted to purchase would have to meet our standards to live in our communities.
- **Question: Have you determine how much water tap fees will be?**
 - Applicant: No, we don't know yet. Those are part of the development fees and would not get passed along to a resident. Residents are only responsible for monthly fees.

Design and Construction

- **Question: The site doesn't seem to be innovative. It doesn't demonstrate walkability, or have neighborhood grocery store or recycling center, or have any way to align with the City's goals to reduce carbon emissions. How could this be more innovative and sustainable?**
 - Applicant: This is helpful to guide us on what is important to Fort Collins. We have replaced all lighting with LEDs and are piloting solar power in some areas. Colorado could be a great candidate for solar power.
- **Question: What kind of house foundations and infrastructure do you plan to provide?**
 - Applicant: That hasn't been determined yet. Generally, we have concrete foundations. In Colorado we generally use a concrete footing system with structural ties. We will know more in the future. We are placing these units much closer to the ground than other units, so that may affect the foundation requirements.
- **Question: Are you willing to prohibit through traffic within the community, allowing only ingress and egress for residents and their visitors/service providers?**
 - Applicant: I would have to think about that. I'm not sure we can do that. Fort Collins generally promotes connectivity for pedestrians and roadways, which encourages more access points. We have six different connection points proposed to multiple different neighborhoods.
- **Question: How will you provide access to active/public transportation (walking, biking, buses, etc.)?**

- Applicant: We are planning for low-speed roads throughout for pedestrian safety. We haven't gotten into the details of where or whether a bus stop or route would be. Once we get into a traffic study and full submittal we would know more.
- **Question: If street parking doesn't exist, where will visitors park?**
 - Applicant: We prefer not to have street parking. Each home will have three parking spots. The amenity center will also have parking, and supplemental visitor parking will be available near open spaces. We have plenty of space for additional parking throughout.
- **Question: Will garages be allowed?**
 - Applicant: You can have garages, but they will not be required. They may not be available on every site.
- **Comment: Neighborhoods do not want to be connected. It is not safe.**
- **Question: Are you currently planning for an exit on College?**
 - Applicant: Not currently.
- **Question: Are there any plans to place fences or visual barriers between units?**
 - Applicant: No, we generally don't have fences or barriers between units.
- **Question: I live immediately adjacent to the property. Do you plan to put a visual barrier in to make sure I can't see into other people's living room?**
 - Applicant: Typically, we have buffers between sites. Sometimes we use berms or a landscape buffer. We are proponents of using landscaping as a buffer.
- **Question: How do you plan to make the streets compatible to City streets and promote connectivity so we don't have an isolated area?**
 - Applicant: We are proposing six connections. There will be a transition from our private streets to City streets. There will be pedestrian connectivity and road connectivity.
- **Question: From an engineering standpoint, the property Sun has purchased is composed of expansive soil. How are they planning to mitigate for that?**
 - Applicant: We are well versed in the challenges of soil in this area. We will work with a geotechnical engineer to plan for foundations, roadways, utilities, etc.
- **Question: Does Sun anticipate receiving any tax incentives or other special considerations from the City of Fort Collins?**
 - Applicant: We haven't discussed anything like that, but I would expect no.
- **Question: Can you speak to the commitment you are making to not develop the wetland? This is an area that neighbors currently use and enjoy.**
 - Applicant: Our intentions are to enhance that wetland and use some of that area for stormwater management. It's a low-quality wetland that was developed by drainage issues, but we are hoping to enhance that and use it as open space.
- **Comment: The entrance onto Crown Ridge is very narrow because of existing street parking. Using Trilby will cause a huge backup. I think you are overestimating the number of units you can put in without adding a turn lane or traffic light.**
 - Applicant: We'll dig into this further when we do the traffic study.