

Planning & Zoning Commission: April 20, 2023

Enclave at Redwood, #MJA220003

Summary of Request

This is a proposed Major Amendment (MJA) of the Enclave at Redwood development plan #PDP210004 that was approved in June 2022. The amendment would eliminate the vehicular street extension of Lupine Street from existing development into the Enclave development, in favor of a pedestrian, bicycle and emergency access-only connection.

Zoning Map



Next Steps

If approved, the applicant will complete a Final Development Plan with pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency access only at the Lupine Drive connection to The Enclave development.

Site Location

Located at the east end of Lupine Dr, 470 feet east of Redwood Street.

Zoning

Low Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood (LMN) zone district.

Property Owner

Aaron Posma
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Englewood, CO 80112

Applicant/Representative

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Staff

Clark Mapes, City Planner

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Staff Recommendation

Denial of the Major Amendment.

1. Project Introduction

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Major Amendment is a follow-up matter that was discussed extensively at the Planning and Zoning Commission hearing on June 16, 2022, where the Enclave at Redwood development plan was approved by the Commission.

The approved plan extends the existing Lupine Drive local street stub into the Enclave development as required under code standards.

The code standards include a provision allowing for Alternative Compliance.

There was, and still is, strong opposition by residents of the existing Redwood Meadows development to this vehicular street connection, who contend that Alternative Compliance is warranted.

In response, the Commission discussed the idea of removing the Lupine connection as a local street per se with vehicular access. After discussion, the Commission agreed that staff analysis and findings on a request for Alternative Compliance were needed with further consideration beyond the hearing.

At the end, the Commission approved the plan as is, but encouraged the applicant to come back with a Major Amendment to the plan, with an Alternative Compliance connection for pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency access only.

The applicant's position is that they are "agnostic" and their plan can work either way for their purposes.

Accordingly, the applicant has submitted this proposed Major Amendment.



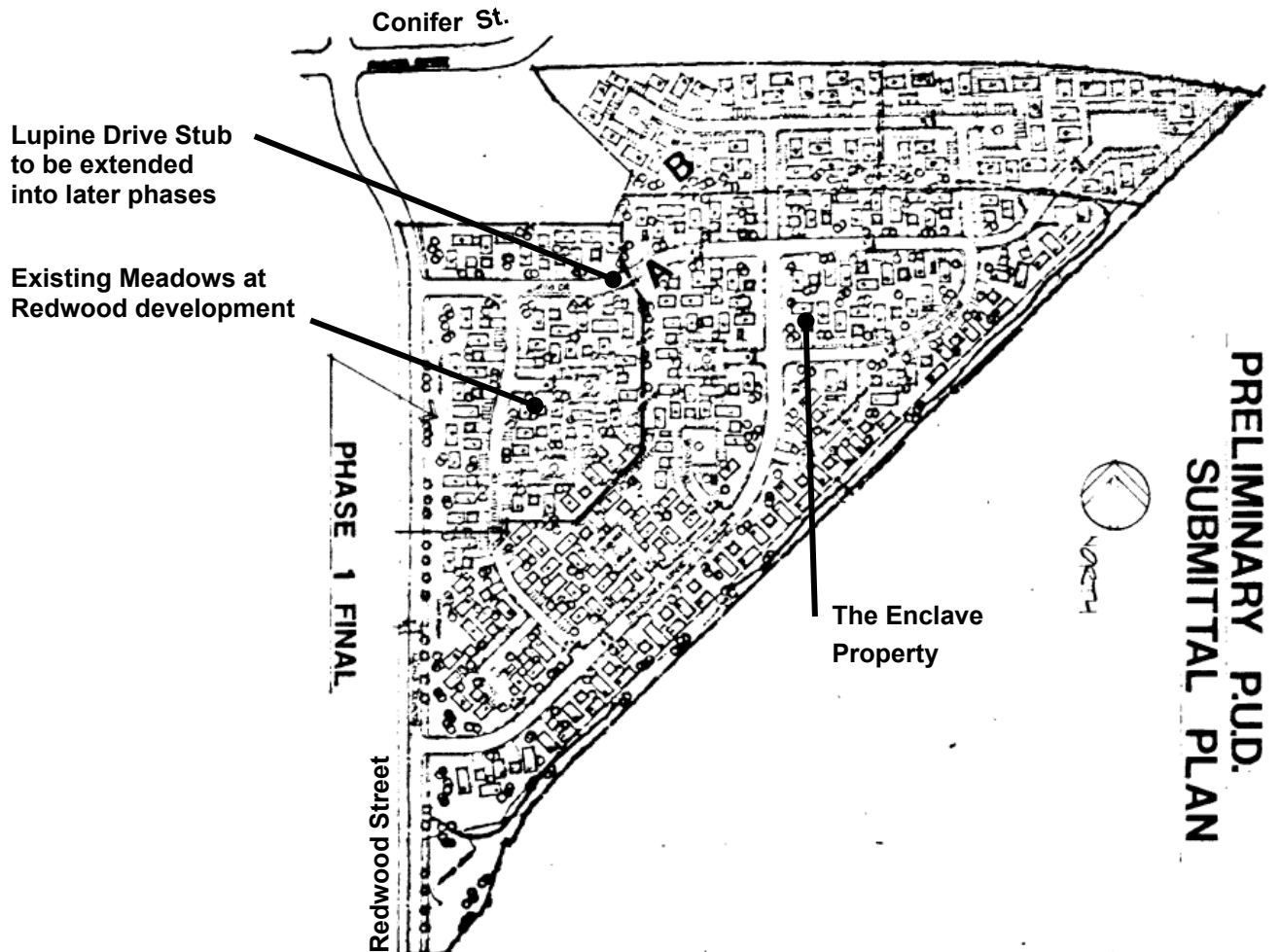
Approved Plan with street connection - (possible narrowing for traffic calming added)



Major Amendment plan with alternative connection for peds, bikes, and emergency access

B. DEVELOPMENT STATUS/BACKGROUND

The existing Meadows at Redwood was developed in 1982 as Phase 1 of the Redwood Village Preliminary PUD, below, which included additional property which never proceeded to development and is now approved as the Enclave at Redwood.



C. OVERVIEW OF MAIN CONSIDERATIONS IN STAFF'S REVIEW

Main considerations are:

- the purpose of the street pattern standards emphasizing interconnectedness knitting developments together; for which Alternative Compliance is proposed;
- the code language of the pertinent standards for street connections and extending existing street stubs;
- the code language for Alternative Compliance emphasizing nonvehicular access and level of service; and

- the traffic study information regarding level of service.

Also, staff is thoroughly familiar with the reasons why homeowners in the existing Meadows at Redwood development oppose the extension of the Lupine Drive street stub as a local street; and staff has given that full consideration and discussion.

2. City Plan Vision and Policy Background

Code standards are intended to implement the City's comprehensive plan--City Plan. A pervasive theme throughout City Plan is for the city to evolve with a unifying interconnected town-like pattern of streets and blocks and not a series of separate individual developments.

Excerpts from City Plan are provided below for background understanding to aid evaluation of the pertinent code standards. Underlines are language that staff finds most pertinent.

Policy LIV 4.1 - NEW NEIGHBORHOODS

Encourage creativity in the design and construction of new neighborhoods that: » Provides a unifying and interconnected framework of streets, sidewalks, walkway spines and other public spaces; » Expands housing options, including higher density and mixed-use buildings; » Offers opportunities to age in place; » Improves access to services and amenities; and » Incorporates unique site conditions.

Policy LIV 4.2 - COMPATIBILITY OF ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT

Ensure that development that occurs in adjacent districts complements and enhances the positive qualities of existing neighborhoods. Developments that share a property line and/or street frontage with an existing neighborhood should promote compatibility by: » Continuing established block patterns and streets to improve access to services and amenities from the adjacent neighborhood; » Incorporating context-sensitive buildings and site features (e.g., similar size, scale and materials); and » Locating parking and service areas where impacts on existing neighborhoods—such as noise and traffic—will be minimized.

Policy T 2.3 - LAYERED NETWORK

Develop a layered network for Fort Collins that designates a continuous, connected, efficient, convenient and comfortable network for bicycling, walking, transit and vehicles.

Policy T 7.3 - NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS FOR WALKING Provide an attractive, safe environment for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers on neighborhood streets with well-designed streetscapes, including detached sidewalks, parkways and well-defined crosswalks.

NEIGHBORHOODS in the overall City Structure Plan

Neighborhoods are the primary building blocks of the community. Whether existing or planned, neighborhoods in Fort Collins will vary in the mix of housing types and supporting uses that are provided; the extent to which they are accessible to adjoining districts, schools, parks, civic uses, transit and other services; and their overall character and form. Routine reinvestment in existing properties and some infill on vacant lots is to be expected in all neighborhoods. The degree to which existing neighborhoods are likely to experience more significant changes during the planning horizon will be influenced by location, the age and condition of existing housing stock, and the availability of vacant lots or larger plots of land. The City will continue to use the subarea and neighborhood planning process to address specific issues and

opportunities. Enhancing connectivity within and between existing and future neighborhoods and improving access to nature are priorities for all neighborhoods.

'Neighborhood Livability and Social Health' is one of seven organizing outcome areas covered in the City Plan comprehensive vision for the city's continual evolution. It inevitably involves tensions and different perspectives about quality of life and new impacts from continual growth and change.

Principles and policies recognize those different perspectives and require a degree of interpretation.

For example, Principle LIV 2 on page 40, "Promote infill and redevelopment", is followed on page 41 with Principle LIV 3, "Maintain and enhance our unique character and sense of place as the community grows."

These two principles may reflect different perspectives.

Likewise, the next page 42 in City Plan juxtaposes Principle LIV 4 "Enhance neighborhood livability", with Principle LIV 5, "Create more opportunities for housing choices."

Again, these principles could be interpreted differently from different perspectives. For existing homeowners, "enhancing neighborhood livability" does not typically include growth and change that would add more people and their vehicles; while "create more opportunities for housing choices" reflects a whole approach in City Plan to accommodating for growth and change.

City Plan reflects multiple different perspectives, and staff attempts to possible to find a balance in development plans.

3. Pertinent Land Use Code Standards

A. DIVISION 3.6 - TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

The following Sections are intended to ensure that the transportation system is in conformance with adopted transportation plans and policies established by the City. Underlines are language that staff finds most pertinent.

Applicable Code Standard	Code Language and Evaluation
<p>3.6.3 Street Pattern and Connectivity (A) - Purpose</p>	<p>Code language:</p> <p><i>"This Section is intended to ensure that the local street system is well designed with regard to safety, <u>efficiency and convenience for automobile, bicycle, pedestrian and transit modes of travel.</u></i></p> <p><i>For the purposes of this Division, "local street system" shall mean the <u>interconnected system of collector and local streets</u> providing access to development from an arterial street."</i></p> <p>Staff Evaluation</p>

	<p>Staff finds that the purposes are better met with a local street connection at Lupine, than they would be with the alternative access, because of slightly lower efficiency and convenience for automobile traffic.</p> <p>It is a matter of degree. The proposed alternative could also fit with this purpose statement. That is, the alternative connection could be considered to be a part of the local street system, with Bergen Drive providing access for vehicles within level of service metric criteria.</p> <p>More specific evaluation is under the additional standards discussed below.</p>
<p>3.6.3(B) – General Standard</p>	<p>Code language:</p> <p><i>“The local street system of any proposed development shall be designed to be safe, efficient, convenient and attractive, considering use by all modes of transportation that will use the system, (including, without limitation, cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, pedestrians and emergency vehicles). The local street system shall provide <u>multiple direct connections</u> to and between local destinations such as parks, schools and shopping. Local streets must provide for <u>both intra- and inter-neighborhood connections to knit developments together, rather than forming barriers between them. The street configuration within each parcel must contribute to the street system of the neighborhood.</u>”</i></p> <p>Staff Evaluation</p> <p>Staff finds that the alternative connection could be considered a part of the local street system thus would contribute to meeting this general standard. However, it would do so to a lesser degree than if Lupine is extended as a local street per se.</p> <p>A local street would provide “multiple direct connections” for vehicles together with the other modes of access and circulation; and it would knit developments together in the most legible way.</p> <p>Without the vehicular access, the local street system would be slightly less efficient and convenient. It would require out-of-direction travel for vehicular access to a single connection to and from Redwood Street and the many destinations accessed via Redwood. The additional distance would be 560-760 feet of southbound travel for north on Redwood Street.</p> <p>Alternative access with an obstruction for vehicles separating the two developments would convey a degree of separateness and two different communities of interest rather than Fort Collins being the community of interest into which the multiple developments fit as integral parts.</p>



Examples of alternative connections: not the same design as proposed; but they help convey a sense of the effect of providing pedestrian/bicycle access only along a street alignment, as different from a continuous street system.

3.6.3(F) – Utilization and Provision of Sub-Arterial Street Connections to and from Adjacent Developments

Code language:

“All development plans shall incorporate and continue all sub-arterial streets stubbed to the boundary of the development plan by previously approved development plans or existing development. All development plans shall provide for future public street connections to adjacent developable parcels by providing a local street connection spaced at intervals not to exceed six hundred sixty (660) feet along each development plan boundary that abuts potentially developable or redevelopable land.”

Staff Evaluation

This standard clearly favors extending Lupine Drive as a local street per se. The City’s whole approach to development is to have neighborhood street connections at least every 660 feet to establish a certain scale and framework for the pattern of development.

	<p>The distance between Bergen Drive and Conifer Street is 1,150 feet. The distance along the western edge of the Enclave property between Bergen Drive and the north property line is 1,000 feet.</p> <p>Without the Lupine Street connection, 560 feet of out-of-direction travel is required to access Redwood for a significant number of homes in the Enclave – i.e., drivers wanting to go north would have to first go south to Bergen Street as the only access.</p>
<p>3.6.3(H) - Alternative Compliance</p>	<p>Code language: <i>Upon request by an applicant, the decision maker may approve an alternative development plan that may be substituted in whole or in part for a plan meeting the standards of this Section.</i></p> <p><i>(1) Procedure. Alternative compliance development plans shall be prepared and submitted in accordance with submittal requirements for plans as set forth in this Section. The plan and design shall clearly identify and discuss the alternatives proposed and the ways in which the plan will better accomplish the purpose of this Section than would a plan which complies with the standards of this Section.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Review Criteria. To approve an alternative plan, the decision maker must first find that the proposed alternative plan accomplishes the purposes of this Division equally well or better than would a plan and design which complies with the standards of this Division, and that any reduction in access and circulation for vehicles maintains facilities for bicycle, pedestrian and transit, to the maximum extent feasible.</i></p> <p><i>In reviewing the proposed alternative plan, the decision maker shall take into account whether the alternative design minimizes the impacts on natural areas and features, fosters nonvehicular access, provides for distribution of the development's traffic without exceeding level of service standards, <u>enhances neighborhood continuity and connectivity and provides direct, sub-arterial street access to any parks, schools, neighborhood centers, commercial uses, employment uses and Neighborhood Commercial Districts within or adjacent to the development from existing or future adjacent development within the same section mile.</u></i></p> <p>Staff Evaluation:</p> <p>There are reasons to support the request for the alternative compliance, and reasons to support the plan as approved.</p> <p>The reasons partially cancel each other out, but staff is unable to find adequate reason to tip the balance in support of the alternative.</p> <p>The following selected wording, repeated from the standards above, tips the balance in favor of connecting the street in staff's discussions:</p> <p>To recommend approval, staff would need to find that the alternative plan <i><u>"accomplishes the purposes of this Division equally well or better than would a</u></i></p>

plan and design which complies with the standards of this Division.” For that finding, staff would take into account “whether the alternative enhances neighborhood continuity and connectivity and provides direct, sub-arterial street access...”

...safety, efficiency and convenience for automobile, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes of travel...

...interconnected system of collector and local streets...

...efficient, convenient and attractive, considering use by all modes of transportation that will use the system, (including, without limitation, cars, trucks, buses...

...multiple direct connections...

...both intra- and inter-neighborhood connections to knit developments together, rather than forming barriers between them. The street configuration within each parcel must contribute to the street system of the neighborhood.

All development plans shall incorporate and continue all sub-arterial streets stubbed to the boundary of the development plan by previously approved development plans or existing development. All development plans shall provide for future public street connections to adjacent developable parcels by providing a local street connection spaced at intervals not to exceed six hundred sixty (660) feet along each development plan boundary that abuts potentially developable or redevelopable land.

Staff does not find that the alternative compliance plan is “equal or better” considering the direction in all of this language.

Note that the most conservative (i.e., maximum) 2040 traffic projection shows that traffic volume on Lupine Street would remain below the desired threshold for public local streets.

If the Commission denies the Major Amendment, staff will follow up with the applicant to incorporate a narrowed “neck down” and crosswalk as a traffic calming measure to mark the transition. Staff recommends extending the narrowed portion clear to the property line, increasing the landscaping in this transitional stretch as an attractive low-speed connection.



Staff recognizes and acknowledges other language in the standards that could be found to support the request, including:

- The alternative would still provide for distribution of the development’s traffic without creating substandard levels of service at any other intersections or streets.
- The alternative would foster non-vehicular access.
- The alternative connection knits the different developments together with an attractive landscaped connection.

Other considerations that could be weighed in support of the request include:

- While Lupine Street was originally stubbed to the boundary with the intent to extend into subsequent phases of the Redwood Village development plan, conditions are significantly changed with the Enclave and Northfield multi-family developments as compared to the original plan for more detached houses in the same pattern as the existing Meadows at Redwood development. For what it is worth, note that the Enclave has about 80 more homes than the original Redwood Village plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the alternative would thwart direct access by requiring out-of-direction travel for vehicles, the inconvenience for people driving vehicles, in terms of time and comfort, would be relatively minor and not unusual. For example, Mullein Drive in the existing development requires a similar distance of out-of-direction travel for vehicles. <p>In summary, reasons can be found to support the alternative; and to support the approved plan. To the degree that the reasons cancel each other out, staff considered the strong and clear desire of existing residents as a potential determining factor.</p> <p>On balance, after extensive consideration, staff was unable to find a sound basis to tip the balance in support of the amendment.</p>
<p>3.6.4 - Transportation Level of Service</p>	<p>This Section contains requirements for the transportation needs of proposed development to be safely accommodated by the existing transportation system, or that appropriate mitigation of impacts will be provided by the development in order to meet adopted Level of Service (LOS) standards.</p> <p>A Transportation Impact Study (TIS) was required under this Section to evaluate the traffic generation and distribution added by the Enclave development.</p> <p>The TIS and a supplemental memo (attached) were part of the original approved plan. The memo was an addendum to the TIS to incorporate traffic from the recent Northfield development plan, which connects to and through the Enclave and was not included in the original TIS.</p> <p>Staff provided a memo at the approval hearing explaining why the addendum was done, and explaining that it did not change staff findings or recommendations (also attached).</p> <p>Staff Evaluation</p> <p>In reviewing all the traffic study information, staff finds that the plan can function at an acceptable LOS from a traffic standpoint with either the street connection as approved, or with the alternative connection.</p> <p>Using a maximum assumption for Northfield traffic using Lupine Drive, the total 2040 daily projected traffic on Lupine is estimated to be 915 trips. The desirable threshold on a Local Street is 1,000 vehicles per day.</p>

4. Public Outreach

Extensive public discussion occurred during the review of the approved plan, including meetings with affected neighbors and two Planning and Zoning Commission hearings (April and June, 2022).

5. Findings of Fact/Conclusion

In evaluating the request for the Enclave at Redwood Major Amendment #MJA220003, staff makes the following findings of fact:

- The request for Alternative Compliance with standards in Land Use Code Sections 3.6.3 (A), (B), and (F) to extend the Lupine Street stub into the Enclave as a pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency access-only connection that prevents vehicular connectivity, is not equal to or better than the approved plan meeting the standards. This is because the standards emphasize direct multiple street access for vehicles as well as pedestrians and bicycles.
- The request is consistent with the Alternative Compliance criteria in Section 3.6.3(H) to a degree, because of emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle access, and the alternative plan would link development projects together with an attractive connection. However, the alternative is not as good as the approved plan, which is more consistent with more of the standards to a greater degree.

6. Recommendation

Staff recommends denial of the request for Alternative Compliance.

If denied, then prior to Final Plan approval, staff will require the extension of the Lupine Street to be designed with a narrowed traffic calming “neck down” and a prominent crosswalk.

7. Attachments

1. Alternative Compliance Request
2. Traffic Impact Study (Original)
3. Traffic Memo with Northfield Assumption Added
4. Traffic Memo from City re: Northfield Assumptions
5. P&Z Minutes from 6.16.22
6. Staff Presentation