

Sanctuary on the Green Project Update

Meeting Date: September 13th, 2021

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

City Staff Attending:

Alyssa Stephens—Development Review Liaison

Jason Holland—City Planner

Applicant Team Representatives:

Stephanie Hansen, Ripley Design

Joel Weikert, Ripley Design

David Pretzler, C&A Companies

Karl Nyquist, C&A Companies

Summary

- **Meeting Topic:** Reviewing updated plans for approximately 200 dwelling units of different types near Laporte and Taft Hill Rd in northwest Fort Collins. This project went through the development review process and appeared before the Planning & Zoning Commission earlier in 2021, but the application was withdrawn. This was the first opportunity to view revised plans, which remove the multifamily condo units and add single-family rowhomes, among other changes. The new plan is likely to qualify for Type 1 Review, which holds projects to the same standards, but goes before an Administrative Hearing Officer rather than the Planning and Zoning Commission for final decision.
- Meeting Details:
 - ~60 attendees, including staff and applicants
 - Meeting was recorded and posted online at OurCity.FCGov.com/DevReview
- Overview:
 - Q&A primarily focused on:
 - Traffic and safety concerns for vehicles and pedestrians, particularly related to traffic patterns for nearby high schools.
 - Concerns about building height and the impact of taller buildings on the viewsheds and character of existing neighborhoods.
 - Environmental resources on the site and concerns about grading and stormwater runoff.
 - Attendees who spoke or submitted questions via chat were mostly opposed to the development, though there were comments in support of the project because of the improved infrastructure and amenities related to the development. Reasons for opposition included concerns about a mismatch with the intent of the Northwest Subarea Plan, increased traffic delays with the addition of new homes onto already busy roads, and concerns about safety for students of nearby high schools.

The following pages include more detailed information, including responses to questions in the neighborhood meeting.

Site Design

- **What is the difference between single-family and multifamily dwellings?**
 - Multi-family is three or more individual dwellings in a single building. Townhomes and rowhomes are considered “single-family attached.” Each dwelling unit is on it’s own lot even though they are attached buildings.
- **What is the density based on buildable land?**
 - Applicant: Natural habitat zone and roadways are subtracted as part of the calculation. Density is slightly higher because we have dedicated so much natural habitat buffer. Open space will be available to everyone.
- **Will single-family homes have basements? Will basement be walk-out?**
 - Applicant: Yes, the water table is low there and can accommodate basements. Basements will not be walk-out.
- **What will the maximum heights be of rowhomes along Taft Hill?**
 - Applicant: Maximum building height will be 39 feet. Some of the homes are “stepped down” to two-stories, which will be around 20 feet.
- **How much height will be added to “fill” the site in this area?**
 - Applicant: Four to six feet in different parts, which is standard.
- **How will grading add on to building height of three-story row homes?**
 - Applicant: Along Taft Hills units are raised two feet, so the total would be just over 41 feet.
- **What is the grading for rowhomes and duplexes along Laporte?**
 - Applicant: One foot of fill on the rowhomes area. Plans may change slightly. They haven’t been updated.
- **Will there be any fencing between this property and the homes to the south?**
 - Applicant: No, we will be improving a retaining wall, but not adding a fence.
- **How do three-story buildings fit with Northwest Subarea Plan?**
 - Applicant: Northwest Subarea Plan is policy document. Land Use Code allows three-story buildings on this property. We feel like this is compatible with nearby homes that are two-stories with walk-out basement. We are also providing a large buffer between these buildings and nearby neighborhoods. Buffer and open spaces absolutely comply with Northwest Subarea Plan.
- **Is this plan compatible with nearby historic structures?**
 - Applicant: Yes, we have completed all of the required historic reviews and comply with the applicable Fort Collins Land Use Codes
- **How does the number of parking spots in the new plan compare to the old plan?**
 - Applicant: The P&Z plan had 477 off-street parking spaces and 261 units for an average of 1.8 spaces per unit. The new plan would have approximately 465 off-street parking spaces and 216 units for an average of 2.15 spaces per unit.
- Three-story homes are not compatible and will block any views of the foothills. Stepping down of buildings does not address neighborhood concerns.
- Three story buildings do not seem appropriate, especially right along Taft Hill. We do not want to look at these buildings, they are incompatible.
 - Applicant: Three stories are allowed in the Land Use Code and are important to get the right amount of square footage. We think many people will like the design of the buildings.
- Agree that three story buildings do not fit in with the character of the neighborhood or with the Northwest Subarea Plan.

Site Amenities

- **Who will manage the gathering place?**
 - Applicant: The HOA
- **How much parking is available for the gathering place?**
 - Applicant: There are five off-street parking spaces and more on-street parking available. However, the intent is that people walk to the gathering place.
- **Will this development have an HOA? What restrictions will the HOA put in place regarding fencing, animals, etc.?**
 - Applicant: Yes. HOA will be important for common area maintenance. Will put in standards for fences and will not allow barnyard animals.
- **What are the plans for water and energy-saving features?**
 - Applicant: It is anticipated that all of the units will be energy star rated. The units utilize water sense faucets, fixtures, and irrigation wherever possible.
- **Will the developer be interested in bringing high speed internet improvements to the existing areas that have none and will get no high speed internet in the foreseeable future? This is a good opportunity to get Centurylink / Lumen / Comcast to run lines to the existing homes.**
 - Applicant: We will be providing the high speed internet improvements to this development and that will provide a close connection for the existing neighborhoods to tap into.
- **Would it be possible to improve the social paths into a paved "loop"?**
 - Applicant: There are paved loops within the project. We received overwhelming feedback at our first couple neighborhood and small group meetings to keep the social paths gravel.
- I support this because it will bring improvements to the area that city is clearly neglecting with little infrastructure improvements and is clearly neglected by the city due to the focus in south FC that has wonderful sidewalks and bike lanes and creates more inequality.

Environmental Resources

- **How accurate is the placement of trees on the diagram? I hope trees shown are included to shield views from my house.**
 - Applicant: Yes, this should be very close to what it looks like.
- **What trees will be planted?**
 - Applicant: Native and adapted species will be planted and should increase biodiversity. Plant list will be submitted with PDP.
- Trees will not be tall enough to shield the buildings.
 - Applicant: It will take some years for trees to grow tall enough for shielding.
- Lots of drainage currently onto my property when it rains. Concerned about grading and flooding.
 - Applicant: We can't fix what happens off our site, but we are creating detention on site, and it will be lower than surrounding properties. The improvements on this site is part of a larger plan to make stormwater improvements in the area. We are not allowed to let stormwater run off our property.

Traffic and Connectivity

- Traffic onto Laporte seems like a concern because of the high schools in the area.
 - Applicant: Traffic study shows that the road can support these additional dwelling units. The road will be improved in this area, with sidewalks added.
 - Applicant: We coordinated with the school district on locating that access point.
- **How are the times determined for the traffic studies?** Changes in start and end time at the high school may affect traffic patterns.
 - Applicant: We use national standards. We can review the traffic study again based on new start and end times at the nearby high school.
- Concerns about traffic remain even with reduced number of houses. It will still mean a lot of traffic coming out directly across from the high school and school district bus barn. Seems like the road needs to be widened and/or turn lanes added.
 - We will be adding a turn lane on Taft Hill and Laporte. Traffic study has determined that the road can handle the additional traffic.
- Concerning that traffic study is based on national trends. Fort Collins is unique.
 - Traffic engineer is local and knows this area.
- Concern about safety of students getting to school.
 - We'll be providing protected sidewalk to help pedestrians cross Laporte and connecting to trails to improve pedestrian and bike access.
 - City: Numbers are based on national data, but standards and requirements are local. They will have to update their traffic study to resubmit. Traffic patterns will definitely change, but things like turn lanes help to mitigate.
- Knowing that traffic study will be updated is positive.
- Trail goes right by our property. Concerned about having people passing by our house constantly.
 - Applicant: City owns the property where the path will be constructed. We're happy to discuss fences or landscape.
- Sidewalk doesn't seem to improve safety. Traffic is already very bad and I can't imagine it with 200 additional homes. Interested to see the updated traffic numbers.
 - Traffic study
- **Will there be any road improvements on Pennsylvania?** I would prefer having it as a through street.
 - In a perfect world we would connect Pennsylvania through our site, but there were concerns about the road crossing the detention area.
- The Emergency road into Impala is still there. **What measures will you take to prevent cars and trucks from using that as a regular route?**
 - City: Typically bollards or a gate system are required in these situations. The specific solution is typically dictated by PFA (may want to have Marcus Glasgow weigh in on this to confirm).
- **Will there be a signal put in on the Laporte entrance to the neighborhood?**
 - City: No signal is planned/proposed at this location.
 - Applicant: The traffic study determined that a signal was not needed.
- As a follow up to the Laporte / Taft Improvements, **what is the current status of the City's Laporte Improvements from Sunset to Fishback?** Is this still moving forward, is funding secure for not only the bridges but also for bike lanes, detached sidewalks and general improvements for all of the dangerous sidewalk gaps and limited turn lanes and lack of bike lanes and controlled pedestrian crossings?

- City: Right now, we are planning to bid the two bridges for fall/winter 2021/22 construction. The Laporte corridor is under-funded currently and pending funding will begin construction in spring/summer of 2022.
- **Does the addition of turn lanes mean that the road will be widening?**
 - City: A portion of Laporte (north side) will be widened to accommodate the proposed right turn lane into the site. A section of Taft Hill will be widened on both sides to accommodate turn lanes into the site.
- **Will the city connect the sidewalk to the intersection?** Or is the city complicit with people walking on shoulders of arterials? Sidewalk to shoulder into right turn lanes is dangerous
 - City: The developer will be installing an interim walk on the north side of Laporte to accommodate pedestrians from the site to a proposed pedestrian signal/crossing on the west side of Impala. Bike lanes and a sidewalk will be installed along the project's Laporte frontage. The intent of the future City project will be to install sidewalk and a bike lane along the north side of Laporte, to the intersection with Taft Hill. Sidewalk and bike lane will be installed along the south side of Laporte to fill in gaps to the intersection with Taft Hill. The scope of the City project will be dependent on funding. The pedestrian and bike lane portion is currently under-funded.

Process and Timeline

- **What will be the process moving forward?**
 - City: Dependent on the type of project that is brought forward. A Type 1 review process includes the same level of review by staff, but with a different decision-maker (an Administrative Hearing Officer instead of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Neighbors will receive a letter before hearing regardless of the decision-maker.
- **Are you planning for a Type 1 Review?**
 - Applicant: We will take feedback into consideration. It seems like people are happy about condos being gone. If we don't have multi-family buildings with more than eight units, it would be a Type 1 process.
- **Is anything being waived?**
 - Applicant: Generally conceptual review would be required, which allows applicant teams to bring a "napkin sketch" to the City for review and early comments. We have already received many comments on plans and received a waiver for the conceptual review from City staff.
- **What will the timeline be on the project?**
 - Applicant: It's hard to predict. We would hope to get our plans revised and submitted to the City in a month. The review will take the same amount of time whether it is Type 1 or Type 2.
- **How can people give feedback?**
 - Email comments to devreviewcomments@fcgov.com to submit comments to the decision-maker.