

Sun Communities Neighborhood Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: May 28, 2020

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

City Staff – Attendees:

Alyssa Stephens – Development Review Liaison
Meaghan Overton – Senior City Planner
Martina Wilkinson – Assistant City Traffic Engineer
Marc Virata – Civil Engineer
Kelly Smith – Senior Environmental Planner

Applicant:

Sun Communities

Summary

- **Meeting Topic:** Typically, neighborhood meetings allow the community to review plans for the site. For this project, Sun Communities is first requesting modifications to some of the standards in our Land Use Code. These changes would allow them to build only mobile homes (instead of mixing together mobile homes with townhomes or other types of housing) and change the way roads are designed. This neighborhood meeting focused only on the proposed changes. If the overall project proceeds, another neighborhood meeting will likely be required.
- **Meeting Details:**
 - ~90 attendees, including staff and applicants
 - Meeting was recorded and will be available on OurCity for viewing and comment
- **Summary:**
 - Q&A primarily focused on
 - traffic and safety concerns for vehicles and pedestrians, particularly around the College and Trilby intersection and proposed street connections on the site;
 - questions about affordability and the cost of living in the development;
 - questions about the modifications;
 - environmental resources on the site;
 - the perception of a concentration or saturation of affordable housing in this part of town; and
 - concerns about the management of existing Sun Communities properties in Fort Collins.
 - 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 affordability and housing need in our community. We received a petition from the Pelican Ridge neighborhood with about 60 signatures in opposition. Reasons for opposition stated by attendees included a desire for a development that provides the mix of housing required, traffic/congestion, concentration of affordable housing, safety/crime, property values, and concerns about the quality of the housing and the management of the manufactured home park.

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

The Modifications

The first request is for a modification of the number of housing types required in the Low Density, Mixed-Use Neighborhood (LMN) Zone. A development of this size would typically require four different housing types (manufactured homes, townhouses, single-family detached, etc). Any one housing type can comprise up to 80% of the total dwelling units. For this project, Sun Communities is proposing a modification that would allow them to provide one housing type – manufactured homes. The second modification relates to the requirements for street-like private drives in the Land Use Code. The Land Use Code requires detached sidewalks with either parallel or angled parking. The applicants are proposing attached sidewalks with no parking on the street.

- **Why can't you do multiple housing types when other developments around you have done so?**
 - Applicant: Our business focuses strictly on manufactured housing/RV parks; don't build other types of housing. Best product from an affordability perspective and focusing on one type of housing promotes efficiencies and economies of scale which is important for affordability.
 - Applicant: Manufactured housing provides a lower barrier to entry to get into your own home and provides some additional benefits beyond apartment living (own home, own driveway).
 - Applicant: Because of our buying power in the industry, we will have considerable variety within the community; we don't want it to look like military housing – variety in roofs pitches, color, etc.
- **How much were the streets narrowed with this modification request?**
 - Applicant: 18 feet travel lanes, City's cross-section is 23 feet including parking. Travel lanes are similar in width to City requirements.
- **Could you consider taking 7 feet from rear yards to provide detached sidewalks and a tree lawn?** Creates a more inviting streetscape.
 - Applicant: We could look at it. Lots of infrastructure that goes into that. You get a lot of efficiencies when the sidewalk is right off the street. We're comfortable with a narrower corridor. Landscaping and trees make a big difference.

Traffic

The current application with the City is not a development proposal, so there isn't a traffic review at this stage of the process. If/when the project moves forwards towards a development submittal, the City will require a Traffic Impact Study.

- Question: **What is the timeline for the improvements to College and Trilby?**
 - City: Anticipated that project could start at end of next year, and most of the construction to take place in 2022.
- Comment: I live along Trilby Rd and have been in this area for over 40 years. People die at the intersection of Trilby and College all the time; it is a very dangerous intersection. Only way into my neighborhood is Debra Dr. My kids play in the front yard. These people are good people, quaint neighborhood. We are worried about safety and impact of the traffic on the neighborhood.

- City: We concur with many of the comments about safety at College and Trilby. There is a \$5.5million capital project happening soon to re-do that intersection. Pedestrian safety is another thing we will ask the applicant to evaluate as part of their development proposal and the traffic study. They need to tell us what the Level of Service impacts will be not only for vehicles but also pedestrians and bicycles.
- Comment/Question: I do not believe there should be street connections with Provincetowne to Crown Ride Lane or Autumn Ridge Drive, especially with some of the recent on-street parking changes and narrow lanes. There are currently 487 units of affordable housing in this section of town, and this proposal will add 200 more units, why is this part of the community getting so much affordable housing?
 - Applicant: City's preference is for interconnected neighborhoods and streets, however some of the connections are not essential for us; open to eliminating or changing connection points.
 - City: Lots of questions about the traffic impact of this proposal. Because it has not been formally submitted yet, there is not complete information to review in the form of a traffic study. If the project moves forward, the applicant will be required do a full traffic impact study that looks at access points, connectivity, and impacts on adjacent roadways and intersections, such as Autumn Ridge and Trilby/College. Those are all questions that need to be answered. Our standards dictate a project would not be recommended until they mitigate their impacts and meet requirements for operations and safety.

Affordability

In the summer of 2019, City Council initiated a moratorium on the acceptance of development applications that could result in the partial or total closing of manufactured housing communities. Since then, City staff have been exploring possible changes to the zoning and regulation of mobile home parks. Manufactured housing is an important and significant form of private, unsubsidized, affordable housing in Fort Collins. Councilmembers directed staff to investigate livability issues at these communities and to help clarify rights and responsibilities of manufactured housing owners and residents.

- **What are the anticipated land lease fees per manufactured home lot? How much will they increase on average per month? Per year?**
 - Applicant: The *projected* monthly land lease for year 1 is around \$750/month. (For comparison, Skyline is \$759/month and Timber Ridge \$649/month.) Historically, Sun has rental rate increases of about 2% - 4% per year and the majority of that increase goes back into the community for maintenance and repairs.
- **Can Section 8 vouchers be used on these?**
 - Applicant: Sun does not currently have considerable utilization of Section 8 vouchers within their portfolio. We would need to discuss this further with the City if it's something they would like us to pursue.
- **Will there be deed restrictions? What makes a project affordable?**
 - City: The City's definition of affordable housing that requires the rental or purchase price must be affordable to someone earning 80% of less of our area median income,

which is set by HUD. Affordable housing also must be deed restricted for a minimum of 20-years.

- City: There are certain qualification requirements that occur with affordable housing developments. For this particular project, this is likely considered a form of attainable housing, as there has been no discussion yet about deed restrictions.
- **Can you describe the affordability of the proposed units?**
 - Applicant: Last year, Sun took in 55,000 applications to live in one of their communities which speaks towards the need for additional affordable housing.
 - Applicant: Built and designed to be high-quality and affordable at the same time. \$150,000-200,000 range instead of \$300,000-\$400,000 for a typical home in Fort Collins.
 - People do build equity in their homes, see this in resident-to-resident sales.
- **Will the units be owner occupied or rentals? What about investors renting things out instead of encouraging home ownership?**
 - Applicant: We do not allow investor properties; we do rent some of the units ourselves. We anticipate a combination of home sales and supplemented with rentals. We have been renting houses in our communities since 2002. A lot of people think renters bring down the value of a community. We do frequent inspections of the homes, have rules to maintain curb appeal. Between 8-12% of residents who rent end up purchasing their homes each year.
- Comment: I applaud Sun Communities. We need affordable housing. There are lots of these comments about trailer trash, which are driven by fear. I believe this dealbreaker for this proposal may be the traffic issue. Trying to make a left to get out onto Trilby and you could be waiting for half a day.
 - City: A big piece of this will be determining what the required mitigation along Trilby will be to make that access point function well. That will need to be figured out for this project to move forward.
- Comment: John does not seem to understand our desire for affordable housing in Fort Collins. Their high-end RV parks are nice, but \$100-200 a night to stay there. Only 2 brown colored people in their renderings. Not the right developer for this land.
 - Applicant: Trying to show the types of finishes that would be associated with this development so we can build a community that everyone is proud to have. RV resorts are different in nature, serve a different purpose. We look at the entire spectrum to learn from all of our properties to get the best outcomes. Have an incredible amount of diversity within our communities.

Management and Policies

- Question: Thank the City of Fort Collins and staff from Sun Communities for this meeting. My husband and I were distressed when we heard about this. We have considered moving out of the area. Question for John: **Were you considering this community to be a senior community?** Our experience is that a senior community property is usually kept up better, less crime or problems with drugs.
 - Applicant: Our plan is to have an all-ages community. That said, we have a high demographic within all our communities that are 55+. 1/3 of our portfolio is age-

restricted. I understand your concerns, that is why we have the rules and regulations we have in our community for maintenance.

- Applicant: We did a study in a different community and looked at the crime grid, and we had a lower instance of crime in our community than the surrounding area. I'd be comfortable saying that we'd be happy to run a similar analysis for Fort Collins.
- **Will people be able to move existing mobile homes onto the property?**
 - Applicant: No. New homes only will be allowed.
- **Are there opportunities to designate handicap and/or aging in place design?**
 - Applicant: Certainly. All of Sun's manufacturers are able to modify designs for handicapped accessibility.
- **How do you explain your poor online reviews from other Sun properties in Fort Collins and around the US?**
 - Applicant: It is important to have context around the few negative reviews against the overwhelming positive reviews the Sun brand has along with Sun's NPS scores. Unfortunately, people that are not happy with their experience seem to generally be more vocal than those that are happy with their experience.

Neighborhood Impact

- Question: We have started to look seriously for another house because of this proposal. Worried about loss of property value. Submitted a petition signed by 66 neighbors. Would argue that the City should not allow the modification because it is detrimental to the public good: Strain on Trilby, more kids at Thompson school district which is already low on funds, concentration of affordable housing instead of mixed throughout city. Housing types requirement is an opportunity to mix income-restricted housing in with other kinds of housing, it is a very important requirement. What will the City do about low-income housing in our part of town?
 - City: The City has not seen or experienced deed-restricted affordable housing lowering property values nearby, and the Land Use Code is silent regarding property values when reviewing and evaluation a development proposal.
 - City: Affordable and deed-restricted is located throughout the community. Most of the affordable housing in the community is located in the northern portion of Fort Collins. There is a fair amount of deed-restricted in the southwest part of town but there is a great need for it and not seeing a saturation in this part of town.
- Comment: Applaud comments from Pelican Ridge, urge the City not to approve this modification as well. Lots of affordable housing around us, lots of affordability in this area. Concerned with all the things people have already said. Traffic, congestion on Crown Ridge and Debra. This looks like a great community, but not for this section of town.
- Comment: I also wish to chime in with previous people and say that this doesn't need to be built in this section of town. Roughly 500 affordable housing units in this section of town. Lakeview on the Rise put in over every objection and everything stated about road conditions, and the City didn't listen to us at all. If you put more affordable housing in here, there will be almost 700 units of affordable housing in a concentrated location.

Environmental Impact

- Question: **What are the environmental impacts to the site, such as on the wetlands and prairie dogs. What is the overall sustainability of the units?**
 - Applicant: We intend to consolidate and improve the wetlands on the site, combine with our stormwater detention
 - City: Glad you're asking questions about the environmental resources on the site. We are aware of many resources here. When a project contains or is within 500 feet of a known resource, the developer is required to hire a professional consultant to do an Ecological Characterization Study (ECS). This documents the resources on the site and their condition (prairie dogs, wetlands, etc.) We require mitigation for any resources that are impacted – prairie dog colonies above 1 acre. Require buffers from resources as well. We use the ECS as a way to understand the value of the resources, and we will require mitigation if any resources are impacted.
 - Applicant: Regarding sustainability, in 2018-2019, one of the things we did was replace all lighting across all 430 communities with LEDs. Added meters for water. Have a solar pilot project underway in California. Resources aren't endless and we need to do our part.

Design

- **Compared to traditional housing, what is the typical life expectancy of manufactured homes?**
 - Applicant: Life expectancy for all home types is dependent on the care put into the dwelling over the years. The benefit from being in a Sun Community is that exterior home and home site care is perpetually monitored under Sun's rules. On average, homes stay in a Sun Community well over 50 years.
- **Do you use MDF in the construction of your units?**
 - Applicant: MDF is used and is common in interior trim. This is no different than site-built homes.

Other

- **Do you own the property or have options to buy?**
 - Applicant: Sun will be purchasing the property and leasing the lots to its residents. The homes can be rented or purchased by the residents.
- **Does Sun Communities plan on acquiring the existing park on Trilby?**
 - Applicant: No plan at this time but Sun would consider it should the opportunity present itself.
- **Is Sun Communities interested in purchasing the Land Bank property in Fort Collins?**
 - Applicant: Sun is interested in purchasing any appropriate property that mutually supports the goals for both Sun and the local communities in which we serve