

The Foothills by Sun Communities Neighborhood Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: December 2nd, 2020

Location: [Virtual Zoom Meeting](#)

City Staff Attending:

Alyssa Stephens—Development Review Liaison

Meaghan Overton—Senior City Planner

Nicole Hahn—Interim City Traffic Engineer

Marc Virata—Civil Engineer

Kelly Smith—Senior Environmental Planner

Applicant:

Sun Communities

Summary

- **Meeting Topic:** Reviewing a proposal for approximately 200 manufactured houses near College and Trilby in south Fort Collins. This project went through the development review process earlier in 2020 to request modifications. The requests were to build only mobile homes (instead of mixing together mobile homes with townhomes or other types of housing) and to change the way roads are designed. These modifications were approved by the Planning and Zoning Board in October. The Board also put “conditions” on the approval requiring that Sun Communities reserve a certain amount of homes as “affordable”, build 15 distinct types of homes, and meet requirements for guest parking. This was the first opportunity to review a full plan for the site.
- **Meeting Details:**
 - ~70 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 street connections to surrounding neighborhoods and the College and Trilby intersection;
 - The perception of a concentration of affordable housing in this part of town and concerns about impacts to property values of surrounding homes;
 - Concerns about fees and the affordability of the property over time; and
 - Environmental resources on the site and the desire to preserve existing natural resources/open space.
 - 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. Reasons for opposition included concerns about property values, safety concerns related to increased vehicle traffic and parking on neighborhood streets, and a desire to preserve existing natural habitats. In addition, commenters expressed skepticism regarding the project as a source of affordable housing because of high lot rents and potential fees.

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

Traffic and Parking

- **Crown Ridge lane is being extended, don't have anywhere but the street to park. Will this change our parking?**
 - City: No, this will not impact existing Crown Ridge lane parking.
- **How can you do a traffic study during a pandemic with lower traffic volumes?**
 - Applicant: The reduced traffic is being taken into account when doing traffic counts.
 - City: We are applying growth factors to places where we have existing counts, and can apply to places where we don't have counts.
- **Will there be a connection to Stoneybrook? An exit onto College?**
 - Applicant: We don't have a connection to Stoneybrook, don't think we actually about that property so we can't connect there. For College Avenue, we can't have an entrance or exit. There is an existing driveway that goes to some houses to our southwest, and that will remain.
 - City: Although you aren't connecting to College, you are connecting the two ends of Debra that then ties into access onto College via Lorien Lane. Would not be allowed to connect directly to College because of separation requirements, but will connect through Lakeview on the Rise.
- **Do we have any assurances that this project would not increase traffic on Crown Ridge?**
 - City: There isn't an assurance that there will be no traffic, what we work towards is to make sure our level of service standards are met. Developer will put together a traffic study to show the impact. This meeting is very helpful to help us scope the traffic study and understand the issues.
- **Comment: I am very very very concerned about traffic. I have sat at the light at Trilby and College for 30 minutes. Adding 200 homes with the cars associated, don't see how that is even possible.**
 - City: Thank you for your comment. That intersection is a congested intersection with safety concerns. We have a funded capital project right now to improve capacity at that intersection, reduce congestion, improve safety. You'll probably be getting information about the design process in the first quarter of 2021. It's a great point and is something that we want to be fully funded, which this project is right now.
- **Will Trilby be expanded to two lanes?**
 - City: There will be some distance from the intersection, but won't go all the way to Lemay yet. That will happen with a future capital improvement. Tend to see congestion manifest most at the intersections, and think this project will really help.
- **Comment: I live in Waterlake subdivision. Concern is traffic. Have been a realtor for 25 years and getting in and out of this subdivision during rush hour is horrendous.**

Other Impacts

- **What is the impact on school districts of adding families into this area? Have you had these conversations?**
 - Applicant: We have not had those conversations yet, we have to pay a school impact fee. If we rezone a property to residential it would impact the schools more. In this case, residential was planned for and we're at the lower end of the density scale.

- **Any investigation into impact of noise? Plan for barriers between this property and existing neighborhoods?**
 - Applicant: Have never seen noise barriers between residential development, none are planned. Noise is not something we've considered, but we do as part of our landscape plan have some fencing along exterior of the site. We will have some signage, landscape islands, etc. to differentiate too.
- Comment: Very concerned about my own property value diminishing.
 - Applicant: Regarding property values, this is part of the reason why we take the long-term investment into our communities seriously. We put money back into the communities every year. We will have rules associated with our community as well. Properties are inspected at least every 6 weeks. Management living on site makes sure it's presented the way it should be. In a house I lived in, we had a manufactured home community next to us, and did not see an impact on value when we sold it.
- Comment: One comment was made about property values. Your property will be impacting property values of Provincetowne and surrounding areas. There's a trailer park just north of you, your property, deed restricted townhomes along Autumn Ridge, CARE housing at Lemay and Trilby. When you put all these projects together in one area, could have adverse impacts on property value. Concentrated in one area, want these dispersed throughout the community. Don't want one area adversely impacted.

Environmental Resources

- **How much of the site will be developed and how much will be open space?**
 - Applicant: 20% will be parks, open space, amenities, stormwater. The 20% does not include roads or buildings or lawns/yards in individual lots. 14 acres of open space.
- **This is an area very rich in wildlife - coyotes, owls all the time. Is there an environmental impact study required?**
 - City: Anytime a project is located within 500 feet of a natural resource that's listed for protection in our code, an ecological characterization study (ECS) is required. Has to be performed by a third-party consultant. This report has happened and I have seen it. The resource specialist has delineated the wetlands and we've asked for more information than required on the wetlands. We require 1:1 mitigation on- or off-site. I haven't evaluated the development plan yet, but we will review to make sure they meet that. RE: wildlife, I went on a site visit and saw a coyote and hawk while I was there. We have protection standards for those.
- Comment: 1:1 mitigation could be off-site, doesn't sound like it would be a good option. Looking for that natural feel, like the quiet ness of the neighborhood now.
 - City: We do have that option for off-site, but haven't seen that happen yet. It requires a natural area restoration project to be in close vicinity and the same wetland type. The applicant is proposing on-site mitigation now, not off-site. Need to make sure the wetlands are of the same quality and value (or better) than they are now.
- Question: Don't want to be too redundant but I have a vested interest in the open space. That's the reason I purchased a home in Provincetowne. Like maintaining a large swath of wetlands. **My question is why purchase them if you plan on keeping them?**

- Applicant: We're buying the property from 2 land sellers, we need to buy the whole thing, not just the parts we'll use. The site plan lays out what's lots, roads, and open space. It's all documented and will be preserved in that state.

Site Design and Policies

- **Size of lots in square footage?**
 - Applicant: Typical lot is 105x55 - 5700 feet. About 55% of lots will be this size. Parallel lots are about 7,000 square feet. Small lots will be 40x105, about 4,200 square feet.
- **What are the bedroom counts for these homes?**
 - Applicant: Might be some 2 bed, mostly 3-4 bed. All single-level.
- **Would short term rentals be allowed?**
 - Applicant: We wouldn't do that.
- **Sun Communities has received many negative reviews from past employees. How would you respond to claims of a negative or discriminatory workplace?**
 - Applicant: While we never like to learn of former team members feeling as though their experience with Sun didn't meet their expectations, we find these situations to be isolated and infrequent – we currently have over 3,500 team members. Sun has a very positive and engaging culture, and when evaluating team member sentiment from a “big picture” standpoint, our online reviews show that the majority of reviewers actually have positive experiences with our organization. Sun was just recognized by the Great Place to Work Institute after conducting an independent, national survey of our team.
- Comment: Façade changes don't really give you the diversity of home types, carbon copy of Sunflower.
- Comment: Sun has been in business a long time, they know what they're doing, and the houses are beautiful. The issue I have is with the site. It's not good. Low water pressure, settling issues, and FCLWD says there is nothing they can do about it. There's a prairie dog issue here that's been exacerbated after LOTR. And issues at College and Trilby have been discussed since 2012 when I moved here. It was a big issue with LOTR. This is not an appropriate site.

Costs and Affordability

- **What does the lot rent include?**
 - Applicant: First and foremost it includes the site, access to amenities. Water/utilities billed separately.
- **How quickly would monthly fees increase, and how does this compare to other lot rents in town? Also question about 15% number - would there be additional options for deed-restricted homes?**
 - Applicant: 15% - this is something that was negotiated with the City. From an affordability perspective overall, there's a few components that come into how we view affordability. Part of that is the barrier of entry to owning a home. We are talking about ranges of 150-200k for a home, but some could be as low as 125k. When you look at that compared to definition of affordable or workforce housing, just about every one of these homes will meet the definition. Thought was that 15% deed restriction would get us to about 30 units, just over 10% of City's goal in a year for affordable housing production.

- I've sold a property in Sunflower, which is another manufactured community. In 2008 when I sold it, the lease was \$375/month. This month its \$850 + \$145 fee. **What type of controls are there other than the 2-4% per year?**
 - Applicant: The best control we have is our philosophy over the past 4 decades. We've always been in that 2-4% range. There are operators who have entered this industry recently looking at it the wrong way. We don't run our communities off of spreadsheets. We are in the 2-4% range because that's a fair annual increase, especially when putting it back into the properties. We've seen a fair amount of price appreciation, which isn't always typical for manufactured housing. Stewardship and long-term commitment. First regulator is ourselves. Beyond that, there are operators who do that with the lot rents. We don't have a property in our portfolio that has experienced anything like that.
- Comment: Your lot rent is coming in higher than average. You're going to be impacting this area in a number of ways, and making it less attainable with fees and lot rents.
 - Response (Applicant): Appreciate your comments. This is why having an active HOA would be important, a way to discuss rent increases, improvements to property. What I can stand in front of is the history of what Sun Communities has done. Would be happy to discuss with anyone individually how we look at this. Affordability is equally important to us. Can't emphasize enough that we need to have good relationships with residents to keep things equitable.
- Seems like there's a lot of lower socioeconomic housing in this area, know that Sun can build if it's approved. **I'm concerned about the number of housing arrangements for people with lower socioeconomic resources and access to amenities. How are they going to access those resources?**
 - City: You're right that ideally City policies support having people living close to amenities they will need, whether that's a grocery store, drug store, healthcare, or other services. It may not be a great answer to your question, but zoning tries to address this with the kinds of uses that are allowed in a given area. Ultimately though, the City can't determine what gets built where if it meets the zoning regulations. This is a complex discussion with a lot of things to consider, and we can talk more in depth about this if you are interested. Also, we do review all projects for access to vehicle, bike, pedestrian, and transit connections so that is something we will be looking at when the project is submitted. If amenities aren't nearby we want to make sure people can get where they need to go.
- Comment: There is nothing on this side of town for this project to make sense. Too many low income with no resources. NO more low income in this area. It does a disservice to those people.
- Comment: Don't want to belabor the point. Any neighborhood that has too many affordable housing units would be actually affordable and it's not. The idea that these would reduce property values is incorrect. For the developers, your target population is making 50-80k units per year, not everyone needs to get to Salud. It's a misnomer to think that this is dumping grounds. The traffic is an issue, but it is an issue everywhere. It was great until most of my neighbors moved in! I like this project and hope you are successful.
- Comment: Just moved here so there's a lot I probably don't know. One of the things I come across all the time is affordable housing. I've looked into Sun Communities with 7-8 billion in

assets, a CEO who makes \$13 million a year. Can see this for vacationers, retirees, but in terms of families who are trying to get their feet under them and get more secure financially, to be able to somehow access a personal property on rented land that isn't even considered real property (hard to get financing), I feel like this is delusional that we are in any way helping people who need help in Fort Collins. Makes sense as a retirement community or second home in the mountains.

Process and Timeline

The neighborhood meeting is required at least 10 days before an application is submitted. The final decision-maker for this project will be the Planning and Zoning Board, which is made up of community volunteers. Notes from this meeting are provided to the Planning and Zoning Board, as well as all comments emailed to the City. Community members are encouraged to engage throughout the development review process by sending comments, questions, or ideas to devreviewcomments@fcgov.com.

- **Will you be installing the homes as they're sold or will the lots be set up from the beginning?**
 - Applicant: We would start with 40-50 houses and then based on sales/purchases we'd add inventory in smaller amounts after that.
- **How long does it take for a typical property to be built out?**
 - Applicant: Probably about 2 years for a site with 200 homes.
- **I have a number of notes written down but we don't have the time tonight. How do I follow up?**
 - City: Know that this is the beginning, not the end. Development Review Liaison is a good resource to help get questions answered. Devreviewcomments@fcgov.com is also where you'll send official comments.

General Comments

- Comment: Live in Provincetowne, I was originally told they were going to be modular homes. Lots more appealing than a trailer park. The high rental fees make it less appealing. Not sure why Fort Collins is putting a lot of affordable housing in one area. Neighborhoods should desegregate. Concerns: valuation of property. Whenever you bring in a manufactured home, they don't increase in value - it goes down and brings the whole neighborhood down. Second point is traffic. Was told one of the main roads is through Autumn Ridge, and we don't have assigned parking so people park on the street. It's inappropriate. Bringing in an extreme amount of traffic by bringing in outside people who don't live in that neighborhood.
- Comment: Agree with the comments about traffic, this part of town is a dumping ground for affordable housing. Nobody is listening. Neighborhood streets are not wide enough for two way traffic and people riding bikes. This is a dangerous area on Autumn Ridge, we don't need extra traffic there, period. Everyone has an idea that they're going to help people. We're oversaturated. We have our share, time to stop it.
- Comment: The people who don't live over here don't know what's going on over here. Traffic is horrible, crime is horrible. Please do not approve this, I'm begging you.
- Comment: Add a couple thoughts. I spent 30 years in manufactured housing and RVs all over the country. Worked with major manufacturers of RVs and boatmakers, worked in distribution of products all over the country. What they are proposing here is much needed, beautiful layout and beautiful plan. We live in Sunflower, retired 5 years ago from Missouri. We are a gated, 65+

community. I joined the industry back in 1971 and we have always struggled when people want to talk about mobile homes or manufactured housing. I think all of us would gain a lot if we started saying that these communities are housing for people. Everything we have is manufactured - our cars, our clothing, etc. I'd love to work with the City and with Sun, think you are doing an excellent job. There are different voices that need to be heard on this. We need a lot more communities like this because they are affordable and there's not much that is affordable in Fort Collins.