

NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION MEETING

- PROJECT:** 2106 S. Taft Hill Rd. Rezone
- DATE:** November 20, 2014
- CITY STAFF:** Noah Beals (Project Planner), Martina Wilkinson (Traffic Operations), Rebecca Everette (Planning)
- APPLICANTS:** Cathy Mathis (TB Group), Laura Olive (Property Owner), Steve Whittal (Urban Revival, Builder)

PLANNER & APPLICANT PRESENTATION:

The meeting began with a synopsis of the development review process and the steps completed by the applicants to date. This is a proposal for the rezoning of a parcel from Low Density Residential (RL) to Low Density Mixed Use Neighborhood (LMN). The LMN zone allows a list of specific uses, but the applicant is proposing to limit the list of uses allowed through the Conditional Rezoning process. A decision on the rezoning will ultimately be made by City Council, with a recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Board. So far, the applicants have met with City staff for a conceptual review of the project and have conducted two outreach meetings with adjacent property owners. City staff were not present at the applicant's outreach meetings. If the rezoning is approved by City Council, then the applicants would submit a development plan, which would be reviewed by City staff and approved or denied by an administrative hearing officer at a public hearing. There is a 15-day appeal period that would follow the decision regarding the project.

The applicants then gave brief overview of the project:

- The site is 2.53 acres in size.
- The existing house on the property is eligible for historic designation, and will remain on the property. The developer will work around the existing building.
- 20 single family homes, both attached (duplexes) and detached, are proposed. The units would each be for sale on their own lot. The buildings would be up to 2-stories tall.
- A 20-foot wide loop driveway around the site is proposed, which meets Poudre Fire Authority's requirements for emergency access. This would be a private street, not a public road.
- Garages and front porches will face the private street with a shared, interior courtyard down the middle of the site. Two units would front on Taft Hill Road.
- The previous outreach meetings with adjacent property owners resulted in revisions to the plan.
 - At one time a center drive aisle was proposed, but this was changed based on feedback from adjacent property owners.
 - Some neighbors were concerned about the proximity of the driveway

access to Sheffield Drive. The applicants plan on moving the access drive

to the northern end of the property, based on this feedback and conversations with the City's Traffic Operations department.

- The goal in rezoning this property to LMN is to create a more diverse housing product type than is currently allowed in RL and given the constraints of the lot.
- The applicant is willing to limit the allowed uses on the site as part of the rezone.
- The homes are not anticipated to be rentals or student housing

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES:

Question (Attendee): How long does the rezoning process take?

Response (City): The proposal will probably be reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Board in January or February. Then it would go to City Council for two readings at separate meetings. But the dates of those meetings have not been determined.

Question (Attendee): Have there been similar requests for this type of development in this general neighborhood?

Response (City): I don't know of any specifically for this area.

Question (Attendee): Does the school district have any role in this process?

Response (City): The school district does not have a reviewing or decision-making role. They are like any other property owner. The City's Traffic Operations department works very closely with the school district on traffic planning and issues. Staff works with both administrators and the Poudre School District Facilities staff. The applicant has previously had a meeting with Poudre School District.

Question (Attendee): As it pertains to the zoning laws, if you want to put a specific demographic in a house, are there any laws that protect a property from being sold to a different demographic group, such as student housing?

Response (City): The Land Use Code does not specify or evaluate housing types related to specific demographic groups. This would also raise Fair Housing issues, which relates to federal regulations.

Comment (Attendee): If there is a guarantee that it could be senior housing, then I would be supportive.

Question (Attendee): If the process is rezoned with certain conditions or restrictions, would the restrictions be carried forward for future sale of the property?

Response (City): Yes, it would be recorded on the plat or site plan, and would be associated with the zoning for the property.

Question (Attendee): What if it was rezoned again in the future? Or there is a proposed change in use?

Response (City): If there is a proposal to rezone the property, or if a proposed development would result in a change of character, it would have to go through another full review process.

Question (Attendee): How would conditions get removed in the future?

Response (City): If conditions are applied through the rezoning process, they could only be removed by City Council.

Question (Attendee): Where do the children cross to get to the school?

Response (City): Just south of the existing home.

Question (Attendee): What is the average square footage of each home?

Responses (Applicants): Between 1250 and 1850 above grade square feet. They would be fairly compact. There are limits to who you can choose to live in the house, but these will not be entry-level products. Price points will begin in the mid \$300,000s.

Question (Attendee): I have a question about senior housing being 2-stories. I have concerns about the safety accommodations needed for seniors.

Response (Applicants): This is not proposed for senior housing. Seniors may buy the home, but it won't be solely targeted to seniors.

Comment (Attendee): I would welcome the land to be used for about 8 houses. I bought my property with the intent that the area would stay low density.

Question (Attendee): How many people will live here?

Response (Applicants): There will be 20 units, each with 2-3 bedrooms. I don't know the exact number of people who would live there.

Question (Attendee): At the previous two meetings, much of time was spent talking about the detention pond. There were concerns about mosquitos and the spread of disease. That will definitely be a wet zone. How do you plan to deal with that?

Response (Applicants): We have had several meetings with the City's Stormwater department. We did hear your concerns and we're still working on addressing that. It would be an open drainage area, not covered in pavers, as was previously discussed. We will need a drainage easement over one property. It's not feasible to keep all of the stormwater that would be generated underground, so there would need to be some kind of outfall from the site. Stormwater drainage will be integrated into the landscaping and along the roadways.

Comment (Attendee): People in the contiguous areas are not served by this development.

Comment (Attendee): The zoning was applied by City Council for a reason, and I think this is a little overdone. A project that fits the existing zoning would be more appropriate.

Question (Attendee): Can you explain the design with the circular drive rather than a central drive, which uses less pavement.

Response (Applicants): We had a design with a central drive originally, but when we had a meeting with the adjacent property owners, there was a preference for moving the houses away from the adjacent properties, so we changed the design. These houses are approximately 30-40 feet from the property line. The backyards are facing each other down the middle.

Question (Attendee): Think about the implications of having a road, with street lighting

directly near back yards. I would be interested in the kind of lighting that would be used for front doors and along the road.

Response (Applicants): Fort Collins has dark-skies lighting requirements. So the only option is for lighting to point down. Because it's a private drive, there would not be any required street lighting.

Question (Attendee): What if the future residents complain about there not being enough street lighting?

Response (Applicants): If there's a desire, then that's something the HOA could work on as part of the development agreement. There would probably be lighting in the central courtyard portion.

Question (Attendee): Would this development have its own HOA or would it be part of an existing HOA? Would there be any responsibility to adhere to existing neighborhood requirements?

Response (Applicants): It would be covered by their own HOA, so they would not be subject to the requirements of other nearby HOAs. But, new developments tend to have much stricter covenants today than they did in the past.

Question (Attendee): I'm concerned that it won't give the neighborhood any teeth for situations that arise for this property.

Comment (Attendee): The map doesn't give any context for adjacent lots, traffic flows, or foot traffic flows. I'm concerned about the kids that have to negotiate this with all the traffic to get to the school.

Comment (Attendee): It's pretty dangerous to take a left turn at Blevins Middle School.

Question (Attendee): I'm concerned about how many residents would be coming in and out of the property. Will there be a stoplight as part of the project?

Response (City): We will review how the project impacts traffic and roadways through the review process. These are the types of situations we are starting to see as more infill development occurs in the City. This particular project only has access to Taft Hill Road, and the City cannot landlock a property, so we have to give them access. Our bigger concern is the exact location of the access. The left turn movements that would be created by this project would not be ideal if the access point was on the northern end of the property, but it's better than putting an access point right next to a school crosswalk (on the southern end of the property). In the past 5 years, there have only been two crashes in this area, both at Sheffield, and neither related to the school. We are not seeing particular safety issues at the school at this time. Right now, the City feels that the northern access point is the better option. As a result of the development, we would be looking at a daily traffic volumes on Taft Hill Road of about 115-130 trips per day. There would be about 7-10 trips in the peak hour (~5:00 pm), mostly coming into the property. Release time for Blevins is at ~3:15 pm, so the peak times would not match up. Also, we cannot guarantee that this property would have full access forever. If there are issues, or if a median is proposed in the future, this could eventually be a right-in/right-out access only.

Question (Attendee): Why is that considered a historic property? If you can let them tear that down then it makes things easier.

Response (City): The City has a Historic Preservation department, and they look at any property that's over 50 years old for historic significance. It has been determined that this property has historic significance and should be preserved.

Question (Attendee): It's currently zoned for 8 houses. Where would the access point be with the existing zoning?

Response (City): The same considerations would be used to determine the best access point for any development on this property.

Question (Attendee): At some point they have to do a traffic study. Will that be reviewed before or after this goes to council?

Response (City): They meet the City's criteria to not be required to do a traffic study. They do not meet the threshold of potential numbers of trips per day that typically requires a traffic study.

Question (Attendee): The private drive – is that something that is built to the same standard as city streets?

Response (Applicants): That would be the plan, with curb and gutter and sidewalks.

Question (Attendee): Because it's a private drive there will never be a traffic light there, correct?

Response (City): It would not warrant a traffic signal in terms of volumes, and it would be located too close to the stop bar and traffic light for the pedestrian signal for the school to allow for a light. Also, there are a couple different options for pedestrian signals now. We're tending toward new types of crossing lights in the City, and we may move to more current standard in the future for the pedestrian crossing on Taft Hill, which would replace the existing light.

Question (Attendee): Would there be problems with left turns coming out of the development that would conflict with left turns onto Sheffield?

Response (City): There is adequate space for both turns to occur, but the left turns into Blevins could overlap.

Comment (Attendee): Cars line up for left turns at school time, and that's an issue right now.

Comment (Attendee): I'm concerned with the value of my property. The appeal when I bought my property was for the low density character of the area. I'm concerned they wouldn't be governed by same rules of the neighborhood.

Question (Attendee): Are there any city laws requiring HOA negotiations with a neighboring HOA.

Response (City): I don't know of any City laws that require HOAs to negotiate with each other.

Question (Attendee): What are the low and high end density limits for the LMN zone district?

Response (Applicants): It's a minimum of 3 units per acre and a maximum of 9 units per acre.

Question (Attendee): You said 7-10 trips could be expected during the peak hour at 5:00 pm. Is that proposing that only one person works per home? This strikes me as a wrong number.

Response (City): There has been tremendous national research on how many trips are generated by different land uses. The Institute of Transportation Engineers has documented

over many years how many trips a typical residence will generate. For example, a duplex typically generates about 6-7 trips per day; a single-family home generates about 9-10 trips per day. Of those trips, about 10% will occur in a given "peak hour."

Question (Attendee): Do those figures take into account the sales price of the homes? They are proposing a price point of \$300,000 or greater, which will likely appeal to professional couples. I propose that there would be many more trips than estimated. Does the trip generation manual take those factors into account?

Response (City): It varies by housing type, but it isn't segmented by size of the lot or price point of the house.

Question (Attendee): Has the City of Fort Collins looked at doing a traffic analysis for the stretch of Taft Hill Road from Blevins to Valley Forge? That stretch in morning and at lunch time is insane. Is Fort Collins going to look at traffic volumes and the way it's getting used, even without this project there?

Comment (Attendee): I've talked to the principal at Blevins about this, who said the City isn't willing to do anything, but they are concerned too.

Response (City): Traffic safety is our most important purpose, and we work very closely with Poudre School District. There is a need to work with the parents about traffic behavior at the school. More education is needed. Traffic Operations is willing to make changes when needed and possible.

Question (Attendee): If there's another development at the corner of Drake and Taft Hill, that will add more traffic too. This project is not in isolation.

Response (City): A larger development may be required to do a traffic study, and may require additional improvements.

Comment (Attendee): I'm concerned about a road abutting my backyard. I see very little backyard, and every other house that abuts my property has a backyard. I bought the property because of the low-density area. A lot of people bought into this neighborhood because it is low density.

Question (Attendee): Did you ever think about putting a traffic light at Stuart and timing it so people can get out?

Response (City): *[Follow-up after the meeting: The decision to install a signal is based on very specific criteria or thresholds in terms of volumes and delay. There are no current plans for a traffic signal at Stuart.]*

Question (Attendee): If the City says no to this, then what will you say yes to? Student housing, condos, other developments?

Response (City): The City is required to follow the Land Use Code. The City has not made a decision supporting the project or not, and this is the beginning of the review process for this project.

Question (Attendee): This is out of character with the neighborhood. How do you come to the rationale that this is an acceptable project?

Response (City): An applicant has the right to propose a development.

Response (Applicants): I feel that we've been slow, methodical, and thoughtful about

determining what would be an appropriate use. Clearly it is different than what it is adjacent to, and there would be more traffic, but there comes a point where it doesn't economically make sense to develop a piece of property. We would like to build a neighborhood that is high-quality. This land will develop. The longer that it is vacant, the more pressure the market will place on it. We have been meeting with the neighbors and trying to find something that works for the neighborhood.

Question (Attendee): A City Planner should be impartial to this process. Are you predisposed to sign off on this?

Response (Applicants): He can't sign off on it, City Council does.

Response (City): I base my comments on the Land Use Code and the zoning for each of these districts, and am not partial to the project.

Comment (Attendee): I sent an email about a concern to the City Manager, and within 17 days there was a change. That wouldn't have happened in 30 years when I lived in Colorado Springs. I am defending the City and the system.

Question (Attendee): Does the manual for trip generation account for only a single access point, or does that assume that there are access points in all directions?

Response (City): In this case all of the trips would be assigned to Taft Hill. There are percentages we can use to determine inbound, outbound, northbound, and southbound trips once this is farther along in the process.

Comment (Attendee): I live in an environment with a cul-de-sac with neighbors that back up against me, and there will be more activity on the road behind the properties than if it was just backyards. I want the neighbors to rethink it.

Comment (Attendee): But I'm concerned that the houses would be too close to the yards with the layout that was previously proposed. I prefer the current layout.

Question (Attendee): The builder said that he saw RL-zoned areas being rezoned throughout the City, is that the case?

Response (Applicant): The RL zoning was created in 1997. However, there are no longer many large lots to build RL-style projects in the City.

Response (City): The City is currently working on the West Central Area Plan, which includes the property being discussed here. This property is similar to other properties along major arterial roads within the core area of the City, which are facing increasing development pressure. This property has been identified as a potential redevelopment area in the West Central Area Plan due to its unique characteristics. In order for redevelopment to occur on this and other properties, a rezoning may be necessary. The West Central Area Plan will recommend the use of Conditional Rezoning to limit the impact of new developments on surrounding neighborhoods.

Comment (Attendee): The other lots in the area are all large lots and similar in size to one another. This property should be treated similarly, with similar sized lots.

Response (City): This property was flagged for potential redevelopment in the West Central Area planning process due to public interest and the fact that it fronts on an arterial road without access to the neighborhood.

Question (Attendee): Have you heard anyone in support of this project? If not why are we talking about this?

Response (City): The applicant has the right to make a proposal. I have not received any phone calls for or against the project. I received one email with comments from the Rolland Moore Neighborhood Network.

Comment (Attendee): The Rolland Moore Neighborhood Network has been active for 12 years. We're here in an information gathering role, not advocating for or against the project. At some point we may testify about the project in front of Planning and Zoning Board. A number of the members of the network are here tonight.

Comment (Attendee): I can't see a single reason of how rezoning would benefit my investment in my property.

Question (Attendee): Part of the reason being here tonight is to gather facts about the West Central Area Plan and report back to that group. What are the next steps in that process?

Response (City): The team is currently developing the draft plan, which will be released for public review in early 2015. It is expected to go to City Council for consideration of adoption in March 2015.

Question (Attendee): What are the next steps for this project?

Response (City): The applicants submitted a rezoning petition this week, which will be reviewed at an upcoming Planning & Zoning Board hearing.

Question (Attendee): If this gets rezoned, could they do whatever they want?

Response (City): They would be restricted by the requirements in the Land Use Code and any conditions applied to the property through the rezoning process.

Question (Attendee): If it is rezoned, could it become a café or other commercial building?

Response (City): If it was rezoned it would follow whatever uses are allowed as part of the rezoning. City Council could restrict the list of permitted uses through the rezoning process. Those conditions have not been established yet.

Question (Attendee): Have you met with Mike Calhoun in mosquito control about this project? I'm very concerned about drainage and mosquitoes.

Response (Applicants): This project wouldn't need a retention pond, just detention that would slow and capture stormwater flows, rather than storing water. We have met with Stormwater about the considerations for this parcel and whether different pavement treatments would be appropriate. There would be an area where water would collect after a large rain. In meeting with the Health Department, there has been no correlation between retention ponds in the city and West Nile Virus exposure.

Comment (Attendee): We know there is going to be infill development. I think there would be a lot less opposition if you would cut the number of homes so it fits the character of the neighborhood. Make them \$600,000 instead of \$300,000 homes.

Comment (Attendee): You're not creating a neighborhood, you're creating a slum area of \$300,000 houses. The houses are too close together.

Question (Attendee): How big did you say the houses would be?

Response (Applicants): They would be comparable in size to the existing house on the property.

Question (Attendee): How much space would there be between the houses (in the middle of the site)?

Response (Applicants): About 35-45 feet in between. The average from property line to structure is about 40 feet. Everything is still conceptual in nature. We're aiming for compact, smaller homes, because that's the gap we see in the market.

Comment (Attendee): I'm concerned that these are small houses, I don't want to live by a low-income neighborhood.

Response (Applicants): I would encourage you to look at Indian Hills Village (located off of E. Stuart St.) as an example of homes built on small lots that are surrounded by larger lots. That would give a better feeling about this project, though this project would also have a green belt down the middle.

Response (Applicants): These will all have basement space that may or may not be finished, depending on the buyer's preference. A 1400 square foot house with an unfinished basement is marketable in the price range we are aiming for. We believe that, if done right, the different product type will be beneficial to the neighborhood. We've tried to be collaborative and listen to feedback from the neighborhood. Ultimately, the developer and landowner take the risk of proposing something that is marketable, and we believe that it is. We are seeing people that are downsizing, and that is our market niche. The houses along Taft Hill would be one story with a garden level basement.

Comment (Attendee): It's a very drastic change from our neighborhood. It's not the same; it's not the character of the neighborhood we bought into.

Comment (Attendee): But why does it have to be the same as our neighborhood? Why can't it be different?

Comment (Attendee): Our concerns may be drowned out and it may not matter what we say if the City is intent on pursuing these rezonings.

Question (Attendee): How much does citizen concern weigh on the final decision?

Response (City): A lot. The Planning & Zoning Board and City Council actively listen to public concern. The minutes from this meeting will be submitted to the Planning & Zoning Board and City Council, and they really do listen to residents.

Question (Attendee): What is the square footage of the duplexes?

Response (Applicants): Part of the challenge is that we're trying to make changes in response to feedback. 1400 square feet is the square footage of some of the duplexes. We'll continue to develop the floor plan further, but we're trying to develop housing types, rather than exact floor plans. We're only required to show that we have a diversity of housing types. 1450-1850 square feet would likely be the range for the buildings. The sizes will vary, and the width of houses will vary based on the size of the garage.

Question (Attendee): Is the distance between houses regulated?

Response (Applicants): There is a building code that regulates how close houses can be together. That would be applied at the time of a building permit.

Question (Attendee): Will we get a notice when the public hearing is scheduled?

Response (City): Yes, a letter will be sent out to everyone that received the letter for this meeting, as well as anyone who signed in at the meeting tonight, and it will be posted online.

Question (Attendee): From my fence line to the start of the road, how far will it be?

Response (Applicants): It would be about 5-6 feet.

Question (Attendee): Would there be parking on the street?

Response (Applicants): A 20-foot road would not allow parking on the road, unless we added some pockets for parking.

Question (Attendee): How close would the buildings be to the adjacent property lines?

Response (Applicants): With RL zoning, we could build within 15 feet of the back property line. With this proposal, there would be approximately 40 feet between the front of the houses and the adjacent property line.