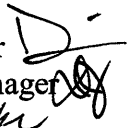








Planning, Development & Transportation
Community Development & Neighborhood
Services
281 North College Avenue
P.O. Box 580
Fort Collins, CO 80522.0580
970.224.6046
970.224.6050- fax
fcgov.com

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

THRU: Darin Atteberry, City Manager 
Diane Jones, Deputy City Manager 
Karen Cumbo, PDT Director 
Steve Dush, CDNS Director 

FROM: Beth Sowder, Neighborhood Services Manager 

RE: Strategic (Student) Housing Action Plan

DATE: September 30, 2011

This memo is intended to provide Council with an update and the timeline of the *Strategic/Student Housing Action Plan* project including work done and feedback received.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff and Focus Groups have drafted the following Mission Statement:

The *Strategic/Student Housing Action Plan* strives to develop community driven strategies that encourage and provide an adequate supply of quality student housing while maintaining neighborhood quality and compatibility.

This project is a collaborative effort between the City and CSU. The stakeholders involved also include Front Range Community College, neighbors, property owners, developers, Colorado State University Research Foundation (CSURF), Fort Collins Board of Realtors, Northern Colorado Rental Housing Association, Associated Students of CSU (ASCSU), students, and more. The purpose of the study is to work with these stakeholders to identify strategies to address the increasing need for student housing, identify possible key areas for development, and develop strategies to resolve compatibility issues.

CSU's Center for Public Deliberation, a department dedicated to enhancing local democracy through improved public communication and community problem solving, is assisting with the community engagement process. Feedback received through the community engagement process will drive the specific recommendations and action items for this project, which could include recommended code or process changes, design criteria, and mechanisms for reviewing and monitoring of the implemented strategies.

City Staff Work Group:
Steve Dush, CDNS

Beth Sowder, Neighborhood Services

Ken Waido, Advance Planning
Courtney Rippey, Current Planning

Ginny Sawyer, Neighborhood Services
Adrienne Battis, Community Liaison

City Staff Advisors:

Karen Cumbo, PDT Director
Bruce Hendee, City Manager's Office
Pete Wray, Advance Planning

Joe Frank, Advance Planning Director
Josh Birks, Economic Development

CSU Partners:

Jeannie Ortega, Off-Campus Life
Stu MacMillan, CSURF
Michael Montgomery, Student member of CSU Center for Public Deliberation
Martin Carcasson, Director, CSU Center for Public Deliberation

Identified Stakeholders:

Associated Students of Colorado State University (ASCSU)
Front Range Community College
Neighbors
Property Owners
Fort Collins Board of Realtors
Property Managers/Northern Colorado Rental Housing Association
Colorado State University Research Foundation (CSURF)
Developers
CSU Everitt Real Estate Center
South and North Fort Collins Business Associations

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

During the Plan Fort Collins process, City staff heard and identified a need to address the student housing supply. Fort Collins has and is continuing to experience an increase in population, increasing CSU enrollment, a limited supply of multi-family and student housing. This combined with very low vacancy rates and challenges addressing neighborhood concerns regarding potential development projects are driving the need for the development of strategies to help facilitate adequate housing supplies while identifying compatibility issues upon existing neighborhoods.

Applicable Plan Fort Collins (PFC) policies include:

Policy LIV 7.2 – Develop an Adequate Supply of Housing

Encourage public and private for-profit and non-profit sectors to take actions to develop and maintain adequate supply of single- and multi-family housing, including mobile homes and manufactured housing.

Policy LIV 7.7 – Accommodate the Student Population

Plan for and incorporate new housing for the student population on campuses and in areas near educational campuses and/or that are well-served by public transportation.

Action Plan – Student Housing Plan (PRIORITY)

Coordinate with Colorado State University, Front Range Community College, and others to develop a plan that identifies future locations and other desirable characteristics of future student housing development.

PROCESS

The project working group started in March 2011. From March through June the City staff work team:

- formed and identified the scope and issues to be addressed
- began the initial data collection
- gathered background information
- identified and collaborated with our CSU partners to further discuss scope, identify issues, and identify additional partners and stakeholders

Data collected (see Attachment 1) includes:

- Fort Collins total population – 144,880 (includes students who live inside City limits)
- CSU Total Enrollment Spring 2011 – 24,529; Fall 2011 - ~27,000
- Fort Collins Multi-family Housing Vacancy Rate – 2011 1st Quarter – 4%
- Existing Off-Campus Multi-family/student housing unit bedrooms – 12,077
- Existing On-Campus beds (2010) – 5,336
- Future projections - possible CSU student enrollment up to 35,000 in ten (10) years
- Approximately 45% of all housing units in Fort Collins are rentals – this is not unusual for a college town
- Multi-family/student housing projects in the conceptual or entitled phase could significantly increase the number of units (see Attachment 2)

Two focus group meetings occurred in July and August. The first included developers and designers and the other included neighbors and property owners. Both groups agreed that the focus and intent is and should be on student housing and they felt that the student emphasis should be reflected in the project name. Unless staff hears differently, the name of the project will be changed from “Strategic Housing Action Plan” to “Student Housing Action Plan”. Additionally, both groups agreed that student housing should be primarily along transit routes, particularly the Mason Corridor. Both groups had ideas about how future housing needs should be met, data needed, and possible strategies to move forward with this discussion (see Attachment 3 and Attachment 4 for detailed lists).

The Center for Public Deliberation (CPD) is currently working with City staff to coordinate an informal questionnaire of stakeholder participants (students, neighbors/property owners, and developers), and to schedule and frame additional focus group meetings. Throughout the process staff will work with CPD to determine if and what type of additional outreach is needed. At this point, the informal questionnaire and two additional focus group meetings are scheduled for September and October. In November, a larger deliberative dialogue with all stakeholders will occur to share input, allow for stakeholders to discuss ideas and perspectives, ask for additional feedback, identify areas of agreement, and determine next steps.

In November and December, staff will attend Board and Commission meetings and professional organization meetings to provide an update and seek input about the project. The Boards and Commissions and professional organizations included:

- Planning & Zoning Board
- Affordable Housing Board
- Landmark Preservation Commission

- Northern Colorado Rental Housing Association
- Fort Collins Board of Realtors

Finally, using Council direction and feedback from community engagement, staff will determine whether more public outreach is needed, identify recommended code or process changes and action items, and update Council on next steps. A Council Work Session is scheduled for February 14, 2012. Staff would like feedback from Council regarding the change in the name calling it "*Student* Housing Action Plan", the general scope of the project, and the process outlined in this memo.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Existing Conditions Data Snapshot
2. Conceptual and Entitled Multi-family/Student Development Projects
3. Developer/Designer Focus Group Feedback
4. Neighbor/Property Owner Focus Group Feedback

**Strategic Housing Action Plan/Study
Existing Conditions Snapshot**

Fort Collins total population – 144,880 (includes students who live within City Limits)

CSU Total Enrollment Spring Semester 2011 – 24,529

Unofficial enrollment for Fall Semester 2011 – approximately 27,000

Fort Collins Multi-family Housing Vacancy Rates (Colorado Division of Housing)

2011 1 st Quarter – 4.0%	2008 4 th Quarter – 4.1%	2006 3 rd Quarter – 8.9%
2010 4 th Quarter – 4.1%	2008 3 rd Quarter – 4.2%	2006 1 st Quarter – 8.8%
2010 3 rd Quarter – 2.8%	2008 2 nd Quarter – 9.5%	2005 3 rd Quarter – 9.5%
2010 2 nd Quarter – 7.9%	2008 1 st Quarter – 4.8%	2005 1 st Quarter – 12.9%
2010 1 st Quarter – 5.2%	2007 4 th Quarter – 4.4%	2004 3 rd Quarter – 11.0%
2009 4 th Quarter – 5.8%	2007 3 rd Quarter – 4.9%	2004 1 st Quarter – 13.9%
2009 3 rd Quarter – 5.5%	2007 2 nd Quarter – 8.5%	2003 3 rd Quarter – 12.5%
2009 2 nd Quarter – 9.9%	2007 1 st Quarter – 7.0%	2003 1 st Quarter – 13.7%
2009 1 st Quarter – 4.0%	2006 4 th Quarter – 8.3%	

City of Fort Collins Multi-family Housing – (*numbers are not comprehensive – only contains those that will rent to students)

Total number of complexes - 57

Total number of Units – 6507

Studio – 207

1 bedroom – 1949

2 bedroom – 3374

3 bedroom – 735

4 bedroom – 242

Total number of bedrooms – 12,077

CSU On-campus Housing Capacity Since 2000 (CSU Housing & Dining Services)

Year	Design Capacity	Program Capacity	Opening Capacity
2000	5016	4483	4549
2001	5016	4790	4777
2002	5016	4584	4828
2003	5016	4904	4798
2004	5551	4985	4922
2005	5135	4784	4668
2006	5135	4772	4758
2007	5561	5165	5155
2008	5561	5240	5215
2009	5778	5359	5186
2010	5778	5355	5336

Changes in capacity (CSU Housing & Dining Services):

2004 – gain 535 beds – Summit Hall added

2005 – loss 400 beds – Ellis Hall removed
 2007 – gain 165 beds – Academic Village Honors
 2007 – gain 261 beds – Academic Village Engineering
 2009 – gain 217 beds – Aspen Hall

Future Projects:

2012 – 120 new beds in Parmelee
 2013 – 120 new beds in Braiden
 2014/2015 – 600 new beds – Lory Apartments site redevelopment

After 2015 – depending on numbers, financing, economy, etc. – Master Plan calls for:

Newsom redevelopment – replace 400 beds with 700 new beds
 Allison redevelopment – replace 400 beds with 700 new beds
 Aylesworth – review for redevelopment
 Aggie Village north – review for redevelopment

CSU Enrollment Fall 2000 – Spring 2011 (CSU)

Year	Semester	Total Enrollment	% Change Fall Semester
2000	Fall	23,098	
2001	Spring	21,740	
2001	Fall	23,934	3.6%
2002	Spring	22,669	
2002	Fall	24,735	3.3%
2003	Spring	23,220	
2003	Fall	25,042	1.2%
2004	Spring	23,468	
2004	Fall	25,382	1.4%
2005	Spring	23,730	
2005	Fall	24,947	-1.7%
2006	Spring	23,095	
2006	Fall	24,670	-1.1%
2007	Spring	22,989	
2007	Fall	24,983	1.3%
2008	Spring	23,051	
2008	Fall	25,011	0.1%
2009	Spring	23,187	
2009	Fall	25,413	1.6%
2010	Spring	23,745	
2010	Fall	26,356	3.7%
2011	Spring	24,529	

CSU Enrollment – Future Projection Range

In the Fall of 2000, we were at roughly 23,000 students. Since then, we have grown to our current level of approximately 27,500. At that same growth rate, and with the continued strong market position for CSU in Colorado and around the nation, we would

project enrollment that could be as high as 35,000 students in a decade. We do not anticipate, or plan, to grow beyond that 35,000 student point – it is the outer limit in our current thinking. This would include graduate and undergraduate enrollment, and will, of course, continually evolve based on funding levels, market conditions and other factors.

Housing Unit and Tenure Data Analysis (2009 American Community Survey)

- About 94% of the housing units in Fort Collins in 2009 were occupied and 6% were vacant.
- Of the occupied units, 55% were owner-occupied units and 45% were renter-occupied units. The relatively high percentage of rental units is not unusual for a college town.
- Of the total number of units in the city, 56% were detached single-family units, 9% were attached single-family units (townhomes), 3% were duplexes, 2% were mobile homes, and about 30% were multi-family units.
- Of the occupied detached single-family units, 79% were owner-occupied and 21% were renter-occupied. With more research, the percentages of owner-occupied versus renter-occupied detached single-family units in areas near the CSU Main Campus could be determined.
- Of the occupied attached single-family units, 55% were owner-occupied and 45% were renter occupied. This would seem to indicate that a good number of townhomes are owned by investors for rental purposes.
- Most of the duplexes (91%) and most of the multi-family units (89%) were renter-occupied.
- And finally, 65% of the mobile homes in the city were owner-occupied while 35% were renter-occupied.

Conceptual & Entitled Multi-Family Development Projects

Stage of Project	Project Name	Location	Proposal
Preliminary design review in Jan 2011	West End Flats	1228 W. Elizabeth St.	Proposed development of a 5 story sustainable mixed-use project consisting of a 100 unit student housing project with 1200 sq ft commercial retail on the first floor.
2 nd Round of Final Review	Rams Bookstore Redevelopment	130 W. Laurel St.	Student Housing – 2 options – 4-story building, 1 st floor retail, 3 stories student housing consisting of 63 beds; or, same concept plus additional property consisting of 75 beds.
Conceptual Review in April 2011		5305 Zeigler Rd.	Multi-family, mixed-use retail – maximum of 36 units in 4 buildings
Conceptual Review in May 2011		1004 E. Elizabeth and 909 S. Lemay	Multi-family residential – two 24-plex buildings
Conceptual Review in May 2011		1409 W. Elizabeth	Apartment lofts – convert existing fraternity into 10 unit Student Housing project
Conceptual Review in June 2011	Spring Creek Farms North	Timberline & Drake	248 unit multi-family project similar to Settlers Creek Apartments
Conceptual Review in June 2011	Serrano Subdivision	Boardwalk & Lemay	Major amendment request to change the existing approved project from 6 3-unit, 2 bedrooms to 6 4-unit, 1 bedroom buildings
Conceptual Review in July 2011		2430 Overland Trail	Student housing complex – 352 apartments in six separate, two and three story buildings with 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom units.
Second round of finals March 2011	Choice Center	1609-1717 S. College, near SW corner of College & Prospect	Existing 58,252 sq ft strip retail buildings along S. College proposed to be remodeled and updated. Two new four-story buildings proposed, one on the west side and one at NW corner of Stuart & College – total of 219 student housing units.
Final plan review November 2010	Appleblossom	712 W. Laurel	Student duplex and triplex (5 units). Each building 2 stories. Duplex – 2,438 sq ft. Triplex – 3,712 sq ft. Lots will be re-platted to creat one 53 ft wide lot for triplex and 42 ft wide lot for duplex. 11 off-street parking spaces.
September 2010	Spring Creek Village	S. Shields and W. Stuart	Student housing – ground level commercial retail in 4 of the buildings while remaining 2 buildings would include commercial space for business offices and amenity centers (gym, computer room, rec/game room). Additional recreation such as pool and courtyard for residents. The residential buildings in MMN zone include 5 residential, 3-story buildings.
Final Plan June 2011	Pura Vida	518 W. Laurel	52 units – 6 studio, 14 one bedroom, 16 two bedroom, 16 three bedroom

Preliminary Development Proposal	The Grove	SW corner of Centre Ave & Rolland Moore Drive	218 units
Conceptual Review in May 2010		1015 E. Swallow	Proposing 8 residential townhome units – 4 duplex structures with 2 parking spaces, 3 bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms per unit, with modular construction.
Replat	Penny Flats	311 N. Mason	27 units
Building Permits Pulled July 2011	Presidio Apartments	North of Rock Creek Drive between Lady Moon and Cinquefoil	240 unit multi-family complex divided among three-story buildings, located on 13.6 acres. A 4,500 sq ft two-story clubhouse with pool is included along with eight mixed-use dwelling units. There would be 436 parking spaces.
Conceptual Review July 2011	The District at CSU	W. Plum St, from City Park to Aster also Scott Ave.	Demolish existing 20 (potentially historic) residential structures and construct 215 new multi-family units. There will be roughly 732 bedrooms as well as a clubhouse and a 5-story parking garage providing 614 parking spaces.
Old Town North			Potential student housing
Union Station		West of College and Willox	Potential student housing
Conceptual Review August 2011	Student Housing	914 W. Lake	Addition of a new 3-story, 40 unit student housing apartment with ground level connection to the existing NW stair access. Phase II – new 2 or 3 story student housing with 20-30 units.
Conceptual Review August 2011	Regency at Parkwood Lake	2700 S. Lemay Ave.	New request for an addition of a permitted use for a new 238 unit, 3-story, multi-family development. The site is zoned R-L, Low Density Residential District and this would be a Type 2, Planning and Zoning Board Review and Public Hearing.
Conceptual Review August 2011	Redevelopment of Kings Auto Site	203 W. Mulberry	Proposal for a multi-family development for 51 units and 66 grade level parking spaces. The site is in the CC – Community Commercial zone district and the proposed use is permitted subject to a type 1 review.
Conceptual Review September 2011	1305 and 1319 S. Shields Student Housing	1305 and 1319 S. Shields	Proposal to demolish two existing single family dwelling units at 1305 and 1319 S. Shields St. and develop five (5) residential scaled buildings with a mix of 1,2 and 3 bedroom student rental apartments plus 69 off-street parking spaces for the proposed community.

Strategic Housing Action Plan
Designer/Developer Focus Group Meeting Notes
July 20, 2011

Ideas included the following:

- Narrow focus to “student housing” – including multi-family and single-family housing; however, do not “badger” students in the process.
- The Everitt Real Estate Center can provide some of the needed data.
- Focus on rental student housing – it is a completely different project from market rate or owner-occupied multi-family (from the developer’s perspective).
- Be sure to ask whether there is really a valuable/producing outcome to even have this conversation – is it worth the time to have the discussion?
 - There is value to get the data and see how the City can best “set the table”.
 - There is value to address the compatibility issues so the process can be better.
 - It will be incremental – one small step after another – the door is open to have the discussion.
- Census data can help us determine rental vs. owner-occupied to help answer the question about whether this discussion and more multi-family units would help relieve the transition of owner-occupied to rental in single family neighborhoods. Or, would new multi-family units draw students who currently live further away? Would it really draw students away from single-family housing?
- Transportation is important – on-going costs – compatibility – Mason Corridor stops.
- Student survey conducted in May to better understand what they want regarding housing – survey will continue annually.
- There may be more of a trend nationally to have more multi-family housing in downtown areas.
- There are some underlying, systematic challenges that may be difficult or impossible to over-come. Low-density neighborhoods close to CSU, following transit just puts students further from campus, neighbors will never want any change.
- Concentrate first on areas that lend themselves to multi-family housing.
- Multi-family developments will/are seeing more of a need for 3 and 4 bedroom units – more families will be moving into multi-family rental housing.
- People want their own bedroom, bathroom, walk-in closet, and washer/dryer in the unit.
- There’s more of a trend to rent by the bedroom.
- There currently is and will continue to be a lot of projects coming – increase in housing stock.
- Larger projects can bring lower rent because of the financials for the developer.
- During Plan Fort Collins, we heard that the aging population will want less yard maintenance and a single level (no stairs).

- Will the market/demand answer the questions? Will the organized opposition stop projects from getting through the process even when the demand is there?
- West Central Neighborhood Plan – written primarily by neighbors – identified the lot where “The Grove” is trying to get in as “student housing.”
- Historic issues are challenging.
- The process should not allow the minority voice to decide development.
- Multi-family housing includes all (rental and owner-occupied; student and market rate) – what is our focus?
- Demand is there – CSU student enrollment increasing.
- Timing, location, and the site is what developers look for.
- Home-ownership is decreasing – multi-family demand is increasing.
- More developers will come in and take care of the demand.
- The incentives should/would be different for each (student vs. market rate).
- Focus should be on student housing.
- Condo projects – changing to multi-family rental projects.
- There are very few vacant single-family lots – Timothy Wilder from Advance Planning can get us this data – “Buildable Lands Inventory.”
- Short time frame for these projects to happen (24-36 months) before interest rates increase and make the financials impossible to work.
- What about converting the Greek system of housing? There are bedrooms in these houses that are not being used. Could CSU rebuild the Greek system and remodel these houses – students want own bedroom and bathroom.
- They want to continue to be involved in this dialogue.
- Identify possible sites?
- Become aware of what the issues are regarding compatibility.
- It would be helpful to convert the compatibility issues into metrics (i.e. building height). Can’t address everything through the Code but some could be.
- What are the key steps? Focus on transitions.
- Some issues are “project specific.”
- A good financial incentive from the City would be looking at City fees.
- Need decision makers at Conceptual Review meetings to get answers.
- Will use the Flexible Zoning Tool to help with some project-specific issues.
- Look for lots that should be re-zoned.
- Look at improving the process rather than identifying parcels.

Strategic Housing Action Plan
Neighbor/Property Owner Focus Group Meeting Notes
August 30, 2011

Ideas included the following:

- Narrow focus to “student housing” – including multi-family and single-family housing – this is really a conversation about student housing so we should call it that.
- Need to provide more clear direction on why we’re having this discussion – what are we trying to accomplish?
- Some feel that we are at the mercy of the developers and the City regarding development.
- There are more students than housing provided – so there’s an acute need for student housing.
- Student housing needs to be tied to transportation – Mason Corridor. Need to integrate current transportation policies with development.
- This is a chance for us to frame what we want – what we’re looking for – starting point to discuss and identify strategies.
- Encourage options – not a “one size fits all”.
- Need a “mission statement” – “How do we as a community provide adequate, quality student housing while not negatively affecting neighborhoods?”
- Come up with preferred student housing options
- How much housing is provided by CSU freshmen and others who choose to live on campus? In the past 20 years, no freshmen who choose to live on campus for a 2nd year have been turned away.
- Don’t want to encourage so much development that current properties can’t be maintained because rent is too low.
- Dwelling Units per Acre brochure – also show how much we have of each in Fort Collins and which zones allow for these densities. Density vs. Intensity.
- Specific policies in Plan Fort Collins/City Plan regarding housing and student housing – started this conversation.
- Relationships between CSU, students, and long-term residents – community impacts – and concerns about appropriate neighborhood compatibility are also driving this conversation.
- Some problems are more about behavior (substance abuse) – this is what the neighbors live with on a daily basis.
- Occupancy violations also an issue.
- It’s a learning process for students when they live in the community.
- Neighbors get tired of dealing with the turnover of students and the “re-training”.
- How about “University-approved Housing” – safety checks so housing meeting minimum requirements.
- There is a need for student housing and housing for increased CSU staff.
- It will probably get worse before it gets better.
- CSU is not doing enough.
- Need to meet student AND non-student needs.

- Can't put much more on immediate areas by CSU – needs to be tied to transportation (transit).
- Most difficult year for students is their first year living off campus.
- How about “student overlay areas”? Higher levels of student housing – along Mason Corridor.
- Additional layers of planning that we don't already have in place.
- Economics – choice vs. what they can afford. Safety standards on houses – there's no enforcement of the regulations so it makes it cheaper for students to live in houses (that are not up to standards) vs. apartments. Need to level the playing field – houses should cost more than apartments.
- Pets, roommate issues – they want to experience living in a house – “no pets” rules move students into neighborhoods.
- Need the political will to do something – from the elected officials.
- Continue to do student surveys regularly – good information.
- Encourage more “non-driving” – other modes.
- CSU could set policy regarding transportation.
- Bus/transit needs to be viable.
- It's difficult to regulate people into riding bikes – educate instead.
- Need to provide space for the car – most students will bring a car even if they don't use it much.
- Put the “preferred options” in front of students to make sure it's what they like and want.
- Student Housing Conference – annual – National Apartment Association (NAA) – good information about student housing issues.