

March 27, 2020

RE: Willoughby Corner Preliminary Plan, Rezoning, and Comprehensive Plan Amendment Narrative



On behalf of Boulder County Housing Authority, we are pleased to be taking the next step towards the approval of Willoughby Corner by submitting the Preliminary Plan, Rezoning and Comprehensive Plan applications. Willoughby Corner is a new neighborhood of affordable homes located on the southwest corner of the intersection of 120th Street and East Emma Street in Lafayette. The neighborhood, developed by Boulder County Housing Authority (BCHA), proposes 400 permanently affordable homes in a variety of building types including 30 duplexes, 130 townhomes, and 240 apartments as well as significant public amenities. In addition to new affordable workforce housing, the 24-acre neighborhood will include community gardens, a community building, dog park, trails, and park space. BCHA anticipates that at least 320 of the 400 homes developed would be restricted at 60% AMI; and at least 80 homes would be for-sale to households earning 120% AMI or below; and no more than 80 homes would be unrestricted market-rate rental or ownership. These permanent affordability restrictions terms meet the intent of the Intergovernmental Agreement that was signed between the City of Lafayette, Boulder County and Boulder County Housing Authority when the entities collaborated on the purchase of the property specifically to serve the affordable housing needs of the community.



On September 24th, 2019, the Lafayette Planning Commission approved with conditions Boulder County Housing Authority's sketch plan for Willoughby Corner on a 6-0 vote. The conditions of approval included the approval of the proposed Rezoning and Comprehensive Plan Amendment, revisions to the code modification table, and a series of ongoing coordination with staff to address usable green space, mobility options, and bicycle storage. These requests have been addressed in the attached Preliminary Plan, Rezoning, and Comprehensive Plan Amendment applications.

Please note that the team is not submitting an application for Site Plan / Architectural Review at this time. BCHA is in the process of selecting an architect, and therefore must defer application for Site Plan / Architectural review.

Preliminary Plan & Rezoning

The attached Preliminary Plan was developed based on community input received thus far, ELAC input, as well as the goals and mission of the BCHA; which aspires to develop a neighborhood built on the principles of affordability, connectivity, diversity, and sustainability.

The site plan for Willoughby Corner seeks to achieve all these outcomes through a variety of specific planning principles. These include:

- Placement of duplexes along Emma Street to maintain the 'Old Town' feel of Emma Street.
- Transitioning density from lowest density uses along Emma Street to higher density uses at the southern edge of the site.
- Providing significant trail connections from Willoughby Corner to the City's trail network.
 - This includes eventual connection to the Inspire Trail, which will provide Willoughby Corner residents with access to Sanchez Elementary as well as the Lafayette Park and Ride and Old Town Lafayette.

- Inclusion of two roundabouts designed to slow traffic and provide congestion relieving measures for Peak to Peak traffic.
- Providing a Mobility Hub which will include a community building with restrooms, bike parking, a bus standby area, trail connections, and wayfinding signage
- Creation of a large buffer zone along 120th Street to transition from Willoughby Corner to the adjacent lower-density development along Flagg Drive.
- Provide a diversity of housing types that will allow BCHA to fulfill its mission of providing safe, affordable housing while also integrating the design into the surrounding neighborhood.
- Design of the neighborhood to include options for sustainable building design and construction. This may include photovoltaic solar, geothermal heating and cooling systems, low-water and low-maintenance landscaping among others.

This plan generally meets the requirements of R4/High Density Residential zoning which will be enhanced to meet community needs with the PUD overlay. With such intent at the heart of the rezoning, the development of this site will meet the housing and community serving needs of Lafayette, while complementing and improving the existing built environment.

Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The existing Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2003 and updated in 2013 designates the site for Industrial Uses; this application proposes an amendment to convert the site to High Density Residential uses, allowing for greater than 6 dwelling units per acre. The proposed change in land use designation is needed to match the plans and principles outlined for the PUD, which align with closely with the Comprehensive Plan. Areas of Specific Compatibility include the following:

Regional Cooperation

Goal A.1

- The joint purchase of the Willoughby Corner property by Boulder County and the City of Lafayette illustrates a shared commitment to regional cooperation and identification of parcels that are suitable for affordable housing.

Land Use and Development

Goal C.1

- Willoughby Corner will provide much needed affordable housing that will include a range of housing options that will strengthen Lafayette's economic and social diversity.

Goal C.3

- Willoughby Corner will provide new connections to the Lafayette trail system and include a variety of residential densities designed to reflect the community character.

Community Character

Goal D.1

- Willoughby Corner was designed to fit into the surrounding neighborhoods. The design includes lower density housing along the edges of the site with higher intensity uses occurring near the industrial edge and Peak to Peak School.

Goal D.2

- Willoughby Corner will include streetscapes that are designed to prioritize pedestrian safety and create cohesive streetscapes. The inclusion of a roundabout at the Canterbury and East Emma Street intersection will also create an introduction to the Old Town neighborhood for west bound traffic.

Goal D.3

- The design of the site plan was inspired in part by the block pattern and size of the Old Town neighborhood to ensure that Willoughby Corner is reflective of Lafayette's image and character.

Housing

Goal E.1

- Willoughby Corner will provide 400 new affordable workforce homes to the Lafayette community. This will provide significant new resources to meet the economic and social needs of Lafayette.

Goal E.3

- Willoughby Corner will contribute significantly to the Boulder County Regional Housing Plan by providing 400 new affordable workforce homes.

Transportation

Goal G.1

- Willoughby Corner will bring much needed transportation improvements to the east Lafayette area. This will include construction of a new signal at Emma Street and 120th Street, a new connection from Canterbury Drive to 120th Street, and a traffic calming roundabout to the intersection of Canterbury Drive and Emma Street.

Goal G.2

- BCHA will continue to work towards providing improved transit access to the Willoughby Corner neighborhood.
- Willoughby Corner will provide a Mobility Hub which will include a community building with restrooms, bike parking, a bus standby area, trail connections, and wayfinding signage.

Goal G.3

- Willoughby Corner will provide new pedestrian and bike access to Downtown Lafayette as well as the regional trail network.

Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails

Goal H.1

- Willoughby Corner will feature significant green space amenities including park space, trail connections, and community gardens. BCHA plans to provide public access easements to all park space at Willoughby Corner.

Goal H.2

- The landscape design at Willoughby Corner will feature sustainable design principles and provide new connections and buffers for east Lafayette.

Environmental Sustainability

Goal I.1

- BCHA believes strongly in providing energy efficient and sustainable homes. For Willoughby Corner this may include design elements such as photovoltaic solar panels, geothermal heating and cooling systems, and efficient passive building design. All of the for rent affordable housing will meet Enterprise Green Communities criteria.

Goal I.3

- The site plan for Willoughby Corner includes significant community garden space.

Additionally, Lafayette is in the process of developing a new Comprehensive Plan and the Preliminary Draft Framework Plan, presented on February 27, 2020 proposes a “Village Mixed Use” as the preferred land use. The intent of such areas is to create “more compact and walkable places that emphasize smaller shops and provide daily conveniences... (and are) feature places where people live, work, and play in a distinct district.” The Willoughby Corner community will provide opportunities for people to live and play in close proximity to the Lafayette Town Center and other important services, matching the intent of the proposed designation.

With the review of the Preliminary Plan, Rezoning, and Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the Willoughby Corner project team is excited to work with the City of Lafayette to make this vibrant neighborhood a reality. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or need any additional information about the attached applications.

Sincerely,
Norris Design

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