

January 23, 2022

TO: Patrick Goff, Wheat Ridge City Manager

FROM: Joy Wollesen

RE: Public Comment - Foothills Regional Housing – Opposition of Affordable Housing Site #2

Dear Mr. Goff,

I am writing to you, as a concerned resident, regarding the proposed request for support for Foothills Regional Housing (FRH) and their proposed site #2 referenced in their letter to the City of Wheat Ridge dated January 18, 2022. I am a commercial real estate broker by trade and am involved, on occasion, in real estate land transactions that are sold to multifamily developers which require re-zoning of the property. I am also a resident of the area and have lived in the Arvada Ridge Apartments (2016 – 2018) and Quail Ridge Estates (2018 to present). My feedback below is why this proposed project should not receive funding, or re-zoning approval, from the City of Wheat Ridge.

**Compatibility:** The site on 54<sup>th</sup> and Miller is currently zoned Commercial / Acreage 4. As stated in the letter from FRH, the +/- 14 acre site would need to be rezoned to R-4. With an R-4 designation, buildings have a height restriction of 80', that is a 7-story building. This area is surrounded by single-family homes to the North and East with maximum 2-story height. These homes sell in excess of \$850,000. To the East of the property is the Ridge Home, owned by the State of Colorado. The community is aware of the residents in this facility, which is comprised of single-story residential buildings. In order for the developer to construct 300 units, and have ample parking to facilitate over 600 vehicles, and amenity buildings, the residential buildings will be in excess of 4 stories, have elevators for ADA access, and tower over the residences in the neighborhood. The other sites that FRH own (48<sup>th</sup> & Garrison and 79<sup>th</sup> and Sheridan) are surrounded by multi-family and commercial uses, not single-family homes.

**Traffic:** The three roads that service this parcel, 54<sup>th</sup>, Ridge and Miller are two lane roads and will never be widened. There are also high-volume commuter and freight rail tracks at Ridge and Miller that are in use over 4 times per hour, per day. I know there has not been a traffic impact study done for this project at this intersection as we asked for an impact study when the Haskins Station/Wonderland Homes developments were being contemplated in 2018 and one was never produced at Planning or City Council hearings for concerned residents.

With an influx of over 600 vehicles to this intersection, with this project, it will create increased accidents and gridlock. On any given hour of the day, cars turning south on Miller block traffic East and West bound and cars maneuver around turning vehicles into the intersection nearly hitting pedestrians crossing the road or other vehicles head on. There are also two housing developments under construction less than 1/3 of a mile from this intersection (Ridge and Quail) that will bring 700 units with more than 1500 additional cars to this intersection in the next 18 months. No one in the City of Arvada and Wheat Ridge is willing to do a combined traffic study as they know what will result if one is produced. This location is touted as "TOD" as was the Haskins Station / Wonderland Homes developments. There are no sidewalks to get to transit stops and if people want to take transit, they are

forced to walk on Ridge Road with no sidewalks to either transit stop. I live less than 1/3 of a mile from Ward Road and I drive to the transit stop as otherwise I am taking my life into my hands walking on Ridge Road – a posted 35 mph road that, in my observation, people speed in excess of 50mph on.

While this project is touted as a TOD, my observation is the amount of people who use the commuter rail is limited. It is used on game days and by about 20 people commuting into downtown during the week. Again, a traffic study would prove the non-use of commuter rail by all people in the Denver area. I feel my 600-car count for this project is low, as there will likely be more than 2 adults in a 2-, 3-, or 4-bedroom unit. In my tenancy at Arvada Ridge, another TOD apartment development, there were sometimes 3 adults in a 1-bedroom apartment which created parking issues and the TOD parking lot became an overflow lot for residents, not people using the commuter rail.

The project also describes having a commercial aspect of Stride Community Health and Jefferson County Human Services. Both of these facilities serve people with disabilities; thus, these individuals would not take public transportation and would be driving to this location exacerbating the congestion at this intersection.

**Safety Issues:** The residents of this community already deal with the issues at Kipling and I-70, the homeless encampments that are swept on occasion from the underpass and commercial areas as well as the American Hotel and the crime that surrounds it. The Wheat Ridge police department has stated many times that being homeless isn't a crime, however the people who are homeless are committing the crimes. There is known, widespread, drug use and sales, from drug dealers at the intersection of Kipling and I70.

I've researched the crime that occurs at the FRH project on 48<sup>th</sup> & Garrison. According to LexisNexis, communitycrimemap.com, there have been 16 police visits to the 48<sup>th</sup> & Garrison project since October of 2021 ranging from car thefts, to assaults, to domestic violence. The 48<sup>th</sup> & Garrison location is a fraction of the size of the proposed 300-unit development Site #2, how would FRH plan to handle crime that unfortunately follows lower income individuals? The Quail Ridge area is not free from crime, however, adding to it without increased police presence is dangerous, and somewhat negligent, on behalf of the City of Wheat Ridge. People move to the suburbs, pay a lot of money for housing and increased taxes, to avoid crime. For reference, in the same time period, there were 16 police occurrences in a 1.5 square mile of residences in the area versus 16 police occurrences in one location.

**Schools and tax base:** Given this site #2 would have a deed restriction of 30 years for low income residents, the site would not be subject to property taxes similar to the 48<sup>th</sup> & Garrison location. Property taxes are what pay for schools in the area. On average, a 300-unit apartment complex could have approximately 300 – 500 children living onsite. This location feeds into Vanderhoof elementary which has a total enrollment of 370 students. This project would double the enrollment of that elementary school which is already stressed with no room and lack of faculty to give appropriate time to students. This project would overload the school system while not adding to solving the problem which is a TAKE from the surrounding area and everyone who contributes to the solution with the payment of property taxes.

All of the above issues would result in a market-rent apartment project being denied by the City of Wheat Ridge on a re-zone due to safety and compatibility issues and this concerned resident of the area requests this proposed development be denied for the exact same reasons.