

## Registry Ridge has support within city, logical uses

I have been an architect working in land-use planning in Fort Collins for 20 years and am the planner for Registry Ridge, a mixed-use project that has been annexed to the city for 12 years and has been through 18 months of city development review.

I am writing about this project because of the campaign of disinformation carefully orchestrated in successive Soapboxes, articles and letters by a group of county residents adjacent to the project who may believe they are protecting their own interests in trying to prevent this property's development but who are certainly not representing the interests of city citizens. I believe you should know why:

■ 1.) To date, this project has received approvals from five city reviewing bodies: staff, Parks Board, Natural Resources Board, Planning and Zoning Board and City Council. Yet, the city must now

spend tax dollars defending claims against it, which were brought by this group, whose members are neither city residents nor city taxpayers, while the developer must spend his own money defending the approval given the development. They call themselves "Citizens for Sensible Community Planning" in an apparent attempt to be seen as a citizens' watchdog group when, in fact, this self-interest group, whose board of directors all live next to the project, was formed just prior to filing its lawsuit.

■ 2.) The project's density is just over three dwelling units per acre, the city's *minimum* requirement. It has master plan approval of 702 units to be built in 13 phases over a number of years, each of which must receive separate preliminary and final plan approval. These neighbors want larger-lot county density, but the project is not in the county. City density policy encourages efficient use of urban

land. Interestingly, the city's most recent version of its Structure Plan designates a majority of this project as low-density mixed-use, just as proposed. The plan for the corridor between Fort Collins and Loveland also shows Registry Ridge as appropriate for urban density at three dwelling units per acre.

■ 3.) The project promotes city and

county open space and corridor goals. To meet part of the city's land-use requirements, the developer provided deed *dedicating to the city, at no cost, 102.89 acres of significant natural areas and an option for another 47.22 acres*. This land is designated in the Corridor Plan as open lands and as priority open space in the city's Natural Area Plan. Its dedication to the city as part of Registry Ridge's approval prevents the development of this valuable open space, which currently has master plan approval for up to 732 housing units.

The city's Natural Resources director stated at the Planning and Zoning Board hearing that Registry Ridge represents the best concept of clustering within the city because it prevents development on valuable off-site open space, which otherwise might occur.

■ 4.) The project is buffered and designed to be compatible. It is separated

from the neighbors by a 100-foot arterial street and includes a substantial buffer strip, varying from 30 to 140 feet in width. Large lots (from .35 to .46 acres) have been placed closest to neighbors.

To try to continue working with neighbors after council approval, I called their spokesperson, offering to discuss additional buffering and design options. Their response was that they had hired an attorney to file a lawsuit.

The facts speak for themselves. Fort Collins' citizens should not be misled by unfounded claims of incompatibility. We are talking about single-family homes next to single-family homes and preserving a large area of priority open space, which will benefit city and county residents alike.

Frank Vaught is vice president of a local architectural firm.

### Soapbox



Frank Vaught