



Los Gatos Meadows

A FRONT PORCH COMMUNITY

Redevelopment of Los Gatos Meadows Frequently Asked Questions

August 2024

Overview:

In January 2020, Front Porch Communities and Services (Front Porch), a non-profit provider of housing and services for older adults, submitted a proposal to rebuild Los Gatos Meadows, a senior living community that closed due to safety reasons in 2019. Based on feedback from the community, Front Porch is in the process of modifying this proposal. The proposed project would provide a community offering independent living and innovative care on a safe and modern campus, aligned with the Town of Los Gatos' long term vision.

As part of our commitment to work closely with the community and Town leaders to ensure a transparent and thoughtful proposal review process, the document below provides answers to frequently asked questions about the proposed project, including:

- Background
- Proposal summary and status
- Project timeline and information
- Construction impact
- Circulation, traffic and parking impact
- More information

Information is also available on the Los Gatos Meadows website at <https://frontporch.net/community/los-gatos-meadows/>. To learn more about Front Porch, visit <https://frontporch.net/>.

Background:

Q1: What is Los Gatos Meadows?

A1: Los Gatos Meadows was developed in the 1970s as a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC, now known as a Life Plan Community) for older adults, providing a continuum of care for people as they age. Although the facilities are currently not operational, the site is still zoned for senior living, which is the proposed future use.

Q2: Who owns the Los Gatos Meadows property?

A2: Los Gatos Meadows is owned and maintained by Front Porch Communities and Services (Front Porch), a non-profit provider of housing and services for older adults

headquartered in Glendale, California. Previously, Los Gatos Meadows was owned and operated by Covia, another California-based non-profit provider of senior living housing and services. Covia merged with Front Porch in 2021.

Q3: Why is Los Gatos Meadows not currently operating as a senior community?

A3: In early 2019, after completion of a rigorous facilities assessment, Covia (now Front Porch) concluded that continuing operations of the 48-year-old Los Gatos Meadows facility presented too great a safety risk to its residents and employees, due to unsafe building conditions, site circulation and access limitations and other concerns. Working closely with all Los Gatos Meadows residents, their families, our employees, neighbors, and the Town of Los Gatos ensured a thoughtful and smooth closing on Sept. 30, 2019.

Proposal Summary and Status:

Q4: What is being proposed?

A4: Front Porch, a non-profit provider of housing and services for seniors, is proposing to rebuild Los Gatos Meadows as a Life Plan community (also known as a Continuing Care Retirement Community, or CCRC). The new Los Gatos Meadows community will provide innovative senior housing and care on a modern campus that ensures the safety and well-being of residents, employees, and neighbors. It will include sustainable, accessible, and state-of-the-art features that align with the Town of Los Gatos' long-term vision.

Q5: What is a Life Plan community?

A5: A Life Plan community (also known as a Continuing Care Retirement Community, or CCRC) is a model of senior living that provides people with degrees of support as they age, depending on their needs. Although a wide range of care and services are available to residents, it is not a medical facility. Life Plan communities differ from assisted living or medical care-based facilities in numerous ways. Residents in Life Plan communities join while they are able to live independently. Family members generally have little to no involvement in the decision to move to the community. Although residents may be downsizing from a single-family home, apartment sizes are larger than typically found in assisted living. Overall, the focus of a Life Plan community is on providing residents with a new home and opportunities for a purposeful life rather than on care, although care and services are available as needed.

Q6: Who will own and operate the proposed community?

A6: Front Porch intends to continue to operate the proposed community and to retain full control of the property.

Q7: Is Front Porch a for-profit entity?

A7: No. Front Porch is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Along with market-rate senior living communities, it owns and manages affordable housing communities and provides community services for older people nationwide. In addition, the Front Porch

Communities Foundation supports residents, employees, and social programs. Among other support, the Circle of Friends fund allows residents who outlive their resources to be able to stay in their homes.

Q8: Who is managing the proposed project?

A8: Front Porch is overseeing the proposed project and has assembled a project team of professional services firms to assist them in designing, permitting and executing the rebuild project: Rockwood Pacific Inc. (development management services); Perkins Eastman (site planning and architecture); Kimley-Horn (planning and civil engineering); and W.E. O’Neil (construction).

Q9: How did Los Gatos Meadows engage the community through the design process?

A9: The Front Porch project team has organized and participated in over 15 public forums and more than 75 meetings with community members, local businesses, neighbors, community groups and other stakeholders to gather public input to shape the project designs.

Q10: What is happening currently to the buildings and grounds?

A10: Since the Los Gatos Meadows facility closed Sept. 30, 2019, Front Porch has provided on-site property management and security, ensuring the campus remains safe from fire, trespassing, vandalism, and illegal dumping. In addition, ongoing maintenance has been provided as needed. Front Porch has erected a perimeter fence around the main campus and has posted no trespassing signs. We do not anticipate demolishing the existing facilities until we have been granted land use approval to rebuild the community.

Q11: Is there asbestos on the current campus?

A11: Asbestos is a construction material used to strengthen different components, so it can have a common presence in buildings, especially those constructed before 1979. It’s important to know that the presence of asbestos is not inherently dangerous. Since the disturbance of asbestos can cause potentially harmful effects if it is not properly remediated, removed or disposed of, Front Porch has multiple policies in place to ensure all construction and renovation projects that could involve disturbance of materials follow strict testing and remediation protocols.

Q12: What is the current status of the proposal?

A12: The project team previewed potential refinements to the re-development proposal with the Planning Commission at their October 25, 2023 meeting. An updated development application was submitted March 1, 2024. (The initial application for re-development review for the Los Gatos Meadows property was submitted to the Town of Los Gatos Planning Division on January 22, 2020.) The project application and all related documents, including the Draft Environmental Impact Report, are available on the Town of Los Gatos website (www.losgatos.com) and at <https://www.losgatosca.gov/2393/W> (listed as “110 Wood Road”).

Project Timeline and Information:

Q13: When are the next public hearings?

A13: We do not yet have a date for the next public hearings; however, we currently expect that the Planning Commission hearing will occur in the later part of 2024, followed by a Town Council hearing sometime afterward.

Q14: If the project proposal is approved by the Town, what is the timeline for construction and opening?

A14: Preparation of construction documents and permit approvals are likely to take at least another 18 months following the Town's action on the project. Construction is not expected to start earlier than 2026 and is expected to run for approximately two and a half years from commencement. Depending on a number of factors, the community could reopen in 2028.

Q15: What are the attributes of the current entitlement?

A15: The Town of Los Gatos approved a conditional use permit (CUP) for the development of the current Los Gatos Meadows community in the late 1960s. The existing CUP granted approval for 184 independent living units and 38 nursing care units (total 222) to be supported by 111 parking spaces.

Q16: Is the property subject to Los Gatos Hillside Development Standards & Guidelines?

A16: No, however the current iteration of the plan includes several attributes consistent with these standards and guidelines including an increase in open space, the elimination of cantilevered buildings, and the expectation to utilize natural materials with muted tones that will blend in well with the surrounding environment.

Q17: What are the design goals of the proposed project?

A17: Early on in the planning process, we established the following design goals, which we continue to maintain:

- No increase to the total number of apartments and care units and no increase in the staff count;
- No increase to the development pad footprint;
- To provide larger apartments and more amenities in alignment with the local market;
- To be sensitive to visual impacts;
- To address the parking problem;
- To substantially improve fire safety;
- To establish best practices for sustainability;
- To restrict the auto exit onto Broadway;
- To improve integration with the Town of Los Gatos;
- And to contribute to the quality of the built environment.

Q18: How many units are proposed in the design?

A18: The current proposal includes 187 independent living units and up to 24 supporting care units (211 total).

Q19: How does the proposed building footprint compare to the existing footprint associated with current improvements on the property?

A19: The proposed development pad does not materially differ from the existing development pad and in fact is slightly smaller.

Q20: How did the project team illustrate the potential visual impact on the community?

Q20: The project team developed numerous exhibits to assist in gauging the visual impact of our proposed rebuild including cross sections and visualization from several key public areas. Furthermore, the project team previously erected story poles in compliance with the prior applicable Town policy.

Despite these efforts, the project team appreciates that these efforts have not resulted in a clear picture of the visual impacts of the proposed project. Accordingly, Front Porch engaged Arnold Imaging (<https://arnoldimaging.com/>) to assist the community and decision makers in better understanding the expected visual impacts of the proposed project. Arnold Imaging was engaged prior to the Town selecting a visualization consultant, and we requested a minor waiver to the Town's applicable policy to utilize Arnold Imaging in lieu of the Town's not-yet-identified visualization consultant. On June 18, 2024, the Town granted this waiver request. A video summary of this analysis can be found at the project information website (<https://frontporch.net/community/los-gatos-meadows/>).

Q21: How does the proposed design address visual impacts on the surrounding community?

A21: The proposed design utilizes natural materials with muted tones that will blend in well with the surrounding environment. In addition, the substantial change in topography from the front to the rear of the property mitigates the visual impact of buildings located in the rear of the property.

Q22: How will the project improve parking from what it had been previously?

A22: Underground parking will be sufficient for both residents and employees, reducing the need for street parking and improving the landscape and view.

Q23: How does the proposal impact trees on the property?

A23: The proposal includes a plan to add more trees to the landscape, bringing color and shade to the property. It incorporates a variety of species, many of them native to the area, which fit with the oak woodlands. Some trees and shrubs have been removed, mostly for fire prevention. Some additional trees would be removed during the construction process, but the overall plan preserves the oak woodland nature of the property and emphasizes the natural landscape.

Q24: How does this project improve fire safety?

A24: Our goal to increase fire safety, including wildfire safety, has been particularly influential in guiding our development planning process. A substantial driver of the site work and resulting impact to existing trees is directly related to improving access for emergency vehicles and evacuation. Furthermore, the project incorporates contemporary fire safety standards, which have changed and improved substantially since the existing improvements were designed in the late 1960s.

Q25: Will the project meet green building standards?

A25: The project will meet or exceed the California Green Building Standards Code, which is more rigorous than other independent certifications. In response to community feedback, the project will incorporate recycling, ample natural light, energy and water efficiency, and other environmentally sound practices.

Q26: What will be the color of the building rooftops?

A26: To address sustainability goals, we plan to select a lighter roof color, though the new roofs would not be white like the roofs of the current buildings. Roof color and other design attributes are expected to be addressed in a future phase of the project.

Q27: Will the project include solar panels?

A27: Solar panels are one option under consideration. The use, placement and configuration of solar panels, as applicable, are expected to be addressed during the architectural and site application review process.

Q28: Will the project result in the undergrounding of PG&E lines?

A28: The proposal does not address undergrounding of power lines. At an appropriate time, the project team intends to inquire with PG&E regarding the undergrounding of power lines and will plan to coordinate with interested neighbors on this matter.

Q29: How will the proposal support the broader community?

A29: The proposal includes recommendations and resources to make it easier for residents to access downtown businesses, community events and programs. In addition, in November 2023, Front Porch acquired the property at 142 S. Santa Cruz. Front Porch intends to use this property for construction oversight and/or marketing during the construction phase, as well as a resource that supports the broader community. Discussions with the Los Gatos Foundation for Older Adults to Thrive to explore possible opportunities are already under way. In part based on discussions to date, Front Porch currently expects to launch a home sharing program called Home Match (<https://frontporch.net/live/home-match/>) in Los Gatos, though a start date has not yet been determined. Front Porch currently offers Home Match in San Francisco, Marin and the East Bay.

Q30: Will the project affect water pressure?

A30: The project is not expected to affect water pressure in the area. As part of the project planning process, San Jose Water Company performed hydraulic analysis and confirmed that water pressure is suitable.

Q31: Will the project include below-market-rate units?

A31: No. The prior Town attorney confirmed that Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) are explicitly exempt by state law from local government requirements to restrict rent and income of CCRC residents. Both the State of California and Front Porch, which owns and operates affordable communities throughout California, have a clear interest in expanding the affordable housing supply, but they also recognize that CCRCs materially differ from traditional housing communities. Although the construction of affordable housing units is not part of the project, Front Porch is proposing to expand Home Match, its home sharing program, providing an innovative alternative solution that can support people with middle or lower incomes in Los Gatos.

Construction Impact:

Q32: If the project is approved, how long will the construction phase last?

A32: Following the Town's action on the project, preparation of construction documents and permit approvals are likely to take at least another 18 months, after which construction is expected to run for approximately two and a half years.

Q33: During what hours would construction occur?

A33: In accordance with Town policy, all construction activities would be limited to the hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. No construction is allowed on Sundays or holidays.

Q34: What is the expected traffic impact related to construction off-haul of dirt?

A34: The project team will do everything possible to mitigate impact to traffic during the estimated four months that off-haul will take place. In accordance with the current draft of Conditions of Approval, hauling of soil shall not occur during the morning and evening peak periods (between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. and between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.) and such hauling shall be subject to a traffic control plan acceptable to the Town. A combination of double bottoms, end dumps, and super dump trucks are expected to be utilized for this task. For outbound trips, trucks are expected to turn right onto S. Santa Cruz Avenue and head south on CA-17 and, as appropriate, turn around on Bear Creek Road. For inbound trips, trucks are expected to approach the site from the CA-17 exit onto S. Santa Cruz Ave.

Q35: Does the contractor expect to utilize tower cranes?

A35: Yes. The project team currently expects that the project will require two tower cranes during construction. The cranes are expected to be in place for approximately one year.

Circulation, Traffic and Parking Impact:

Q36: What are the project plans for Farwell Lane?

A36: The proposal plans for Farwell Lane to be rebuilt and widened (some portions would be widened from 12' to 26'). The current plan contemplates restricting use of Farwell Lane to pedestrians, bikes, an autonomous vehicle shuttle system, emergency access and extraordinary deliveries. The Santa Clara County Fire Department intends to utilize Farwell Lane as the primary access point to the property in the event of a fire. Though it is a private road, Front Porch intends to improve and operate Farwell Lane in a manner that would permit accessible use of this route by our neighbors in the event of an emergency.

Q37: Will the project include sidewalk improvements on Wood Road?

A37: Yes. The current draft Conditions of Approval require the installation of a sidewalk connecting the project to the intersection of Wood Road and S. Santa Cruz Avenue and construction of the necessary retaining wall(s), potential pedestrian crosswalk and associated ADA ramps for connectivity to the existing sidewalk on the south side of Wood Road.

Q38: How will the proposed community affect traffic and parking in downtown Los Gatos?

A38: The current plan includes the integration of one or more electric autonomous vehicles (similar in size to a golf cart) to be used along Farwell Lane to enable a safe, convenient, and alternative means of transport for residents between Los Gatos Meadows and Los Gatos retail, entertainment, and civil services, reducing traffic and parking demand. The autonomous vehicles are not expected to leave the Los Gatos Meadows property.

Q39: After the project is completed, what is the expected impact on traffic?

A39: The project is expected to result in a modest increase in the number of trips on Wood Road due to the change in the use of Farwell Lane, although we anticipate that the improvements to the parking conditions at Los Gatos Meadows will mean that overall there is less traffic than the community used to generate. The project further mitigates its traffic impact by utilizing electric autonomous shuttles to connect residents to downtown without impacting parking demand.

A traffic analysis originally conducted in 2020 and updated in March, 2024 reports that the proposed rebuild would result in not more than an additional 42 cars per hour in or out which equates to less than one trip per minute. On Saturdays, the peak hour in-bound is 43 trips. This still equates to less than one trip per minute. The rebuild project is expected to result in a reduction in the number of peak hour trips in the mornings and evenings in comparison to baseline conditions.

More information:

Q40: How do I get updates and more information?

A40: When available, updated information, including the current FAQ document, will be posted on the Los Gatos Meadows website at <https://frontporch.net/community/los-gatos-meadows/>.

If you have questions or would like to be added to our mailing list, send your name, mailing address and email address to Susan Rockwood (susan@rockwoodpacific.com). Please note that we currently do not have information about pricing and services. However, if you are interested in receiving this information when it is available, let us know.

Q41: How can I see planning and proposal documents?

A41: The project application and all related documents, including the Draft Environmental Impact Report, are available on the Town of Los Gatos website (www.losgatos.com) and at <https://www.losgatosca.gov/2393/W> (listed as “110 Wood Road”).