



Los Gatos Meadows

A FRONT PORCH COMMUNITY

Rebuild of Los Gatos Meadows Frequently Asked Questions

December 2024

Overview:

Front Porch Communities and Services, a non-profit provider of housing and services for older adults, submitted a proposal in January 2020 to rebuild Los Gatos Meadows, a senior living community that closed due to safety reasons in 2019. The proposed project offers independent living and innovative care on a safe and modern campus, aligned with the Town of Los Gatos' long-term vision and informed by extensive community engagement.

The answers to these frequently asked questions are the product of thoughtful and transparent discussions with community leaders, neighbors, and Town leaders that fit into the following categories:

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

Complete information also is 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 is a proposed senior living community designed to provide housing and care for older people. The proposal includes sustainable, accessible and state-of-the-art features that align with the Town of Los Gatos' long-term vision and is informed by extensive community engagement. The project will replace the current facility at 110 Wood Road that was built in the 1970s and closed in 2019 for safety concerns.

Q2: Who owns the Los Gatos Meadows property?

A2: Los Gatos Meadows is owned and maintained by Front Porch Communities and Services, a non-profit provider of housing and services, primarily for older adults, headquartered in Glendale, California. Los Gatos Meadows previously was owned and operated by Covia, another California-based non-profit provider of senior housing and services. Covia merged with Front Porch in 2021.

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

A3: Los Gatos Meadows was closed in 2019 after a rigorous facilities assessment by Covia concluded that the 48-year-old was a safety risk to its residents and employees. Los Gatos Meadows worked closely with residents and their families, employees, neighbors, and the Town of Los Gatos to ensure 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, is proposing to rebuild Los Gatos Meadows as a Life Plan community for older adults that offers independent living and innovative care on a safe and modern campus informed by extensive community engagement. It includes 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, which also is 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. Life Plan communities are not assisted living or medical care-based facilities. Residents in Life Plan communities join while they are able to live independently to enjoy a new home and opportunities for a purposeful life where 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 non-profit entity?

A7: Yes, Front Porch is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Front Porch provides quality, accessible and affordable housing and aging services to approximately 7,500 residents in 18 senior living and 32 affordable housing communities, primarily in California.

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 organized and participated in more than 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 on 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. Ongoing maintenance has been provided as needed. Front Porch installed a fence around the main campus perimeter 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 and how will it be mitigated?

A11: Asbestos, which was a common material in buildings constructed before 1979, can cause potentially harmful effects if it is not properly remediated and removed. Although there is currently asbestos on the current campus, the presence of asbestos is not inherently dangerous unless it is disturbed. Front Porch has multiple policies and procedures 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 proposal was reviewed Nov. 13, 2024 by the Los Gatos Planning Commission, which unanimously voted to recommend approval of the project and referred the proposal, with some recommendations, to the Los Gatos Town Council. At present, we expect the Town Council to formally review the proposal at their February 4, 2025 hearing. The initial application was submitted to the Town of Los Gatos Planning Division on Jan. 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 is the next public hearing?

A13: We expect the project to be reviewed by the Los Gatos Town Council at their February 4, 2025 hearing. The Town Council hearing related to this project will be open to the public and, when available, meeting details will be posted on the Town of Los Gatos website (<https://www.losgatosca.gov/>).

Q14: What is the timeline for construction and opening of Los Gatos Meadows if the project proposal is approved by the Town?

A14: Preparation of construction documents and permit approvals are likely to take at least another 18 months following the Town's approval. Construction is not expected to start earlier than 2026 and is anticipated to take approximately two and a half years. Los Gatos Meadows could reopen in 2028, at the earliest.

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: The following design goals were established early during the planning process and continue to be maintained:

- 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
- 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 is slightly smaller than the existing facility yet does not materially differ.

Q20: How did Front Porch illustrate the potential visual impact on the community?

Q20: Front Porch developed numerous exhibits, installed story poles and 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 an exception 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 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. 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 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: The proposed project substantially improves access for emergency vehicles, creates efficient evacuation routes and implements contemporary fire safety standards to ensure safety from fires. Installation and maintenance of vegetation, including trees, is a substantial focus in addressing wildfire safety.

Q25: Will the project meet green building standards?

A25: Yes, the proposed Los Gatos Meadows will meet or exceed the California Green Building Standards Code, incorporating recycling, ample natural light, energy and water efficiency, and other environmentally sound practices.

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

A26: We plan to select a lighter roof color as part of our sustainability efforts, although the new roofs will 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 resources for residents easily to access downtown businesses, community events and programs. Front Porch acquired the property at 142 S. Santa Cruz Ave. to use for construction oversight and/or marketing as well as a resource that supports the broader community. Front Porch is discussing opportunities with the Los Gatos Foundation for Older Adults to Thrive and plans 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: No, the project is not expected to affect water pressure in the area. San Jose Water Company performed a hydraulic analysis and confirmed that water pressure is suitable for the project.

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: How long will construction last?

A32: Following the Town's approval of the project, preparation of construction documents and permit approvals are likely to take at least another 18 months, after which construction is expected to take 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 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 Avenue.

Q35: Does the contractor expect to utilize tower cranes?

A35: Yes. The project team 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 feet to 26 feet). 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 Farwell Lane is a private road, Front Porch intends to improve and operate it 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 requires 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, allowing connections 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 previously generated. The project further mitigates its traffic impact by utilizing electric autonomous shuttles to connect residents to downtown without impacting parking demand.

More information:

Q40: How do I get updates and more information?

A40: The Los Gatos Meadows website <https://frontporch.net/community/los-gatos-meadows/> contains updated information and a comprehensive and easy-to-use FAQ document.

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 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”).