

Coachman Ridge Neighborhood Plan

Introduction

Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District

In 1999 the City of Clearwater implemented a new planning tool known as the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCOD). The purpose of this designation is to provide a means of ensuring that infill and redevelopment activities in existing, stable neighborhoods are consistent with the protection of the existing character of the neighborhood. The designation calls for the preparation of a special area plan for the neighborhood that includes goals and objectives as well as development standards that are necessary and appropriate to protect the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood. Once the plan is prepared and approved by the City Commission, the NCOD is identified on the City's zoning atlas and in the Community Development Code. The Coachman Ridge Neighborhood Association is the first neighborhood group in the City to initiate this planning process and take advantage of the NCOD provisions.



Coachman Ridge Neighborhood Planning Process

Coachman Ridge is an established and stable neighborhood that has experienced increasing property values over the years. The Coachman Ridge Homeowners Association became interested in the NCOD due to the voluntary nature of the Association and the potential difficulty in the enforcement of neighborhood standards. The Association expressed concern that lack of compliance with deed restrictions would alter the established character of the neighborhood and possibly result in a decline in property values and neighborhood quality of life.

In August 2000 the Coachman Ridge Homeowners Association distributed a letter to all properties within the neighborhood explaining the NCOD. The letter also included a petition asking property owners whether or not they wanted to initiate the NCOD process for Coachman Ridge. Residents overwhelmingly endorsed the petition with 190 homeowners out of a total of 255 owners voting "yes" to proceed. This represents seventy-four percent (74%) of the neighborhood compared to the sixty percent (60%) approval rate required by the Clearwater Community Development Code. Only ten (10) homeowners voted "no" and fifty-five (55) did not vote.

The Coachman Ridge neighborhood submitted an application for NCOD designation and the required petition to the City on October 25, 2000. At the January 16, 2001 meeting, the Clearwater City Commission held a public meeting and determined that Coachman Ridge met the criteria set forth in the Community Development Code. The Commission's action authorized the neighborhood to proceed with the NCOD planning process. The Commission appointed the requisite study committee, which was comprised of ten (10) neighborhood residents.

The Coachman Ridge neighborhood, in conjunction with city staff, held a total of five public meetings between February 2001 and May 2001. At the first meeting, residents identified strengths and weaknesses associated with their neighborhood and prioritized the issues identified. At the second and third meetings, residents developed goals and objectives to enhance neighborhood strengths and minimize neighborhood weaknesses. The fourth meeting was dedicated to reviewing the neighborhood's deed restrictions and identifying development standards that should be included in the Coachman Ridge NCOD overlay provisions. At the fifth meeting the neighborhood reviewed the final plan and agreed to submit it to the City for approval. Throughout the neighborhood planning process the study committee met with City staff to guide the process, establish a format for meetings and provide direction in the development of the Plan.

Neighborhood Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Coachman Ridge neighborhood plan is to provide a framework for neighborhood enhancement and change. It will serve as an official document for Coachman Ridge and the City of Clearwater. It should be used to coordinate public and private initiatives, as well as to provide the basis for the implementation of development standards unique to the neighborhood.