

Coachman Ridge Neighborhood Plan

Neighborhood Strengths and Weaknesses

At the first public neighborhood meeting held by the study committee on March 22, 2001, participants divided up into three groups and brainstormed about the strengths and weaknesses of Coachman Ridge. Each group presented their list of strengths and weaknesses to the entire group and then each participant was asked to prioritize the issues by identifying the three most important strengths and three most important weaknesses. Coachman Ridge residents identified the following issues as the neighborhoods' priority strengths and weaknesses.

Coachman Ridge Strengths

Neighborhood Location

Coachman Ridge residents ranked neighborhood location as the most important strength. The neighborhood is centrally located near US 19, which serves as the primary north-south transportation route in Pinellas County. Coachman Ridge is in close proximity to places of work, worship, schools, shopping, parks and trails, which makes its location attractive to potential residents. It is also minutes from Clearwater Beach, the St. Petersburg/ Clearwater International Airport and Tampa International Airport.



Neighborhood Character

Neighborhood character was identified as significant neighborhood strength. Coachman Ridge residents place a high value on the variety of architectural styles found in the neighborhood and the lot and house sizes required by the deed restrictions. Well-maintained property and mature landscaping are viewed as defining characteristics of Coachman Ridge, as well as underground utilities.

Neighborhood Infrastructure

Quality infrastructure is regarded as another important neighborhood strength. Residents like the loop and curvilinear streets that keep traffic slow and prevent neighborhood streets from being used as cut-through streets. The construction of the Stag Run Boulevard cul-de-sac was identified as the most positive aspect of the neighborhood's infrastructure. Stag Run Boulevard was a through street that provided an alternative traffic route from U.S. 19 to Old Coachman Road. Over the years the City received complaints about people parking along the eastern portion of the roadway, speeding and cut-through traffic. The issue came to the forefront when plans emerged for the construction of the Wal-Mart. During the site plan review process Wal-Mart agreed to construct the cul-de-sac as part of its development and it was completed in 1994.



Properly functioning drainage is also regarded as an important neighborhood feature, as well as the continuous sidewalk system.

Neighborhood Security/Safety

Residents attending the brainstorming session believe Coachman Ridge is a very quiet and safe neighborhood, and feel secure living in the neighborhood. Residents noted that they experienced very quick response times from the Clearwater Police Department and 911. Residents are also supportive of the Coachman Ridge Neighborhood Watch program, which they believe is an asset to the neighborhood.

Property Values

Property values in Coachman Ridge have been steadily increasing over the years. As stated in the existing conditions section of the Plan, Coachman Ridge property values average 12% above citywide property values. Increasing property values are very important to Coachman Ridge property owners. They believe that all of the identified priority strengths contribute to neighborhood stability and the above average property values found in the neighborhood.

Coachman Ridge Weaknesses

Possible Impacts of Community Sports Complex

Coachman Ridge residents are concerned about the possible impacts of the new community sports complex. Of particular concern is the ability of Old Coachman Road

and N.E. Coachman Road to accommodate additional traffic generated by complex events. Currently, during peak travel times, ingress and egress from Coachman Ridge is difficult. Residents fear that increased traffic, as a result of complex events, will create more congestion and have a negative impact on their quality of life. Residents are also apprehensive about other potential impacts such as increased noise, crime and litter. Lastly, Coachman Ridge is concerned about the types of events, other than baseball, that will occur in the complex.

Neighborhood Perimeter

The perimeter of Coachman Ridge received an extensive amount of discussion, as well as consensus. The lack of a uniform wall around the neighborhood is an issue which neighbors agree needs to be addressed. Many residents believe that some of the existing wooden fences are old, unattractive and in disrepair. They are concerned about the effect piecemeal fence replacement will have on neighborhood appearance and image.



The proposed construction of the Florida Power Trail, which will be on the eastern edge of the neighborhood, troubles some residents. There is fear that the trail may bring litter and crime into the neighborhood because there will be a new, less visible means of access into Coachman Ridge.

Residents believe the increased activity that the new community sports complex and Florida Power Trail will bring to the surrounding neighborhood intensifies the need for perimeter fencing that will increase safety and provide noise abatement.



Another perimeter issue identified is the lack of sidewalks on the north side of N.E. Coachman Road and on the east side of Old Coachman Road adjacent to the Coachman Ridge neighborhood. Due to the significant amount of traffic on these roadways, the neighborhood has been working with the Florida Department of Transportation to get sidewalks constructed. Residents view the lack of sidewalks in these rights-of-way as an important perimeter safety issue that needs to be resolved.

Three other perimeter issues were identified as weaknesses. One is overgrown vegetation surrounding the neighborhood and in particular in the Florida Power right-of-way. Another is the lack of maintenance and litter control on N.E. Coachman and Old Coachman Roads. The other issue is noise associated with US 19, airplanes, perimeter traffic and Wal-Mart.

Traffic and Parking

The volume of traffic on Old Coachman Road and N.E. Coachman Road has become a major concern of Coachman Ridge residents. Since there are no turning lanes on either of these streets, traffic backs up during peak periods when cars are trying to make left turns. This congestion blocks neighborhood entrances, making it difficult to get in and out of the neighborhood. This problem is most evident at the intersection of El Tair Trail and N.E. Coachman Road and was documented in the traffic study conducted for the new community sports complex. Speeding on N.E. Coachman Road was another problem identified by Coachman Ridge residents.



Several issues related to parking were identified as neighborhood weaknesses. Residents believe that when cars are parked on both sides of the street directly across from one another, it is difficult for cars to drive through. Another parking issue discussed is when cars park in such a manner as to block sidewalks. When this occurs, pedestrians cannot use the sidewalk and in many instances are forced to use the street.



Another parking issue discussed is the parking of vehicles outside of garages, although there is sensitivity to the fact that today's vehicles do not always fit inside garages or a family may have more vehicles than the garage can accommodate. There was overwhelming consensus that boats, trailers, recreational vehicles and commercial vehicles continue to be parked inside garages as required by the deed restrictions. The only other parking issue noted was the late night parking that occasionally occurs at the Stag Run Boulevard cul-de-sac.

Property Maintenance

Many properties are well maintained in the Coachman Ridge neighborhood; however, poor property maintenance evident in some homes is viewed as a significant weakness. Residents believe that unkempt properties have a negative impact on neighborhood appearance and value. Residents discussed specific areas of maintenance that cause particular concern. This discussion centered on roofs with mildew, rust stains on homes and sidewalks, fence maintenance and yard maintenance i.e. overgrown and dead landscaping and fruit tree maintenance.

Voluntary Homeowners Association

Residents ranked having a voluntary homeowners association as a weakness. Because the association is not mandatory, the Coachman Ridge Homeowners Association cannot rely on mandatory dues. This is a problem because the Association has been responsible for planting and maintaining landscaping at the neighborhood entrances, publishing a neighborhood directory and newsletter, etc. Every year the Association must have a membership drive to secure funds to continue its activities. Another weakness of



a voluntary association pointed out by some residents is its lack of authority compared to the board of a mandatory association especially when enforcing deed restrictions. The voluntary Coachman Ridge Homeowners Association does enforce deed restrictions, however, strict enforcement can only occur if neighbors litigate.

Lack of Reclaimed Water

Since quality landscaping and lawn maintenance is an important characteristic of Coachman Ridge, the inability of residents to get reclaimed water is an issue. Having to rely on potable water for lawn maintenance is expensive and is limiting due to the restriction on the number of days one can water. Residents believe as the drought continues or if water costs rise, they will not be able to maintain their property to meet neighborhood standards.