

Why Woodward is a match for Fort Collins

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The news that Woodward is interested in growing and expanding comes with both appreciation and apprehension.

The company, which designs and manufactures parts for the energy and aerospace industries, has been a part of Fort Collins for more than 50 years. They moved their world headquarters here 5 years ago.

At a meeting earlier this week, the company released a plan that would locate a new headquarters on the site of the Link-N-Greens golf course on Lincoln Avenue. The development sketches show thoughtful stewardship of the area, which sits on a sensitive area of the Poudre River. Nearly a quarter of the site plan is used for open space, and historic buildings on the site would be preserved.

Groups like Save the Poudre have given the plan at least a tentative nod — initial development sketches show a significant green space between the river and trail network and the building's footprint. Area residents agree that the facility would be a good neighbor. And the city gets to see a huge parcel of land be used for "infill" instead of sprawl — a priority we wholeheartedly buy in to.

It's certainly a plan that seemingly covers all the bases.

What's not certain is whether Woodward will act on it. Earlier this week, the company noted that they're looking at several sites — not all of them in Fort Collins.

We have little doubt that other communities will be aggressive in their economic incentives for relocation — an area in which Fort Collins is sometimes more conservative than our neighbors.

Woodward's footprint goes deeper than the hundreds of jobs it

provides to the city's residents. CEO Tom Gendron was instrumental in moving Woodward's headquarters to Fort Collins, and he also has been a part of making this community a richer place. The company has supported increased funding for public schools and has been a big part of kickstarting the area's clean energy programs in public and private sectors. They've been a partner in helping Fort Collins grow in an intelligent manner.

In looking for a new facility, the company has said they want to provide "an environment for collaboration and innovation while fitting in well with the surroundings."

Admittedly, we're a community that is sometimes more picky about growth than its neighbors. We don't just want industry — we embrace companies that are a good fit. We'd remind Mr. Gendron why he moved the headquarters to Fort Collins in the first place. Look out the window; walk around town, and work with the city to ensure that the company's home for future decades nestles near the bank of the Poudre River in the heart of Fort Collins.