Fort Collins Housing Access and Affordability Questionnaire:

Dear Fort Collins City Council/Mayoral candidate, the Associated Students of Colorado State University (ASCSU) would like to cordially invite you to express your perspectives on the current state of the City’s housing market, and the issue of rental affordability through the following questionnaire:

Median rental costs in Fort Collins have increased by about 65% since 2005, a significantly larger increase than portrayed in similar cities (per recent occupancy study conducted by Corona Insights). This increase in rental prices has perpetuated housing-insecurity throughout our community, caused some CSU students to experience homelessness, drove workers to reside at neighboring towns, and prevented individuals of low-income background from joining our community.

1. Do you view housing affordability as an issue in Fort Collins? (y/n/open answer)

Housing affordability is most certainly an issue. It is affecting our economy, our environment, and our quality of life.

2. Does the current state of housing affordability in Fort Collins contribute to college unaffordability in your opinion? (y/n/open answer)

My understanding is the data points to a number of reasons why college is unaffordable to individuals. Housing most certainly plays into these figures but it is not the only issue.

3. Do you believe the occupancy ordinance, also known as U+2, is a significant contributor to the sharp rise in rental prices over the past fourteen years? Would you support a marginal increase in permitted occupants per dwelling unit such as Me+3

Please email back to: ASCSU_Community_Affairs@colostate.edu
No later than March 20th, 2019
There are a number of reasons why rental market prices have increased over the last 14 years. It follows the growth of the city of Fort Collins, the housing market in general, and the strength of our economic development. In all fairness, maybe the ordinance should be modified that if the house is built with 4 bedrooms, then the owner should be able to accommodate accordingly. Yes, there are zoned areas where a person can ask for more occupancy, but why shouldn’t it be equal everywhere. I’m not talking about those who build a garage into a bedroom, etc. Maybe this is where licensing rental units could be more transparent of what qualifies or not.

4. Over 50% of violators of U+2 are non-students. Do you agree that this issue, and the issue of neighborhood quality, are more than just a student concern? (y/n/open answer)

The violations are most certainly more than a student concern. I have personally experienced that to be true and this data proves that is true.

5. The recent occupancy study concluded that U+2 had a negative impact on housing affordability. It also found that the local community believes the ordinance had a positive effect on neighborhood quality. Do you believe housing affordability and neighborhood quality are mutually exclusive? (y/n/open answer)

My thoughts are that these two things aren’t mutually exclusive. I think there are additional things that individuals can do, and the city can help with to ensure the quality of neighborhoods. I think affordable housing leads to greater diversity and can lead to a higher quality when it comes to neighborhoods. Occupancy in and of itself doesn’t indicate quality.

6. What ideas do you have to address housing affordability and neighborhood quality in Fort Collins? (Open answer)
We need to seek a multi-modal approach to address this issue including but not limited to the emphasis in the new City Plan on adjusting and diversifying our portfolio of housing we offer in our city. Additionally, we need to continue to work with builders and non-profits in offering affordable housing in our city.