

Monday, August 21, 2023

## **Re: Concerns about Hwy 40 Hotel Development at Indian Meadows and Stone Lane Bridge**

Dear City Council Members and the Steamboat Planning Department,

I am writing to express my concerns about the implications of the proposed development of two hotels at the Indian Meadows Lot Subdivision as well as the Stone Lane connector bridge.

I live on Meadowood Lane and have lived in this Mountain Area neighborhood since 2001. I am raising two elementary-aged school children with my husband, Chris Martin, and our dog, Willa. We have loved teaching our children to freely ride bikes, scooters, and skateboards in the surrounding streets (primarily Chinook and Stone Lane). These developments feel like they are threatening the very safety, security and community that we know and love.

Before I begin addressing the developments, I wanted to express that I am very disappointed about the lack of communication that our neighborhood has received from the planning department about these developments. A year ago, I heard from a neighbor that properties that were within 300 ft of the development were notified. Our property almost backs onto the bike path and creek (we have a clear view of the path between where our property joins the yards of our two neighbors) and yet we have *never* received *any* information. We have relied upon word-of-mouth from neighbors.

Furthermore, I tried to research information just last week on the City website and via an array of Google searches. The only piece of information I could find was letter that was apparently distributed to homes (as mentioned above). I cannot find any other records.

Regarding the Indian Meadows Hotels:

1. **Flooding:** One of our biggest concerns is flooding caused by the destruction of the surrounding natural environment and the subsequent construction of massive paved areas, in addition to the buildings. Each spring we hold our breath, hoping that the creek will not rise to ours or surrounding properties.

We are presently not in a flood plain and are not required to carry flood insurance. This year I inquired due to the high snow-fall and we were quoted a price of over \$4000. If proper mitigation measures are not taken during the development of the property, our home and our neighbors – and downstream homes – will highly likely be under threat of flooding each Spring, and may also be required to carry exorbitant flood insurance. Since I cannot find any online information about the property development, I have no

idea whether the planning department and the City have taken proper consideration of the implications of developing this land in this manner. It was not done properly for the Homewood Suites since it flooded a couple of years in a row.

2. **Stone Lane Connector – and the Hotels Combined:** I am led to believe that at the most recent City Council meeting, council members expressed that these two projects are *not related*, and yet the developer is being asked to pay \$465K toward the Stone Lane bridge. Clearly, the projects are therefore *not* mutually exclusive, and therefore, I am going to raise my concerns about the Stone Lane Bridge project again.

Approximately a year ago, I wrote to the Planning Department to express issues with the bridge and I will attach a copy of that email below which outlines my concerns (which are shared by many of my neighbors) some of which are listed below:

- a. Walkability / Bikability: **The safety risks for children, dog walkers, bike riders** (who use these streets after exiting the bike path) and a whole array of community members enjoying the relative safety of these streets that presently enjoy minimal traffic use;
  - b. **The lack of planning for sidewalks before the bridge is built** (not just on Stone Lane but also on Chinook which is incredibly narrow)
  - c. The safety issues for my neighbors in cars **reversing in and out of driveways** on Stone Lane when it is predicted that 300+ cars per hour (that's one car every 12 seconds)
  - d. The **increased traffic at Walton Creek intersections** on Whistler and Chinook when cars transit through our neighborhood to get to the ski area
  - e. The implications for the **school bus route, trash pick-up, and mail cluster boxes**.
3. **Destruction of Neighborhood Character:** One of the goals of the **STR Overlay Zones** initiative was to protect *neighborhood character* and this area is in the **red zone**. Flooding the streets with additional traffic (approx. 300 cars per hour) from HWY 40 and nearby hotels (traffic study predictions assume at least 80% of traffic is visitor, not local traffic) will undoubtedly be detrimental to the safety of the streets for children and residents.



## STRs have an impact on...

- Housing supply and availability
- Neighborhood character
- Overall community character



- *Planning Commission, July 12*
- *City Council, July 13*

It seems entirely **counterproductive to the STR program** to open the streets up to additional vehicle traffic and tourists from the 190+ room hotels, as well as several other neighboring hotels.

The residents of **Pamela Lane** fought for 17 years to rightfully protect their small neighborhood. We are desperately trying to do the same.

4. **Wildlife Protection:** Our neighborhood is frequented by bear, moose, and array of other animals. They use the surrounding creeks to traverse the area, and are often wandering down Chinook and Stone Lanes. An increase in inexperienced tourist vehicles and people on bikes or on foot will undoubtedly increase incidents with wildlife which will endanger both parties lives.
5. **Light and Noise Pollution:** The Homewood Suites already has a number interior and exterior lights that light up the neighborhood – including unnecessary Christmas lights that light up the wilderness around the creek so the features of the creek are distinctly visible at night.

Finally, on a personal note: I was chatting with two friends this winter about the stress and anxiety expressed among their team members at one of Steamboat's largest employers. Among many concerns was the feeling that **local residents are being "crowded out"** of Steamboat. From basic issues like long lift lines, the increasing costs of food and dining out—to more serious issues like a lack of daycare, all-day summer programs, available rental properties, affordable housing, and even the fact that our property taxes have nearly doubled in one year—the list of changes we have all experienced is long. *(We also respect that there are benefits too of our growing, changing community).*

But this massive development and pathway from the hotel corridor directly into our neighborhood streets all **in the name of tourism growth and increased taxes** threaten the very peace and freedom we crave in Steamboat—where children ride scooters freely, dog

walkers stroll with long leashes, and, on Halloween, we have one of the loveliest Halloween Strolls (around throughout Chinook, Stone, and Hiawatha). It literally feels like we are being crowded out of streets.

I cannot see the benefit of a development this large, nor the value of building the connector bridge from HWY 40 to Stone Lane.

Please re-consider these two developments before it's too late.

Sincerely,  
Katy Martin

1230 Meadowood Lane  
Steamboat, CO 80487



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**Copy of email to [tstauffer@steamboatsprings.net](mailto:tstauffer@steamboatsprings.net)**  
**Date Mon, Jul 18, 2022**

Hi Toby,

This email pertains to the Application PL20220209 for Lot 1 Indian Meadows F3.

My husband, Chris Martin, and our 2 children (ages 5 and 8) live at 1230 Meadowood Lane, Steamboat Springs, CO 80487. Our house is accessed from Chinook, just before Stone lane, and we have a view through our yard and a small portion of our neighbors to the bike path, just before the end near Stone lane. When the leaves are gone in the winter, we look through to the Homewood Suites.

**This letter expresses that we vehemently oppose the subsequent Stone Lane connector bridge and road from HWY 40 and this development.**

### **Part 1: Flooding:**

While we do oppose the building of the hotels, I do not personally have enough environmental engineering impact experience to be able to express many specific concerns.

I will express that I am very concerned about the impact of flooding on my property and my neighbors' properties on Meadowood Lane and Meadowood Court. Each spring, we watch the flood waters rise for at least a week at a time, coming up several feet in the surrounding yards just near the decks of our neighbors and into lower-lying areas of our own yard.

It is inevitable that there will be occasions when a myriad of environmental factors come together to create a massive amount of water coming down from the mountains in spring due to a big snow season, heavy spring rainfall, and high spring temperatures causing more extensive flooding than we already experience. Adding in these massive hotel structures, car parks, and roads without proper flooding mitigation could be devastating to our homes. (Not to mention that the floodwaters are dangerous to our children).

The flooding in our neighborhood is already significant and it wouldn't take much change for it to become catastrophic for a number of homes. With prevailing global warming issues, we need to be proactive.

And it is not just our neighborhood that could be affected, but others downstream when there is increased speed and diversion of water from our area.

Clearly, these issues were overlooked when Homewood Suites was developed, as evidenced by the fact that they faced continual flooding in the lower level of their building when it was first developed.

In light of that, **I am curious about what environmental impact studies have been conducted, if any,** to properly understand what the potential damage would be from increased run-off from these hotel developments, especially from the original proposal's loss of 1000 sf of wetlands, direct roof and parking lot runoff into Walton Creek without prior water filtration or catchment...).

(In my lifetime, my family has personally experienced the impact of flooding from upstream structural changes around rivers and wetlands.)

## **Part 2: Traffic Safety**

My greater concern is the building of the Stone Lane connector bridge and road.

**My second question is, what are the City's plans for sidewalks, road guttering etc. in our neighborhood?**

**If you do install Sidewalks, what would be the snow removal plans by the city to ensure the safety of our children, especially those waiting at bus stops on Chinook and Stone Lane?**

**Also, would you have plans to relocate the cluster mailboxes on Stone and Chinook?**

**What traffic control safety measures would you plan to implement in Stone Lane, Chinook, and Whistler if the road does go ahead? (eg. signage, speed limits, speed bumps?)**

**What traffic control measures do you plan for the intersections of Chinook and Stone, as well as Chinook and Skyview. The existing give-way systems would not be sufficient.**

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We are so fortunate to be able to feel safe walking dogs and allowing our children to ride bikes, scooters, and skateboards around our streets without a lot of traffic.

The traffic coming from HWY 40 would be extremely dangerous and could completely destroy the relative safety of our streets for our children and pets.

Increased traffic in this neighborhood would undoubtedly lead to more traffic accidents.

**Sidewalks would absolutely be imperative.**

**Extra, Unnecessary Traffic:** I am extremely concerned about the traffic from HWY 40 coming into our neighborhood *unnecessarily*. I do not know of anyone in our area that laments the access from Whistler, Village Drive, and Chinook. There is very little land left to develop in our neighborhood (less than 5%, I heard). I am unaware of the need to increase access to our neighborhood or existing traffic issues.

I believe a lot of extra cars would be driving into the area merely to access Walton Creek road and other roads closer to the ski resort. They would end up in the same place: Walton Creek Road. These cars would therefore simply transit through our residential area.

**Width of Existing Roads, No Sidewalks:** When people ride or walk down Chinook towards Skyview Lane, for example, cars always give the people and pets a wide birth. There is not enough room for pedestrians and 2 cars to pass. There is barely enough room for 1 car and pedestrians as it is. Because the majority of people driving through our neighborhood live here and are experienced, they drive cautiously in these situations. **Has the city conducted traffic safety studies to examine what would need to be done to ensure the safety of our residents, especially children?**

**Trash Cans:** When residents of Mica Court and some of the courts on Stone Lane put their trash cans out on the street, the available road area is radically reduced — especially in the winter when there are large snowbanks. Often the bins are on the street until after the residents get home from work at the end of the day. **What would be your plan to ensure traffic safety past these areas?**

**Snow Plowing of Courts:** When residents of Mica and some of the courts on Stone Lane have to relocate their cars to Chinook and Stone, respectively, to allow the snow plows to clear their courts, the cars take up almost an entire Chinook and Stone lane, respectively. Oftentimes residents are leaving for work so the cars are out for the majority of the day. The current traffic handles this relatively safely and respectfully. I am concerned traffic from HWY 40 would not.

**What would be your plan to ensure traffic safety past these areas?**

**Cluster MailBoxes:** When residents pull over near the cluster box on Chinook, close to Stone Lane, again, they take up a large portion of the lane. **What would be your plan to ensure traffic safety past these areas or relocate the boxes?**

**Chinook Pedestrian Issues:** While the width of Stone lane handles traffic and pedestrians concurrently relatively safely for now—even without sidewalks—pedestrian traffic near the bike path, bus stop, and Chinook townhomes on Chinook lane is already very dangerous. In the winter, cars come blindly around the corner of Chinook near Willowbrook court. Pedestrians, especially on the river-side of the road, often have to step quickly away and cars swerve. I am sure records will show that this corner also features a number of traffic accidents in the winter since the corner is steep and icy and we often see cars in the ditch.

Cars typically move to the other lane to give pedestrians a wide birth. 2 cars cannot safely bypass pedestrians, especially with dogs, in this section of the road. **Again, what plans does the city have to ensure the safety of pedestrians, in this section?**

**School Bus Stops, Sidewalks, and Snow Removal:** The school bus stops on the corner of our cul de sac, Meadowood Lane and Chinook, and then again on Stone Lane, before moving to Whistler. **What plans does the city have to ensure the safety of school children with increased traffic and (currently) no sidewalks if this connector road goes through?**

**Also, if you do install sidewalks, what is the City's plans for removing snow regularly to ensure the pick-up and drop-off points for school children are properly maintained?**

I was riding my bike with my children around the neighborhood streets this past weekend and my mind was racing with all of the potential dangers from increased, inexperienced traffic in the area.

So, again, I vehemently oppose the construction of the connector road (even as a pedestrian bridge) into Stone Lane — ESPECIALLY without comprehensive environmental, flooding, and road safety impact studies, as well as the actual implementation of the subsequent recommended mitigations being in place BEFORE any further development of land and the connector road across Walton Creek.

Please let me know if you have any questions, or if you have any answers to some of my own questions outlined above.

Sincerely, Katy Martin

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**Katy Martin**

