



Ph: 970-871-6772 • Fax: 970-879-8023 • P.O. Box 775966 • Steamboat Springs, Colorado 80477

November 4, 2025

City of Steamboat Springs Planning and Community
Development 137 10th Street
Steamboat Springs, CO 80477
Phone: (970)-871-8207, Fax: (970)-879-8851

RE: Village Drive Townhomes
Parcel No. 328300001 / PL20220086
PL20220086 Major Variance

Dear City of Steamboat Springs Planning Department,

Please accept this letter as the revised major variance request narrative for the Village Drive Townhomes project. The project, originally approved in 2022 under application PL20220086, includes seven townhomes located at the northeast corner of Village Drive and Walton Creek Road. Both buildings are now nearing completion.

The project was reviewed by the City of Steamboat Springs Planning Commission on October 9, 2025. During the hearing, the Commission supported the retaining wall variance but upheld staff's denial of the variance related to the access design standards. Because the variances were interdependent, the development plan received a unanimous 7-0 vote for denial.

In response, the design team has revised the development plan to request a single variance to the City of Steamboat Springs Community Development Code, as outlined below. In addition, the following changes are included in the updated civil plans and building permit plans.

1. Adding a stair connection to Walton Creek to private access drive.
2. The boiler building is not detached from the north (five plex) unit.
3. A sidewalk grade adjustment is proposed along the south duplex building.
4. The stair design for the south duplex is added.

1. Retaining wall - Variance #1 – Section 418 – Retaining Walls.

The project is requesting a variance for a wall over six feet in height that does not have an offset of at least three feet from the face of each wall segment.

The purpose of the retaining wall standard states the following.

1. Minimize the impact of retaining walls on adjacent properties.
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The variance request is to allow for the retaining wall on the east property to be a maximum of 7.6 feet without being stepped wall segments with a three-foot horizontal offset. Currently, the constructed height exceeds the six-foot height limit of the CDC and includes a 2-foot 4-inch stepped wall segment. (75% of the requirement)

Section 719.D – General Criteria for Approval.

1. The Variance will not injure or adversely impact legal conforming uses of adjacent property, or the applicant has accurately assessed the impacts of the proposed Variance and has agreed to mitigate those impacts. The proposed multi-family development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, which consists predominantly of multi-family residences and condominiums. No legally conforming uses of adjacent properties will be injured or adversely affected by the retaining wall located along the east property line. The retaining wall is situated at the rear of the proposed buildings and is not visible when walking or driving north along Village Drive, except at the development entry. It is visible when walking east along the sidewalk on Walton Creek Road. The wall features a ledgerstone finish that is both visually appealing and consistent with the architectural color palette of the buildings currently under construction. As a buffering and screening measure, a 3.5' tall fence is proposed above the retaining wall on the Pine Grove Condominiums. The fence will be stained to match the Vantage at Village Drive Condominiums and include 2"x4" rails, 6.5" on center with a 2"x6" cap. The fence, once constructed, will also be a safety measure for the adjacent neighbors. Village Drive Townhomes has reached a preliminary agreement with Pine Ridge Townhomes to install a wood fence along the top of the retaining wall at the east property line. (draft agreement attached). Village Drive Townhomes will purchase and install the fence, while Pine Ridge Townhomes has agreed to assume ownership and long-term maintenance responsibility.
2. The Variance is compatible with the preferred direction and policies outlined in the Community Plan and other applicable adopted plans. The Steamboat Springs Area Community plan promotes high density development and work force housing. The Village Drive Townhomes site is prime spot for redevelopment due to the proximity of the Steamboat Ski Area and transit. The development as proposed is aligned with goals and policies of the Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan as noted in the following goals and policies.
 - a. *Policy LU-5.2: New neighborhoods will be well connected by streets, sidewalks, trails, walkways and bicycle lanes.*
 - b. *Policy CD-1.4: Encourage high quality site planning and design*
 - c. *Policy CD-2.2: Create a functional mix of uses in new neighborhoods and development areas*

The Variance application meets either the criteria for unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty, as applicable, or the criteria for an acceptable alternative. We are requesting a variance according to **Section 719.D.3.b(ii)** of the Community Development Code, which permits relief when the purpose and intent of a standard cannot be effectively achieved through strict application in a specific circumstance.

The approved construction drawings, prepared by Landmark Consultants and approved by the City of Steamboat Springs, included a general note indicating "wall by others." In August 2023, Geowall Designs provided a complete engineering plan set for a two-tier Redi-Rock retaining wall system, including construction drawings, a design report, and material quantity estimates. Four Points Surveying and Engineering (FPSE) incorporated the Geowall design into the civil construction plan set and completed wall staking in October 2024.

The final wall design is wider than the originally proposed layout in order to accommodate the required structural height and tie into existing grades at the adjacent Pine Ridge Townhomes. Although a two-tier system, as initially illustrated in the Landmark plans, was considered, there was insufficient space on-site to safely complete the necessary excavation while maintaining stable cut slopes behind the wall. The constructed Redi-Rock wall includes a 2-foot, 4-inch tier between segments, which effectively reduces the visual mass of

the structure.

The intent of the code—to minimize the visual impact of retaining structures on adjacent properties—is achieved through the wall’s strategic placement and tiered design. The limited horizontal separation between tiers helps reduce the perceived height and blends the structure into the surrounding topography. The contractor has successfully implemented a sound and context-sensitive solution within a physically constrained construction area.

We believe the variance is aligned with the overall vision of the project and allowance for the variances will have very limited impact on the community. In conclusion, we request the City of Steamboat Springs Planning Department approve the variance as outlined herein acceptable for the development plan of the Village Drive Townhomes.

The following is a summary of final designs for civil work for the Village Drive Townhomes project shown on the updated civil plans.

1. Adding a stair connection to Walton Creek to private access drive.
2. The boiler building is not detached from the north (five plex) unit.
3. A sidewalk grade adjustment is proposed along the south duplex building and the stair design for the south duplex is added.

A stair connection is finalized for access from the north end of the private drive with concrete stairs and landscape patio on grade to Walton Creek Road sidewalk. This access was shown in two places on the Landmark Consultants approved construction drawings on Sheet C.300 and C.301, but the design information was incomplete.

The boiler building is modified to not attach the south end of the five plex building. This removes the requirement to adjust the siding for the unit and allows for a slab on grade foundation.

Sidewalk Grade and revised stair plan south duplex. The project architect, Steamboat Architectural Associates, in collaboration with Four Points Surveying and Engineering, has refined the stair and sidewalk design for the north unit of the south duplex to improve residential connectivity and site functionality. The revised design raises the sidewalk profile to a maximum 5% grade to align with the new stair entry and then transitions back down at a 5% grade to match the existing sidewalk elevation. At the entry, the sidewalk will be slightly lowered to promote positive drainage away from Village Drive and widened to eight feet to enhance accessibility. As previously approved, the sidewalk will taper from eight feet to six feet along the south end of the project. The proposed grade adjustment is expected to have minimal site impact, as there is no roadside ditch parallel to the sidewalk in this area.

We look forward to the review and future public meetings for the project.

Sincerely;

Walter Magill, P.E.
Four Points Surveying and Engineering
