



MOUNTAIN ARCHITECTURE
DESIGN GROUP

719.B.2.b Narrative for Variance, Major Variance

6) Variance Request: CDC 406 Off Street Parking

October 30, 2025

Revised December 31, 2025

Property Information:

Owners: Oak Street Partners, LLC
PO Box 775457, Steamboat Springs, CO
135 11th Street
Development Unit River House Condominium
Steamboat Springs, Routt County, Colorado
PIN: 286700004
Zone District: CK-2

Project Description / Request:

The Development Plan application is for the relocation and adaptive re-use of a historic structure to the subject site. The proposed use of the structure is a restaurant / tavern (speak easy) on the main level, and a cigar lounge at the basement level.

The variance request addresses off-street parking requirements for the project. There is an existing structure on site, with a business on the ground level and two condominiums on the second level. A parking variance has been granted for the existing building and associated uses under engineering variance PL20250081, dated April 23, 2025. The proposed Marshall House does not propose any additional off-street parking.

The parking requirement for tavern use in this zone district is 1/900 net square feet. The total net square feet is 960, resulting in 1.06 parking spaces; marginally greater than one space which tips the requirement to **2 parking spaces**, as the code requires fractions round to the next whole number. The project proposes no off-street parking for the relocated historic structure due to significant site constraints and practical parking use of the building. Site constraints include lack of alley access due to the location of Soda Creek, exceptionally steep topography, wetlands, floodplain, and the size and shape of the historic resource. The site is similar to those along the river-side of Yampa Street where the Yampa River runs along their rear property line (zone district CY-1). Parking requirements for non-residential uses are waived for those similar properties; the subject site mirrors CY-1 site qualities and uses, making it a supportable project for a parking variance.

The site location supports a walkable, pedestrian-friendly environment. The site is well-connected by existing sidewalks and is located within close proximity to public transit stops, further reducing the need for on-site parking and encouraging multimodal access. A dedicated area for bicycle parking will be provided to promote alternative transportation.

Customer parking during business hours is available along Oak Street and 11th Street frontage, as well as established ROW parking immediately in front of the historic structure along Oak Street. Due to existing site constraints, including steep topography and the presence of Soda Creek, the site does not have alley access and cannot accommodate traditional on-site parking or loading areas. While site conditions limit traditional vehicular access, the plan provides functional and context-appropriate access that aligns with the district's pedestrian-oriented vision and preserves the natural features of the site, and notably the preservation of an important local historic resource.

Variance criteria response by the applicant to Community Development Code criteria is addressed below.

719.D 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 scale of the business uses for the proposed adaptive re-use are small in nature due to the size of the historic structure. On-street parking is available year-round along Oak Street and the surrounding area during normal business hours, and adjacent property owners are accustomed to this parking pattern in the downtown area. No overnight parking is necessary to support the proposed project uses; city snow removal operations are not impacted by the requested parking variance. Furthermore, the site is well connected via existing bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit systems, further reducing the impact of parking on adjacent property owners.

2. *The Variance is compatible with the preferred direction and policies outlined in the Community Plan and other applicable adopted plans.*

Chapter 6 of the Community Plan addresses the community's Transportation and Mobility goals. Furthermore, current conversations amongst local leaders and sustainability partners point to reducing vehicular reliance, ride sharing, bolstering public transportation opportunities, and reducing parking requirements for development. In this spirit, requesting a variance for 2 parking spaces in a dense urban setting supports these goals while preserving an important historic resource.

Goal T-1.1: The Marshall House is a great example of urban infill, with well-connected pedestrian and bicycle access as well as proximity to public transit.

Future Transportation System: Pedestrian and Bicycle Systems, Creation of Pedestrian Districts: The Marshall House location is a beneficiary of past and current work to provide sidewalks, bike racks, crosswalks, and similar systems where pedestrian activity is high.

3. *The Variance application meets either the criteria for unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty, as applicable, or the criteria for an acceptable alternative:*
 - a. *Unnecessary Hardship or Practical Difficulty*

- i. Major Variance. The special circumstances of the subject property make the strict application of the standard an unnecessary hardship to the applicant, and the special circumstances are not the result of actions of the property owner or applicant.*

The variance to parking requirements qualifies under the criteria for unnecessary hardship due to the presence of exceptional site constraints that are unique to this property and not the result of actions by the applicant. The parcel is bounded at the rear by Soda Creek, including designated wetlands and a FEMA-regulated floodplain, and features steep topography that significantly limits viable building area outside of these sensitive environmental zones, and access for on-site vehicular parking and circulation.

The historic structure proposed for relocation to this site was not designed for this parcel, and its size and shape cannot be reasonably modified without compromising its architectural integrity. The structure is located to minimize disturbance of the site and sensitive areas along the creek, as well as minimal impact to natural grades. Soda Creek, located along the rear property line, negates the option for alley access to on-site parking traditionally found within this zone district. These physical site constraints are not results of actions by the applicant.

Strict application of the off-street parking requirement would result in extensive site regrading and retaining walls, paving pervious landscape areas, and additional street cuts and vehicles crossing established sidewalks resulting in significant safety concern. Additionally, vehicles would be required to back onto Oak Street, increasing safety concerns.

Preserving this important, local historic resource is a priority of our community, the benefit of which supports a variance for 2 on-site parking spaces.

- b. Acceptable Alternative*

The proposed development provides at least one of the following acceptable alternatives to the standard:

- i. The alternative achieves a result that is equal to or better than the code standard to which a variance is being sought; or*

The proposed parking variance furthers the historic preservation purposes and intents outlined in the CDC by providing a site for relocation of the historic resource. The limited site area accommodates the relocated structure and a refuse enclosure. The remaining site area is insufficient to provide off street parking spaces, in addition to constraints of topography and sensitive environmental areas noted in the *hardship* category of this narrative.

- ~~*ii. The purpose and intent of the code standard will not be achieved by strict application of the standard in the particular circumstance; or*~~

~~iii. The application of other code standards, purposes, or intents will be improved by varying the standard.~~

End of narrative.