



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

April 16, 2021
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City of Steamboat Springs Planning & Community Development
137 10th Street
Steamboat Springs, CO 80477
Phone: (970)-871-8207, Fax: (970)-879-8851

RE: Copper Ridge Village Skyline Overlay

Dear Steamboat Springs Planning Department;

Four Points Surveying and Engineering (FPSE) has analyzed the skyline overlay (SO) impacts for development of a seven-building apartment complex called Copper Ridge Village. This letter served to document the analysis and recommendations for a variance related to the skyline overlay. The property is a 15.02 acre parcel platted as Lot 1 Steamboat Airpark Filing No. 1 in the Steamboat Airpark Subdivision located along Gloria Gossard Drive west of the intersection with Downhill Drive. The project consists of 201 residential housing units with associated access and utility infrastructure. The project is designated as skyline by the City of Steamboat Springs but is located quite a distance from the US Highway 40 and Elk River corridors (just under half a mile). The site was analyzed for impacts to the Skyline Overlay Zone Section 234.G of the Steamboat Springs CDC, Standards for New Development. There are two standards as outlined below:

1. The construction of any structure will not protrude into the skyline as viewed from public vantage points; and
2. All improvements are designed and situated to blend with the physical and visual character of the landform.

FPSE and the owner are requesting a waiver according to section 234.D of the Steamboat Springs CDC which states that:

1. City Council may waive the requirements of the SO zone upon a finding that strict application of the standards will interfere with other objectives of this CDC or Community Plan. In granting a waiver, City Council may consider the following:
 - a. The relationship of existing structures, landforms, and mature vegetation that may serve to minimize the impact of the proposed development; or
 - b. The significance of the public vantage points from which the property is skylined.

The site is zoned MF-3 which allows for a maximum allowable building height of 63 feet with underground parking. The Copper Ridge Village development proposal is concurrently being processed through the City of Steamboat Springs Design Review Team. The applicant is presenting the attached narrative to request waiver of the skyline overlay zone and approval for the building locations and the maximum elevations proposed for Copper Ridge Village development plans.

Corridors of Concern: US Highway 40 and Elk River Road.

It is the opinion of FPSE that the development of Copper Ridge Village would qualify it for waiver of the SO. The property is located far away from the corridors of concern, US Highway 40 and Elk River Road. Existing topography of the project site depicts the development with a valley type depression in the center of the project site with a large mountain ridge surrounding that valley on all sides except the southern portion, which is open to Gloria Gossard Drive. The development has been designed to mesh with the natural landform and topography using terraced buildings, built into the slopes. The majority of the proposed development is hidden within the existing ridges, with the eastern ridge of the property being a limited portion of the site that can be seen along the analyzed corridors. That ridge is proposed to be cut down approximately 15 feet from the existing hilltop with two buildings located on the ridge, buildings #6 and #7 as shown in the proposed site plans for the development.

FPSE also stipulates that strict application of the standards will interfere with other objectives of this development, including availability and construction of housing and workforce housing for the community. Limiting development of buildings 6 and 7 likely would render this project infeasible. The ability to construct tasteful, environment-blended structures for our community seems to outweigh the impacts to the community on skyline in a limited view corridor within a commercial zone.

There are multiple developments in between the project site and the corridors, including but not limited to West Acres trailer park, YVEA Campus, West End Village, Elk River Road Business Park, and the Amalgamated Subdivision, all providing some level of mitigation for skyline impacts to the proposed project site. There will be some protrusion into the skyline when viewed from the analyzed corridors, but the view areas are slight and we question if those views are significant to the public or would in fact be degraded. FPSE believes the limited protrusion of the proposed residential structures wouldn't degrade the view since the vantage points are limited, and from within commercial zones where aesthetics are not that of residential communities, nor untouched, natural views otherwise. The following provides rationale for this opinion.

Purpose of Skyline Overlay (taken from the Steamboat Springs CDC):

The Skyline Overlay zone is intended to ensure that development of properties containing visually significant skylines do not negatively impact the skyline as viewed from designated public vantage points.

Procedure:

On April 8, 2021, FPSE went to the site to analyze potential impacts to the SO. The first step was to determine where the eastern hillside, again the only portion of the project site that would be seen along the corridors of concern, could be seen. Prior to this visit, Walter Magill reached out to City of Steamboat Springs planning for direction on determining "designated public vantage points". The City responded that we should determine those as a part of this narrative to be analyzed during the development process. Therefore, FPSE drove both directions along US Highway 40 and Elk River Road in order to determine these vantage points. Five locations were identified for the purpose of the SO study as follows:

1. View #1: Intersection of US Highway 40 and Downhill Drive
2. View #2: Intersection of Elk River Road and Downhill Drive
3. View #3: Northbound US Highway 40 at 1856 Lincoln Avenue
4. View #4: Northbound US Highway 40 at 1744 Lincoln Avenue
5. View #5: Intersection of US Highway 40 and Lagoon Court

Photos were taken at all locations of the current conditions looking at the proposed project site. The views are displayed, along with a map of the locations, on the exhibit SKY1 included with this letter and the photos taken are included in the body of this letter. The locations were surveyed for inclusion on the exhibit. 3D modelling of the site was not prepared given the limited view corridors and ability to visualize using existing photography.

Results:

View #1 – At this location, the east hill is visible, however it is difficult to see and orientate in the small window where it is visible from the intersection. Any development on this site would be visible however, this view is not significant as it represents a small portion of the US Highway 40 corridor. Drivers and pedestrians going both directions along US highway 40 would have this view solely directly at the intersection as shown in the hatched area on exhibit SKY1. The hillside is not visible from anywhere outside of that area along US Highway 40. In addition, the eastern hillside is over 2,000 feet away from View #1 and is difficult to bring into focus with the naked eye as seen in the existing photo below.

Existing Photo:



North side of US Highway 40



South side of US Highway 40

Conclusion: The development will have minimal protrusion into the skyline that will not be a significant impact to the existing skyline of Steamboat Springs

View #2 – At this location, the eastern hillside can be clearly seen but again this is only visible for a small window along Elk River Road as shown in SKY1. Southbound traffic and pedestrians would not see this unless they were looking behind them and northbound traffic would only see this by turning 90 degrees to the road. Even when visible, the sight of residential buildings would not degrade the view from this vantage as shown in the photo. The development is far enough away from this vantage point to not be a towering vantage, nor impact the aesthetics of the overall location.

Existing Photo:



Conclusion: The proposed development will have minimal impact to the existing skyline. In addition, the existing developments in between this view and the proposed development provide mitigation as the foreground draws eyes away from anything located on the hillside.

View #3 – The ridge behind the proposed development on the east hillside of the project site is visible from this location. Any proposed development will not extend into the skyline.

Existing Photo:



Conclusion: There will be no impact to the skyline from this location.

View #4 – Similar to View #3 but from further south down US Highway 40, the eastern hillside of the project site is slightly visible from this location and the ridge behind the development is very prominent.

Existing Photo:



Conclusion: There will be no impact to the skyline from this location.

View #5 – East of the intersection of Downhill Drive and Us Highway 40. The site is not visible form this location.

Existing Photo:



Conclusion: There will be no impact to the skyline from this location as the project site is not visible.

Overall Conclusion:

After evaluating the potential impacts of each view, FPSE concludes the new development will not significantly impact the skyline of the city of Steamboat Springs. The development has been designed to match the existing landform, and be aesthetically pleasing. Vantage points with minimal skyline protrusion, views #1 and #2, are from a long distance from the project site. Those views are at the intersections of US Highway 40 with Downhill Drive and Elk River Road respectively and represent limited view corridors to the project site. Therefore the new development will not significantly impact the skyline.

Four Points Surveying and Engineering requests that the SO variance be granted for approval of Copper Ridge Village by the City of Steamboat Springs Planning Commission and City Council. Approval is based on the concurrent development

noted above and the proposed building elevations and locations shown therein. This request is not a waiver to the skyline overlay zone for any other development other than the one referenced in this report for the parcel.

Any additional information can be provided by request. Please contact matthewm@fourpointsse.com or 248-444-3268 with any questions.

Sincerely;

Matthew McLeod, P.E.
Four Points Surveying and Engineering

