



General Assembly State of Colorado Denver

October 10, 2023

Steamboat Springs City Council
124 10th Street
PO Box 775088
Steamboat Springs, Colorado 80477-5088

Dear Honorable Members of the Steamboat Springs City Council:

We write today to respectfully and enthusiastically urge you to support the annexation of the property associated with the Brown Ranch housing development. Please do not let this unique and transformative opportunity slip away.

While we understand this is a complex and consequential decision and we respect your local jurisdiction on this matter, we feel this is too great of an opportunity to pass up. Brown Ranch will help ameliorate an acute need for affordable and attainable housing for the people of Steamboat Springs, Routt County, and the entire Northwest Colorado region that power our economy, invigorate our communities, and make this such a special place to call home.

As the legislators for Steamboat Springs and Routt County, by far the top issue we hear from our shared constituents with you is the problems that the lack of affordable and attainable housing in region causes. Whether it is school administrators that cannot hire or retain teachers for our kids, our law enforcement departments struggling to recruit officers to keep our community safe, or the multitude of small businesses that have had to reduce hours due to lack of staff, adequate housing for our workforce does not exist in the quantity we need. The working class, those who we *need* for a vibrant, functioning community, cannot afford to live in our region. Brown Ranch presents a unique opportunity for the City of Steamboat Springs to continue to solve that problem in a big way and to show statewide leadership in how local action can be the solution to our housing challenges.

For several years in the legislature, we have been working hard to secure funding to help bolster local housing efforts and have done so. Over \$10 million for Routt County housing projects (YVHA Mid-Valley & Town of Hayden) has been awarded and we plan for that support to continue with Brown Ranch. We have been working closely with the Governor's Office, the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), and YVHA to allocate significant grant funding for Brown Ranch. **Based on our work and conversations with the Governor, his staff, and DOLA, we are extremely confident that significant state grant and loan support will come for Brown Ranch – but only if annexation occurs.** Should annexation not occur, that funding will not be able to come from the state and will go to other communities who are willing to put it to use. Further, the voters' approval of Proposition 123 last year is anticipated to bring even more state funding opportunities for this project and Steamboat Springs and Routt County could lose out on those funds as well should annexation not occur. It would be incredibly disappointing to see that happen.

Further, during this past legislative session's debate on Senate Bill 213, a bill concerning land use changes to incentivize more housing development, we heard loud and clear from many of you about how that bill would have usurped your local authority to the point where Brown Ranch would not be possible. We fought for and secured large amendments in that bill at your urging so that we could allow you to continue your locally-driven housing work, including pursuing the Brown Ranch development. As that bill's ideas are being prepared to come back in the 2024 legislative session, it will be much harder for us to argue for the Steamboat Springs City Council's position of preserving local control if you have also put an end or significantly slowed-down the very project you promoted, on the record to the legislature, as a reason for not passing SB213.

We understand that this is a complex debate with strong opinions. We also respect each of your individual positions that voters entrusted you as decision-makers for the City of Steamboat Springs.

What is *not* complex, however, is the need for more affordable and attainable housing in Steamboat Spring and Routt County and we respectfully yet strongly urge you to move forward with annexation so that this project, and the potential for significant state financial support for it, can continue. The future of our region depends on it.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dylan Roberts".

Senator Dylan Roberts

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meghan Lukens".

Representative Meghan Lukens

Cc:

Gary Suiter, City Manager
Jason Peasley, Executive Director - Yampa Valley Housing Authority
Rick Garcia, Executive Director - Department of Local Affairs
Alison George, Director, Division of Housing – Department of Local Affairs
Governor Jared Polis