

Michèle Hamilton
[REDACTED] Ranch Road, Okotoks

18 March 2026

Re: Thunder Stone Junction Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (Draft February 2026)

Mayor Thorn and Members of Council,

I am writing as a resident whose property is located at [REDACTED] Ranch Road, directly across from the western Business Flex area identified in the proposed Thunder Stone Junction Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (NASP). I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback during this stage of the planning process.

I understand that Thunder Stone Junction is intended to accommodate future employment growth and that development of these lands will proceed. My intent in writing is not to oppose the plan, but to request stronger and more explicit measures to mitigate impacts on existing homes, particularly where new employment uses will directly abut established residential properties.

I also recognize that the Thunder Stone Junction NASP is a long-range planning document and that development of these lands may occur over several decades, potentially spanning 15 to 40 years or more. Given this extended timeframe, the decisions made at this stage will have long-lasting implications for residents who already live adjacent to the plan area. For those of us along Ranch Road, impacts related to construction, buffering, lighting, noise, and land use compatibility will not be short-term concerns, but issues that may arise repeatedly over multiple phases of development. This makes it particularly important that strong, clear, and enforceable mitigation measures are embedded in the plan now rather than deferred entirely to future development stages.

My primary concern relates to the Business Flex and Industrial Business Park uses proposed adjacent to Ranch Road, and the adequacy of the planned interface treatments given the close proximity of my home. While the NASP includes policies recognizing the need for sensitive transitions, several key elements are deferred to future stages or framed as minimum standards. For residents who live immediately adjacent to the plan area, this creates uncertainty about how effectively impacts will ultimately be mitigated.

Section 3.7 of the NASP establishes an Employment-Residential Interface Area with a minimum 30-metre setback, including a 20-metre municipal reserve linear park and an additional 10 metres on the employment parcels. I support the intent of this policy. However, given that my home is directly across from the western Business Flex area, I respectfully request that Council consider strengthening the buffer requirements along Ranch Road specifically, rather than relying on the minimum standard alone.

In practice, the effectiveness of the buffer will depend on its design, height, and long-term performance. I would ask Council to consider requiring a wider and more substantial natural buffer in this location, including increased berming, dense year-round landscaping, and the use of mature trees or accelerated planting strategies. A taller and deeper buffer would significantly reduce visual, noise,

and light impacts and would better protect the residential character and long-term value of homes along Ranch Road.

I am also concerned about the types of businesses permitted within the Business Flex area adjacent to residential properties. Although Section 3.7 restricts nuisance-generating activities within the interface area, Business Flex parcels may still include light industrial uses at the discretion of the Town. Without clearer direction at the NASP level, there is a risk that uses with extended hours, service vehicle activity, or mechanical noise could negatively affect nearby homes. I respectfully ask Council to consider clearer limits on the intensity, hours of operation, and operational characteristics of uses permitted directly adjacent to existing residences along Ranch Road.

In addition, I would like to highlight the potential impacts during the construction phase, which are not addressed in detail in the NASP. Extended construction activity can significantly affect quality of life through noise, dust, vibration, heavy truck traffic, and disruptions to access. Given the proximity of Ranch Road homes to the western development area, I request that Council ensure strong construction mitigation measures are required at later stages, including clear expectations for traffic routing, hours of construction, dust and noise control, and communication with adjacent residents.

Lighting and noise impacts are another area of concern. While the NASP encourages dark-sky compliant lighting and screening of service areas, there are no explicit requirements related to light spill, after-hours illumination, or cumulative lighting effects along residential edges. Similarly, noise impacts are addressed conceptually rather than through clear limits. I would ask Council to strengthen direction to ensure exterior lighting, building lighting, and operational noise adjacent to Ranch Road are tightly controlled to prevent long-term nuisance impacts on nearby homes.

Finally, I wish to note the potential long-term impact on residential property values. Homes along Ranch Road represent a significant financial and personal investment, and the manner in which the employment-residential interface is implemented will directly affect perceptions of livability and value. Strong buffers, carefully controlled land uses, thoughtful lighting and noise management, and meaningful construction mitigation will help ensure that existing residents are not disproportionately affected by this development.

Thunder Stone Junction represents an important economic opportunity for Okotoks, and I appreciate the Town's efforts to plan for compatibility with surrounding neighbourhoods. I respectfully ask Council to reinforce and strengthen the interface measures where the plan directly abuts established homes, particularly along Ranch Road, so that the impacts of development are appropriately mitigated both during construction and over the long term.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Michèle Hamilton
[REDACTED] Ranch Road