

**MESA COUNTY, FRUITA & GRAND JUNCTION  
PLANNING COMMISSIONS  
JOINT PUBLIC HEARING  
JUNE 6, 2002 MINUTES  
7:04 P.M. to 9:33 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 P.M. by Chairman Paul Dibble of the City of Grand Junction Planning Commission. The public hearing was held in the Whitman Education Center, Museum of Western Colorado.

In attendance, representing the Fruita Planning Commission, were Mike Joseph, Dave Karisny, Kenneth Dodgion, David Shishim, Bill Tallon, Susan Carter, and Steve Moats.

In attendance, representing the Mesa County Planning Commission, were Charlie Nystrom, David Caldwell, Jean Moores, Craig Meis, Tom Foster, and Mark Bonella.

In attendance, representing the Grand Junction Planning Commission, were Paul Dibble, John Redifer, John Evans, William Putnam, and Richard Blosser.

In attendance, representing CDOT, was Jim Patton (Resident Engineer).

In attendance, representing Mesa County, were Keith Fife (Director of Long Range Planning), Michael Warren (Senior Planner), Tom Fisher (Director of Regional Transportation Planning), Ken Simms (Transportation Planner) and Kurt Larsen (Planning Director).

In attendance, representing the City of Grand Junction, were Bob Blanchard (Director of Community Development), Kathy Portner (Planning Manager), and Dave Thornton (Principal Planner). Also present was Jody Kliska (Transportation Engineer).

In attendance, representing the City of Fruita, was Bennett Boeschstein (Director of Community Development).

Gayleen Henderson was present to record the minutes.

There were approximately 35 interested citizens present during the course of the hearing.

Chairman Paul Dibble explained that tonight's presentation would take public testimony on the proposed Redlands Area Transportation Plan and consider the adoption by the County and recommendations by Grand Junction and Fruita Commissions to their City Councils. With the Access Control Plan being conceptual in nature, the purpose of the hearing was to consider the concept of the Access Control Plan. The specifics of the draft Access Control Plan will be debated and discussed by the various departments who will then form a consensus. The Councils of Fruita and Grand Junction and the Mesa County Board of Commissioners, in conjunction with the Colorado Department of Transportation, will consider an Intergovernmental Agreement. Future action will be needed to make the document binding upon all parties. This meeting was not for the purpose of getting into final details.

The Joint Urban Area, according to the City and County Codes, Chapter 2, Section 2.4 and Chapter 3, Section 3.2.6 respectively, Grand Junction and Mesa County must act jointly to adopt the Master Plan. Chairman Dibble qualified this by saying that the City may adopt the plan for the areas only within the 201 service area. Regardless of the outcome of this meeting, that may happen separately or jointly. All of the Redland planning area east and south of about 20 Rd is within the Grand Junction joint urban area. By State Statues the County Planning Commission is charged with the duty to adopt the Master Plan and will be taking action in that area. In Grand Junction and Fruita, the Planning Commissions make recommendations to the City Council to adopt the Master Plans.

**Presentation:**

Ken Simms, Transportation Planner, Mesa County Regional Transportation Office offered a Power Point presentation.

The Access Control Plan is conceptual in nature and can be used as a planning guide for the City of Grand Junction, City of Fruita, Mesa County, and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT); however, adoption of the Redlands Area Transportation Plan does not make the Access Control Plan binding. Future action by the City Councils of Fruita, and Grand Junction, the Mesa County Board of Commissioners and the Colorado Department of Transportation is needed to make the document binding upon all parties.

**Public Comments:**

Larry Beckner, Attorney representing The Bank of Grand Junction, expressed opposition to the proposed construction of an island median on SH-340 from the intersection of Redlands Parkway east to the new proposed intersection of South Broadway (SE corner of the intersection with access directly across from Kansas Ave.). The proposed concrete median from the intersection of SH-340 and Redlands Parkway approximately 2/10ths of a mile east would prohibit any left turns in and out of the property. Map designated as Figure 21 in the packets. Opposition was based on three arguments:

1) Several years ago in the development of the property, considerable expense was incurred in the traffic studies and purchase of additional property to move the access directly across from Kansas Ave. Two years ago, the City of Grand Junction Planning Commission and the City Council approved improvements to the road to allow left-hand turn access. Beckner noted that it was essential that the Bank maintain left-hand turn access for the convenience of its customers and continue the design created two years ago. A recurring theme also noted in public hearings was the desire to create left-hand turn lanes instead of four lane highways. Beckner noted that has essentially already been accomplished at the access to the subdivision.

2) Noted that of the 30 deficient areas designated on the map, the intersection at Kansas Ave. was not designated as deficient, yet it was one of the few intersections being impacted with the proposed construction of the solid median to prevent left-hand turns. To the west of the intersection exists a long strip of deficiency that goes up the hill and past the school, that does not have a median proposed on that part of the road. The commercial development on the southwest corner has much less sight ability than the Kansas Ave intersection.

3) Beckner also proposed that a median did not make sense at that location and is not needed based on the previous studies. Of the 59 CDOT requirements, item #33 required the existing turn lanes. Since all of the items were done at the time of the development, it was asked if the median was warranted. There was a concern expressed that even with this being a conceptual plan, that once a line was drawn on a map, it stays there as the issue has perhaps already been addressed. One of two things was asked for: either to remove the concrete median barrier from the plans that exist now or some alternatives for the future such as a potential roundabout or signal options. It was asked that these same types of options be studied at some time in the future upon specific design and construction in that area.

Robert Johnson, President of The Bank of Grand Junction, stated that the Bank has been open for one and one-half years having followed all the procedures in order to operate in that facility. He asked that the rules not be changed as direct egress and ingress was needed in order to be successful as a business. After the obtainment of additional property, any benefits gained would be lost if the property were to be made inaccessible and justice wasn't seen in that. High visibility was available at the Bank property in comparison with the Loco property, even though a median wasn't being advocated at that location. Johnson asked that the Bank not be singled out again and the median be removed.

Roxanne Lewis, owner of the proposed car wash located directly across from the Bank on Kansas Ave, indicated that the recently completed traffic study showed 200 cars a day at that intersection. With this considerably less than the number of cars at the convenience store, she questioned the need for a median at this location with this not being a safety deficient intersection. At previous public meetings, it was indeed stated that the desire was for the roads to remain with a more rural feeling, that faster was not necessarily better, and that in some instances medians could be used to slow down the traffic. Lewis also noted that SH-340 would probably be turned over to the county or city in the future. A concern was also expressed about the sidewalks and the safety for kids getting to school. There were strong feelings indicated against this median because of the additional distance required to reach Lewis property.

Don Pettygrove, a Consultant and resident of the Redlands, stated that a median would hinder the use of the Bank of Grand Junction at that location. This would entail him to either use the Mesa Mall location or doing an unsafe u-turn. He expressed his concern about this concept being adopted as the plan after several years unless removed ahead of time. Also as representative of the Vineyards HOA with 204 homes, a barrier to make left-hand turns into town would block access to that area. Pettygrove was not clear about taking a vote on a concept because of the problem if it becomes part of the plan.

Ken Simms, stated even though access management has been talked about for years, there has never been any concrete plan implemented. This will only be used as a guide for a Consultant to prepare a final access management plan to present to the two city councils, the Mesa County Commissioners, and CDOT. Adoption of the Redlands Area Transportation Plan does not make the Access Control Plan binding. Before any future action is taken, workshops and public hearings will be held.

Jody Kliska, reviewed the reasoning behind the proposed medians and the reason something needs to be done in these areas. In the thirteen-mile section reviewed with the Consultant, there was the desire to keep large intersections closed by way of limiting access control. The distance needed for medians continues to be under consideration.

Chairman Dibble, asked about the areas on the map representing proposed intersection modifications located at each side of intersections. One was at the Parkway intersecting SH-340, but not in the divided section.

Ken Simms, noted that this was conceptual in nature with not much detail included. This will be looked at in more detail as the Access Management Plan is gone through.

Chairman Dibble, stated that the access control plan is a concept within the proposed plan and is not set in concrete.

Ken Simms, reiterated that the access management standards were part of the toolbox and everyone was encouraged to be involved in the development of the Access Control Plan.

Don Pettygrove, wondered if this was still conceptual, why was anything being shown? If other concepts were still possible, they should be shown. One of the important concerns expressed in the public meetings was the smooth flow of traffic such as demonstrated in the center turn lane at the Vineyards, rather than the blocking the access with a median. Other options should be developed with future discussion for a concept.

Paul Dibble, noted that in his understanding, the concept does include all of the items Pettygrove mentioned.

Don Pettygrove, said only one preferred alternative had been provided and perhaps there was a need for different options in terms of a concept. The concern he was expressing was that the concept was tied into the plan when it comes to the development. He stated that he has seen it happen over and over again that a concept has been incorporated into a plan.

Dennis Hutman, 1903 Broadway, shared similar concerns about recurring themes as previously expressed. He previously developed a driveway, played by the rules, and now has a driveway that serves his needs. Recently at public meetings, he was horrified to learn of the intention to consolidate driveways with his neighbor. His concern was that the driveway has been there for a number of years and he believes that we are a culture that respects private property rights in those regards. Noted that he is very much in favor of safety along SH-340 and his research with the State Hwy Patrol and the Sheriff's Dept, determined that there have not been any previous accidents at that location. Hutman doesn't want to change the amicable relationship with his neighbor in regards to his fenced property and dog. Thought that process would have been better if proposed changes had been demonstrated for individual property owners prior to public meetings where they were displayed on a map. An appreciation was expressed for the bike trails that currently exist, with the hope that the shoulders be firmer and better constructed in the future.

Chairman Dibble, asked the difference between sidewalks and pedestrian paths?

Ken Simms, answered that pedestrian facilities include sidewalks and pedestrian pathways, and they were being included in the description of the plan.

Mike Joyce, Development Concepts, asked why were we adopting the conceptual plan if there was only one conception. Thought that perhaps a statement should be included in the overall Transportation Plan that an Access Control Plan will be developed in the future or get alternatives on the existing plan, such as shown on the intersection of S. Broadway and Redlands Parkway. A roundabout or traffic signal or median should be discussed more in the future, as they are conceptual in nature. Concerned that the concepts being discussed, if adopted, would be written in stone in the future.

Jim Patton, CDOT representative, said that design details were not looked at for the study, which was just a starting point. Since the State already had an Access Code and if the Intergovernmental Agreement is adopted, more local control to access along SH-340 will be given to the four members of the Agreement. Thus any new or proposed changes to access along SH-340 will go through the four members of the Agreement and stand alone over the State Access Code and would give more control to local governments.

Chairman Dibble, asked for any other comments or clarification on points from staff. Seeing none, he closed the public portion of the hearing. Chairman Dibble then asked the Commissioners to respond and discuss this prior to any decisions on voting.

**Discussion:**

Charles Nystrom, requested any questions from the Mesa County Planning Commissioners.

Mark Bonella, asked Ken Simms that in lieu of the presentation of recurring themes of turning lanes along SH-340 with three lanes instead of four lanes, why were medians presented that blocked off access? Also there was the question as to what SH-340 was considered – rural roadway, collector street, minor arterial, or major arterial?

Ken Simms, answered that the State classifies SH-340 as a rural arterial. This is to indicate the volume of traffic it is intended to handle. Up to the year 2020, the vast majority of SH-340 needs to be only two to three lanes and not that much length of median barrier is being proposed along there. There are some areas of development that simply provide no options, thus the emphasis on three lanes to allow turns, and medians in some areas.

Mark Bonella, asked about a traffic count for Redlands Parkway from SH-340 to the Mall, and also from Redlands Parkway to Safeway.

Ken Simms, noted that he was not able to respond to that right now, and stressed both today's volumes and future volumes are anticipated.

Mark Bonella, noted that was the same answer he got at the workshop and had a hard time believing that Redlands Parkway has more traffic than SH-340 and warrants up to four lanes, where SH-340 doesn't have any warranty of even going to three lanes. Yet the proposal is to

widen bridges on Redlands Parkway without a definitive count. He is concerned that everybody that goes out there says SH-340 is definitely busier than Redlands Parkway.

Ken Simms, addressed the volume of traffic on Redlands Parkway to Mesa Mall and the 24 Road area in regards to the traffic model for the year 2025. The attraction of using Redlands Parkway and the continued growth of the land use in that area, at a much faster rate, would create an increase in the traffic volume. Roads are only a response to the future land uses.

Craig Meis, asked if there were any other alternatives available other than the medians to the conceptual plan? If so, could those not be added as a toolbox approach.

Ken Simms, indicated the only alternatives were either with or without median barriers. Until the time comes when CDOT actually does the preliminary design based on drawings and accidents in a future year, the length of medians is not known. Simms said the biggest thing he can say about the concept plan is that it illustrates all the tools that are used to do the Access Management, whether it is median barriers, access consolidations, or traffic signal spacing. Any new process can strive to minimize harm to anyone. Many communities have successfully gone through Access Management Plans. An Access Management Plan is also a cheap way to retain capacity and allows the roadways to operate more efficiently without building extra lanes which is in accordance with the expressed comments of the public.

Richard Blosser, stated that there was no access control purpose for the median on Redlands Parkway before the left turn onto SH-340. He thought it was a valid point being brought up as to why medians were being proposed in one area and not in another. Perhaps making this wider in scope and showing more alternatives would be appropriate.

David Caldwell, continued with one of his standing objections to the road that is shown from the Ute water tank to S Camp Rd. He could not support this plan because it would greatly impact his neighborhood in terms of noise and quality of peace. A three-lane road in that area would create more headlights in backyards and more noise.

Tom Foster, focused that of the 13 miles of roads, the majority of time has been spent on the 700 ft intersection of Kansas and SH-340. This intersection has been noted before as one that would fail in the future, and has failed in the concept plan presented here. He suggested going back to the drawing board and coming up with something different in the highway program. Perhaps support of a cloverleaf approach than a roundabout instead of cramming so much activity into a tight corner. He thought the medians would not solve any problems. In his 2,000-mile trip in the South, Foster noted that larger areas were used in the intersections of major arterials.

Jean Moores, no comments.

Mark Bonella, suggested addressing more concrete ideas before accepting this conceptual plan. Noted that Mr. Johnson had brought up a good point that medians were proposed even though there was a recurring theme of three lanes. Medians would be detrimental to the access of any business, consolidating driveways would create a burden on property owners, and he didn't agree

with that plan. Bonella did agree with previous testimony that questioned the need to adopt a conceptual plan. His opinion is that this would be a band-aid fix for major surgery.

Dave Karisny, expressed that there are a number of small elements that have to do with this thirteen miles. What he has heard is a concern that these elements won't be addressed. The sense he has is that this is a concept where further public hearings will address specific details. He posed the question about making this specific document work as a concept, and still address specific concerns. He suggested using a toolbox approach to identify certain areas that will need access control, or should this be tabled, address all the specific things and bring it back.

Kenneth Dodgion, wanted to echo Mr. Karisny's concerns that this is just a concept issue with a long way to go. This starting point has some issues that Fruita will want to address, which should result in a comfortable agreement.

David Shishim, was very happy to see that access has been retained on the roadway to his subdivision.

Bill Tallon, knew from his previous experience how difficult obtaining state funding is to get projects going. He felt assured that the final improvements would take place and the details worked out. Spoke of the dangerous road without shoulders many of the distances which needs to be proceeded with from this conceptual point.

Susan Carter, concurred that the conceptual plan was too specific. Once in the preliminary stages, the specifics should be looked at. The reason for this meeting is the desire to work together.

Steve Moats, understands the concerns about the medians being permanent. He wondered how difficult it would be to adopt the conceptual plan after erasing all or a portion of the median.

Tom Fisher, suggested taking the map out completely and adding language that supports using access management and a toolbox. This would acknowledge that the work has been done to come up with a concept that can be used as a starting off point to the IGA in the future. That way, the things that seem to be the specifics are taken out of the plan.

Dave Karisny, asked at what point then is a conceptual plan developed?

Tom Fisher, suggested putting language into the adoption of the plan that would give the staff direction to come up with an IGA within a year.

Mark Bonella, asked if Fisher agreed with the comment by Ken Simms earlier, that it is either with or without a median?

Tom Fisher, responded that he did not agree with that statement.

Steve Moats, questioned if the conceptual plan was adopted this evening, how difficult would it be to change?

Tom Fisher, said it would not be difficult to change.

Charlie Nystrom, mentioned that several of his neighbors recently had great difficulty obtaining a driveway permit off of a state highway and wondered how difficult would it be to go before the different groups for approval after the IGA?

Tom Fisher, said that in light of that concern, in the development of the IGA would appear some very clear language about timeframes and where to appear. The concept details such as changes to the roadway would be difficult to change once there is an agreement in place. Additional accesses still would remain the responsibility of CDOT. The IGA should speak with one voice about the details.

Charlie Nystrom, asked if the Planning Commission would have any voice in developing this IGA?

Tom Fisher, responded that they were having that voice at tonight's meeting. The Board of County Commissioners would adopt the IGA.

Keith Fife, noted that Jim Patton from CDOT indicated that in the interim before this IGA is adopted, we are living with the Access Management Plan that the state adopted which is currently more restrictive. Questioned was the proposed access management control more liberal than the current rules.

Jim Patton, responded that parts of the IGA would accept parts of the Access Code such as design features and work development. In most actions, the State would not be involved other than a new access. Any existing changes would be handled at a local level.

Keith Fife, noted that the concept of an IGA is very similar to the Master Plan about community separators. He spoke of the merits of an IGA about Access Control along SH-340 being accepted with the details worked out in the future.

Mike Joseph, this very vocalized issue best summarized as a conceptual plan with potential solutions. With the primary problem areas identified, perhaps more than one potential solution should have been presented.

Richard Blosser, understood this overall plan as being of a conceptual nature. He is concerned with the attempt to work out all the details before going forth with the plan. He supports the plan along with the recognition that some valid concerns exist. He suggested there be some possible alternatives shown on the maps noting where some access control methods might be used.

William Putnam, in light of waiting another year, he supports the plan. The details need to be worked out for a current plan as well as a 20-50 year plan. Without the need to micromanage the details of the plan, he recommended approval of the plan.

John Redifer, agreed and understood the concerns of the concept plan. He thought that by implication some things are said and some things are not, and can be figured out by where



choices are designated. These choices seem to affect a number of people who don't think roundabouts are the solution to anything. He would support a clearer plan showing the access controls are still under discussion with changes still possible.

John Evans, sees the plan as a historical ruling that merits going forward. Lots of money has been spent and the group needs to work together to make it work.

Chairman Dibble, summarized that the purpose of the meeting was to hear a portion of the Master Plans of the County and the Grand Valley Circulation Plan, specifically the transportation sector. A plan is subject to change at any one time. The good reasons for the access management outlined:

- 1) the future volume is going to increase
- 2) access to properties can't be restricted by law
- 3) safety factors dictate the need for signals
- 4) pedestrian and sidewalks

Access management is proposed with a toolbox approach. In order to postpone the development of a five-lane highway in the Redlands, alternatives must be addressed in terms of safety factors and congestion delay. He suggested the present goal and the responsibility would be to approve the plan to add to the circulation plans that are in place. He also recommends taking another look at the map to meet the needs of public.

Jean Moores, asked if a signal light would work in place of a median and suggested a change of wording on the maps indicating potential access control sites.

Mark Bonella, noted that Fruita's toolbox is bigger with more options. Bonella stressed that the proposed plan says with or without a median. He thought it best to go forward with the plan even though, as it is written right now, it is not good. He suggested coming back in a month with new ideas such as taking out the medians and making the toolbox bigger, and making it more open-ended. He would like more concepts besides just one because he has a problem with the way it is.

Dave Karisny, shared some possible language that he was handed, that we propose to adopt the conceptual plan with the understanding that the plan to be approved would integrate affected parties concerns, contacting them is critical to the effectiveness of the project. The variety of proposed solutions should be considered during the dialogue of the public hearing process and we support the concept of local control over one fate, cooperation with our partners in consideration for the hope of the best proposals to meet one emerging need.

Chairman Dibble, called a recess at 9 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 9:15 p.m.

Tom Fisher, offered solutions suggesting the following:

Pass (Mesa County) or recommend for passage (City of Grand Junction and City of Fruita) the Redlands Area Transportation Plan as presented by staff with the following conditions:

1. The Access Control Plan Map as presented is not approved;
2. Recognizing that extensive access control analysis has been completed as part of this study and using it as a basis, a detailed access management plan for the Redlands planning area

should be developed and approved through an intergovernmental agreement between Mesa County, the City of Grand Junction and the City of Fruita; and,

3. The development of the Intergovernmental Agreement and Access Management Plan will include a public review process.

Tom Foster, requested some clarification on the attachment to the map, which was explained as only being a basis for a starting point and would not be on the plan.

Charlie Nystrom, expressed his feeling that there should be another hearing or two to draw input from the community.

Chairman Dibble, responded that this would be done in the City Council process.

Keith Fife, provided that there would be other public hearings before this matter goes before the County Commissioners.

Tom Fisher, suggested that language be added concerning the public process. The major points of the proposed adoption were repeated.

**MOTION:**

William Putnam, Grand Junction Project #PLN-2002-060, moved to adopt staff's recommendations and recommend to the Grand Junction City Council adoption of the Redlands Area Transportation Plan as an amendment to the Grand Valley Circulation Plan subject to the amendments that were presented by Tom Fisher.

Richard Blosser, seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Jean Moores, Mesa County Project #2002-081, moved that a motion be made to adopt with the recommendations already made by Tom Fisher.

Mark Bonella, seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed with one opposition expressed from David Caldwell about the inclusion of the Ute water tank to the S. Camp Rd. section of roadway. Otherwise, he would probably vote for the passage.

Dave Karisny, Fruita Project # 6-4-02, moved to adopt the Redlands Area Transportation Plan as part of the City of Fruita's Master Plan and Community Plan in accordance with Section 30-28-108 Colorado Revised Statutes with the amendments provided by Tom Fisher.

Kenneth Dodgion, seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

David Caldwell, made motion to adjourn.

Charlie Nystrom, seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Dibble, with no further business to discuss, adjourned the meeting at 9:26 p.m.

