

**GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 22, 2001 MINUTES
7:05 P.M. to 8:15 P.M.**

The regularly scheduled Planning Commission hearing was called to order at 7:05 P.M. by Chairman John Elmer. The public hearing was held in the City Hall Auditorium.

In attendance, representing the Planning Commission, were John Elmer (Chairman), James Nall, Mike Denner, William Putnam, Dr. Paul Dibble and Nick Prinster. Terri Binder was absent.

In attendance, representing the Community Development Department, were Kathy Portner (Planning Manager), Joe Carter (Assoc. Planner), Bill Nebeker (Sr. Planner) and Kristen Ashbeck (Sr. Planner).

Also present were John Shaver (Asst. City Attorney), Rick Dorris (Development Engineer) and Tim Moore (Public Works Manager).

Terri Troutner was present to record the minutes.

There were approximately 5 interested citizens present during the course of the hearing.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were available for consideration.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRESENTATIONS AND/OR VISITORS

Items FPP-2001-077 (Final Plat/Plan—Brookside Subdivision, Filing #2) and ANX-2001-011 (Preliminary Plan—Westland Subdivision) were pulled from the agenda.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Available for placement on the Consent Agenda were items FPA-2001-075 (Final Plan Amendment—Solarium Addition), FPP-2001-076 (Final Plat/Plan—Independence Ranch, Filing #7), VR-2001-081 (Mesa State College Alley Vacation), CUP-2001-073 (Conditional Use Permit—Carl's Jr. Drive Thru), and CUP-2001-071 (Conditional Use Permit—West Side Auto Sales and Body Shop). Item VE-2000-061 (Appeal of Administrative Denial—Mesa Village Marketplace) was included in the motion for continuance to the June 12, 2001 public hearing. No objection or commentary was expressed or given by the audience, planning commissioners or staff on any of the aforementioned items.

MOTION: (Commissioner Denner) “Mr. Chairman, I move that we approve the Consent Agenda as read.”

Commissioner Dibble seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Due to the potential for conflict of interest, Commissioner Nall recused himself from participation in the next item.

IV. FULL PUBLIC HEARING

PLN-2001-070 24 ROAD AREA TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A request for Planning Commission recommendation on adoption of the 24 Road Area Transportation Plan as part of the City's Major Street Plan.

Petitioner: City of Grand Junction

Location: 24 Road area

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Tim Moore outlined the planning process which went into the 24 Road Transportation Plan (Plan). He said that a series of public open houses and City workshops had been held to solicit input on needed infrastructure improvements to identify funding sources and discuss both current and future traffic impacts in the area. The Plan offered proactive transportation options designed to preserve the corridor long-term. Options discussed included the future widening of 24 Road to five (and possibly seven) lanes, G Road improvements, construction of a new interchange off of I-70 (potentially a split diamond design), possible widening of 23 ½ Road to five lanes, and an F ½ Road parkway (proposed route location noted on an overhead aerial photo). Some of the improvements would require the cooperation of CDOT (Colorado Department of Transportation) and FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) to construct.

QUESTIONS

Commissioner Denner wondered if the starting point of the F ½ Road parkway would originate in Foresight Park. Mr. Moore acknowledged that some of the asphalt in Foresight Park may be used for the parkway. While the parkway option would require much more additional review, its basic premise would include curvature reduction and more restricted access to F Road. This option, he added, would be dependent on the outcome of a cost-benefit analysis and a more detailed feasibility study planned for next year.

Chairman Elmer asked if the Transportation Department had considered future expansion of G Road as a major east-west corridor. Mr. Moore said that G Road already represented, and would continue to represent, perhaps the most viable east-west traffic alternative; however, it has limitations. He expected improvements to include widening to three lanes, with five-lane widening in some areas for 2050 traffic and intersection improvements.

Commissioner Putnam said that any plan implemented must take into consideration expected business and residential development in the area. Mr. Moore remarked that a number of varied uses had been approved for the area which, he felt, showed great foresight on the part of planning commissioners. He said G Road improvements wouldn't solve all of the area's problems.

Commissioner Dibble wondered if additional thought had been given to a Highway 6 & 50 bypass. Mr. Moore said that this option was also under consideration but would require the cooperation of CDOT to design and construct.

Commissioner Prinster thought that widening existing roads would be less costly than construction of new improvements such as the F ½ Road parkway. Mr. Moore agreed that a number of options were being explored; however, seven-laning 24 Road and/or F Road were not desirable alternatives.

Commissioner Dibble asked about the type of intersection improvements being discussed. Would they include roundabouts or would they all be signaled? Mr. Moore responded that discussions had not gotten to that level of detail yet. He expected that highly trafficked intersections along G Road would be signaled, while other less-trafficked intersections could use a roundabout.

Commissioner Prinster asked if the Plan was conceptual only, or did it propose actual improvements? Mr. Moore answered that while only conceptual, it provided the Major Street Plan with the level of detail not currently in place.

Commissioner Prinster expected the F ½ Road parkway option to be contentious, one which would include property rights issues. Mr. Moore agreed and said that the City was trying to be as proactive as possible. To this end, as areas along these major corridors (23 ½ Road, 24 Road, G Road) were developed, the City would be actively acquiring right-of-way for future widening/improvements projects.

Mr. Shaver reminded the Commission that the Major Street Plan put people on notice of certain City improvements and that planning/design/building efforts could be anticipated. He said that the 24 Road Transportation Plan was a sub-component of the Major Street Plan.

Commissioner Denner asked if any type of improvements were planned for the section of F Road from 1st to 7th Streets. He wondered whether there was any way to widen that section of roadway? Mr. Moore agreed that that section of roadway was tight, with traffic congestion at the 1st Street/F Road intersection being a problem; however, there are a number of limitations to the section which prevented additional widening. The best option available was routing traffic to other corridors. It would be difficult, he admitted, getting people to change their habits.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jesse Dodd (621 – 26 Road, Grand Junction) pointed out that the 1st Street, 7th Street and 12th Street/F Road intersections were the worst ones in the City. The currently proposed concept plan did nothing to alleviate current or future traffic congestion at any of these intersections. He asked is there any practical way to construct an F Road bypass at either 28 or 29 Roads? Chairman Elmer said that that option had been lost when developments were approved which precluded that as an option.

Patrick Moran (623 – 26 Road, Grand Junction) said that if the F ½ Road parkway were constructed, it would probably end up being a “freeway.” Its construction, he thought, could also justify closing the 1st Street/F Road intersection altogether. Dr. Moran mirrored comments about traffic congestion problems at the 1st Street/F Road intersection and noted that new development approved for the area north of H Road would add another 300 or more vehicles to that intersection. Dr. Moran didn’t feel that the concept plan did anything to alleviate traffic problems along F Road.

PETITIONER’S REBUTTAL

Mr. Moore said that a number of improvements were planned for F Road, even though there would be no added lanes. For example, right-hand turn lanes are planned for construction at the 1st Street, 7th Street, and 12th Street/F Road intersections. Traffic light synchronization was another improvement that is included in the 10 year CIP, beginning in 2002. He acknowledged the lack of a viable bypass alternative available to alleviate traffic congestion along F Road. Perhaps the City could consider encouraging business development to move further to the east of 24 Road.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Dibble said that I-70 would eventually have to be developed as an east-west corridor. Further widening and/or development of G Road as a primary corridor would probably bring just as much opposition from residents located near it as could be expected from residents living near to the F ½ Road parkway. He agreed with a previous comments made about the difficulty in changing people’s driving habits and said that traffic problems were best handled in segments.

Chairman Elmer acknowledged that further study would be undertaken in determining the best option(s) available for the 24 Road area. The F ½ Road parkway was only one such option and no in-depth

analysis had yet occurred. Since the 24 Road Transportation Plan was only conceptual, he expressed support for its approval.

Commissioner Prinster agreed that concept plans were designed to consider ways of handling traffic 20-50 years hence. He said that everyone recognized the traffic problems associated with F Road, but unfortunately there were limited options. The 24 Road area would be a major focus of additional development and growth and it was important to take a proactive stance in traffic planning. G Road improvements and the F ½ Road parkway were only options under consideration and subject to closer scrutiny by Mr. Moore and his staff. While the Plan gave some realistic planning alternatives, there were a number of questions still to be answered; however, it appeared the City was moving in the right direction, and he expressed support for the Plan.

Commissioner Denner took no issue with the Plan and thought that perhaps some of the current traffic congestion would be alleviated with construction of the cross-town extension of 29 Road to I-70. He also suggested an educational push to get people off of major corridors. He too supported the Plan as proposed.

Commissioner Dibble commended planning and engineering staffs for their work in attempting to solve long-term problems. He said that the current Plan represented the one receiving the most public support.

Commissioner Putnam felt that the current plan would address many of the traffic needs of the 24 Road area.

MOTION: (Commissioner Denner) “Mr. Chairman, on item PLN-2001-070, the 24 Road Area Transportation Plan, I move that we recommend approval of the Plan as presented to the City Council.”

Commissioner Putnam seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 5-0.

V. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Ms. Portner briefly updated planning commissioners on the appeal of the cell phone tower, which had been heard by City Council. The Council had upheld the Planning Commission’s decision of approval; however, Council members had directed planning staff to develop a more in-depth process for reviewing alternative sites.

Chairman Elmer thought this a good idea and asked that as a part of Planning Commission packets, staff present them with written documentation showing which sites had been reviewed, how each site had been assessed, and if eliminated as a viable siting option, how that determination had been made. His focus was and would continue to be more on the site selection process. Ms. Portner said that future tower proposals would include input from experts. Tower co-location would become an even greater priority in the future.

Ms. Portner expected two public hearing in June, and they would probably be lengthy.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M.