

MESA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION

MARCH 29, 1979

The special meeting of the Mesa County Planning Commission and the Grand Junction Planning Commission for the month of March was an advertised joint hearing on the subject of transportation. However, due to a failure to achieve a quorum of the Grand Junction Planning Commission, the public hearing was open only for the Mesa County Planning Commission. The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m. by LLOYD SOMMERVILLE, Vice-Chairman.

The following members of the Grand Junction Planning Commission were present: FLORENCE GRAHAM AND DALE SCHOENBECK.

The following members of the Mesa County Planning Commission were present: DAVID SKINNER, CHARLES REICKS, NANCY DICKEY, LLOYD SOMMERVILLE, JUDY PRAKKNEN, and GERRY STUART.

CONNIE MCDONOUGH, Development Director, BOB KETTLE, Comprehensive Planner, and MARIE WELCH, Stenographer were also present. There were approximately 15 interested citizens in the audience.

Connie McDonough explained that the purpose of the meeting was to make a joint presentation to the Planning Commissions on the subject of transportation to facilitate cross communication. Since only two members of the Grand Junction Planning Commission were present, they would not be able to make any official recommendations during this meeting. The Mesa County Planning Commission could consider adoption of all of the policies presented tonight, the adoption of a portion of the policies, request further input prior to making a decision, or deny the entire package. The subject could be referred to a workshop and then rescheduled for action at a later date.

Ms. McDonough presented a history of the subject of transportation planning in Mesa County, summarized as follows:

The Small-Cooley Plan was done in the City and County in 1967, and adopted. In 1976 the Planning Department staff prepared a new study and presented it to the Planning Commissions and City Council. This was a proposed amendment to the Small-Cooley Plan. At this time the City Council appointed a Transportation Task Force to put together citizen recommendations. The Task Force worked for six to seven months and prepared a report which was presented to the Planning Commissions, City Council, and the County Commissioners.

Since that time the Development Department staff has compiled the Task Force Report, the informal recommendations of the Planning Commissions concerning the Task Force report, the transportation study work of two years ago, and staff input into a transportation component of the comprehensive plan. This plan may concur with either the Task Force or Planning Commissions' point of view, but does not do so at all times. It is a compilation of staff views.

Bob Kettle explained that this presentation was being made at this time rather than after the completion of the entire Comprehensive Plan due to the Transportation Task Force and Planning Commissions' recommendations being done and the staff's desire not to lose the momentum already created. In addition, the following are reasons for bringing the matter to hearing at this time:

1. The Small Cooley designations are out of date and deserve re-evaluation.
2. Several transportation areas are in need of immediate attention. Improvement priorities are critical in order to compete for funds. Lack of unity on priorities will jeopardize the community's ability to obtain funds for transportation.
3. The proposed memorandum of agreement with the State Highway Department for transportation planning.

Staff feels that the designations proposed at this hearing will not contradict the outcome of the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Bob Kettle then went over the proposed priorities, and they are as follows:

A. Highest Priority

1. Amend Roadway Designations (see attached exhibit). The 4-step sequence for any capital improvements project is:
  - a. Planning studies
  - b. Right-of-way determination
  - c. Design, while simultaneously obtaining right-of-way
  - d. Construction

Roadway designations are critical to determining the amount of right-of-way which must be obtained.

2. Proceed with the Transit Development Program (TDP).
3. Initiate Bikeway Plan, as supported in Parks and Air Quality Plans.
4. Synchronize lights on 7th, 12th, North, and Grand.
5. Design and construct grade-separated Railroad crossing at 29 Road.
6. Improve the at-grade crossing at Railroad and 30 Road, and the intersection of 30 Road and Highway 6 & 24.
7. Design and construct extension of Horizon Drive from Airport to Patterson to major arterial parkway standards.

8. Upgrade Patterson from 29 Road to 24½ Road, to arterial parkway standards.
9. Design Goat Draw corridor, from State Highway 340 to Highway 6 & 50.
10. Coordinate with the Railroad to select additional crossing locations.

B. High Priority

1. Construct additional connectors between North Avenue and Patterson - both 15th Street, and completing 28½ Road between Orchard and Patterson.
2. Improve River Road Bypass between 5th Street bridge and 24 Road (this is an alternative to the Highway 50 bypass).
3. Construct Goat Draw corridor.
4. Improve Ute/Pitkin corridor - signalization, signage, channelization, and parking limitation.
5. Improve 24 Road from I-70 to Patterson to arterial standards.
6. Design 29 Road river-bridge crossing.
7. Improve B½ Road between Highway 50 and 28½ Road.

C. Medium Priority

1. Build 29 Road river-bridge crossing. Simultaneously design the connection of Horizon Drive with 29 Road. Subsequently, construct the 29 Road connection to Horizon Drive, and improve B½ Road between 28½ and 29 Roads.
2. Upgrade Patterson Road from 29 Road to the I-70 Business Loop to arterial standards.
3. Upgrade D Road from 15th Street to 32 Road to arterial standards.
4. Revise intersection of Grand Avenue, 29 Road, and the I-70 Business Loop.
5. Establish a transportation terminal for buses, taxis, and shuttles in the downtown area.

Bob Kettle pointed out that some recommendations fall in the jurisdiction of the State Highway Department and will be considered by them, although they are endorsed by the Development Department. These are:

1. Improve 1st Street from Pitkin to Grand, the intersection of 1st and Grand, and the circulation around the Railroad depot.
2. Upgrade 32 Road from D Road to I-70 to major arterial standards.
3. Improve signage on I-70 both east and west-bound.

Additions to the priorities were the proposal of Grand Avenue as a minor arterial instead of a major arterial as it is now, and limited parking on Road, Colorado, and 29 Road south of Highway 50.

Bob Kettle then explained the proposed policies, and they are as follows:

1. Encourage a compact development pattern which can promote better use of the existing routes, optimize the future potential for public transit, and minimize total vehicle miles travelled and resultant air pollution.
2. Encourage the development of alternative modes of transportation, including public transit and recreational/commuter circulation systems for pedestrians and bicyclists. Encourage major employers to experiment with staggered work hours and car pool/van pool systems.
3. Discourage movement of fast-moving traffic through neighborhoods by developing a high-capacity arterial street system. Any arteries which unavoidably must traverse residential areas should be developed as parkways, with landscaped medians and limited access.
4. Improve traffic flow to minimize air pollution by synchronizing lights, installing left/right run lanes and acceleration/deceleration lanes, eliminating on-street parking on arterials, minimizing curb cuts through subdivision design, limiting accesses to major arterials, and other similar means.
5. Each individual development should be responsible to develop its access and perimeter streets in accord with the street Master Plan, as well as to pay a share of any off-site improvements necessitated by that development. Such financial share shall be proportional to the relative impact contributed by that particular project, and shall be determined by elected officials.
6. Commit funding in accord with the priorities identified in Part II and adopted Capital Improvements Programs. Alternative means available to obtain supplemental funds include an increased sales tax, a real estate transfer tax in the County, and/or creation of a special district for transportation.

7. Restrict residential development in the vicinity of Walker Field in accord with the Federal Aviation Authority, the Airport Authority, and the Airport Master Plan.

Lloyd Sommerville, Vice-Chairman, opened the public hearing at 8:20 p.m.

Greg Robson, a member of the Transportation Task Force, pointed out that this proposed transportation comprehensive plan provided no distinction between freeways and expressways, and that the Transportation Task Force had felt that this was necessary because of the different types of travel.

Ron Rish, City Engineer, submitted the attached memorandum to the Planning Commission summarizing his feelings on the proposed plan and the method used in preparing it. Conni McDonough pointed out that Mr. Rish's input was deleted from the presentation at his request. Mr. Rish stated that his main concern was that while he felt a need to get on with transportation planning, he personally felt that there wasn't enough time allowed for input, especially when streets are proposed to be designated. He also stated that a formal process was premature without time for full, in-depth input from him.

Conni McDonough concurred with his observation and publically apologized for not getting the proposed plan to the technical advisory committee sooner than two weeks prior to this hearing. She also made it clear that there was no endorsement of the plan from the technical advisory committee for this reason.

Florence Graham suggested that Mr. Rish schedule a meeting with staff for the next City Planning Commission workshop. Ms. McDonough pointed out that it would be necessary to determine what staff had planned for upcoming workshops prior to such scheduling.

Judy Prakken inquired of Mr. Robson if he would respond more if there was more time available for study and input. Mr. Robson responded affirmatively.

Kathy Lofink, member of the Development Department Staff, stated that she had talked with members of the Transportation Task Force today, and that their comments would be submitted in writing to the Planning Commission.

Bob Kettle again explained that the purpose of this meeting was to set the wheels in motion and move on to the Elected Officials.

The public hearing was closed at 8:30 p.m.

Judy Prakken stated that she felt that a decision should be postponed due to her feeling that the public did not get a fair chance to comment and she would like to hear input from the City staff, the Transportation Task Force, and the technical advisory committee.

Lloyd Sommerville inquired as to the status of the Transit Development Program. Conni McDonough reported that the City Council had acted on a resolution committing their support to a TDP to study the feasibility of public transit. She stated that the County Commissioners would likely be taking the same action, which will enable the request to UMPTA to provide funding. She further stated that the UMPTA grant would provide 80% funding, that the additional 20% was already in the Development Department budget for 1979, and that no new moneys would be required for the study.

Charles Reicks inquired as to the placement of 29 Road river crossing as a higher priority than the Planning Commission's recommended high priority of 27 Road-12th Street River Crossing.

Nancy Dickey agreed with staff that 29 Road from Orchard Mesa to I-70 would be the best crossing through the valley.

Conni McDonough stated that the decision on the River Cross was a difficult decision for staff, and that there were many points of view involved in the question. These included comparative costs (a 12th Street crossing would be further away in time because of the additional cost involved), that the 12th Street crossing would provide more relief of the 5th Street Bridge, and that a 29 Road River crossing would also enable development of Pear Park.

Lloyd Sommerville stated that he felt Policy #5 needed better wording concerning the discussion and establishment of a "fair share" of payment of off-site improvements to the County.

Conni McDonough explained that each project would be discussed on the basis of its own merit to establish a fair share of payment, but that some criteria certainly needed to be adopted. The wording will be worked on and a recommendation made as to a change.

Dick Prosen of the State Highway Department stated that they were currently in the process of discussing access programs and were contemplating policies in this regard.

Lloyd Sommerville commented that Policy #7 concerning development in the vicinity of Walker Field was too vague.

Ms. McDonough responded that airport vicinity regulations were needed, and that a proposal would be presented to the Grand Junction Planning Commission in upcoming meetings. After further discussion among the Planning Commission, Charles Reicks pointed out that a positive approach is needed in this matter.

STUART/PRAKKEN MOVED TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING UNTIL FURTHER INPUT COULD BE RECEIVED. The motion was carried 5-0. Hearing was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.