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Mesa County Commissioners  
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Gentlemen:

A recent newspaper article reported that the Mesa County Road Supervisor had reported to the County Commissioners concerning his efforts to promote an extension of Dike Road. The road, as extended, would extend from the intersection with Highway 340 near Brach's Market, thence along the river, across the Redlands Power Canal, thence to 23 Road and thence to rejoin Highway 340 in the vicinity of Redlands Village. The announced reason by the Road Supervisor for the proposed road was to alleviate the congestion of traffic on Highway 340 from the Redlands into Grand Junction.

The proposed extension of Dike Road would pass directly through the "Connected Lakes Park" which is the largest greenbelt project undertaken to date. At places along the greenbelt park the distance between the Redlands Canal and the river is little more than 1,000 feet. Accordingly, the road, if constructed, I believe would have serious detrimental affects on the park and would be destructive of the objectives for which the Connected Lakes land was acquired. The part was intended to serve as open space and as a preserved enclave of nature in the growing Grand Junction metropolitan area. In furtherance of this objective, development was to be prohibited which would destroy the solitude and undisturbed nature of the area, but development would afford use of the area for picnicing, hiking, bicycle trails, boating and a natural habitat for wild life.

It is always easy for road planners to seek to utilize the few remaining undeveloped areas to route new roads since the problem of right-of-way acquisitions, as well as many construction problems, are minimized. If these few remaining undeveloped areas are preempted, however, for automobile roads, we may well have a growth pattern thoughtlessly destructive of environmental values as has occurred around many growing communities.

Over and above the environment affects, it appears to me that expenditure of funds for the proposed road would be imprudent, and that these funds could be used in a more constructive manner to alleviate access problems to the Redlands.

In the "1973 Highway Recommendations" made by the Highway Committee of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce (and other groups including Mesa County) the flow of traffic on Colorado 340 on the Redlands is shown to have a daily traffic count of 9,900 at the point at which Dike Road enters Highway 340 near Brach's Market. The report indicates that the railroad viaduct leading from this point into Grand Junction carries some 14,400 cars daily. The information also indicates that the point at which the Dike Road would be departing from Highway 340, generally around the area of 23 Road, the daily traffic count is some 680 autos. The result, therefore, of building the alternate route along the Dike Road would be to syphon traffic from a segment of Highway 340 and then reinject the traffic by means of a left turn onto the same highway at a point at which the highway has 50% more traffic than at the point of origin of the bypass road.

At the point at which the extended Dike Road would reenter Highway 340, the left turn would have to be made at a point at which the traffic is particularly jammed. Such an arrangement would cause more delays and congestion than would the same traffic proceeding along 340 without the necessity of the stopping and making of the left turn.

It seems to me that the problem of access to and from the Redlands is composed of two primary elements. The first (and most severe) is congestion at the intersection of Highway 340 with Grand Avenue at First Street. This is, of course, the chief bottleneck to traffic moving from the Redlands into Grand Junction. The second element is the need to improve the ability of Highway 340 to carry the traffic which must continue to be interjected into the City at such intersection.

I would submit that the principal problem mentioned above must be solved by affording an additional point at which traffic can be funnelled into the City. Any efforts which tend to increase the amount of traffic entering at the Grand-First Street intersections would tend to aggravate, rather than alleviate, the problem.

To the extent that the section of Highway 340 west of the bridge or viaduct must accomodate additional traffic, further improvement of the highway seems to me to be the best

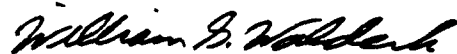
solution. As pointed out in the Highway Recommendations, "Based upon accepted highway standards, the number of vehicles using 340 now qualifies it for consideration as a four-lane highway." I believe that the long planned project of four laning Highway 340 which, incidentally, has already commenced, should be pursued.

I respectfully submit that it would be much preferable to utilize the money, energy and efforts available to seek another bridge across the river to funnel traffic from the Redlands area to enter the City along North Avenue and to seek to further four-lane Highway 340 rather than spending these resources on a road which, in my opinion, would be counter-productive as well as destructive of other community values.

The Highway Recommendations referred to above suggest that monies be appropriated in 1973 for the purpose of making a study of traffic needs on the Redlands. Surely we should await the results of this study before any decision is made to utilize funds for purposes which could offer little relief or, perhaps even be counter-productive, while at the same time being detrimental to environmental considerations.

This matter seems to me to be of sufficient importance that if the County Commissioners feel that they wish to proceed with the plan being advocated by the County Road Supervisor, that a public meeting be held in which all interested parties can air their views with respect to this plan.

Yours very truly,



WILLIAM G. WALDECK

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