

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
January 24, 2017 MINUTES
6:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Christian Reece. The hearing was held in the City Hall Auditorium located at 250 N. 5th Street, Grand Junction, Colorado.

Also in attendance representing the City Planning Commission were Jon Buschhorn, Kathy Deppe, Keith Ehlers, Ebe Eslami, George Gatseos, and Bill Wade (Vice-Chairman).

In attendance, representing the City's Administration Department - Community Development, was Kathy Portner, (Development Services Manager) and Dave Thornton (Principal Planner).

Also present was Jamie Beard (Assistant City Attorney) and Paul Jagim, Transportation Engineer.

Sue Mueller was present to record the minutes.

There were five citizens in attendance during the hearing.

Announcements, Presentations And/or Visitors

None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Action: Approve the minutes from the December 13, 2016 Meeting.

[File#VAC-2016-582]

2. Vacation of Alley Public Rights-of-Way –R-5 High School Block

Request to vacate alley public rights-of-way in Block 84, Original City Plat, also known as the R-5 High School Block to clear encumbrances for potential redevelopment of the block.

Action: Recommendation to City Council

Applicant: DDA – Brandon Stam, Executive Director
Location: 310 North 7th Street. Block 84 Original City Plat – Southeast corner of 7th Street and Grand Avenue
Staff Presentation: Kristin Ashbeck, Sr. Planner

3. 23 ½ Road Circulation Plan Amendment

[File#CPA-2016-29]

Request an amendment to the Grand Valley Circulation Plan, an element of the Comprehensive Plan, to change the classification of 23 ½ Road between F ½ Road and Interstate 70 from a Principal Arterial to a Minor Arterial with a modified street section.

Action: Recommendation to City Council

Applicant: CFP Estate, Ltd – Owner
Gus R. and Chris R. Halandras – Owner
Andy Peroulis - Owner
Location: 23 ½ Road from F ½ Road to I-70
Staff Presentation: David Thornton, Principal Planner

Chairman Reece briefly explained the Consent Agenda and invited the public, Planning Commissioners and staff to speak if they wanted the item pulled for a full hearing.

Commissioner Ehlers stated that he wanted to pull item number three (3), the 23 ½ Road Circulation Plan Amendment for a full hearing.

With no other amendments to the Consent Agenda, Chairman Reece called for a motion to approve the revised Consent Agenda.

MOTION: (Commissioner Wade) “Madam Chairman, I move approve the consent agenda as modified.”

Commissioner Deppe seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

*****INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION*****

Staff Presentation

Dave Thornton (Principal Planner) displayed a location map of the area and stated that this is a request to amend the Grand Valley Circulation Plan. Mr. Thornton went on to explain that the City’s home rule powers and Section 212 of Article 23 of Title 31 of the Colorado Revised Statutes grants authority to the City to make and adopt a plan for the physical development of streets and roads located within the legal boundaries of the municipality and all lands lying within three (3) miles of the municipal boundary. The location of the proposed amendment is entirely within the City Limits.

Mr. Thornton displayed a map of the proposed amendment location and noted that the applicant, OneWest, owns the property (shaded gray on the graphic) located between 23 ¼ Road and 23 ¾ Road from G Road to Highway 6 & 50.

The Grand Valley Circulation Plan bisects the property with proposed major roadways, including the F ½ Road Parkway (parallel to the Xcel high-voltage lines), 23 ½ Road as a principal arterial (extending north to I-70), and major collectors at ¼ mile intervals.

OneWest partnership approached the City about the desired future of 23 ½ Road. As a Principal Arterial, a significant amount of ROW would be required in order to develop this roadway. This ROW would need to be set aside now, in order to avoid impacting future development within OneWest.

The partnership applied to the City for a change to the classification of 23 ½ Road to a Minor Arterial, specifically to what is known as the “D Road section”, a modified design with the same amount of ROW as a Minor Arterial which is 80 feet in width.

If approved, the requested change would apply to the entire one-mile stretch of 23 ½, beginning at F ½ Road and continuing north to Interstate 70.

The next slide was a zoning map of the 23 ½ Road area and Mr. Thornton stated that the zoning around the corridor area is industrial, commercial and mixed use.

Mr. Thornton then displayed the Future Land Use Map of the area noting that the future land use around the corridor area is Village Center, commercial/Industrial, commercial and higher density Residential/mixed use.

Paul Jagim, City Transportation Engineer, explained that his portion of the presentation was to describe the background of how the Grand Valley Circulation Plan (GVCP) came to being and explain some of the circumstances that have changed, that caused the need to revise the GVCP.

In the late 90s the City looked at planning efforts for the 24 Rd. sub-area to identify what future street capacity improvements would be required. At the time, 24 Rd. was two lane and it was anticipated that traffic volumes would require that the road be widened in addition to improvements to the 24 Rd./ I 70 interchange.

As a result of those planning efforts, 24 Rd. was widened to three lanes in 2000 in a way that could be increased to five lanes in the future. In addition, the split diamond interchange concept was identified for future traffic capacity. This concept shares traffic capacity along two different roadways. In this scenario, 24 Rd. and 23 ½ Rd would share capacity with each having two ramps as shown on the GVCP map.

Mr. Jagim pointed out that traffic planning goes beyond what just the City is looking at and there are other regional partners such as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) that plan for future capacity as well. Mr. Jagim noted that the split-diamond concept never really caught traction with partners at CDOT and the MPO. CDOT recognized the need to increase capacity at that interchange and in lieu of the split diamond concept, in 2006 they constructed the

roundabouts that are there today. This was done with a 25-year planning horizon and addressed the anticipated traffic volume needs through 2040.

Similar to CDOT, the Grand Valley MPO did not incorporate the split diamond into their Regional Transportation Plan. Mr. Jagim explained that a tool used to create the plan is the Travel Demand Model. Just as the 25-year Regional Transportation Plan is updated every 5 years, the Travel Demand Model is updated as well. Mr. Jagim explained that when the 2040 Regional Plan was updated, the City looked at the GVCP to revise it so that it was still aligned with the assumptions and conclusions of the MPO plan.

Mr. Jagim displayed a slide of a draft of the proposed revisions to the GVCP that was a result of a year-long effort of a committee comprised of City and County staff. The next step in the process would be a public input process and then hopefully adoption of the revisions in 2017.

Mr. Jagim noted that there are approximately 50 revisions needed to align the plan with the MPOs plan. One of the revisions is the removal of the split-diamond at 24 Rd. and associated changes to 23 ½ Rd. Assumptions used in the traffic model was the current and future land use and current and future improvements at 24 Rd. It was determined that these would sufficiently address the future needs in that area through the year 2040. Likewise, it was determined that the need to use 23 ½ Rd. for the interchange was no longer needed and it could serve as a minor arterial for collector streets that will eventually be built along with development.

Mr. Jagim pointed out that the travel demand model is a macro level model so the accuracy of it is limited to the network level. Mr. Jagim also pointed out that the revised network does not consider 23 ½ Rd as a connection to the interstate. Therefore, the traffic projected for 2040 is less than 10,000 vehicles per day which is well within the capacity of a three lane street section.

Mr. Jagim displayed a slide illustrating typical street cross sections for the various street classifications. The primary difference of why the recommendation is for a minor arterial classification instead of major collector is that they would need to preserve an 80-foot width right of way instead of 60 feet in case something should change. Mr. Jagim cautioned that the model is only as good as the assumptions that are plugged into it.

Mr. Thornton referred to the review criteria in Section 21.02.130(c)(2) of the Grand Junction Municipal Code. Noting that at least one of the criteria needs to be met, Mr. Thornton recapped the next slide with the following information.

Specifically, this criterion has been met.

(ii) Subsequent events have invalidated the original premise and findings;

- Every five years the City and County update the Regional Transportation Plan and determine future traffic projections. These 5 year updates have never recognized the split diamond interchange at 23 ½ Road /24 Road as a solution to traffic demand nor for its need to accommodate future traffic demand.

- 24 Road has seen improvements constructed at the I-70 interchange that enhance and improve traffic circulation and flow, as well as increase its ability to accommodate future projected traffic.
- Traffic projections for 23 ½ Road without a split diamond interchange show no demand for a principal arterial street running parallel and within one-half mile of 24 Road, a principal arterial.

Findings of Fact/Conclusions

Mr. Thornton stated that after reviewing a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, CPA-2016-29, to amend the Grand Valley Circulation Plan, the following findings of fact and conclusions have been determined:

- The requested amendment is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan;
- The review criteria in Section 21.02.130(c)(2) of the Grand Junction Municipal Code have been met.

Questions for Staff

Commissioner Eslami asked if staff has plans to update the Grand Valley Circulation this year. Mr. Thornton stated that an update is planned for this year, however the applicant, OneWest has submitted the application for this amendment. Mr. Thornton explained that a member of the public has the right to request to expedite an amendment by going through the proper process, as they did.

Mr. Thornton explained that staff supports this amendment as it is one of the 51 potential amendments that are being considered for the future update.

Referring to the Street Cross Sections example, Commissioner Ehlers stated that he wanted to make sure they weren't unnecessarily restricting access points by choosing a particular street classification. Discussion continued regarding potential scenarios.

Mr. Jagim explained that the width of the surface pavement was the same for the minor arterial D Rd. section and the major collector. Mr. Jagim added that the capacity and safety of the street is not just based on the street width, but it's also a function of the driveway and intersection spacing. The minor arterial classification also fits in well with the overall grid that is projected.

Questions for the Applicant

Tom Logue, representing the applicant OneWest stated that he has read the staff report and is in agreement with the recommendation to move the request forward to City Council. Mr. Logue noted the applicant's development is in a PD zone and the declassification of the 23 ½ Rd. would require less right of way dedication and that the

extra footage for this section add up quickly. Mr. Logue noted that they had started this application about a year ago and are now finalizing the development agreement which is why they chose to make an application for the amendment.

Commissioner Ehlers noted that his questions regarding the alternative classifications were to provide discussion for other possible considerations. Commissioner Ehlers wanted to confirm that the applicant was aware of the access implications of it being a minor arterial compared to a major collector as well as the alignment restrictions.

Mr. Logue explained that during the ODP process, they had discussed their needs for access spacing and decided that with such a large parcel to work with, they were comfortable with this request.

Commissioner Reece asked if there were any other questions or comments from the public regarding this item. Hearing none, Commissioner Reece closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

MOTION: (Commissioner Gatseos) “Madam Chairman, on the Grand Valley Circulation Plan Amendment, CPA-2016-29, I move that the Planning Commission forward to City Council a recommendation of approval to amend the Grand Valley Circulation Plan, an element of the Comprehensive Plan, to reclassify 23 ½ Road from F ½ Road to I-70 from a Principal Arterial to a Minor Arterial, and specifically to what is known as the “D Road Section”, a modified design with the same amount of Right-of-Way as a Minor Arterial, with the findings and conclusions listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Buschhorn seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

4. Other Business

Kathy Portner, Community Development referred to the new schedule prepared for the Commission that lists the future meeting dates and workshop dates. Noting that there is a pretty full agenda for the February meeting and workshop, Ms. Portner asked if the Commission would like to schedule a special workshop meeting that would include IT support for the I-Pads, one-on-one meetings, or wait until March.

Commissioner Reece asked Ms. Portner to contact Commissioners with dates that may work for most via email.

5. Adjournment

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.