

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Traffic & Safety Section
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DATE: July 2, 2013

TO: Tamra Allen, Planning Manager, Garfield County Community Development Department
Larry Ballenger, Public Work Director, Town of Carbondale

FROM: Dan Roussin, Region 3 Permit Manager *Dan Roussin*

SUBJECT: Access Clarification for Carbondale Access Control Plan

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Town of Carbondale (Town), and the Garfield County (County) undertook a traffic study on SH 133 to develop an access control plan (ACP) that is intended to provide a blue print for the future location and overall accessibility of motorist to the highway within town limits. A goal of the study was to develop a set of recommendations regarding access to SH 133 that would accommodate existing and future traffic (vehicle and non-vehicular) volumes to minimize unnecessary traveler delay and attempt to provide a safe traveling environment for all users of the facility.

During the process of developing the recommendations, the project team has reached out to the public through small groups, one-on-one meetings, open houses, and elected official proceedings to provide information and gather feedback on the plan. This has resulted in some concern regarding the wording contained in the documents as well as some of the graphics contained in the studies documentation. The intent of the letter is to provide subsequent details regarding the meaning of the terminology used in the final documents of the SH 133 ACP.

It is important to re-iterate that an access control plan, while being a legal document, is really a planning document that is intended to provide guidance to the Town, County, and CDOT. All of the recommendations made in the documents do not have a time table for implementation, as implementation typically occurs when a roadway improvement project occurs, money is available, or a safety need is identified. The document is also intended to provide as much flexibility to the agencies as possible due to changes to land use, un-expected growth in traffic volumes, and changes to community development goals.

The recommendations of the ACP are not necessary the final conditions that will exist in the future. The showing of new roadways or connections with the local street networks is only potential solutions. Any change to access along the corridor will require the completion of a more detailed traffic study to determine the best solution

for the location at question. These future traffic studies will start with the recommendations of the ACP and explore all possibilities before making a final recommendation that meets the needs and goals of the community, the citizens, and stakeholders along the highway. If necessary, the current ACP can be modified in the future to account for changes to land use, community development, regional goals, and safety priorities that were unanticipated at the time the recommendations contained in the ACP were originally developed and documented.

Another concern that has risen deals with the use of the terminology full-movement in the ACP. This letter provides some additional explanation of the overall meaning of this term that goes beyond what is currently contained in the study's existing documentation. The term full-movement means that all vehicular movements will be allowed at this access location as the long term solution. Because it is unknown at this time of exactly what the future traffic conditions will be at this location, including pedestrian demands, the ACP allows CDOT, Town, County, and various stakeholders to ability to conduct a future traffic study to determine the exact design details of the full movement access location. This means the future study could result in a final design that includes a traffic signal, a roundabout, or some other type of design that does not restrict vehicle movements.

Finally, just because the ACP contains a recommendation for a new access location, this does not mean that the access location must be constructed in the future. A goal of the plan is to ensure that the stakeholders have the maximum amount of flexibility in addressing the future access needs along the highway. The plan simply shows possibility in addressing future demands for access to and from the highway and the most optimal method to safely move vehicle and non-vehicle traffic through and around the community. If changes to access are necessary in the future to address traffic demands or a safety issue then the first step in fixing the problem is to open the ACP and begin the discussions by looking at the recommended solution for the location in question.