

January 17, 2013

John Martin, Mike Samson, and Tom Jankovsky, Garfield County Commissioners

Re: Highway 133 Access Control Plan

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns regarding the Draft State Highway 133 ACP, as it affects the Dolores Way intersection. Since this is the only vehicular access to our homes, we are very familiar with the intersection, and are surprised that CDOT thinks it does not currently experience “safety or operational issues.” Making a left turn out of Dolores Way is not for the faint of heart, especially at those times of day when parents are dropping off or picking up their children at the Community School. It is just a matter of time before someone gets killed at this intersection. The situation will only get worse when roundabouts replace the traffic lights which currently serve to create breaks in the traffic.

We have been told that the Dolores Way intersection cannot be signalized because it is too close to the signal at Village Road, #11. The solution proposed by CDOT is to create a new road to a new intersection opposite the entrance to La Fontana and Grand Junction Pipe, called #83. The existing intersection, #13, would then become right-in, right-out only. New intersection #83 would have the potential to be signalized.

The attached drawing entitled “**CDOT Option**” is an approximation of what this new configuration would look like. It has 2 major flaws (not to mention creating a bizarre scenario where one must turn right in order to turn left, but can still turn left in order to turn right, when exiting Dolores Way):

1. It requires CRMS to give up productive agricultural land which CRMS does not want to sell.
2. It would require a new traffic light which would slow traffic on 133. To make matters worse, the 700 foot distance between Intersections #83 and #85 (Industry Place) is even less than that between Dolores Way and Village Road. Therefore, a signal at #83 would preclude the roundabout at #85 called for by the ACP. Eventually, #85 will be the entrance to a commercial development on the Village at Crystal River property, so it will need a signal or roundabout much more than it does now.

We have long seen the RFTA Park and Ride as the obvious route to connect Dolores Way to a signalized intersection with Highway 133. The Town of Carbondale says that a road can't be put through there because the 20 foot access easements which provide internal circulation through the Carbondale Business Park are too narrow to accommodate more traffic, and because RFTA won't allow it.

It would not be hard to create a new wider route through the Business Park. There is vacant land for sale just south of the NAPA store, and just north of the building which houses Sunsense. Instead of trying to buy an acre of hayfield from an unwilling seller, why not look at buying 8000 square feet from a willing seller? Trimming a 20 to 40 foot wide strip from either of these lots will still leave the sellers with very buildable lots, while providing some income to cover property taxes on the land while the sellers wait for the market to recover. It's a win-win solution. The “**Neighbors' Options**” 1, 2 & 3 are just three of the ways in which this scenario might work.

As far as RFTA's objections are concerned, we believe that it makes more sense to ask a governmental entity to compromise in the name of safety than it does to force CRMS to give up productive agricultural land. RFTA has legitimate concerns that additional traffic would interfere with bus traffic, but there are ways to assure buses would still have free movement. “**Neighbors' Option 1**” is our best shot at it, but your engineers could no doubt do better.

We understand that it will take significant time and money to build what we are suggesting, but it would be cheaper than the CDOT option, especially factoring in land acquisition costs. More importantly, all the CDOT Option would accomplish is to move the Dolores Way intersection farther away from one signalized intersection by moving it too close to another intersection which CDOT has prioritized for signalization. What a waste of tax dollars!

The options we are suggesting will also require a cooperative effort among governmental entities which may not like to cooperate with each other. But given all that CRMS contributes to our community, does it make sense to force CRMS to do something which they see as counter to their best interests, just because we can't cooperate amongst ourselves?

We would also like to encourage you to work cooperatively with the other governmental entities to build the pathway proposed in the ACP for the west side of Highway 133. Another huge safety problem is bicyclists who cross 133 at Dolores Way, because there is no path to get them safely to the crosswalk at Village Road. Because the construction of this path will necessitate grading and landscaping modifications at the Park & Ride, it would be efficient to build the path at the same time as the new Dolores Way connector road.

Once again, we sincerely thank you for listening to our concerns and suggestions.

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Cc: Joe White, Director of Finance, Colorado Rocky Mountain School
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