

OLD TOWN CLIFTON PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

November 8, 2007

Mesa County, along with consultants, has been studying the prospects of redevelopment within the Old Town Clifton area as recommended in the 2006 Clifton/Fruitvale Community Plan. This area includes both sides of F Road, from I-70 B to 33 Road, and from Front Street north to the Price Ditch. The study included economic and transportation issues, an inventory of existing physical conditions, review of the current zoning codes, public meetings and workshops, and finally, a series of recommendations addressing all of the above issues.

Economic Analysis

Old Town Clifton is lagging behind in the economic growth being experienced within the Grand Valley. Most of the residential and commercial growth is taking place on the west side of Grand Junction.

The Economic Analysis included a review of the larger trade area from west of Grand Junction to Palisade. The analysis reviewed the state of residential, retail, office, industrial, hotel, and medical related uses. The trade area was profiled in regard to estimated demand for projected growth over the next decade for all of the above uses. Population, household growth, and building permits were studied.

The analysis was then refined to study the more immediate area, within 2 miles of Old Town Clifton. Issues reviewed included:

- Historic population and household growth
- Projected demand for uses
- Existing supply and competitive projects within the Clifton area

With these criteria, the study estimated a capture rate for different land uses. Once the demand for uses was identified, a land use plan was developed. One result of the economic analysis is that there is a demand today, and over the next 5 years, for all of the uses mentioned above.

Transportation

Old Town Clifton is bisected by F Road in an east west direction, with a large number of vehicles coming from 33 Road as well as Palisade. According to 20 and 30 year forecasts, traffic on F Road will increase from 15,000 cars per day to 40,000 or 50,000 cars per day. Residents of Clifton do not want F Road to be widened from its current 3 lanes to 5 lanes. In an effort to avoid this, planners have recommended that Front Street be improved to handle more traffic.

Improvements would include extending Front Street to the east where it would connect to Highway 6 just west of the bridge over the railroad. To the west, Front Street would connect to I-70 B. This would require lengthening of the Highway 141 bridge. With this scenario, morning traffic from the Palisade area and 33 Road heading to downtown Grand Junction, would be directed to Front Street instead of F Road. As of this writing, traffic models are still being reviewed to determine what kind of impact improving Front Street will have on future traffic volumes.

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Future Land Use Plan and Zoning

The County and consultant team reviewed the existing physical conditions of Old Town Clifton. Heavily traveled I-70 B allows for high visibility of the F Road intersection as well as the Peach Tree Plaza area. The east side of I-70 B is lined with restaurants, and a bank. Peach Tree Plaza is lacking an anchor tenant, with Murdochs the only larger retail business. Public comments favor a phased removal of the remaining buildings within the Plaza.

F Road (State Highway 6) is currently lined on both sides with a mix of small retail businesses, as well as the historic church, a post office, fire station and grade school. Toward the east end, closer to 33 Road, are open agricultural fields. Interior, north south streets from 2nd to 5th Streets are lined with older homes in various states of repair. 2nd Street has a few retail businesses along with the Mesa County Community Center. Front Street runs adjacent to the railroad tracks and dead ends at the Highway 141 bridge.

Clifton residents expressed a need for a more walkable community with lighted walks, and the need to clean up several properties that hurt the Clifton image. Also requested was the need for new development, such as retail, business and residential. This development must have a level of quality that promotes a more positive image, and yet respects the history and character of Clifton.

With this in mind, the planning team developed a Future Land Use Plan, related to the Economic Analysis, which includes the concept of Mixed Use. Due to the restricted amount of developable land within Clifton, a mixed use development makes sense. With retail on the first floor and office or residential on upper stories, mixed use allows for architecture of 2-4 levels. This type of development lends itself to the high use areas of Clifton including along F Road, 2nd Street, Front Street and potentially the Peach Tree Plaza area.

Design Guidelines

A proposed Mixed Use Zone District has been submitted to the County by the consultant team, in draft form, to provide investors the opportunity to develop this type of land use. Included within this draft code language are design guidelines for new development in terms of architecture, open space and landscape requirements, all related to the Old Town Clifton area.

Once the Future Land Use Plan, Mixed Use Zone District and Design Guidelines are in place, the scene is set for market driven development to look at Clifton. What will help attract development is the construction of one or several public improvements such as a new Clifton "Gateway" on F Road at I-70 B. This Gateway might include some type of vertical elements to attract attention from I-70 B. Also included might be new curb and gutter, new sidewalks and landscape, all to show that Old Town Clifton is serious about redevelopment.