

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Grand Junction and Mesa County are planning to complete a new three- to five-lane parkway around the southern part of Grand Junction. The city's portion of the new loop road, known as Riverside Parkway, extends approximately 6.8 miles from 24 Road on the west to 29 Road on the east and includes a new interchange with SH 50/South Fifth Street in Lower Downtown Grand Junction. In November 2003 the citizens of Grand Junction approved an \$80 million bond issue to pay for Riverside Parkway. The project is 100 percent locally funded.

Under the provisions of Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Policy Directive 1601, a new interchange with SH 50 requires preparation of an environmental study to evaluate and consider the potential effects of the new interchange on the existing transportation system and on the surrounding environment. This document, the Riverside Parkway Lower Downtown Section Environmental Assessment (EA), evaluates these issues in an area bounded by the Colorado River on the south, the Union Pacific Railroad mainline tracks on the north, 4th Avenue near Koch Asphalt on the west, and D Road at 27½ Road on the east. More than 68 alignment options, 21 interchange configurations, and five potential SH 50/5th Street interchange locations were comparatively evaluated before identifying three alternatives for detailed analysis. These three Build Alternatives along with a No-Action Alternative are presented for comparison in this EA.

No significant impacts to the environment were identified during the course of this study. Issues of concern that will require implementation of mitigation measures include degradation of water quality, introduction of higher levels of transportation-related noise, adverse impacts to historic properties, excavation and removal of hazardous wastes, and displacement of a limited number of businesses and residences in the Lower Downtown Area.

Consideration of social, economic, and environmental issues was done in cooperation with a number of local, state, and federal agencies and with the public at large. Three large open house presentations were held during the development of this EA and numerous small group, neighborhood, and one-on-one meetings also took place to ensure that interested citizens had an opportunity to learn about the project and influence the final decision to be made on the project.

After full consideration of the beneficial and adverse impacts of the four alternatives under consideration, the City of Grand Junction has recommended Alternative 30J as the Preferred Alternative for the Lower Downtown Section of Riverside Parkway. This document describes the process followed and the basis for arriving at this decision.

This EA was made available to the public for their review and comment on October 20, 2004. Written comments on the project and the alternatives under consideration should be submitted to Mr. Jim Shanks at the address shown below. The deadline for receiving comments on this EA is November 19, 2004.

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