

Memorandum

To: Mayor and Council

From: Tom Baker, Town Administrator

Date: December 16, 2014

Re: Main Street Letter to CDOT

Purpose: The purpose of this item is to review the draft letter to CDOT in preparation for our January 28th meeting with them in Grand Junction. I have received several ideas for additions and want to check with Council on these ideas.



Town of New Castle

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January 5, 2015

David A. Eller, Region Director
CDOT Region 3
222 south Sixth Street, RM 317
Grand Junction, CO 81501-2769

Re: New Castle

Dear Mr. Eller:

On January 28, 2015, representatives of the Town Council, led by Mayor Gordon, will meet with you and your team at CDOT to discuss opportunities for better utilizing the 64 foot r-o-w that is state highway 6&24 through downtown New Castle. Currently, this section of roadway consists of four travel lanes and two parallel parking lanes. Our goal is to work with CDOT to reconfigure the r-o-w so that angle parking is created on the north side of the r-o-w and travel lanes are reduced from four to two. The Town has some ideas about how this can be accomplished: a safety feature for backing out of the angle parking spaces and reduce traffic speed to 25 mph.

From New Castle's point of view, Main Street (SH 6&24) is vital to the town's economic development. In the past, it was a regional traffic route. Now the regional traffic route is I-70 and SH 6&24 has low traffic flows and serves as a local Main Street providing access to local businesses. Over the past two years, small businesses have begun to repopulate Main Street in downtown New Castle. Many of these businesses – Lazy Bear, Hacienda El Patron, Black Dog Saloon and Maud's on Main are restaurants and require convenient parking for patrons. The lack of downtown parking has become a problem for new businesses especially during peak business hours, but also during some non-peak hours. Increasing parking in the existing SH 6&24 r-o-w is a better use of this existing underutilized resource.

The Town of New Castle has made investments of over \$500,000 in Main Street streetscape improvements and expect to make another \$500,000 of Main Street streetscape improvements in 2015. This \$1M investment in economic development demonstrates that the Town is stretching its resources to their limit to make Main Street work better for local businesses and for users of the downtown. We now need

your help, Mr. Eller. We want to better utilize the existing taxpayer investment to improve the economic prospects of downtown New Castle. We want to live up to Governor Hickinlooper's challenge to collaborate with all entities and find creative ways to address the challenges of the economy.

Finally, vehicle and pedestrian safety are also a primary concern for Town Council. With safety in mind, the Town is proposing changes to 7th Street/Main Street intersection, reduced traffic speed on Main Street through downtown, and a safety lane for backing from angle parking spaces. The Town recently completed a pedestrian safety improvement – Flat Tops Pedestrian Bridge – which provides a safe travel route to and from the north and south sides of town. Prior to this safety improvement pedestrians were required to walk or bike in travel lanes on the state's exit 105 bridge, which provides a vehicle link between north and south New Castle. Garfield County, Garfield Federal Mineral Lease District, Department of Local Affairs and the Town of New Castle invested over \$2,250,000 to make this project a reality. This project was dedicated to the community on December 6, 2014.

We look forward to meeting with you.

Respectfully,

Robert Gordon
Mayor