

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rifle Transportation Master Plan

INTRODUCTION

The City of Rifle, in cooperation with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), contracted with LSC Transportation Consultants to prepare a Transportation Master Plan for the greater Rifle area. The development of a Rifle Transportation Master Plan will allow the City of Rifle to identify what transportation improvements will be needed between now and 2025.

The study focused on transportation issues in the greater Rifle area. The primary factor in the Rifle area is the projected growth in population and correspondingly, the traffic congestion that will accompany that growth. The City of Rifle and surrounding areas are beginning to see some traffic-related problems, as well as the existing problems with street alignments and geometry. The goal of the study is to provide the Rifle area with alternate solutions to foreseeable future transportation problems.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

An important aspect of preparing a local transportation plan is to have involvement of local technical staff and citizens. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed made up of representatives from the City of Rifle, Garfield County, and the Colorado Department of Transportation. A Citizens' Advisory Committee was set up with volunteers recruited from the community.

TAC and CAC

LSC worked closely with the Rifle Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) throughout the study process. The TAC and CAC reviewed the five interim reports and the Draft Plan, and provided input and feedback to LSC. The TAC and CAC also have made decisions regarding directions for the study and possible alternatives to be considered. The analysis and plan are

designed to address the following three primary categories of need for the transportation system as set forth by the committees:

- Issues related to past growth
- Issues related to future growth
- Operate and maintain the transportation system

Public Comments

Public comments on the overall transportation plan were obtained during an informal Open House held at City Market on May 7, 2002. Comments included the following:

- “...additional sidewalks on Morrow”
- “...there is a strong need for public transportation for seniors and people with disabilities...”
- “...trouble getting across Railroad...to go into Palomino Park around 5:30-6:00 p.m.”
- “...signal lights at 3rd and 5th aren’t timed well...”

Additionally, public comments were solicited through the City of Rifle as well as having the working papers available for comment through a web link on the City of Rifle’s website. Additional public meetings were scheduled and the working papers were made available for public review. All concerned residents were encouraged to provide input and comment on the transportation process and available reports.

KEY ISSUES AND GOALS

As part of the process to identify issues within the study area, the CAC and TAC came up with a preliminary set of goals and issues. There were many issues identified, and the following represents only a portion of what was identified to the LSC Team:

Key Issues

- The need for additional north/south corridors within Rifle.
- The extension of Taughenbaugh to the south with connections to County Roads 320 and 332 with access to the airport.
- Concern for current and future Airport Road traffic.
- The non-motorized trail system should provide alternate circulation within Rifle.
- Concern regarding the development of the West Rifle interchange and the impacts on US 6.
- Address impact of county development on Rifle and coordination with Garfield County and the entire region.
- The overall street pattern within Rifle may require a grid system combined with cul-de-sac development based on topography.
- A threshold capacity for roads relating projected volumes to existing volumes and the overall perception of current congestion.
- The Plan should consider new developments and the impacts on current and planned schools and emergency services.
- A need to establish typical street cross sections while providing some design flexibility.
- The need for a street classification system to identify arterials, collectors, and local streets.
- A need for public transportation connecting the older area of Rifle and the new development south of I-70 along Airport Road, as well as coordination with the Rural Transportation Authority in the Roaring Fork Valley.
- The need for public involvement throughout the planning process.

Transportation Plan Goals

The are the goals developed for the Rifle Transportation Master Plan:

- *Goal 1:* Develop consensus on a long-range plan or vision of coordinated state and local transportation improvements for the City of Rifle and its immediate vicinity.
- *Goal 2:* Evaluate roadway capacity issues at several key areas, including but not limited to, the central business district, access points to town, and the I-70 area.
- *Goal 3:* Evaluate safety and mobility issues within the study area.
- *Goal 4:* Identify arterial and collector streets.
- *Goal 5:* Identify future alternative arterial and collector locations through Rifle, including south of Airport Road.

Executive Summary

- *Goal 6:* Identify capital improvements or strategies to accommodate future transportation needs.
- *Goal 7:* Evaluate access-related operational issues and potential solutions, utilizing flexible and creative design criteria.
- *Goal 8:* Identify an off-site street impact fee to be adopted by the city that is legally defensible.
- *Goal 9:* Identify accumulated transportation and roadway shortfalls and costs to rectify regardless of future growth or development.

STUDY PROCESS

During the development of the Transportation Plan, five incremental Working Papers were submitted for public review and review by both the TAC and CAC. Feedback received on each of the Working Papers was used to set the direction for subsequent tasks.

Working Paper #1 provided a summary of the existing conditions including community characteristics, existing transportation services, and an assessment of current traffic levels at selected areas of the Rifle Study Area. Demographic data were collected using both the 2000 Census and the State of Colorado's Office of Local Affairs. Additionally, current traffic data were collected and analyzed at specific locations and used to project future traffic volumes.

Working Paper #2 presented the future traffic volumes in Rifle based on low- and high-growth scenarios. This process required projecting future development and growth within the study area (a three-mile boundary around the Rifle city limits). Projected traffic volumes reveal that there is going to be significant congestion on Railroad Avenue and Whiteriver Avenue. Areas which will experience significant increases in traffic include SH13 near the Interchange of I-70, Airport Road, and US 6 east of SH13.

Working Paper #3 described the different alternatives for improvement of the street system and compares the effectiveness of each alternative. A total of 13 different alternatives were analyzed using the transportation system model developed for Rifle. Preliminary recommendations were provided for consideration by the community.

Working Paper #4 described the Preferred Plan. Descriptions of the projects were provided with estimated costs and priorities. The Preferred Plan was based on input received from the community regarding the options presented in Working Paper #3.

Working Paper #5 was a refinement of the Preferred Plan. Cost estimates were updated and local criteria were developed for ranking the local street projects. The local criteria reflected the priorities of the community. Revenue projections were developed so that the financially-constrained plan is identified.

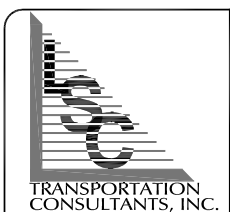
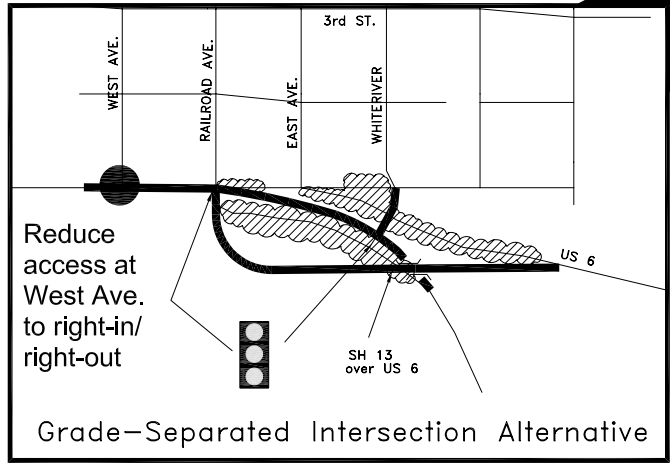
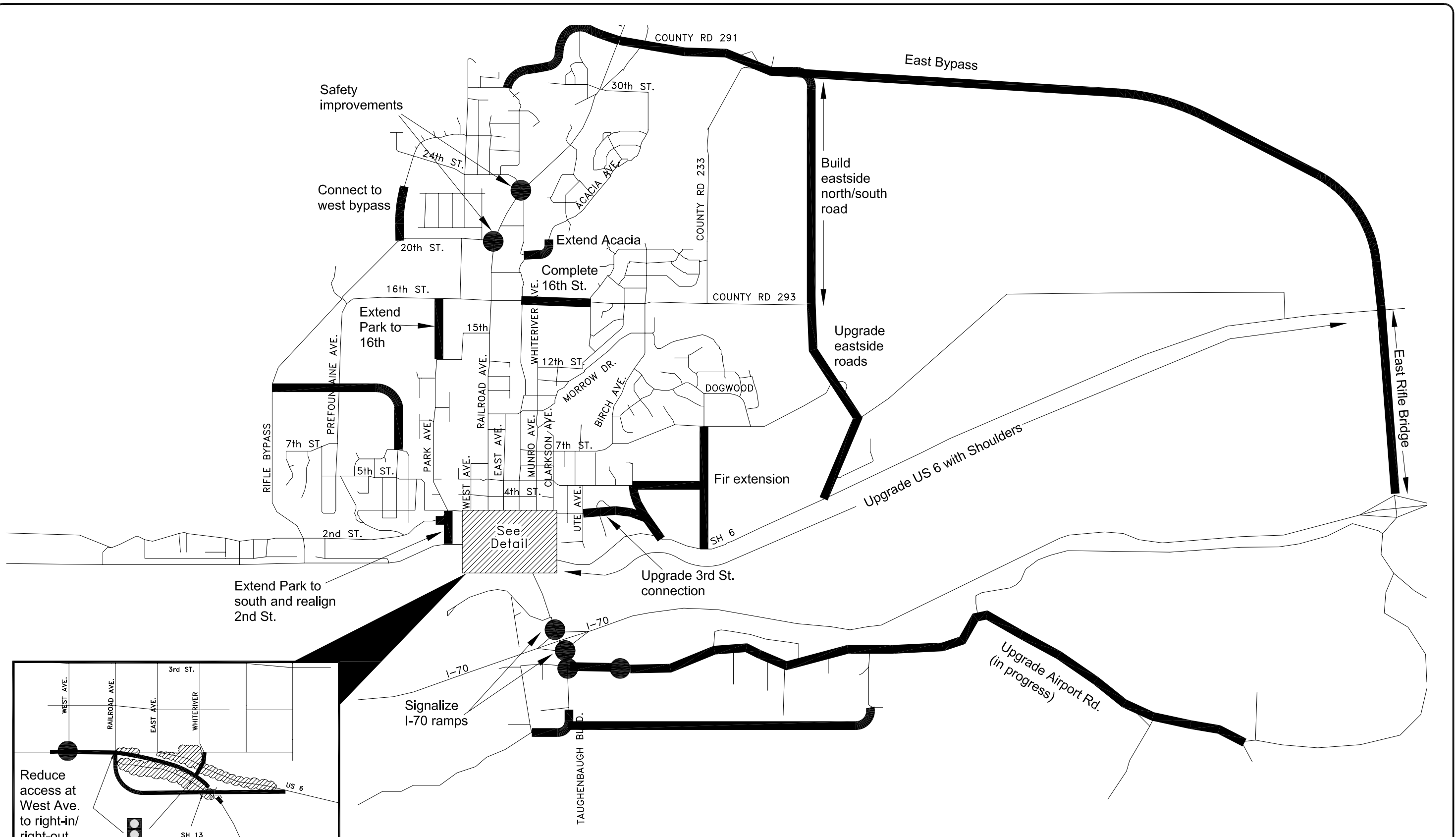
Following review of Working Paper #5, the Draft Plan was submitted for review. The Draft Plan was presented at public meetings and to the City Council. The City Council adopted the Transportation Plan after extensive review of the Draft Plan.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended improvements are shown in Figure ES-1. These improvements will meet the transportation needs of the community based on the anticipated growth. The transportation system improvements were prioritized using the local community criteria. The total estimated cost of the Preferred Plan is \$59.8 million. Projected revenues to provide the improvements are significantly less at approximately \$15 million. The financially-constrained plan falls short of meeting all the future transportation needs in Rifle.

To provide all of the needed improvements, the plan recommends a Traffic Impact Fee program to provide additional funding. The Traffic Impact Fees are calculated based on the anticipated funding shortfall and the projected level of development. Fees are calculated on the basis of the trip generation of future development. A combination of funding sources including the street improvement fund and impact fees should be used to complete the projects in the Preferred Transportation Plan.

(This page intentionally left blank.)



LSC NO.:	015990	FIGURE NO.:	ES-1
Preferred Alternative			
Rifle Transportation Master Plan			