

# Memo

To: City Council  
Through: Mike Bestor, City Manager  
From: Dan Hartman, Public Works Director *Dan*  
Date: August 27, 2004  
Re: Amendment to conditions of Arapahoe Street Vacation

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## Background:

Arapahoe Street was vacated in April of 1994 so the Calvary Episcopal Church could expand into the street. I strongly opposed this vacation, and still think closing Arapahoe Street between 14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> is bad for downtown circulation which can stifle future opportunity. In the 1994 action some modifiers were included to lessen the impact to long term circulation in the downtown area. Council felt those would mitigate some of the potential circulation problems. The church is now requesting relief from two of those conditions. I believe that council relied strongly on those mitigating factors when they approved the vacation.

## Analysis:

Removing the mitigation for the loss of connectivity in the area raises the question whether the vacation should be revisited. This is epically true if the church now wishes to argue that the substitute connection that council relied on in approving the vacation. At the time of vacation we argued that the connecting road was a poor substitute for the downtown grid that existed, but if Arapahoe was vacated at least some connection must remain. If the School of Mines has a study relating to the connecting road, we would like to see it. If the connection is that bad, then the original vacation that relied on it should be reconsidered.

The main concern regarding the loss of connection is access to important parking, and business in the downtown. An example of how possible opportunities can be seen in the one idea GURA worked on to add a parking structure and retail on the city/Foss lot. Traffic currently backs-up through the downtown lights during busy times, and additional access routs provide alternatives during these peaks. This additional access may be critical to the viability of future projects. This will be even more important during events when Washington Avenue is closed leaving business like Myers with no access except through a four block detour. Because we can't know all potential opportunities may

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come that will strengthen the heart of our community we need to be very careful when we make it harder to reach parts of it.

The last thing that bothers me concerning this is the precedent of giving public right of way for private purposes. Other churches, businesses or citizens may find it more convenient to use right of way to accomplish their goals, will they request vacation?

**Alternatives:**

This is what I find most distressing is there have always been alternatives for the church. They own property across Arapahoe Street which can be used for their growth needs. If connectivity is important they could use a bridge like the church at Ward Road and 64<sup>th</sup>.

**Recommendations:**

I do not believe that the loss of access to the west side of the historic heart of downtown is good for Golden. It would have current effects on business like the San Francisco Row buildings, the Upper parking level of the Golden Hotel, and business on the west side of Washington Ave. It could become a deterrent to future investment that is critical to the vitality of the downtown. It further restricts access options for emergency responses, customers and citizens on a daily basis, and has substantial effects during special events. I strongly recommend keeping the required replacement access. The original agreement to vacate was substantially based on some level of access being provided, and it should not be removed.