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City vs. the Old Spanish Trail

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Monday night, the Grand Junction City Council annexed 17 acres at 166 Edlun. Orchard Mesa Neighbors in Action asked the council to postpone decisions because of questions regarding the adjacent Old Spanish Trail and ownership issues raised by requirements on the BLM's trail easement.

OMNIA members, who spent hundreds of hours researching the trail, gave a clear and concise presentation. Nobody spoke in support of annexation — the developer was not represented during the hearing process — but still the city chose to annex.

There was also discussion – and commitment – regarding the city's role in protecting the trail. I hope council members are sincere. I also hope they understand the reasons for my skepticism:

- The city's logo is on signage proclaiming a partnership with BLM and Mesa County. However, when asked in early February, staff had no documents regarding historical or contemporary easements. To my knowledge, the city has never participated in maintenance, expansion or study of the trail – nor did it participate in an OMNIA-hosted tour of the area in May.

- Staff admitted the trail is not shown on their GPS system because they cannot determine where it is. Earlier Monday, a staff member also said they “cannot be sure which trail is the actual Spanish Trail and/or the Gunnison Bluff Trail.” Hint: The Gunnison Bluff Trail is along the Gunnison River.

- The city has had meetings about the trail with county and state officials. However, members of the Old Spanish Trail Association were not invited. By not including OSTA's resources and knowledge, these meetings are incomplete. OSTA's maps show where the trail is. They're even fairly accurate.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, July 2nd, 2008 at 10:11 am and is filed under [General](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS](#)

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