

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY March 13, 2023

Meeting Convened: 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held in person at the Fire Department Training Room, 625 Ute Avenue, and live streamed via GoToWebinar.

City Councilmembers Present: Councilmembers Chuck McDaniel, Phil Pe'a, Randall Reitz, Dennis Simpson, Mayor Pro Tem Abe Herman, and Mayor Anna Stout.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Assistant to the City Manager Johnny McFarland, Director of Community Development Tamra Allen, Housing Manager Ashley Chambers, Finance Director Jodi Welch, City Clerk Amy Phillips, and Deputy Clerk Janet Harrell.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Zoning and Development Code Update

The City hired Clarion Associates to update the City's Zoning and Development Regulations, Title 21, of the Grand Junction Municipal Code. This effort worked toward three primary goals:

- Update the City's development regulations to better implement the City's vision and goals as described in the 2020 One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan.
- Achieve greater simplicity, efficiency, consistency, and legal effectiveness in the code language.
- Identify opportunities to facilitate the development of affordable and attainable housing.

For City Council discussion, the project team presented the recent discussions with the Zoning & Development Code Committee and the Planning Commission regarding the Consolidated Draft of the Code and provide an overview of the changes made in the Consolidated Draft.

The project team has been reviewing and discussing the Consolidated Draft of the Code with the City Council, Planning Commission, and the Zoning & Development Code Committee. The City received valuable feedback and continue to discuss the changes with these public bodies. Some of the major discussion items updated in the consolidated draft include:

- Off Street Parking & Bicycle Parking
- Electric Vehicle Charging
- The Principle Use Table
- Residential Use Types
- Bulk Standards, including Minimum Setbacks

- Open Space Requirements
- Outdoor Lighting
- Rezoning Review Criteria
- Multi Family & Commercial Design Standards

The project team held many discussion and feedback meetings, and those meetings occurred on:

- February 21 - Zoning & Development Code Committee
- February 23 - Planning Commission Workshop
- February 28 - Zoning & Development Code Committee
- February 28 - Planning Commission Workshop
- March 3 - Zoning & Development Code Committee
- March 8 - Planning Commission Workshop
- March 9 - Planning Commission Workshop

A variety of additional meetings and upcoming meetings have been scheduled, which included:

- March 13 - City Council Workshop
- March 13 - Zoning & Development Code Committee
- March 13 - Planning Commission Workshop
- March 14 - Planning Commission Workshop
- March 23 - Planning Commission Workshop
- April 3 - City Council Workshop

Discussion ensued regarding the development community and non-developer community and how they have differing opinions on certain issues. It was mentioned that there are different sticking points in the Code, and people have different opinions and levels of disagreement about those points. Council wants to hear more from the committee members and Planning Commission. The Code revision is over 550 pages and Council asked for an index of changes to accompany the final draft for consideration.

b. Unhoused Survey Results

Housing Manager Ashley Chambers reported that in the Fall of 2022, the City of Grand Junction's Housing Division developed a survey to hear directly from People Experiencing Houselessness (PEH), with the goal of pinpointing gateways of entry into, and barriers against exiting out of, houselessness in Grand Junction. The design of the survey was informed by a "systems-thinking" approach to solving houselessness, which views houselessness as a solvable systems problem. At this workshop staff discussed the results of the Unhoused Needs Survey, to understand the needs of the unhoused in Grand Junction, and the potential resources still needed.

The impetus for developing and conducting this survey emerged from numerous conversations with unhoused individuals, local service providers for PEH, first responders that have regular contact with PEH, and Grand Junction business owners

and residents. All groups have observed the growing rate of the unhoused population in Grand Junction and have felt a strain on their day-to-day activities as a result.

With feedback from partners like the Mesa County Public Health Research & Planning Team and CMU Sociology Professor Stephen Merino, a 40-question survey was developed. The survey was then conducted in December 2022 with the support of trained volunteers. Over a 2-week period, over seventy surveys were completed and returned to the City of Grand Junction Housing Division.

The survey found that affordable housing was the most pressing need for people experiencing homelessness, followed by safe shelter, food, and drink. It was noted that homelessness is a complex issue that can result from multiple factors, such as loss of a job, addiction, medical crises, divorce, and more. The study found that 75% of respondents would be looking for housing if they could afford it, and the top three things needed before moving into housing were more money, temporary housing, and finding a property owner who does not discriminate. Ms. Chambers shared a story of a man with a criminal record who cannot find housing or employment. She noted that developing housing options for unique characteristics of the individuals is essential to reducing barriers and preventing homelessness. The survey found that 54% of people experiencing homelessness have lived in the area for four years or more, which contradicts the myth that people are being bussed in from other areas.

Council asked if it were possible to show in charts the most commonly co-occurring reasons for homelessness, as this would be valuable information.

Three areas of focus to address the issue of homelessness in the community, are 1) reducing the rate of inflow of people into homelessness, 2) crisis response, and 3) outflow or transitioning people into housing. Also noted, was the need for an in-house needs assessment to understand people's complete story, assess current conditions, and develop strategies specific to meet those needs. The assessment will also provide insights into the economic implications of addressing the issue and the number of beds and rooms required for transitional and permanent supportive housing. It was reported that there is a lot of data available from service providers but no system to aggregate the data.

Concluding the discussion, Council agreed that the City cannot solve this problem alone and will require a joint effort from everyone in the community.

c. Land Acquisition Program

A Land Acquisition Program (LAP) is being proposed in response to a generalized shortage of affordable housing in Grand Junction. The proposed purpose of the LAP is to provide funds to assist local developers to acquire property and/or land to assist in reducing the overall cost of construction of new affordable housing units. Discussion built upon the direction received from City Council at the February 13, 2023, workshop to revise a portion of the proposed administrative procedures and modifications to the proposed scoring matrix as well as funding of the LAP.

Property and/or building acquisition costs, especially in developed areas of the City, are a major component of the cost of developing affordable housing. In current markets, land and/or building acquisition is 10-15% of the overall project.

At the August City Council workshops, Staff presented an overview of land banking and land trusts and based on the Council's direction, is now focusing on strategic land acquisition to increase the supply of available properties. The November City Council Workshop included a presentation about the different options available for how to establish and the decision-making structure of the proposed land bank. Recently, the appointed ARPA committee recommended the use of ARPA funds in the amount of \$3,373,337 be assigned for the purpose of creating a land bank. Additionally, Grand Junction Housing Authority (GJHA) recommended its appropriation of \$1,800,000 of ARPA funds be moved to the land bank as it was not able to move forward with a preservation project. On February 27, 2023, City staff presented the proposed Land Acquisition Program, to which Council made several recommendations for change.

Staff presented a revised and updated process for the Land Acquisition Program including a scoring matrix and administrative procedures.

Council directed staff to place the Land Acquisition Program on the March 15, 2023, agenda with a second reading and public hearing scheduled for April 5, 2023.

1. RES-Land Acquisition Program
2. Land Acquisition Program Scoring Matrix
3. Land Acquisition Program Allocation Administrative Procedures

2. City Council Communication

Council discussed the language in the Cannabis ordinance related to a random selection process for applications submitted within the Horizon Drive Association Business Improvement District as well as the overall selection process. Council discussed the implications of all options and whether each would be fair to all applicants. They discussed the language of the ordinance and whether it needs to be changed. Overall, the discussion was about how to conduct a fair and transparent random selection process for applications and as quickly as possible. It was noted that there are ten available licenses, but there is a possibility that an 11th license may be required in the future. The 11th license is considered a contingency and will only be used if the City loses a lawsuit or if one of the selected applicants does not meet the necessary requirements. If an 11th license is required, it will be randomly selected from the applicants in the initial selection process. There was general agreement that having an 11th in waiting was a promising idea.

Staff will place this item on the March 15, 2023 agenda for consideration.

3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Caton reported the Workshop items for April 3, 2023 will be:

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan
- Urban Forestry Management Plan
- Discussion on Regulations for Cannabis Product Manufacturers

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 7:58 p.m.