

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY **June 5, 2023**

Meeting Convened: 5:40 p.m. The meeting was held in person at the Hospitality Suite, 1307 North Avenue, and live streamed via GoToWebinar.

City Councilmembers Present: Councilmembers Scott Beilfuss, Jason Nguyen (virtual), Randall Reitz, Dennis Simpson, Mayor Pro Tem Abe Herman, and Mayor Anna Stout. Councilmember Cody Kennedy was absent.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Best and Brightest Fellow Andrea Brush White, Director of Community Development Tamra Allen, Finance Director Jodi Welch, Fire Chief Ken Watkins, Utilities Director Randi Kim, Public Works Director Trent Prall, Sustainability Coordinator Jenny Nitzky, Mobility Planner Henry Brown, Water Services Manager Mark Ritterbush, General Services Director Jay Valentine, Parks and Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou, City Clerk Amy Phillips, and Deputy City Clerk Janet Harrell.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Update of Purdy Mesa Flowline Project

The Purdy Mesa Flowline project is in the final design stage. Due to the high cost of pipeline materials and limited remaining funding, to stay within budget Staff plans to construct the upper 3.3-mile section of the project with an in-house crew since it is relatively easy to construct as it is mostly on flat terrain along Lands End Road. However, the lower 2.9-mile section is in an area with challenging terrain and would be more suitable to be performed by an outsourced contractor.

The 2022 Appropriated Budget for the Purdy Mesa Flowline Project was \$7.5 million. The project is mostly funded with a \$7 million low-interest rate loan through the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB). The project includes replacing two sections of the Purdy Mesa flowline, totaling about 6.2 miles, and installing a new pressure control tank.

After direct purchase of pipe materials in 2022, the remaining \$2 million was carried forward to 2023 with Council approval of the Supplemental Appropriation on April 19, 2023. After accounting for 2023 expenditures, the current available budget is \$1.93 million. In addition, \$740,000 is available for transfer into the project from the Kannah Creek Flowline project which came in under budget, resulting in a total available budget of \$2.67 million.

The Engineer's estimate to construct the entire project is \$3.82 million. By using an in-house crew for the upper section, the estimated construction cost would be reduced to \$1.9 million, a savings of \$1.84 million which would keep the project within budget. The remaining \$690,000 would be utilized for the pressure control tank. If the City does contract the upper section of the project, Staff would have to pursue a loan amendment of \$1.84 million from CWCB to complete the project and, if approved, incur additional interest costs over the life of the loan.

The project is currently in the final design phase as easements for the realigned flowline are being negotiated with property owners. Staff anticipates completing the design and being ready to bid the project in June 2023, and starting construction by July/August.

Discussion regarding staff's plans to construct the upper 3.3-mile section of the project with an in-house crew ensued resulting in the acceptance of staff's proposal for the project.

Council will receive a memo from staff outlining the self-performance part of the project detailing costs, labor, equipment, and previous projects completed by the pipeline maintenance crew.

b. EV Readiness Plan Update

The Resource Stewardship principle of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, proposed action items to improve public and environmental health include improving Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, implementing policies to reduce air pollution, and educating the public about community-wide actions that can be taken to limit environmental impacts. Additionally, in the previous Council's strategic plan implementation matrix, one of the actions under the Quality of Life priority stated: "Create an EV Readiness Plan". Due to these components, staff worked with utility providers in the area to create a comprehensive community-wide EV Readiness Plan. In January 2023 the City began working with Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy to create and implement this EV Readiness Plan over the coming years. City staff and consultants from Partners in Energy presented the background and draft components of the EV Readiness Plan.

The presentation noted that Grand Junction is located at the crossroads of two major regional travel corridors and is uniquely situated to benefit from the ongoing transition to electric vehicles (EVs). Nearly 10 percent of newly registered vehicles in Colorado in 2022 were EVs, making the state a top-five national leader in EV adoption, and almost a million Colorado-registered EVs are expected to be on the road by 2030. By implementing infrastructure and policies that attract EV-driving travelers and local and regional commuters, the City sees an opportunity to become a vital regional charging hub. For this reason, and due to the outcomes of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Principle 8: Resource Stewardship, the City is now preparing an EV Readiness Plan that will ensure this opportunity for the benefit of our entire community.

Over the past six months, the City has been working with Partners in Energy, a free Xcel Energy consulting service, to create a plan that is inclusive, robust, and pragmatic for Grand Junction's unique community. Focus areas of the plan include incentivizing public adoption, increasing public infrastructure, and transitioning institutional fleets. A Council-appointed steering committee referred to as the EV Action Team has helped develop the goals, vision, and short and long-term strategies of the plan. In addition to the steering committee, community input has been gathered through numerous avenues to provide the plan with more direction. These include an EV and ebike event hosted by Western Colorado Alliance, an EV Ride and Drive event co-hosted by the City and Clean Energy Economy for the Region (CLEER). Staff-led targeted focus groups, an EV plan Open House, and engagement activities hosted on the City's EngageGJ.org platform.

One final EV Action Team workshop is scheduled for June 14. The purpose of this workshop is to garner any final suggestions from the EV Action Team before moving forward with a draft plan. A draft plan will be presented to City Council at a workshop in July.

Council was very excited about the proposed plan and thanked staff and the consultants for the good work.

c. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory & Resiliency and Sustainability Plan

Staff provided an overview of the greenhouse gas emissions inventories recently completed for 2018 and 2021 and discussed the forthcoming purpose and process for the resiliency and sustainability plan.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory – In November 2022, the City contracted with Lotus Engineering & Sustainability to conduct Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventories to serve as the baseline for the Resiliency and Sustainability Plan. A GHG inventory lists all emission sources within a certain boundary and calculates their associated emissions. The boundary for these inventories is City limits, including emissions that are the result of activities from assets not owned or controlled by the City, but that the City indirectly impacts within its value chain. Inventories were conducted in 2018 and 2021, and over that span the City saw a four percent decrease in emissions. This decrease is mostly due to Xcel Energy adding more renewable energy to the grid, which reduces the carbon footprint of electricity used by residents and commercial businesses. The inventories also indicated that the largest sources of GHG emissions in the City in 2021 were gasoline vehicles, commercial electricity, commercial natural gas, and residential electricity, in that order. Action items from the final report include policies and programs that address these sources of emissions, including encouraging vehicle electrification, increasing investments in multimodal transportation, and implementing higher building efficiency standards and electrification.

Resiliency and Sustainability Plan – In Plan Principle 8: Resource Stewardship of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, City residents indicated the importance of creating a community-wide Sustainability Plan. In addition, in Plan Principle 10, the community established a goal to “Promote a safe and more resilient community” to ensure the health, safety, and economic resiliency of the community through increasingly frequent natural disasters and social disturbances. The findings of the GHG emissions inventories will lay the groundwork for a data-driven approach to developing a community-based resiliency and sustainability plan.

In April 2023, the City selected Design Workshop and Spirit Environmental to help facilitate this community-driven plan. The planning process began in May 2023, and will last approximately 12 months. A Council-appointed steering committee will be convened to help provide direction for the plan. This committee will include those with specific experience and expertise in related fields as well as those with an interest in creating a sustainable future for Grand Junction. Members will reflect diversity in the community. Solicitation for people interested in participating in the committee began the week of May 15 and the application deadline was June 2, 2023. Promotional materials and the application will be available in English and Spanish. Staff will prepare a recommended steering committee for Council’s consideration at its June 21st City Council meeting.

Numerous public events and engagement opportunities will take place throughout the year to determine the plan’s general scope and specific strategies, and final adoption of the plan is slated for March 2024.

d. Transportation Engineering Design Standards (TEDS) Update

In July of 2022, the City hired Fehr and Peers to work on updating the City’s Transportation Engineering Design Standards (TEDS) manual. This effort has occurred alongside the City’s work with Fehr and Peers on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan and will incorporate changes reflecting

community values for multimodal transportation and support implementation of the adopted Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.

The Transportation and Engineering Design Standards (TEDS) Manual establishes requirements and provides guidance to the City and developers on how streets and multimodal transportation infrastructure are to be designed within Grand Junction. It includes guidance and requirements for preparing transportation impact statements (TIS), street design standards, access control, traffic signal design, street lighting, pavement, and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facility design standards.

The TEDS Manual has not had a major update for almost 20 years. Some aspects of the Manual are out of date and not reflective of current community values or current design practices being applied within the City.

The TEDS Manual is being updated to incorporate the following general improvements:

- Reflect current community values for multimodal transportation (including for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users)
- Incorporate current state and national design standards
- Improve the usability of the manual
- Support implementation of the vision established in the recently adopted Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan

Final adoption of the Transportation Engineering Design Standards (TEDS) is scheduled for the September 6, 2023 City Council Meeting.

e. Orchard Mesa Recreation Facility Study

The history of the Orchard Mesa Pool is complex, and a long-term resolution has yet to be identified. It was constructed in 1983 and the facility now requires a full renovation. The attached auxiliary space and gym was built in the early 1960s and it was decommissioned as a part of the new Orchard Mesa Middle School built in 2019. It is also in need of a complete renovation should the decision be made to reactivate it.

The Orchard Mesa Pool is a partnership between Mesa County School District 51, Mesa County, and the City of Grand Junction. District 51 owns the land and the building and pays the utilities. The City operates the facility, and the City and the County split the annual subsidy required to run the facility. While maintenance has been conducted on a regular basis since 1983, all the mechanical, pool, and building systems are at the end of their useful life and the facility requires a full renovation. In late 2022 and early 2023, the pool broke down and had to be closed for multiple weeks. Given the age of the facility and the age of all its major systems, similar occurrences are expected moving forward.

The City was on a path to consider renovation in the fall of 2022, but one of the pool partners, District 51, declined to make any contribution to the effort. As a result, design halted. The issue then came to the forefront with feedback from numerous community members at Council meetings, in letters to the editor and in media coverage. In response, on February 1, 2023, the City resumed the planning to consider possible long-term solutions to the Orchard Mesa Pool issue.

Now that the Community Recreation Center (CRC) was approved by the voters, the City is delving back into examining options for the Orchard Mesa Pool. The City hired Ohlson Lavoie Corporation

(OLC) to facilitate this process. A primary consideration involves the substantial state-of-the-art aquatic facilities that will be present in the \$70,000,000 CRC, \$35,000,000 of which will be spent on aquatic components. OLC assembled five options for consideration, ranging from minimal investment to ensure the operation of the Orchard Mesa Pool until the CRC opens, to a basic modernization of the pool, to a reinvented facility that provides indoor field space.

OLC presented these options at the Council workshop. On June 6 they will hold two focus groups and a public forum at the Lincoln Park Barn at 910 N. 12th Street.

Discussion ensued regarding the public meetings to gather information and community feedback on the different options before Council makes any decisions. The goal is to understand the community's preferences and engage in a transparent decision-making process.

Discussions also revolved around the need for various amenities and facilities for different user groups, such as pickleball courts, skateboard parks, and improved basketball offices. Also discussed was the cost of upgrades and the need for additional funding through grants, private donations, and partnerships. The conversation touched on the possibility of expanding the CRC by adding more lanes to the pool.

2. City Council Communication

Council was asked for two volunteers to sit on the Interview Committee for the Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals. The Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem will serve on the interview committee.

Councilmembers Randall Reitz and Scott Beilfuss volunteered to serve on the Grand Junction Housing Authority Interview Committee.

3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Caton reported the item for the June 12, 2023 Joint City Council/Zoning and Development Committee Special Workshop will provide an update on the Code revision.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 8:45 p.m.