

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY **August 28, 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 Scott Beilfuss, Cody Kennedy, Jason Nguyen (virtual), Randall Reitz, Dennis Simpson (virtual), 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, Planning Supervisor Niki Galehouse, Finance Director Jodi Welch, Public Works Director Trent Prall, General Services Director Jay Valentine, Principal Planner David Thornton, City Clerk Amy Phillips, and Deputy City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

1. Discussion Topics

a. I-70 Interchange at 29 Road

The Mayor reported that this item was to discuss the I-70 Interchange at 29 Road and answer remaining questions. However, the City just received a letter from Mesa County stating that it would fund up to 25% of the \$80 Million project instead of the previously agreed 50%.

The Mayor suggested that Council move forward with the next item for discussion since this item would no longer be a viable project for the City at this time.

Public Works Director Trent Prall explained that Consulting engineering staff from Denver were present for the discussion, so Council agreed to hear the Consultant's presentation.

The presentation provided an update on the status of the I-70 Interchange at 29 Road and answered questions associated with the purpose and need of the interchange as well as discussed, the issuance of transportation bonds as a potential funding source for this project.

It was noted that the interchange at 29 Road has been identified since the 1990s in many local and regional plans to enhance local and regional connectivity, as part of a larger plan to provide connections in and around Grand Junction. The proposed interchange improvements, in coordination with other regional improvements, have been envisioned to complete the transportation loop around Grand Junction, provide critical community access, support economic opportunity, and enhance local and regional connectivity. Some of the efforts to evaluate and further develop an interchange at 29 Road have included:

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| 1999 | Identified the need for an I-70 interchange in northeast Grand Junction |
| 2018 | Studied the benefits and potential environmental impacts of a 29 Road interchange (PEL Study attached for reference) |

- Positioned the City and County for future state and federal funding opportunities.
- 2022 Developed vision and goals for future design concepts with local governments. Built consensus and documented key issues and opportunities with business, school, economic development, airport, and planning organizations.
- 2023 Analyzing and presenting potential interchange configurations for community input.

Continuation of these efforts is in process to complete the additional analysis necessary, develop a preliminary and final design, and secure funding for construction. The construction of the I-70 Interchange at 29 Road, and the associated road improvements along 29 Road between I-70 and Patterson Road were most recently estimated at \$80 million. The City of Grand Junction and Mesa County have a long history of working together to find solutions to fund a project of this magnitude, which may include the issuance of debt.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT

The purpose of the project is to enhance the eastern Grand Valley transportation network between the I -70 Business Loop East Interchange and Horizon Drive Interchange to:

1. Improve local and regional connectivity
2. Provide enhanced access to planned land use surrounding I-70 in Grand Junction, Colorado

PROJECT NEED

The proposed project would provide improved local and regional connectivity by:

- Addressing limited regional transportation network connectivity with access to/from I-70 between I-70 Business and Horizon Drive interchanges.
- Extending the functional longevity of the existing transportation system connecting to I-70.

It would also improve access to I-70 by:

- Providing transportation infrastructure needed to accommodate planned land use surrounding I-70, and specifically, the future Matchett Park and the associated Community Recreation Center.
- Providing transportation infrastructure needed to accommodate projected and regional traffic demands.

Discussion ensued, regarding traffic patterns, land use projections, and how the interchange would impact traffic congestion and level of service at various intersections. Analysis showed that the interchange would significantly improve traffic flow and distribution in the area. The presentation included data on current traffic conditions and projected volumes, explaining the three alternative alignments for the interchange and why one was chosen. Emphasis on the importance of reusing the existing 29 Road bridge to separate vehicles and pedestrians, promoting multimodal transportation, public outreach efforts, positive public feedback, and key concerns raised by the community, such as impacts on 29 Road, bicycle and pedestrian safety, right-of-way issues, and the Patterson Road intersection.

The environmental assessment's validity was discussed, with some components needing periodic updates. Potential economic development around the interchange was discussed noting various types of businesses, such as fast-food restaurants, hotels, and gas stations. The Comprehensive Plan and future land use map have outlined what types of development can occur in different zoning areas.

Council noted that the interchange project may continue in the future if new information or partnerships emerge.

b. 4th and 5th Street Improvements Update

Public Works Director Trent Prall reported that the City and DDA have been working on the development of improvements to 4th and 5th Streets from Ute to North Ave that would help increase bikeability and walkability downtown. The proposed design calls for the narrowing of the existing through lanes, conversion of diagonal parking to parallel parking, separated bike lane and sidewalk widening to enhance the pedestrian experience with accommodations for landscaping, art, and outdoor dining. While the current design is for a one-way, two lane configuration, staff has completed a study responding to a suggestion for a one-way, one lane configuration.

In 1981, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) identified the conversion of 4th and 5th Street from one-way to two-way as a goal in its original Plan of Development. This was confirmed again in the 2019 DDA Plan of Development. The City's Greater Downtown Plan also referenced the need to study under 36.12.030 Downtown District goals and policies. (7) Policy 1g. Study alternatives for 4th and 5th Streets which includes returning these streets to the two-way grid system between Ute Avenue and North Avenue.

In 2021-2022, the City/DDA completed the 4th and 5th Street One-way to Two-way Feasibility study which included alternatives for both an enhanced one-way design as well as an enhanced two-way configuration. City Council and DDA board concurred to move forward with improvements that would maintain the one-way configuration but would also meet the goals developed for the project: enhance safety, improve walkability and bikeability, activate economic development and optimize traffic circulation. The enhanced one-way configuration allows for the conversion to two-way if appropriate at some point in the future.

Proposed improvements for 2024 include installation of "quick-build" elements such as bollards and striping to "set" both corridors from North Ave to Ute Ave, into the final configuration providing a pilot period. Curb and gutter modifications will need to be completed at Main Street, Rood Ave, and Belford Ave on both corridors. For 2025 through 2028, permanent improvements are proposed to approximately two blocks each year.

In May and June, DDA and City staff met one-on-one with adjacent businesses and property owners as the City finalized the final design. Significant concern was raised regarding the loss of parking within a block of Main St. It was suggested that the DDA/City investigate a one way, one lane configuration that would preserve more parking but more importantly make the corridors and cross streets even more bicycle and pedestrian friendly while preserving more trees.

The one way, one lane configuration was not contemplated in the original study and therefore the City retained the previous traffic engineering consultant for analysis. It appears that the one way, one lane configuration will work. Staff is working with CDOT on concurrence as it has the potential to impact their facilities at both I-70B/Ute Ave as well as Hwy 6/North Ave.

The reconfiguration to a one lane, one way configuration has the potential to reduce implementation costs as it would allow for the design to fit within existing infrastructure.

c. Transportation Engineering Design Standards (TEDS) Update

Public Works Director Trent Prall and Principal Planner David Thornton gave an overview regarding TEDS. He reported that in July of 2022, the City hired Fehr and Peers to work on rewriting and 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 City of Grand Junction completed a final draft of its Transportation and Engineering Design Standards (TEDS) Manual.

The TEDS manual update and rewrite began in mid-2022 guided by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to review outdated information and provide thoughtful improvement recommendations. The TAC committee is made up of representatives of City departments, CDOT, Mesa County, the Regional Transportation Planning Office, neighboring jurisdictions, private developers, and transportation engineering consultants in the Grand Junction area that regularly use the TEDS manual.

The rewrite/updating process involved two key passes, a manual assessment, and draft updates. During the first phase, the project team reviewed the existing TEDS manual to identify all updates needed to achieve the project goals. The draft updates were done through a repetitive process with the consultant, City staff, and the TAC, and included two drafts before the final version.

During the second phase, the second draft update was made available for public input. The project team conducted a listening tour, meeting with various users and development industry members that were affected by the changes the TEDS manual has to the City's development standards. The proposed final draft took the comments and concerns received from the entire community into account as well as recommendations by the TAC producing the final recommended draft for this important rewriting and updating of TEDS.

The manual incorporates recommendations from the recently adopted Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan and improves usability.

The TEDS Manual incorporates the following general improvements:

- Current community values for multimodal transportation (including for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users)
- Current state and national design standards
- Improved usability of the manual

- Implementation of the vision established in the recently adopted Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.

Council discussion centered on the practical implications of the proposed transportation standards and how they relate to housing affordability and bike infrastructure.

The TEDS Manual is proposed for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption.

The following public hearings are scheduled:

- September 26, 2023 – Planning Commission Public Hearing at City Hall Auditorium, 250 N. 5th Street at 5:30 p.m.
- November 1, 2023 – City Council Public Hearing at City Hall Auditorium, 250 N. 5th Street at 5:30 p.m.

d. Redlands 360 Planned Development Update

Director of Community Development Tamra Allen reported the Redlands 360 Planned Development was approved by City Council on February 2, 2022. As part of these approvals, the applicant, Grand Junction Land Company, LLC, committed to providing regular updates to City Council. The Outline Development Plan (ODP) includes seven exhibits which detailed land use, trails, parks, and other aspects of the development. Exhibit 5: Development Progression Plan, included a City Council Report Schedule, which identifies the first report to coincide with Phase 1 development. The Filing 1 plat was recorded on June 14, 2023. Subsequent reports will occur approximately every five years until the project reaches buildout.

The applicant, represented by Jane Quimby, presented the update on the project.

Key points from the presentation included:

- The project involves a 600-acre parcel located near South Broadway, South Camp, and other roads in the Redlands area.
- The project was approved in multiple phases, including an annexation, Metro District approval, and Outline Development Plan (ODP).
- The presentation shows maps and diagrams illustrating the approved ODP, Metro District boundaries, and the timeline of development phases.
- Various filings and subdivisions within the project, such as Renaissance 360 and Canyon Rim 360, are mentioned with their respective status.
- The presentation also highlights the anticipated development of Easter Hill, which includes 51 lots and model homes.
- Future phases of development are briefly discussed, including the extension of the loop road and off-site improvements, such as the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of 23 Road and Redlands 340.

e. Riverside Education Center (REC)

This item is to consider Riverside Education Center's (REC) request to alter the use of \$300,000 granted by the City for the purchase of 1177 Winters Ave. REC indicated in a letter to City Council that they had received additional grant money that would cover the capital cost of the building along with additional improvements. As such, they are requesting to utilize City funding toward capital improvements needed at the donated building at 1199 Winters.

In January 2023 Riverside Education Center (REC) submitted a letter requesting \$300,000 in off-cycle funding to support their capital campaign to purchase buildings at 1177 and 1199 Winters Avenue. At the April 19 meeting, Council gave direction to staff to prepare a supplemental appropriation for \$300,000 from the General Fund Reserve to fund the request from Riverside Educational Center.

In June of 2023, REC submitted a second letter indicating they had been approved for a state grant covering the purchase of the building and capital improvements up to approximately \$170,000. As a result, REC requested authorization to reallocate the \$300,000 in City funding to fund a portion of the sustainability phase of their capital campaign.

On August 21, 2023, REC submitted a third update letter which indicated they will be finalizing purchase of the 1177 Winters Ave building on August 31 and provided a breakdown of capital improvements needed to make the space fully functional. This is expected to be covered by the \$170,000 that will be dispersed to them once they finalize closing on the building. REC is requesting to utilize the \$300,000 approved by City Council toward needed capital improvements at the donated building, 1199 Winters. Improvements include a remodel to build offices and meeting space.

Discussion revolved around the Riverside Educational Center's funding request and the potential modification of funds originally allocated for a building purchase.

Some key points from the discussion include:

- Initial request was for building purchase funds, but the purpose has evolved to include operational expenses and expansion.
- Riverside Educational Center aims to acquire a building and expand its operations to better serve the community.
- Sustainability of the organization's growth and how it plans to maintain its expanded operations.
- The role of the school district in supporting the Riverside Educational Center and whether they should contribute to its funding.
- Council support for the organization's mission and its positive impact on the community.
- Fairness of allocating funds to this organization versus other nonprofits in the area and the need for clarity on the future funding requests from Riverside Educational Center.
- If taxpayer funds should be used to close the funding gap for the capital campaign when the community hasn't been fully engaged.

It was acknowledged that the REC raised a significant amount of money from individual donors, but much of it was designated for program sustainability rather than the capital campaign.

Concluding discussion, Council consensus advanced this request be considered with other nonprofit proposals within the City's established process.

2. City Council Communication

City Manager Caton reported on the upcoming October budget meetings, stating that there will be three budget meetings, with the first night covering major operating departments, the second

night discussing capital projects, outside funding decisions, and economic development partners, and the third night involving airline agreements and the general fund discussion.

3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Caton reported the items for the September 18, 2023 Workshop will be:

- Community Recreation Center Design
- Unhoused Needs Assessment
- Materials Recovery Facility
- Zoning and Development Code Update

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 8:53 p.m.