

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2013, 8:30 A.M.
CITY AUDITORIUM
250 N. 5TH STREET

To become the most livable community west of the Rockies by 2025

1. **Glacier Ice Arena**
2. **Mesa Land Trust:** Mesa Land Trust seeks financial support from Grand Junction to purchase two important properties along Monument Road for inclusion in the City's park system along Monument Road. As the Meens property (13 acres next to Three Sisters) and the Files property (50 acres next the Lunch Loop parking lot) adjoin City-owned land to the east and west, they are referring to this effort as the Bookends Acquisition. [Attach W-2](#)
3. **Budget**
4. **Other Business**

The Bookends Acquisition Enhancing a Community Asset & Economic Driver

Introduction

Mesa Land Trust seeks financial support from Grand Junction to purchase two important properties along Monument Road for inclusion in the City's park system along Monument Road. As the Meens property (13 acres next to Three Sisters) and the Files property (50 acres next the Lunch Loop parking lot) adjoin City-owned land to the east and west, we are referring to this effort as the Bookends (see attached map). These two properties offer a critical opportunity to acquire land for additional trails and facilities, conserve scenic views, and provide for key connections to link Lunch Loop to neighborhoods, the Riverfront Trail, and downtown.

This acquisition builds on the successful Three Sisters effort and follows a similar template. The Land Trust seeks to leverage the Grand Junction's investment many times over through an aggressive fundraising campaign. Once the properties are acquired, the Land Trust would deed the land to the City, lead a park planning effort (working closely with the City and other partners), and coordinate volunteer trail-building and restoration work so that the properties can be utilized and enjoyed by the public.

A primary goal of this effort is to create a turn-key park addition for the City at a minimal cost. The Land Trust will do this by raising money as well as utilizing volunteers and community partners for the acquisition and development of the park land, and also for ongoing maintenance.

Monument Road: A Critical Asset & Economic Driver for Grand Junction

With a vibrant, charming downtown located just a few miles from a world-class protected natural area, Grand Junction is perhaps unique in the American West. Linking these two wonderful assets is Monument Road. This corridor serves as the eastern gateway to the Colorado National Monument and is home to residential neighborhoods that attract newcomers and long-time residents alike. Monument Road also features the incredibly popular Lunch Loop Trail network. The BLM estimates that Lunch Loop saw 116,000 user days in 2012, a four-fold increase over 5 years. This is about twice the entire population of the City.

The significance of the Corridor is reflected in the Council-approved City Comprehensive Plan and Redlands Neighborhood Plan, both of which call for conserving and enhancing recreational opportunities along Monument Road.

The Monument Road corridor contributes to the Grand Junction economy in two distinct ways. As a scenic access route to the Colorado National Monument and the home of the renowned Lunch Loop Trail network, the Corridor serves as a compelling tourist draw that brings in visitors from around the world. These tourists stay at our hotels, eat in our restaurants, and patronize our shops. Mountain bikers come from literally around the world to enjoy the 50-plus miles of trail radiating out from the Lunch Loop trailhead.

The Monument Road Corridor also adds to our economy by providing a wonderful amenity that enhances our quality of life. Retirees and highly skilled professionals, including business owners move here in part because of our incredible outdoor recreational resources.

Request to the City of Grand Junction

The Mesa Land Trust seeks \$150,000 from the City to acquire the Meens and Files property, create a park plan for the acreage, and develop trails on the land. The Land Trust also seeks to deed the properties, subject to a conservation agreement, to the City. The conservation agreement, a requirement by GOCO, would be created in partnership with City staff and tailored to accommodate public use of the land.

Return on the City's Investment

The total budget for the turn-key project is estimated at \$770,000. The City's investment is projected at just under 20% of the total budget. This represents a 4:1 leveraging of City funds.

Through the Three Sisters project, the Land Trust has demonstrated its ability to raise funds and complete the acquisition and development of City park land, with a minimal ongoing burden to City staff and budgets. Especially given that a huge percentage of the Lunch Loop trails are located on BLM land and the responsibility of the federal government, the trail network is a tremendous bargain for the City.

Other Costs to City

A modest amount of property tax would be forsaken with the public ownership of the Meens (\$750 in property tax) and Files (\$2,500) land. Added City costs to managing the City land along Monument Road would be negligible with the addition of the two parcels.

City's Participation is Essential for Project Success

A \$150,000 City investment is essential for two reasons. First, other funders will contribute only if they see meaningful participation by Grand Junction. Second, given our experience with Three Sisters, the Land Trust believes that \$150,000 is needed from the City if we are to raise sufficient funds to complete the project.

Timeline

The Land Trust seeks to close on the acquisition in mid-2014 and begin park planning and conduct park planning and development in late 2014-2015. To date, the Land Trust has secured a \$70,000 commitment and has a grant pending with GOCO for \$393,000.

Business Leaders Voice Support for the Bookends

I grew up in this area and chose to remain here in large part because of the amazing community and incredible opportunity for outdoor recreation. I could move my company anywhere in the country but the beautiful scenery, great mountain biking right out my back door, and other outdoor opportunities are why my wife and I decided to raise our family here. (Ben Johnson, President, Colorado Components)

Protecting views and supporting projects that make our community more bikeable and walkable are good for our community. US Bank contributed to the Bike Park at Lunch Loop, Three Sisters, and bike racks at the new Mesa County Public Library to assist with projects that enhance our quality of life. Working with landowners to protect more land along Monument Road, create additional open space, and provide more recreational opportunity is good for our community.

(Tom Eatwell, Vice President Commercial Relationship Manager, US Bank)

As the Publisher of the Daily Sentinel, I am pleased to support the Meens/Files Property acquisitions as part of the Monument Road project, which will preserve the landscapes that enhance our quality of life and contribute to the local economy. (Jay Seaton, Editor, Grand Junction Daily Sentinel)

As a downtown business owner and resident of the Monument Road area, I believe in the value of preserving the beautiful scenery along Monument Road and building a bike path that connects our amazing downtown to the incredible recreation opportunities along Monument Road.

Beautiful landscapes, hiking and biking in urban open space attract more and more visitors and locals to our downtown area; we should all be promoting scenery and open space! (Jodi Niernberg, local business woman, Downtown Development Authority Chair, and co-owner of Bin 707 Foodbar)

Protection of land, preservation of views, and outdoor recreation all serve to attract more visitors to our hotels, shops, and restaurants. The Monument Road corridor is critical to visitation to the Colorado National Monument and to the Lunch Loop area. Fabulous scenery attracts people from all over to ride road bikes or drive into the Monument. The rugged and undeveloped lands surrounding the Lunch Loop area attract a wide variety of users to the area, not just mountain bikers (Lon Carpenter, Regional Senior Operations Manager, American National Bank; Board Chair, Visitor & Convention Bureau).

We at Big O Tires understand the importance of the Monument Road corridor as an economic driver for the community. Spectacular scenery and great trails so close to downtown have inspired us to live near downtown and open a new shop in our urban center. Recreation opportunities along Monument Road are fantastic for our business and downtown. They encourage tourism as well as attract more people to live in the area. And, they are one important reason why we continue to live in Grand Junction. We all should support efforts to protect this amazing amenity. (Kevin and Valerie Brooks, Owners, Big-O Tires.)

Files & Meens Properties: Surrounding Uses Map

- Files Property
- Meens Property
- MLT Conserved Properties
- City of Grand Junction Property
- Colorado National Monument
- Bureau of Land Management
- RiverfrontTrail
- TabeguacheTrails
- No Thoroughfare Wash
- Roads

