

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

January 13, 2025

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

City Councilmembers Present: Councilmembers Scott Beilfuss, Cody Kennedy, Jason Nguyen, Dennis Simpson, Anna Stout, Mayor Pro Tem Randall Reitz, and Mayor Abram Herman.

Staff present: City Manager Mike Bennett, City Attorney John Shaver, Assistant to the City Manager Johnny McFarland, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, Transportation and Engineering Director Trent Prall, Deputy City Clerk Krystle Koehler, Administrative Assistant Kerry Graves, and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Discussion on Moving Elections to November

Mesa County Elections have reduced support for municipal elections in April, prompting a discussion on changing the City's regular municipal elections to November of odd years. City Manager Mike Bennett and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval provided a presentation on the impact of the City conducting its future elections in April or moving them from April to November to coordinate with Mesa County Elections, requiring a city charter amendment.

The key points included:

- Retain April Elections: Managed by the City but incurs higher costs and potential voter confusion.
- Move to November: Lower costs due to coordination with Mesa County staff and resources.
- Cost Comparison:
 - 2023 city-run April election: ~\$169,000.
 - County-run November special election: ~\$27,000.
 - Projected costs for future city-run elections: \$135,000–\$238,000 annually.
- Council Discussion:
 - Pros: Cost savings, consistency with broader elections.
 - Concerns: Ballot length, logistical challenges, and seating new council members in December (amid budget processes).
- Potential Adjustments:
 - Council expressed interest in adjusting the start date of new terms to January to avoid budget disruptions.

Consensus: General support for exploring the move to November elections, with considerations for voter education and term adjustments.

b. 4th and 5th Street Update

Transportation and Engineering Director Trent Prall presented this item.

The key points included:

- Pilot Project Review:
Staff provided updates on the 4th and 5th Street pilot project aimed at reducing traffic speeds and enhancing safety through reconfigurations.
 - Current Configuration: One travel lane, parallel parking, protected bike lanes, and parking modifications.
 - Outcomes to Date:
 - Average speed reductions:
 - North of Grand: 5 mph decrease (closer to posted limits).
 - South of Grand: Speeds down 4-5 mph.
 - Decrease in overall accidents; however, there was a rise in bike and scooter-related incidents due to visibility issues.
 - Community visitation downtown has increased by 3.4% (Downtown Development Authority provided Placer AI data).
 - Challenges:
 - Intersection sightlines.
 - Parking buffered bike lane prevents bikes and moving cars from seeing each other.
 - Confusion due to vertical delineators and buffer spaces.
 - Aesthetic concerns with vertical delineators make the corridors appear under construction.
- Proposed Changes:
 - Transition to a more conventional configuration resembling 7th Street (bike lanes adjacent to vehicle lanes, diagonal parking where feasible).
 - Implementation timeline:
 - In late January, delineators will be eliminated where feasible, and many will transition to lower-profile curb stops and roll-over elements for curb extensions.
 - Restriping cannot occur until late April 2025 due to weather constraints.
- Council Feedback:
 - Mixed views on the current configuration, but general agreement on moving forward with staff's recommended adjustments.
 - Some concerns about maintaining reduced speeds.
 - Continue to monitor public sentiment.

2. Council Communication

There was none.

3. Next Workshop Topics

Mayor Herman outlined future workshop items.

4. Other Business

City Manager Bennett asked Council for volunteers to serve on the interview committees for the Horizon Drive Improvement District and the Downtown Development Authority Board. Mayor Pro Tem Reitz and Councilmember Kennedy volunteered.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 8:13 p.m.