

GRAND JUNCTION DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025
750 MAIN STREET-GROWL CONFERENCE ROOM & VITRUAL OPTION
7:50 AM

Board Members present: Libby Olson (Chair), Garrett Portra (Vice-Chair), Dustin Anzures-via Zoom, Cole Hanson, Karli Hyland, Faith Rodriguez-via Zoom, Doug Simons, Jr.-via Zoom, City Council Representative Ben Van Dyke

Board Members absent: Steven Boyd

Downtown Grand Junction staff present: Brandon Stam, Vonda Bauer, Dave Goe, Jed Willis, Sarah Dishong-via Zoom

Other: Northland Securities, Inc Financial Advisor Troy Bernberg (representing the DDA)-via Zoom

City of Grand Junction staff present: City Manager Mike Bennett, City Attorney John Shaver, Parks & Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou, Community Development Director Tamra Allen

Guests: Walker Thrash-Developer and Contractor-Vertikal, LLC, James Palmer Senior Associate + Landscape Architect-DTJ Design, Inc.-via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER: Libby called the meeting to order at 8:27 a.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes:

Meeting on April 30, 2025

Garrett made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 30, 2025, Downtown Development Authority Board meeting. Karli seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

DDA GRANT ADDITIONS

Brandon noted that during the previous meeting, the board discussed proposed updates to the grant programs and the need for a formal vote on the changes outlined in the April 30th meeting minutes. The proposed modifications included:

- Addition of a Mural Grant Program
- Modification of the Façade Grant Program to implement a sliding scale
- Consolidation of the Upper-Level Activation Grant and the Restaurant Expansion Grant into a single grant
- Removal of the \$500,000 allocation from the Catalyst Grant, leaving it open-ended
- Inclusion of marketing requirements for all grant programs

Libby made a motion to approve the grant program modifications as outlined in the April 30th minutes. Garrett seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

600 WHITE PRESENTATION-VERTIKAL, LLC

Brandon provided background on the 600 White site (also known as the White Hall property) for the benefit of new DDA Board members. He noted the site formerly was a church that burned down, and there has been no structure there since 2016. The property has posed redevelopment challenges, particularly for mixed-use projects, which was the Board's original preference. More recently, the site was opened to broader development proposals.

Following a recent Request for Proposal (RFP), the DDA Board received several strong applications, and Vertikal, LLC was selected.

Walker Thrash, Vertikal, LLC introduced himself and expressed enthusiasm for Downtown Grand Junction. He noted that Downtown Grand Junction has a growing national profile and emphasized his team's focus on Main Street and the surrounding core. He acknowledged the site's unique challenges, particularly related to parking, which was a concern during prior discussions.

Brandon noted that the project will move to the Real Estate Committee for further review and a more formal letter of intent. Brandon asked for input from the Board regarding the project.

Walker provided a presentation outlining the preliminary concept for the 600 White site. Key highlights included:

- Preliminary Site Analysis: Environmental and site conditions were reviewed for the ½-acre property.
- Development Concept: The proposal features a dense, urban-style contemporary/modern design townhome development with 24 units on the site. Walker noted that this is a high-density approach, developed in collaboration with Oz Architects, who typically work on larger high-density projects.
- Target Market: The focus is on middle-market housing aimed at singles and two-person households, reflecting statewide demographic trends such as delaying having children until later in life, smaller households, and increased interest in downtown living. The Grand Junction market was noted as aligning well with these trends.
- Housing Product: The development includes two housing types:
 - A three-story, two-bedroom townhome
 - A two-story, two-bedroom townhome with an urban loft layout
- Affordability Goal: Units are designed to be design-forward while aiming for pricing in the high \$300,000s.
- Parking Plan: A mix of angled street parking (not owned by the development) and internal parking, with each unit having at least one on-site reserved space. Overnight parking would be marked or reserved for residents.

Walker also referenced similar public-private projects his team is currently developing in Longmont and Boulder County, reinforcing their experience with delivering middle-market housing.

Walker explained that at the proposed 24-unit density, there is an estimated \$400-\$500K project funding gap. A lower-density alternative with 9 units would eliminate the gap, but the resulting homes would need to be priced at a higher level, moving away from the middle-market focus. He emphasized that the 24-unit concept offers a better long-term fit for the site and aligns with their vision. He also noted that some units could potentially be rented out, adding flexibility for buyers.

City of Grand Junction Community Development Director Tamra Allen shared that Vertikal, LLC was also selected as the lead developer for the Sawmill site, an approximately 11-acre property near Las Colonias, which will include around 72 units along with other product types. She expressed strong support for the decision to partner with Vertikal, LLC, mentioning their strong reputation on the Front Range and extensive experience with public-private partnerships.

Board members expressed their support for the higher density concept, acknowledging its appeal to the desired demographic. There was general consensus for staff to consult with the Real Estate Committee for further review and to begin drafting a formal letter of intent.

MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENTS-FORMER SPLASH PAD

Brandon provided background on the proposed improvements to the former splash pad area at 400 Main Street. In collaboration with DTJ Design, Inc., the scope has expanded to consider potential improvements along Main Street from 3rd to 7th Streets. The DDA has allocated funding for the Main Street Improvements project.

City of Grand Junction Parks and Recreation Director Ken Sherbenau shared that the City has allocated \$120,000 for improvements to the former splashpad project, which limits the scale of changes but allows for meaningful enhancements. The fencing has been removed, and the splashpad feature has been relocated to Dos Rios. Ken added

that the project will go out to bid, with a goal of completing construction in 2025 to avoid carrying it into the next fiscal year.

James Palmer from DTJ Design outlined key features of the preferred design:

- Reconfiguration of parking to enhance streetscape without reducing total spaces
- Play mound and slide with overhead shade structure, creating a child-friendly zone
- Flexible seating, fire pit/gathering area, and shade umbrellas
- Planter adjustments, including a new planter near Trail Life Brewery's outdoor dining area
- Addition of decorative lighting to enhance ambiance

Board members expressed support for the project and showed interest in the idea of an interactive water table with a geological learning component. They emphasized the importance of completing the project before winter to ensure the space can be actively used, and prior to the installation of holiday lights and the Parade of Lights event.

Brandon stated that this topic would be revisited for further discussion at the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Garrett made a motion to adjourn. Karli seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

GRAND JUNCTION DOWNTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025
750 MAIN STREET-GROWL CONFERENCE ROOM & VITRUAL OPTION
7:30 AM

Board Members present: Libby Olson (Chair), Garrett Portra (Vice-Chair), Dustin Anzures-via Zoom-, Cole Hanson, Karli Hyland, Faith Rodriguez-via Zoom, Doug Simons, Jr.-via Zoom, City Council Representative Ben Van Dyke

Board Members absent: Steven Boyd

Downtown Grand Junction staff present: Brandon Stam, Vonda Bauer, Dave Goe, Jed Willis, Sarah Dishong-via Zoom

Other: Northland Securities, Inc Financial Advisor Troy Bernberg (representing the DDA)-via Zoom

City of Grand Junction staff present: City Manager Mike Bennett, City Attorney John Shaver

CALL TO ORDER: Libby called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes:

April 30, 2025

Garrett made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 30, 2025, Grand Junction Downtown Business Improvement District Board meeting. Karli seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Introductions:

Brandon welcomed new members to the board:

- Dustin Anzures (joining via Zoom), appointed to fill the remainder of Cris Silverberg's term
- Ben Van Dyke, City Council liaison and owner of Van's Car Wash

REGULAR AGENDA

UPDATES

Jed Willis-Downtown Event Coordinator

Jed is the newly hired Event Coordinator. Jed shared that he is originally from the Four Corners area in southwestern Colorado. He has spent the past two years working at Gearhead Outfitters, with previous experience in Rexburg, Idaho.

May Event Recap

Brandon reported that final numbers from May events are not yet available. Follow-up meetings are planned with organizers of Cinco de Mayo and Rides & Vibes. Overall, both events went well, but there are areas for improvement.

- **Cinco de Mayo:**
 - Coordination continues to be a challenge, particularly with early organization and communication.
 - The event is produced by a third-party and run by volunteers, which creates additional challenges.
 - Efforts are underway to better coordinate in advance and help promote the event's purpose-raising scholarship funds-which is not widely known.
 - Downtown staff's role is primarily to approve and oversee logistics like street closures.
- **Rides & Vibes**
 - The event was successful with good weather, but Friday attendance continues to be primarily local, with minimal activity until late afternoon, despite full-day street closures.
 - There is opportunity to attract more out-of-town visitors, particularly for the Friday portion of the event.

- Vendor participation was low, though keeping the 600-block open was seen as a positive.
- Downtown Grand Junction did not help co-produce the event this year due to staffing changes (Kyra's departure).
- The DDA contributed \$15,000 in sponsorship and retains some oversight, but vendor management was handled by the Rides & Vibes staff.

Downtown Businesses

Brandon reported significant activity with new businesses opening, relocating, and interest from outside retailers:

- 400 Block of Main Street Updates:
 - Ability Advocates has opened at 435 Main Street
 - Colorado Cool Apparel has opened at 443 Main Street
 - A canvas art-related business is also new to the block
- New Openings:
 - The Golden Rookie, a marijuana dispensary, opened at Grand Avenue
 - Williams Mercantile, an established business from Bedford, Indiana, is planning to open a second location in the former Crescent Moon Spiritual Goods space at 535 Main Street.
 - Crescent Moon Spiritual Goods is relocating to the former Loki space at 537 Main Street, and Loki is moving back to its original Colorado Avenue location.
- Upcoming Businesses:
 - West Winds Gallery, a high-end gallery with a wine tasting room, will move into the former Main Street Café space at 504 Main Street.
 - Moody's is relocating to 6th & Colorado (old Drive Train Industries building); details about the new name are still pending.
 - Grand Valley Creative Alliance purchased the old Baron's building and plans to create a maker space.
 - WestCo Brewing is scheduled to open in August at the former Edgewater Brewery location at 945 Struthers Avenue.
- Closures & Transitions:
 - High Desert Authentiques and Crush Salon have closed or relocated outside downtown.
 - Out West Books and Junct'n Square Pizza are currently for sale.
 - The Highline space will soon house a new retail tenant.
- Downtown Inquiries:
 - Strong interest from outside retailers, including one from Glenwood Springs.
 - Ed Chamberlain reported receiving multiple offers on properties, indicating continued high demand for downtown commercial space.

Placer AI Data Update

Brandon shared updated visitation data for downtown using Placer AI. In 2023, there were 3.1 million visits from 642,000 unique visitors, with an average dwell time of 146 minutes. Major spikes occurred during events like the Parade of Lights. In 2024 to YTD, visits rose to 3.2 million, with strong repeat visitation (2.6 million visits from returning visitors).

Key demographics include a median visitor income of \$67,000 and diverse age segments, including young adults, boomers, and seniors. Saturday is the busiest day, with growing activity on Sundays despite limited business openings.

Brandon shared that an intern with a background in data analytics will begin in June to support this work. Meetings have been held with a Placer Ai Representative to identify the most useful reports.

Survey

The Board discussed concerns about a recent Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce survey indicating a downtown decline, noting potential bias and inaccuracy of data. While acknowledging that some community members are dissatisfied with the changes to 4th and 5th Streets, data shows increased downtown activity and positive sales,

particularly on weekends, which contradicts the narrative that the area is declining. Board members emphasized the importance of using reliable data to inform the public and provide proactive communication with businesses.

Brandon emphasized the DDA's role in supporting businesses through grants, marketing, and improvements, acknowledging that trial and error are part of the process. He reiterated that while not all issues are within the DDA control, staff are available to assist and help clarify decisions.

John Shaver reminded board members of their role as facilitators between businesses, encouraging them to direct business owners to DDA or City leadership for accurate information and support.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Cole made a motion to adjourn. Garrett seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:26 a.m.