

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

March 3, 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 (virtual), 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, Interim Finance Director Jodi Welch, Transportation and Engineering Director Trent Prall, Deputy City Clerk Krystle Koehler, and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Update on Expedited Review Process Study

Presented by consultants from Baker Tilly, the update provided findings and recommendations on streamlining the city's development review process, particularly for affordable housing projects. The study was conducted in response to Colorado's Proposition 123, which mandates that cities expedite affordable housing projects to remain eligible for state funding.

Key Points from the Presentation:

- Study Overview:
 - The city engaged Baker Tilly in August 2024 to assess the efficiency of the development review process.
 - The study included interviews with city staff and developers, data analysis, and process mapping.
- State and Local Policy Implications:
 - Proposition 123 requires cities to commit to increasing affordable housing by 3% annually and reviewing applications within 90 days.
 - The city has local resolutions (48-22, 97-22, and 65-23) that outline expedited review commitments.
- Current Challenges Identified:
 - Incomplete applications are frequently submitted, causing delays.
 - Multiple review cycles are common due to inadequate initial submissions.
 - The general and pre-application meetings create inefficiencies.
 - The planning staff faces workload and training challenges.
- Recommendations:
 - Revise the application intake process to ensure applications are complete before being accepted.

- Eliminate the general meeting and focus on pre-application meetings.
- Establish an interdepartmental review team for expedited projects.
- Improve technology and tracking systems to monitor project timelines.

Next Steps:

- The consultants will prepare an implementation action plan.
- Further meetings with the Planning Commission and development stakeholders will occur.
- Staff will assess whether additional resources are needed to implement the changes.

b. 5/10-Year Capital Plan and Prioritization

The council discussed how to balance long-term capital project planning while managing financial constraints.

Key Discussion Points:

- The 2026 and 2027 capital plans will be balanced as part of the budgeting process.
- A five-year balanced capital plan was generally supported, while a ten-year plan would remain more flexible.
- The importance of prioritization was emphasized, especially in light of economic uncertainties.
- Funding considerations included leveraging grants and adjusting priorities based on revenue fluctuations.

c. Role of the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and the Agenda Committee

Council discussed the responsibilities and structure of the Agenda Committee, which is currently composed of the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, City Manager, City Attorney, and key staff.

Key Discussion Points:

- Some Councilmembers expressed concerns about the agenda committee influencing what topics reach the council.
- Others defended the current system, emphasizing that the Agenda Committee primarily facilitates scheduling and efficiency.
- Alternative suggestions included:
 - Rotating membership on the agenda committee.
 - Making agenda committee meetings open for other council members to attend.
 - Keeping better records of agenda discussions for council review.
- Some Councilmembers opposed immediate changes, noting that a new council will be seated in two months, and the issue should be revisited then.
- City Manager Bennett will work with staff for suggestions for the future Council to consider.

2. Council Communication

A Persigo Board Meeting will be scheduled for a requested exclusion by Centro de la Familia Head Start.

3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Bennett stated that no items are currently scheduled in anticipation of the new council being seated. Workshops are still scheduled in case something pressing needs to be brought forward. Staff is working on the Lodging Tax MOU.

4. Other Business

There was none.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 8:44 p.m.