

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

November 17, 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 Robert Ballard, Scott Beilfuss, Laurel Lutz (formerly Cole), Jason Nguyen, Anna Stout, Ben Van Dyke, and Mayor Cody Kennedy.

Staff present: City Manager Mike Bennett, City Attorney John Shaver, Assistant City Attorney Jeremiah Boies, Deputy City Manager Kimberly Bullen, Chief Financial Officer Jay Valentine, Assistant to the City Manager Johnny McFarland, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, Engineering & Transportation Director Trent Prall, Grant Supervisor Chloe Lomprey, Communications and Engagement Manager Kelsey Coleman, Deputy City Clerk Misty Williams, and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Depot Federal Grant Discussion

GJ Union Depot, through Dustin Anzures and Veronica Sanchez, has engaged with the City regarding a grant funding opportunity to complete the rehabilitation of the Grand Junction Union Depot. The grant will require the City to act as the eligible applicant, with the GJ Union Depot (Depot) as a subrecipient of the funds if awarded. The grant is offered through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Dustin Anzures presented this item and was available for questions.

Key points included:

- Council broadly expressed enthusiasm, emphasizing the project's importance for history, downtown activation, safety, tourism, and long-term economic vitality.
- Staff noted the City must be the official grant applicant, with the developer preparing a near-complete application for staff review.
- Federal grants pose administrative burdens and compliance risks, but safeguards (MOUs, match-verification) will be incorporated.
- Direction: Proceed to prepare a December resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for the grant for formal consideration during a regular City Council meeting.

b. Town Hall Update

As part of the Meet You There community engagement initiative, City staff hosted a City Council Town Hall to foster more two-way dialogue between residents and their elected

officials. This workshop serves as a debrief of the October 28 event, providing City Council with a summary of outcomes, community feedback, and recommendations to strengthen future Town Hall formats and continue advancing the initiative's goals of transparency, connection, and community-centered engagement.

Communications Manager Kelsey Coleman presented feedback from the City's first-ever Town Hall under the new outreach strategy.

Key points included:

- Attendees appreciated transparency, access to Council, and informal conversation.
- Mixed feedback on:
 - Question format (some wanted deeper discussion, others broader topics).
 - Space limitations and the RSVP cap.
 - Desire for multiple councilmember responses rather than single answers.
 - Need for staff at the table to answer operational questions.
 - Audio issues during the livestream.
- Council Recommendations
 - Shift toward topic-specific town halls.
 - Allow multiple councilmembers to respond to questions.
 - Add informal social time before/after events.
 - Include staff moderators and subject-matter experts.
 - Improve livestream quality; consider larger venues.

c. Judicial Review Commission

The Council revisited the structure and appointment process for the Municipal Court Judicial Review Commission.

- Council Consensus
 - Consider moving away from having active councilmembers serve to avoid perceived bias.
 - Staff will make appointment recommendations.
 - Prefer a larger commission (5–7 members) for balanced perspectives.
 - Commission findings will be reported to the full Council.

d. I-70/29 Road Interchange

In the Spring of 2024, City Council and the Board of County Commissioners authorized staff to continue working with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to complete necessary project approvals with the understanding that staff would provide an update prior to issuing the final design Request

for Proposals (RFP) which would be primarily funded by Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) funding.

At this time, staff is requesting confirmation of the prior direction/support from both governing bodies to proceed with the issuance of the RFP and initiate the final design.

- **Key Clarifications**
 - Proceeding with design does not commit the City to building the interchange.
 - No interchange can be built without a new, voter-approved funding source.
 - Design is essential to:
 - Address existing congestion at 29 & Patterson.
 - Support multimodal needs (sidewalks, cycle track, school access).
 - Allow the City to pursue future state/federal construction grants.
- Staff to proceed with issuing the design RFP per previous Council direction.

2. Council Communication

Open discussion by councilmembers included:

- Shoshone Water Rights Meeting: Councilmember Stout will attend the CWCB meeting in Denver; timing may affect their availability at Wednesday's council meeting.
- Museums of the West: Financial challenges persist; RFPs underway; City and DDA assisting with feasibility studies.
- Homeward Bound Update: Recent meeting with executive leadership; revised financial clarifications forthcoming.

3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Bennett gave a summary of upcoming Workshop topics, which included: Museums of Western Colorado, HomewardBound, and the annual proclamation review.

4. Other Business

There were comments made regarding meetings being held with HomewardBound.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the workshop was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.