

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
December 9, 2025, 3 pm - 5 pm

The meeting was held at Residence Inn, 767 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction, CO.

Presiding: Elizabeth Fortushniak, Board Chair

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Members Present: Tammy Anderson, Elizabeth Fortushniak, Julie Shafer, Brenda Greene, Joe Burtard, Manon Desrosiers, Theresa Horvat, Pat Nichols-Perrin, Tevfik Demirciftci

City Council Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Laurel Lutz

Visit Grand Junction Staff Present: Elizabeth Fogarty, Director; Teagan McLennan, Content Specialist

Guests: Kamie Long, Western Colorado Urban and Community Forestry Program Specialist, Colorado State Forest Service

Public: Kalen McCain, Reporter, Grand Junction Sentinel

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m. by Board Chair Elizabeth Fortushniak.

Minutes from the November 12, 2025, advisory board meeting: Theresa Horvat motioned to approve the minutes as written; Pat Nichols-Perrin seconded. Motion passed.

Community Updates and Q&A – Colorado State Forest Service

Kamie Long, Western Colorado Urban and Community Forestry Program Specialist with the Colorado State Forest, shared updates on projects, programs, and upcoming events. She reported that 400 acres on the Grand Mesa have been pruned to enhance forest resilience and mitigate wildfire risk, and outlined forestry programs underway at Vega State Park focused on forest health, wildlife habitat improvement, and fire mitigation.

Kamie also provided an update regarding the Grand Junction Forestry Board, of which she is a member, noting that the board is currently updating their ordinances. She explained that the City of Grand Junction manages right-of-way trees, unlike other cities, with the exception of watering. She further discussed a Federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) grant awarded to the Colorado Forest Service, which was dispersed through the Grand Junction community to support the installation of water meters on private property, allowing for additional trees to be planted.

Kamie also outlined ongoing outreach efforts, including hosting a booth at Downtown Grand Junction's Market on Main from July through September, and a radio show, "Western Slope Outdoors," which airs on KFM on the last Tuesday of each month at 12:00 p.m. MST. Kamie mentioned details about Arbor Day at Lincoln Park in April, where the Forest Service will distribute baby seedlings grown in Fort Collins at the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery, along with a silent auction for larger trees, and a kids' tree-planting activity.

A discussion followed regarding the types of trees planted in Grand Junction, as well as the prevention and treatment for insect infestations.

Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Kamie for the update and asked if there was anything Visit Grand Junction could do to further assist or improve the partnership with the Colorado Forest Service. Discussion included collaborating on a blog highlighting the Downtown tree walk, local arboreta, or the types of trees in the area.

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Business

Election of Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board of Directors Officers: Pat Nichols-Perrin expressed interest in serving as the Board Chair for 2026. Manon Desrosiers expressed interest in serving as the Vice Chair for 2026. An election was conducted by individual printed ballots. No other board member had expressed interest in serving as an officer. By a majority vote, Pat Nichols-Perrin was elected to serve as Board Chair, and Manon Desrosiers was elected to serve as Vice Chair for 2026.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth Fogarty shared an update on Grand Junction's lodging tax collections and key hotel performance metrics for October 2025's business activity.

For October 2025's business, Grand Junction's lodging tax collections were 8.8% above October 2024. October 2025 hotel occupancy was 72.6%, average daily rate (ADR) was \$121.20, and revenue per available room (RevPAR) was \$88.02. Year-to-date lodging tax collections are 0.2% above through October 2025's business compared to the same ten-month period in 2024. Notable hotel metrics include:

- October 2025's Occupancy of 72.6% was 7.5% above October 2024, and outpaced Colorado (including and excluding ski towns), and the U.S. It was the highest recorded Occupancy for any month of October in Grand Junction's history.
- October 2025's ADR of \$121.20 was 6.5% above October 2024, and outpaced Colorado (including and excluding ski towns), and the U.S. It was the highest recorded ADR for any month of October in Grand Junction's history.
- October 2025 RevPAR of \$88.02 was 14.5% above October 2024, and outpaced Colorado (including and excluding ski towns), and the U.S. It was the highest recorded RevPAR for any month of October in Grand Junction's history.

The Board commented that the pacing data is helpful and provides a more comprehensive view of lodging activity.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Other updates include:

- A brief update was provided regarding the decline in lodging tax revenue resulting from 30 or more day stays, along with the resulting reduction in available hotel rooms and the ongoing impacts on the lodging sector. A discussion followed regarding the typical number of rooms occupied for 30 days or more.
- Fogarty announced the appointment of Dora Fang, Christina Schultz, and Julie Shafer to the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board. Julie Shafer is currently serving a partial term and is eligible for two full terms. The three-year terms will begin on January 1, 2026.
- No significant update was provided regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance (GJRASA). Visit Grand Junction continues to update monthly the proprietary data worksheet to assist the GJRASA with its strategies.
- Mayor Pro Tem Laurel Lutz relayed a recent guest's appreciation for the design and thorough information in the Visitor Guide, and shared that they would like to return to Grand Junction based on the content.
- Fogarty announced and invited Advisory Board Members to the City of Grand Junction Boards & Commissions Volunteer Appreciation Banquet, which will be held in April 2026 in recognition of National Volunteer Appreciation Month. The specific date has not yet been announced.
- Fogarty also invited board members to Visit Grand Junction's Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, scheduled for January 2026. The specific date has not yet been announced.
- Community and Industry Meetings, Conferences and Events that Elizabeth attended during the months of October, November, and December month-to-date include the City of Grand Junction New Employee Orientation; City Council 2026 Budget Workshop; Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference; Destination Think Collective: Governance Excellence; City Council Meetings - first and second 2026 Budget Readings and approval; New Dimensions Presentation; West Slope Outdoor Recreation Industry Summit; City Leadership presentation visit with staff.
- A comparison of the Visit Grand Junction budget to industry standards was presented, highlighting the budget allocation to programs, labor, and operating costs. Visit Grand Junction allocates 73% of its budget to programs, 22% to labor, and 5% to operating costs, compared to Destination Marketing Organizations with similar budgets that allocate 52% of their budget to programs, 38% to labor, and 10% to operating costs.
- Recent media coverage of Grand Junction included a Travel + Leisure Instagram takeover; Échappées Belles ("Colorado, back to the roots"); Forbes ("Top Places to Stay, Dine, and Sip in Colorado Wine Country", "Lessons From The Road In Western Colorado", and "Celebrate Halloween with Five of Colorado's Best Frights"); TimeOut ("The best state parks in the U.S."); Condé Nast Traveler ("50 States, 50 Desserts: America's Favorite Sweet Treats"); Mountain Town Magazine ("Grand Junction: A Sandstone Foodie and Biking Oasis on The Western Slope"); Sunset ("Immerse Yourself in Nature at These Iconic Western Destinations"); Camping Caravanning Magazine ("Les Splendurs du Colorado"); Nos Curieux Voyageurs ("Traveling as a family in Colorado: our one-week road trip") and Azure Road ("Indiana Jones and the Dig Site Generation").

Elizabeth thanked Advisory Board members Joe Burtard and Tammy Anderson for their service and dedication after completing two full terms on the Advisory Board.

There being no further business, Tammy Anderson motioned to adjourn; Joe Burtard seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:19 p.m.