

## **GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY MAY 18, 2026**

**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 (virtual), Scott Beilfuss, Laurel Lutz, Jason Nguyen, Anna Stout, Ben Van Dyke, and Mayor Cody Kennedy.

**Staff present:** City Manager Mike Bennett, Interim City Attorney Jeremiah Boies, Deputy City Manager Kimberly Bullen, Chief Financial Officer Jay Valentine, Housing Manager Ashley Chambers, Housing Specialist Sherry Price, Housing Program Specialist Paul Stahlke, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, Communications and Engagement Manager Kelsey Coleman, Deputy City Clerk Krystle Koehler, and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

### **1. Discussion Topics**

#### **a. Housing Needs Assessment Update**

Council heard a presentation from Root Policy Research regarding the draft Housing Needs Assessment and upcoming Housing Action Plan.

#### **Key Findings Presented**

- Mesa County and Grand Junction continue to experience steady population growth driven largely by migration.
- Housing production has recently begun keeping pace with growth, though the community is still recovering from years of underproduction.
- Rental vacancy rates remain extremely low (approximately 3.4%), indicating a highly constrained market.
- Home prices and rents continue to outpace wage growth, creating increasing affordability challenges.
- Significant affordability gaps exist:
  - Greatest rental need is below 30% AMI.
  - Greatest ownership need is below 100% AMI, especially for homes under approximately \$280,000.
- Approximately 7,000 additional housing units are projected to be needed in Grand Junction by 2036.
- Market-rate development alone will not address deeply affordable housing needs.

#### **Community & Stakeholder Feedback**

Survey and stakeholder engagement showed:

- Strong public support for a variety of housing types and affordability strategies.

- Renters expressed strong interest in transitioning to homeownership but cited down payment and affordability barriers.
- Owners identified needs for repair assistance, ADUs, and affordable housing for adult children.
- Stakeholders emphasized:
  - Need for more affordable rentals and entry-level ownership opportunities.
  - Regulatory and process barriers impacting housing production.
  - Need for transitional housing, senior housing, and homelessness support services.

## **Council Discussion Highlights**

Councilmembers discussed:

- Streamlining development processes and reducing regulatory barriers.
- Pet restrictions in rental housing as a possible barrier to stability.
- Hotel/motel conversions into studio housing and impacts on affordability.
- Manufactured housing community acquisitions and preservation concerns.
- Investor cash purchases competing with first-time homebuyers.
- Multifamily vacancy rates and comparisons with similar communities.
- The importance of balancing deregulation with strategies for deeply affordable housing.
- Concerns regarding vacancy rates in subsidized housing and matching subsidy levels to actual need.

Staff indicated the Housing Action Plan phase will further evaluate policy options and implementation strategies.

### **b. Air Race X Event Update**

City Manager Bennett provided an update regarding discussions with Air Race X.

#### **Main Points**

- Staff, the airport, Sports Commission, and other partners have continued evaluating the proposal.
- The original request for direct city support is no longer being pursued.
- Air Race X is now exploring a revised model in partnership with the Grand Junction Sports Commission.
- Further discussions and vetting will continue through the Sports Commission process.

#### **Council Comments**

Councilmembers expressed:

- Continued interest in the event's economic development potential.
- Appreciation for the Sports Commission taking the lead role moving forward.

- Support for continued collaboration with aviation and community partners.

### **c. Boards & Commissions Liaison Assignments**

Council reviewed and discussed annual liaison assignments for boards and commissions.

#### **General Actions**

- Several assignments were reaffirmed with existing liaisons remaining in place.
- Air Service Alliance and Colorado Water Congress were removed from the liaison list.
- Council discussed balancing workload distribution among members.

#### **Key Discussion Areas**

##### **Business Incubator Center / Riverview Technology Corporation**

- Both Councilmembers Scott and Ben expressed interest in serving.
- Discussion focused on:
  - Experience and continuity.
  - Workload balancing.
- Council encouraged further discussion between the two prior to formal action.

##### **Urban Trails Committee**

This generated the most extensive discussion.

Topics included:

- Concerns regarding politicization of the committee.
- Questions surrounding committee tone, advocacy, and council oversight.
- The role of liaison members in facilitating communication versus directing policy.
- Desire to reduce tension and improve collaboration moving forward.

Councilmembers discussed:

- Potential dual liaison arrangements.
- Maintaining productive relationships with volunteers.
- The importance of multimodal transportation planning while avoiding adversarial dynamics.

A resolution with final appointments will be presented at the next regular council meeting for adoption.

## **2. Council Communication**

- Council expressed support for scheduling a norms-of-conduct training through CIRSA or CML to help improve council communication and collaboration.
- Councilmembers briefly discussed:
  - Upcoming CML legislative updates.
  - Existing procedures for handling policy disagreements with CML positions.

### **3. Next Workshop Topics**

City Manager Bennett summarized list of next workshop topics.

- Housing Affordability Task Force consultant request.
- Community survey questions.
- 7th and 9th Street multimodal corridor concepts.
- Real Estate Review Committee discussion.
- Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative.
- Single stair multifamily discussion.
- Service provider presentations related to homelessness and housing support systems.
- Woodman Park and Museum discussions.
- Local procurement discussions.
- Norms of conduct training scheduling.

Staff noted June workshops are expected to be very full, and some items may shift between meetings.

### **4. Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **5. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the workshop was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.