

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
August 11, 2026, 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

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

Presiding: Pat Nichols-Perrin, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Members Present: Julie Shafer, Dora Fang, Manon Desrosiers, Theresa Horvat, Christina Schultz, Tevfik Demirciftci

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Members Absent: Elizabeth Fortushniak, Brenda Greene

City of Grand Junction City Council Present: Mayor Laurel Lutz

Visit Grand Junction Staff Present: Elizabeth Fogarty, Director; Kim Machado, Administrative Specialist

Guests: Dalida Sassoon Bollig, Chief Executive Officer; Robyn Miley, Chief PR and MarCom Officer, Business Incubator Center

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Chair Pat Nichols-Perrin.

Minutes from the July 14, 2026, advisory board meeting: Theresa Horvat motioned to approve the minutes as written; Manon Desrosiers seconded. The motion passed.

Community Updates and Q&A – Business Incubator Center

Dalida Sassoon Bollig, Chief Executive Officer of the Business Incubator Center (BIC), provided an update on BIC's mission, initiatives, and programs that support entrepreneurship in Western Colorado. She explained that BIC helps businesses launch, grow, stabilize, and scale through five pillars: business development; innovation and labs; space and tools; business capital and loans; and grants and incentives. Current programs include the GJmakerspace, a revolving business loan fund, and administration of the Mesa County Enterprise Zone. She also discussed BIC's efforts to help businesses scale and to connect aspiring entrepreneurs with viable business ideas. BIC is exploring relocation to a more visible and accessible facility to better connect its businesses with the community and reduce the burden of maintaining its aging buildings.

BIC's 2025 Annual Report was distributed to Advisory Board members. Dalida reported that over its 40-year history, BIC has generated \$346 in economic impact for every dollar invested, contributed more than \$3.29 billion in capital investment, and launched or supported 35% of businesses in Mesa County. In 2025, BIC served 647 clients, created or retained 518 jobs, and had 112 businesses operating on its campus. BIC was named Entrepreneur Support Organization of the Year by the International Business Innovation Association in the Mixed-Use category. Upcoming events include the Entrepreneur Exchange on October 16, 2026, at the Grand Junction Convention Center and the Small Business Expo on November 20, 2026, at the BIC.

Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Dalida for the update and inquired how Visit Grand Junction could further support the Business Incubator Center. Dalida thanked Visit Grand Junction for its partnership and encouraged ongoing promotion of BIC businesses and services.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth reviewed Grand Junction's lodging tax collections and key hotel performance metrics for June 2026 business activity.

For June 2026 business, Grand Junction's lodging tax collections were 7.5% below June 2025. Year-to-date (YTD) collections through June 2026 were 2.4% above the same six-month period in 2025. Hotel occupancy was 73.6%, average daily rate (ADR) was \$129.63, and revenue per available room (RevPAR) was \$95.35. June 2026 hotel occupancy was 4.8% below, ADR was 1.4% below, and RevPAR was 6.2% below compared to June 2025. Elizabeth noted that June's results were affected by the cancellation of Country Jam and other events that took place in 2025 but not 2026, Colorado wildfires, lodging cannibalization, and limited hotel inventory.

Notable hotel metrics include:

- Despite the year-over-year declines in June 2026, Grand Junction continued to pace ahead of Colorado and the U.S. in YTD and 12-month rolling hotel metrics.
- YTD June 2026 ADR of \$111.74 was the highest recorded through June in Grand Junction's history.
- YTD June 2026 RevPAR of \$72.09 was the highest recorded through June in Grand Junction's history.

Other Updates

- Highlights from the Colorado Tourism Office's (CTO) 2025 hotel performance and visitor profile research were presented. Compared with 2024, Grand Junction's hotel occupancy increased 3.3%, ADR increased 1.8%, and RevPAR increased 5.1%, outpacing statewide growth and leading comparable hotel markets. Grand Junction's share of travelers age 55 and older increased to 30%, while Colorado's share declined to 26%. Pet travel also remained an important market. Visit Grand Junction's content strategy continues to reflect evolving visitor demographics and travel behaviors, including pet-friendly travel. For example, average session duration across five pet-focused blogs increased 441.8% YTD through July 2026 compared to the same period in 2025.
- Visit Grand Junction's wildfire communications were reviewed, including a special eNewsletter honoring the four firefighters who lost their lives responding to the Snyder Fire. The tribute received significant positive feedback from community members.
- Community meetings and events that Elizabeth recently attended included the Davis School of Business BBA ReVision Community presentation; Visit Grand Junction presentation to the Downtown Development Authority and Business Improvement District (DDA/BID); the Grand Junction 250/150 Main Street Celebration; True West Steering Committee meeting; 2025 CTO Economic Impact and Visitor Research; Daily Sentinel interview; Hotel Melrose and DDA/BID meeting; City Council Workshop; One West Tourism Alliance Smoke and Wildfire Committee meeting; and a meeting with Grand Valley Outdoor Recreation Coalition Executive Director Chandler Smith.
- Recent media coverage of Grand Junction included The Denver Post ("Five Must-Ride Mountain Biking Destinations in Colorado" and "Plan a Road Trip to One of These Colorado Farm Restaurants"); 5280 Magazine ("The 11 Best Places to Tube in Colorado This Summer"); Yahoo! Travel ("8 Under-the-Radar Colorado Towns Locals Go to When They Want to Escape the Crowds"); and TEGNA Inc. online segments ("Rogers' Road Trip | Mountain West"), resulting in 49 online placements with a total viewership of 31,597,525.
- Marketing continues with regard to the Aspen/Pitkin County Airport closure.
- Elizabeth presented updated research on Grand Junction's hotel room shortage based on destinations with similar populations and overnight visitation. Grand Junction's hotel room inventory has declined from approximately 3,100 to 2,842 as some rooms have been converted to long-term stays. Garrett County, MD, has 5,000 rooms, and Door County, WI, has 7,000 rooms, reinforcing the estimate that Grand Junction has a shortage of at least 2,000 rooms. Advisory Board members suggested additional destinations for comparison. Visit Grand Junction will continue refining the peer analysis and use the findings to support outreach to prospective hotel developers and investors. Elizabeth added that, following Visit Grand Junction's outreach, a prospective developer is scheduled for a site visit in Grand Junction with Elizabeth, City Manager Mike Bennett and Grand Junction Economic Partnership Executive Director Curtis Englehart.

Mayor Laurel Lutz provided a City Council update.

There being no further business, Dora Fang motioned to adjourn; Manon Desrosiers seconded. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.