

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP SUMMARY
June 4, 2007**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, June 4, 2007 at 7:03 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers Bonnie Beckstein, Teresa Coons, Bruce Hill, Gregg Palmer, Doug Thomason, Linda Romer Todd and Council President Jim Doody.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS & COMMISSIONS:** Juanita Peterson, Deputy City Clerk, gave an update on the status of appointments to various volunteer boards. She advised that due to low response, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board vacancies will be readvertised. She then requested volunteers for the various interview panels.

Action summary: Gregg Palmer, Bruce Hill, and Linda Romer Todd volunteered for Avalon Theatre Advisory Committee interviews. Jim Doody, Bonnie Beckstein, and Teresa Coons volunteered for the Walker Field Public Airport Authority interviews.

2. **GRAND JUNCTION REGIONAL CENTER:** Christian Mueller, Director of GJRC updated City Council on GJRC activities and offered collaborative community efforts. Mr. Mueller explained the history of the center; how they want to be a part of the community now and in the future, and the programs the facility has along with the staffing. He explained the challenges, primary goals, and the self assessment for 2007 given to Council in their packet. Mr. Mueller explained the types of licenses they have.

Councilmember Palmer asked if, when they integrate homes into the community, if they are having any problems with zoning, etc. Mr. Mueller said it is his belief that if you provide services, you reduce problems. With the group homes they have usually figured out their issues before establishing them as homes.

Action summary: No action taken. Council thanked Mr. Mueller for the update.

Council President Doody called a recess at 8:36 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:45 p.m.

3. **GRAND VALLEY TRAFFIC MODEL UPDATE:** Public Works and Planning Director Tim Moore presented the 2035 Traffic Model Scenarios for the Grand Valley. Mr. Moore noted that most areas of town are functioning satisfactorily, but in the late afternoon, some areas are more congested. He then displayed the 2035 model which had many more areas indicated in red, meaning congested. Councilmember Palmer inquired as to what assumptions are made in this model to which Mr. Moore replied that it assumes a 2.44% annual growth

rate, and it assumes that everything on the City's ten-year capital plan as far as infrastructure is built, as well as Mesa County's six year plan and CDOT plans, plus all internal networks that would come with development. It also assumes the current Growth Plan Policy stays in place.

Councilmember Todd inquired if the model assumes the additional 7,000 homes in Whitewater. Mr. Moore said it does. What the model does not assume is the newly approved development in the northwest area (Mesa County).

Mr. Moore continued that the next step was to look at a number of scenarios where a change in land use would affect the model. One of the scenarios included relocating those 7,000 households from Whitewater around town and relocating 1.5 million square feet of retail space to the east end of the valley. Other scenarios included eliminating 1.5 million square feet of retail or leaving it in the 24 Road area.

Councilmember Palmer asked if these scenarios have been shared with Mesa County as this affects their planning also. Mr. Moore responded yes, staffs have reviewed these and Ken Simms from Mesa County is present. Mr. Simms is responsible for developing the models.

Councilmember Coons inquired if any of the scenarios include the north development recently approved by Mesa County. Mr. Moore said it does not as that was a recent review process and the impact is not clear at this time.

The first scenario, with the shift of households and retail as outlined above, does impact the traffic system to the positive; there are fewer "red" areas, that is, congested areas. The second scenario adds additional retail to the east end of the valley without removing it from the west end and likewise relocates the housing anticipated in Whitewater to the northwest end of town, which also has a positive impact on the system.

Councilmember Palmer pointed out that even with improvements there are still failures in the system. Mr. Moore agreed but expressed that through the Comprehensive Planning process, through the ten-year capital plan process plus with partnering with Mesa County, it is hoped that the impacts can be minimized.

Councilmember Beckstein asked about the discrepancy in the growth rate as discussed at the Grand Valley Transportation Committee meetings. Mr. Moore advised that is why the growth rate used in the model was increased from 1.76% to 2.44%; 2.44% has been a consistent rate as averaged over the last twenty years.

Councilmember Coons inquired if public transportation has been considered for future modeling. Mr. Moore replied that it will be.

Councilmember Hill asked Mr. Moore to identify the higher traffic generator. Mr. Moore said retail, clarifying that in mixed use areas, a combination of retail and residential is taken into consideration. Councilmember Hill was in general

agreement but pointed out that land use is many times market-driven so there should be flexibility in any plan. He also asked what street network improvements would improve the situation. Mr. Moore replied that once the Comprehensive Plan is complete and land uses are determined, then capital improvement projects can be applied to the Plan in order to mitigate negative impacts on the transportation network.

Councilmember Todd said people move where they want to live and Whitewater has been the affordable area where people can get the room that they want. She has some concerns about the affected landowners not being involved in the discussions. Mr. Moore replied that can be addressed further in the next agenda item where the process for developing the Comprehensive Plan is slated for discussion. He noted he is not suggesting those changes and relocations take place, just pointing out options.

Councilmember Beckstein questioned the model being largely dependent on retail rather she thought the greatest impact came from commuters to and from work.

Mr. Moore agreed that commuting plays the biggest role in congestion but when looking land use, the use that has the greatest impact is retail.

Mr. Moore then demonstrated how one scenario would impact one roadway, namely Patterson Road.

Councilmember Hill, while agreeing with Mr. Moore's assumptions, cautioned that the plan has to include other options because there is very high growth currently and it is obvious the City does not have the resources to address scenarios where the growth rate exceeds the projections.

Councilmember Palmer agreed noting that with his work on the committee that looked at land use and infrastructure needs, it became obvious that the City needed a Comprehensive Plan so that all of these things could be looked at – such as where to put more retail, where to put more residential density, whether other interstate interchanges are warranted, to name a few. It also emphasizes the need to work with all local governments in the valley.

Council President Doody pointed out that the Riverside Parkway along Las Colonias Park may be underbuilt. Mr. Moore said the two lane was projected as sufficient in the 2020 plan but it will depend on whether traffic patterns change significantly when the 29 Road interchange is built.

Councilmember Coons appreciated the different scenarios but pointed out that many times plans are not necessarily followed, however, building bigger roads cannot be the only answer.

Action summary: The City Council appreciated the timing on the presentation. No action was taken.

4. **DISCUSS AWARD OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONTRACT:** Public Works and Planning Director Tim Moore presented the plan for developing the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. He explained the reasons behind this project and the process the City went through advertising for consultants. The recommendation is to award the contract to Winston Associates. Jeff Winston and Melissa Barry with Winston and Associates were present to answer additional questions. Mr. Moore reviewed the key elements that were included and developed for this first Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Moore reviewed the draft goals and objectives of the plan, the trends and projections using the base model along with the plan for extensive public participation.

Councilmember Palmer said he hopes that the Plan will benefit future City Councils and be the framework from which they can follow.

Councilmember Hill asked as a Council, what is the goal; what will it do for this community.

Councilmember Palmer advised that the Future Land Use map and the Transportation Plan was not enough; a more encompassing plan was needed that took into account development happening outside the City limits (Whitewater, Palisade, and Fruita). A better tool, or framework, is needed to plan further into the future.

Councilmember Coons added that it is to create a long term vision for the future that is not just what the elected officials and the staff envision but what the citizens want to see. The City currently has a Strategic Plan and it is updated every two years but that is an implementation plan for the vision.

Councilmember Todd said she sees the development of the Plan as an opportunity to conversation. The last such visioning has created some issues and she hopes that some of the implications that happened as a result of those decisions can be rectified and they can learn from some of those missteps. The public was not given the opportunity to be involved.

Council President Doody pointed out that the possibilities are only limited by the natural boundaries and the opportunity for this process is exciting and challenging.

Councilmember Todd said it is very important for Council to reach out and to get people involved.

Councilmember Palmer agreed, they need to find a way to encourage and invigorate the people to be involved.

Councilmember Hill stated the community has done a good job of looking toward the future but it is time to re-look at the vision and engage the community. He felt some of the things on the list will take care of themselves if they do this comprehensive planning right; things like economic development and infill and redevelopment. Barriers have to be removed from achieving those objectives.

He hopes the City can think outside of the box; this is a huge undertaking. Dialog needs to happen with others to determine what the areas are for future growth.

Public Works and Planning Director Moore added that the City intends to have a major outreach effort, putting to use many of the Bleiker (SDIC) tools. Acting City Manager Laurie Kadrach identified the types of tools that Winston Associates will use that will engage the public and allow those participating to see the outcome of their input at the time. Through the technology today and the use of the City's GIS, the process for citizen input will be a very different experience than in the previous planning and visioning efforts.

Jeff Winston of Winston Associates was introduced and then he introduced his team. He reviewed the direction they will go if awarded the contract Wednesday night. Mr. Winston explained the scope of services, the project objectives, the necessary resources, and demonstrated capabilities of his group and others they use during this process. He noted that the public opinion survey will be a very critical tool for the City Council to really know what the general population envisions. Mr. Winston then described some the tools they will employ with the citizens participating. He pointed out that following the first steps is a big responsibility.

Action summary: The City Council was comfortable with what the Staff had outlined relative to the Comprehensive Planning process and the proposed elements of the plan. The contract will be presented to City Council on Wednesday's Agenda.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.