



Community Workshop Summary

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

On April 9th, 2019, the City of Grand Junction hosted a Community Workshop at Two Rivers Convention Center. The workshop was part of the public outreach process for the creation of the new Comprehensive Plan, *One Grand Junction*. Attended by 128 individuals, this workshop was an opportunity for residents and community stakeholders to offer their input and feedback regarding the City and the plan. The workshop included a review of the planning process to be undertaken as well as a group exercise designed to gather input regarding issues, opportunities, potential projects, and key strengths and assets of the City. Input from this and other workshops and focus groups will help to guide the planning process and will be directly reflected in the vision, goals, recommendations, and policies of the final *One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan*.

The top issues identified at the workshop were a lack of affordable housing and living-wage jobs. These issues rose to the top of individual lists as well as during group breakout sessions. Residents also ranked homelessness, health, and school system funding high on their lists. Participants highlighted rapid growth as a major concern, with concerns of its effects on roadway and development infrastructure, and rural and agricultural areas. Many emphasized the importance of attracting young families and workers to offset an aging population.

When asked to identify the assets and strengths of Grand Junction, residents listed a variety of features and amenities that should be preserved and promoted. Natural and recreational areas, downtown character, and sense of community were the top identified assets and strengths of the City. Residents also highlighted agriculture, medical facilities, and Colorado Mesa University as important assets.

Note on Summary Context

The following is a summary of the thoughts, comments, and opinions received in the workshop. Some comments were shared with the entire group, while others were recorded privately on worksheets. The items identified in this summary are not recommendations or observations of the consultant, but rather represent feedback and comments received from those who participated in the workshop.

Issues & Concerns

At the beginning of the workshop, participants were asked to individually identify the issues and concerns confronting the Grand Junction community. Next, in breakout table groups, participants worked to generate a single, cumulative list, with each table identifying important issues to present to the larger group. The result was a list of the 35 top issues and concerns facing the community.

The breakout table groups were asked to rank the top three of the 35 issues and concerns. Below, in no ranked order, are the highest-ranked issues as determined by this method, as well as all other issues identified through the workshop.

Highest Group-Ranked Issues

- Traffic and traffic-calming measures
- Poor crosstown connectivity
- Lack of public transportation and adequate bike/pedestrian infrastructure
- Lack of affordable housing
- Homeless population
- Growing retirement community
- Urban sprawl and blight and a need for better growth management and infill development
- Sustainability, including air quality and better water management
- Job growth, workforce attraction, and business diversity
- Low wages and a high cost of living
- Quality education and aging educational facilities
- Inaccessible and costly healthcare
- Lack of infrastructure prevents development
- Trail access to the riverfront
- Management of local government and regulations
- Building an attractive identity
- Need for more advanced technology and access to internet

Other Issues by Category

Land Use and Development

- Vacant properties
- Lack of large lots
- Clifton incorporation
- Land use compatibility
- Riverfront development
- Lack of density
- Appropriate zoning
- Development planning
- Funding for development and maintenance

Economy & Jobs

- Diverse economy
- Economic stability
- Lack of strong downtown business communities
- Departure of intellectual property

Parks and Open Space

- Preservation of existing parks/open space
- Creation of new parks/open space

- Trash in the parks
- Lack of dog parks
- Maintenance of public use lands
- Development eliminating access to natural areas
- No parking at Emerson Park

Housing and Growth

- Residential and commercial encroachment on rural areas
- Lack of smart growth
- Too much growth and density
- Buffer zones

Amenities, Services, and Livability

- Quality of life
- Poverty
- Gentrification
- Lack of community center
- Crime and public safety
- Traffic enforcement

Transportation

- Road infrastructure conditions
- Better air travel and more flights
- Transportation corridors
- Bicycles on busy streets

Environment

- Dependence on fossil fuels
- Not enough solar usage
- Need for better drainage

Character and Identity

- Segmented communities
- Preservation of character and history
- Departure of young people

Representation and Taxes

- City & County cooperation
- Maintaining affordable taxes
- Resident and government relationship
- Lack of progressiveness
- De-Brucing at County level
- Taxes to fund projects
- Investment in youth
- Sunset clauses
- Coordination with Mesa County

Priority Actions & Projects

In response to the list of issues, participants were asked to name specific projects or actions that would provide solutions to those issues identified in the first part of the exercise. Recommended projects and actions are categorized below.

Land Use and Development

- Preservation of rural and agricultural areas
- Revitalization of vacant buildings
- Infrastructure funding strategy
- Adequate parking for developments
- Form the townships of Appleton, East Orchard Mesa and Fruitvale
- Green building codes
- North Ave. revitalization
- Riverfront development
- Mixed use, pedestrian-friendly for 24 Rd development
- Densify city to curb sprawl
- Incentives for in-town development
- Strong development map
- Need to adjust Gallagher
- More retail

Economy & Jobs

- Economic diversity
- Attract businesses
- Long-range financial planning
- Agricultural tourism

Parks and Open Space

- Trail development and canal access
- Maintain and create parks/open space
- Clean parks
- Dog parks

Housing and Growth

- Create affordable housing
- Have a growth plan made available to public
- Incentives for high-density housing

Amenities, Services, and Livability

- Community Center
- Broadband and cell tower infrastructure
- Education
- Develop fine arts
- Public safety
- Attract doctors to area

- “Feed the Pig” program (debt management education)
- Substance abuse and recovery program
- Trader Joes, Costco
- Charter Schools

Transportation

- Roadway maintenance
- Airport expansion

Environment

- Eliminate agricultural burning
- Solar

Character and Identity

- Engagement of Colorado Mesa University students
- Cohesive neighborhood developments
- Strengthen neighborhood character and identity

Representation and Taxes

- De-Brucing at County level
- City and County cooperation
- Stewardship of funds
- A growth plan made available to public

Strengths & Assets

As the *One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan* is developed, the key strengths and assets of Grand Junction should be regarded as areas to maintain and build upon. For the final part of the exercise, community members were asked to list strengths and advantages of Grand Junction that should be preserved. The following were identified:

Land Use and Development

- Downtown
- Riverfront
- Buffer Zones
- Planning department and developer relationship

Economy and Jobs

- Agriculture
- Tourism

Parks, Natural Areas, and Open Space

- Natural and recreational areas
- Federal Land
- Skiing
- Weather

Amenities, Services, and Livability

- Colorado Mesa University
- Medical facilities
- Arts and culture
- Quality of life
- Health care
- Low cost of living

Transportation

- Short commutes
- Airport
- Light traffic

Character and Identity

- Community
- Small town feel
- Historic character
- Community values
- City entrances

Representation and Taxes

- Low property taxes