

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

Project Name: Grand Junction Circulation Plan
Grand Junction Complete Streets Policy
Applicant: City of Grand Junction
Representative: David Thornton
Address: Comprehensive Plan Area-wide within Urban Dev. Boundary
Zoning: N/A
Staff: David Thornton
File No. CPA-2017-554
Date: May 22, 2018

I. SUBJECT

Consider a request to 1) amend the Comprehensive Plan by adopting the Grand Junction Circulation Plan, including the Network Map, Street Plan Functional Classification Map, and Active Transportation Corridor Map; 2) repeal and replace the existing Grand Valley Circulation Plan and Urban Trails Plan; and 3) approve a Complete Streets Policy.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed Grand Junction Circulation Plan (“Circulation Plan”) establishes a comprehensive approach to transportation planning within the Urban Development Boundary and supports and builds on the transportation principles and goals of the Grand Valley 2040 Regional Transportation Plan as well as the City’s adopted Comprehensive Plan. In general, the Plan supports a balanced, multi-modal approach to transportation planning, accommodating the safe and efficient movement of people and goods and providing for transportation options for all users. The Plan document includes a Network Map, the Street Functional Classification Map, the Active Transportation Corridor Map and Strategies and Policies.

A Complete Streets Policy, as an implementation element of the Circulation Plan, is also proposed for adoption. The overall vision of the Policy is to develop a safe, efficient, and reliable travel network of streets, sidewalks, and trails throughout the City to equitably serve all users and all modes of transportation. The proposed Policy includes seven principles and design standards to ensure that streets are designed and maintained to be safe, attractive, accessible, convenient and comfortable for users of all ages and abilities and all transportation modes. The Policy would be applicable to all development and redevelopment and outlines an exception process to be used in cases where strict adherence to the Policy is impractical or unnecessary.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, the adoption of the Grand Junction Circulation plan requires review and recommendation by the Planning Commission and a decision by City Council. Adoption of this plan would replace the existing Circulation Plan adopted in 2010 as well as the existing Urban Trails Plan that was last adopted in 2001.

III. BACKGROUND

Grand Junction Circulation Plan:

Staff from the City of Grand Junction, Mesa County and the Regional Transportation Planning Office, with significant input from the Urban Trails Committee, have collaborated over the last two years to develop the draft Grand Junction Circulation Plan. The Plan incorporates and updates the elements of the previous 2010 Circulation Plan and the 2001 Urban Trails Plan into one document that also includes Policies and Strategies for implementation. The planning process included more than 25 meetings with various agencies and stakeholder groups representing a variety of interests as well as a well attend public open house.

The Comprehensive Plan was jointly adopted by the City of Grand Junction and Mesa County in 2010 for that area within the Urban Development Boundary. Consistent with the Plan and related policies and agreements, the City's responsibility is to plan for areas within the Persigo 201 Boundary while Mesa County plans for those areas outside the Persigo boundary. Mesa County Planning Commission will consider the Circulation Plan on June 21, 2018. The City's adoption of the Plan is independent of Mesa County's decision. The Complete Street Policy is currently only being considered by the City.

The proposed Circulation Plan establishes a comprehensive approach to transportation planning within the Urban Development Boundary and supports and builds on the transportation principles and goals of the Grand Valley 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and the adopted Comprehensive Plan. The Plan supports a balanced, multi-modal approach to transportation planning, accommodating the safe and efficient movement of people and goods and providing for transportation options for all users. The Plan document includes a Network Map, the Street Functional Classification Map, the Active Transportation Corridor Map and Strategies and Policies.

A. The **Network Map** identifies important corridors and linkages connecting centers, neighborhoods and community attractions.

B. The **Street Functional Classification Map** identifies the functional classification of the roadway corridors that connect neighborhoods, employment centers and local attractions and amenities. Many of these corridors also provide for heavy truck movement and access to the Grand Junction community. Based on improved traffic modeling techniques and growth trends, there are a variety of proposed changes since the map was last adopted in 2010. These changes include adding road segments, reclassifying some existing road segments and removing others from the map.

C. The **Active Transportation Corridors Map** replaces the Urban Trails Master Plan/Map and identifies major corridors important for non-motorized travel by providing critical, continuous and convenient connections for bicyclists and pedestrians. The corridors are broadly defined and could accommodate active transportation as part of the road network or as separated paths. The Plan

identifies corridors important for active transportation and does not attempt to identify trails that are predominately recreational in nature. Active transportation corridors are shown along, adjacent to or near canals, ditches and drainages for non-motorized connections only where there is not another safe and efficient alternative for non-motorized transportation on the road network. The map identifies 275 miles of corridors for active transportation, 236 miles of which are along road corridors, 24 miles along canals (a reduction of 20 miles from what was shown on the 2001 plan) and 15 miles along drainage corridors. Further, the plan clearly specifies that the map is a planning document. Trail corridors depicted on the map do not mean they are currently open to public use. Any future routes shown along canals and drainage corridors would be constructed in cooperation with property owners and those holding other use and/or easement rights.

D. Strategies and Policies

The Plan's Strategies and Policies provide a framework for the implementation of the Plan as follows:

1. Adopt a Complete Streets Policy for Grand Junction and develop and adopt a Complete Streets Policy for Mesa County.
2. Develop or revise policies for support of an integrated transportation system.
3. Provide conceptual and corridor maps that will be used by decision makers and staff to improve transportation systems.
4. Improve interconnectivity between Grand Valley Transit and centers, neighborhoods and community attractions.
5. Improve the Urban Trails System on and connecting to Active Transportation Corridors.
 - a. Provide guidance on incentives for trail construction
 - b. Provide guidance on standards for trail construction
 - c. Provide guidance on ownership and maintenance of trail system
 - d. Maintain or improve multi-purpose trails
 - e. Provide wayfinding to attract visitors to the trail system and improve the ability of residents and visitors to find area attractions.
6. Maintain or improve circulation of vehicles on the road system.

Grand Junction Complete Streets Policy:

The first strategy and policy for implementation of the Circulation Plan is the adoption of a complete streets policy. The Urban Trails Committee felt it was important to have a policy in place to support their mission to provide for safe and efficient transportation options throughout the community as well as a policy to specifically address the Comprehensive Plan's Guiding Principle #5: Balanced Transportation. A Complete Streets Policy also bolsters the City's efforts for designation as a Bicycle Friendly and Walk Friendly Community; Both of which are strategic initiatives of the City Council

The Urban Trails Committee has developed a recommended draft Complete Streets Policy for the City of Grand Junction. The overall vision of the Policy is to develop a

safe, efficient, and reliable travel network of streets, sidewalks, and urban trails throughout the City to equitably serve all users and all modes of transportation. A Complete Streets approach integrates people and places in planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation networks, helping to ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities, while balancing the needs of different modes, thereby supporting local land use, economy, culture and the natural environment.

The proposed Policy includes seven principles and context sensitive design standards to ensure that streets are designed and maintained to be safe, attractive, accessible, convenient and comfortable for users of all ages and abilities and all transportation modes. The Policy would be applicable to all development and redevelopment in the public realm and outlines an exception process to be used in cases where strict adherence to the Policy is impractical or unnecessary. A summary of the principles include:

1. Complete Streets serve all users and modes through design, operation and maintenance by considering the needs of motorists, pedestrians, people with disabilities, transit users, bicyclists, and commercial and emergency vehicles,
2. Complete Streets design criteria shall take an innovative approach to develop streets that meet or exceed national best-practice design guidelines by thoughtfully applying engineering, architectural, and urban design principles.
3. Create a complete transportation network that provides connected facilities to serve all people and modes of travel, that provide travelers with multiple choices of travel routes and that help to reduce congestion on major roadways. The network shall include off-street hard-surface trails for biking and walking where necessary to improve safety and convenience. The network shall connect services, schools, parks, civic uses, major centers of activity and attractions.
4. Complete Streets are attractive, interesting and comfortable places for people and designed as public amenities to include aesthetic elements such as street trees, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, street furniture, and wayfinding signage.
5. Complete Streets require context-sensitive approaches balancing land use and transportation goals, policies and code provisions to create Complete Streets solutions that are flexible and appropriate.
6. Complete Streets include all roadways and all projects and phases and the City shall apply this policy, to the greatest extent practicable given budget constraints, to all street projects.
7. The City will foster education and outreach on the Complete Streets policy to City Departments and other agencies and will encourage community engagement.

IV. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Published Notice was completed consistent to the provisions in Section 21.02.080 (g) of the City's Zoning and Development Code. A notice of the public hearing was published May 15, 2018 in the Grand Junction Sentinel. Mailed notice and posting are not required for Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

In addition, the proposed 2018 Circulation Plan and the Grand Junction Complete Streets Policy has been available on the City's website and a Public Open House was held on February 28, 2018 with over 40 members of the public in attendance.

V. ANALYSIS

Pursuant to Section 21.02.130(c)(2) of the Grand Junction Zoning and Development Code, the City may amend the Grand Valley Circulation Plan and the Urban Trails Master Plan if the proposed changes are consistent with the vision, goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the following criteria for Plan Amendments are met:

21.02.130(c)(2)

(i) There was an error such that then-existing facts, projects, or trends that were reasonably foreseeable were not accounted for; or

There was not an error in the planning analysis in 2010 when the Circulation Plan was last revised since. However, the previous plan was based on the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and its anticipated densities and some of these base assumptions have changed as the intensity of development in some areas of the Urban Development Boundary area have changed. Staff finds that this criterion has not been met.

(ii) Subsequent events have invalidated the original premises and findings;

The changes recommended for the 2018 Circulation Plan are based on a modified approach for planning transportation infrastructure as well as changing growth trends and increasingly sophisticated traffic modeling. The 2018 planning effort took a fresh approach to transportation planning for the urban area by looking at where people are traveling to (major attractions) and from where they are beginning their travel (home, work and play) creating the Network Map. Both motorized and nonmotorized transportation corridors provide connections between major attractions and nodes as shown on the network map. Incorporating nonmotorized transportation corridors into the Circulation Plan emphasizes these corridors as important travel corridors to move traffic to area attractions whereas the 2001 Urban Trails Plan established corridors for the additional purpose of recreation.

Growth in Grand Junction since 2010 has been largely single family detached residential development and at densities at the very bottom of the range the Comprehensive Plan contemplated. For example, much of the development in the northwest area of Grand Junction along 24 ½ Road has built out at an average density of 5.5 units per acre rather than the

anticipated minimum density of 8 units per acre, impacting the anticipated traffic demands and resulting street network and classification needs. Some of the changes proposed for the Plan reflect the decreased traffic demand in some areas. Updated traffic models support changes to the functional street classification map.

Based on the transportation network, current growth trends and traffic modeling, Staff finds that the original premises and findings of the Circulation Plan and the Urban Trails Plan have changed and, therefore, this criterion has been met.

(iii) The character and/or condition of the area have changed enough that the amendment is acceptable;

As noted under criterion (ii) the growth trends have generally been at the lowest density anticipated in the Comprehensive Plan such that planning for the future road classification needs of some corridors has changed. In addition, the need for safe and efficient corridors for nonmotorized travel, whether by choice or necessity, continues to grow. The Grand Valley 2040 Regional Transportation Plan identified the transportation mode share for nonmotorized transportation options increasing by 2040. Because of the changing needs of the traveling public as well as the development trends of specific areas within the community, Staff finds that this criterion has been met.

(iv) The community or area, as defined by the presiding body, will derive benefits from the proposed amendment;

The Urban Development Boundary serves as the planning area for the Circulation Plan. The 2018 Circulation Plan provides for motorized and nonmotorized travel options, connecting major attractions and nodes in a comprehensive manner creating greater connectivity. The Plan supports the Grand Valley 2040 Regional Transportation Plan's principles and best practices including: reducing congestion, easing commutes, improving roadway safety, enhancing sidewalks, bike, and multi-use trails, and maintaining an efficient and effective transportation system, thereby benefitting the overall community. Further, the Plan supports the Comprehensive Plan's vision for connectivity with a well-connected street network with multiple travel routes that diffuse traffic, which have been shown to reduce congestion, increase safety for drivers and pedestrians, and promote walking, biking, and transit use. Creating a plan that provides a roadmap for the community to achieve these

significant and documented community benefits supports Staff's finding that this criterion has been met.

(v) The change will facilitate safe and efficient access for all modes of transportation; and

The proposed Circulation Plan establishes a plan to improve, develop or construct a network of transportation corridors and separate active transportation (nonmotorized) corridors to specifically accommodate all modes of transportation. For example, the Circulation Plan establishes policies and strategies supporting a complete street policy, an integrated transportation system, improved transit interconnectivity between attractions and an improved urban trails system. In addition, the Plan establishes strategies and policies to add safety and efficiency to the transportation network, thereby working to plan, encourage and facilitate the implementation of safe and efficient access for all modes of transportation. The core of the plan is to facilitate safe and efficient access for all modes of transportation, therefore, Staff finds that this criterion has been met.

(vi) The change furthers the goals for circulation and interconnectivity.

The Network Map is key to understanding how people are moving throughout the community, specifically where people are coming from and going to in their daily travel decisions. Linking and providing efficient and safe transportation corridors for motorized vehicles (using the Street Plan Functional Classification Map) and nonmotorized travel (using the Active Transportation Corridors Map) provides options and furthers the Comprehensive Plan's vision for connectivity with a well-connected street network for an urban-wide circulation and interconnectivity. Staff therefore finds this criterion has been met.

The proposed Circulation Plan and Complete Streets Policy is consistent with the vision, goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan as follows:

Goal 1: To implement the Comprehensive Plan in a consistent manner between the City, Mesa County, and other service providers.

- The proposed Circulation Plan was developed jointly by the City and County to be consistently implemented within the Urban Development boundary.

Goal 9: Develop a well-balanced transportation system that supports automobile, local transit, pedestrian, bicycle, air, and freight movement while protecting air, water and natural resources.

- The proposed 2018 Circulation Plan and the proposed Grand Junction Complete Streets Policy is balanced and supports multi-modal transportation options.

Policy A. The City and County will work with the Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office (RTPO) on maintaining and updating the Regional Transportation Plan, which includes planning for all modes of transportation.

Note: The proposed Circulation Plan and Complete Streets Policy supports the Grand Valley 2040 Regional Transportation Plan

Policy B. Include in the Regional Transportation Plan...consider functional classification in terms of regional travel, area circulation, and local access.

Policy D. A trails master plan will identify trail corridors linking neighborhoods with the Colorado River, Downtown, Village Centers and Neighborhoods Centers and other desired public attractions. The Plan will be integrated into the Regional Transportation Plan.

VI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND FINDINGS OF FACT

Grand Junction Circulation Plan:

After reviewing the Grand Junction Circulation Plan, CPA-2017-554, a request to adopt the Grand Junction Circulation Plan and to repeal and replace the Grand Valley Circulation Plan and the Urban Trails Plan, as part of the Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan the following findings of fact have been made:

1. The proposed amendments are consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. At least one of the review criteria in Section 21.02.130(c)(2) of the Grand Junction Municipal Code have been met.

Therefore, Staff recommends approval.

Grand Junction Complete Streets Policy:

After reviewing the Grand Junction Complete Streets Policy, CPA-2017-554, a request to adopt the Grand Junction Complete Streets Policy as an element of the Grand Junction Circulation Plan, the following findings of fact have been made:

1. The proposed Complete Streets policy furthers the intent and goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan, specifically the strategies and policies of the Circulation Plan.

VII. RECOMMENDED MOTION

Madam Chairman, on the Grand Junction Circulation Plan request, CPA-2017-554, I move that the Planning Commission forward to the City Council a recommendation of approval of the Plan with the findings of facts as listed in the staff report.

Madam Chairman, on the Grand Junction Complete Streets Policy request, CPA-2017-554, I move that the Planning Commission forward to the City Council a recommendation of approval of the Complete Streets Policy with the findings of facts as listed in the staff report.

Exhibits:

1. Staff Report
2. Circulation Plan document
3. Proposed Network Map
4. Street Plan – Functional Classification Map – proposed changes shown and listed Street Plan – Functional Classification Map
5. Street Plan – List of Changes
6. Street Plan – Proposed 2018 Final Draft – As amended
7. Proposed Active Transportation Corridors Map
8. List of Public Meetings
9. Letters and Public Comments (public, open house, development review agencies, local organizations)
10. Grand Junction Complete Streets Policy document
11. Proposed Ordinance for Circulation Plan
12. Proposed Resolution for the GJ Complete Streets Policy