



CITY OF GRAND JUNCTION

URBAN TRAILS COMMITTEE

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

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Resolution No. 48-94 created the Grand Junction Trails Board in 1994 as a subcommittee of the Riverfront Commission to serve as the principal coordinating body for the development of a trails and pathway system throughout Grand Junction and connecting to trail systems outside the City; to plan, develop and promote such a path system and help coordinate the implementation of the Multi-Modal Plan; and to actively pursue the development of new trails both in the City and in areas which may be annexed.

Resolution No. 48-14 was adopted by the Grand Junction City Council on December 17, 2014, re-establishing the Trails Board as the Urban Trails Committee (UTC) of the City rather than being a subcommittee of the Riverfront Commission.

VISION

The UTC envisions Grand Junction as a vibrant walkable and bikeable community for all ages and abilities. The convenience, efficiency and safety of our active transportation network will be an attraction to everyone who lives here or comes to visit.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Urban Trails Committee is to plan and promote the City Council's goals for an interconnected network of sidewalks, paths and routes for active transportation and recreation throughout the Grand Junction urbanized area. The Urban Trails Committee will act in an advisory capacity to the Grand Junction City Council on matters pertaining to the safe, convenient and efficient movement of pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities throughout the community, as well as other forms of transit.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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The following Strategic Plan was approved by the Urban Trails Committee in November 2015 and are reviewed on an annual basis. The most recent update was approved in June 2019. The goals and strategies are used to establish the Committees annual work plan and to assess accomplishments.

GOAL ONE.

Improve the built environment by providing safe and efficient active transportation options for people of all ages and abilities by increasing the number of miles of connected sidewalks, bike lanes and pathways within the City.

Strategies

- Review and comment on land development applications to ensure compliance with the Urban Trails Master Plan [2018 Circulation Plan].
- Maintain a prioritized list of on and off-street trail improvements, emphasizing Safe Routes to School and underserved areas of the City
- Identify and assess conditions of major active transportation corridors and connections throughout Grand Junction
- Act in an advisory capacity to the Grand Junction City Council on policy, priorities and funding issues pertaining to active transportation
- Identify safe routes and look for opportunities to provide connectivity and access to the Riverfront Trail
- Identify safe routes and look for opportunities to provide connectivity to public lands trailheads, including Tabaguache trails, Old Spanish Trail and the Bookcliffs/North Desert area
- Maintain and update, as needed, the Urban Trails Master Plan [2018 Circulation Plan].
- Implement a Complete Streets Policy

GOAL TWO.

Increase Programming to promote Safe Walking and Biking Opportunities

Strategies

- Promote Bike Month and Bike to Work Day activities
- Participate in Share the Road activities
- Support Safe Routes to School activities, including audits, Walking and Wheeling events, bike rodeos, education and safety campaigns, Walk and Bike to School activities

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

- Support the development of a sustainable Safe Routes to School program to be implemented district-wide
- Develop a standardized bike/pedestrian wayfinding program using signage, maps and GIS applications
- Develop a community Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan

GOAL THREE.

Increase the number of citizens utilizing active modes of transportation and promote the health, livability and economic benefits of a Walkable/Bikeable Community

Strategies:

- Organize and participate in the Walking and Biking Summit and other community forums
- Participate in Healthy Mesa County's Active Communities initiative to promote the health benefits of active transportation choices
- Pursue a Bicycle Friendly Community Designation and continue to work toward improving the rating
- Promote the economic benefits of a walkable/bikeable community by participating in local studies and assessments

2019 PROJECTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Urban Trails Committee has regular meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. Committee members are appointed by the City Council and currently include Devon Balet, Andrew Gingerich, Dr. Kristin Heumann, Sarah Johnson, David Lehmann, Steve Meyer, Gary Stubler (Vice Chair), Shana Wade, and Orin Zyvan (Chair). Outgoing member in 2019 was Elizabeth Collins. The Committee is staffed by Lance Gloss (City of Grand Junction Community Development Department) and minutes are taken by Michele Rohrbach (One Riverfront). The Committee was additionally staffed in 2019 by Paul Jagim (City of Grand Junction Public Works Department), Kristen Ashbeck (Community Development Department) and Kathy Portner (Community Development Department). Following is a summary of significant projects and activities that further the adopted goals and strategies of UTC during 2019.

ADVISORY INPUT FOR CITY DEPARTMENTS

The Urban Trails Committee continued its practice of prioritizing projects related to multimodal infrastructure based on the goals stated in the Committee's Strategic Plan. This list of priorities helps inform projects in the City's Capital Plan as well as projects funded by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Design, bidding, and construction proceeded on several of these projects, including the introduction of the city's first sharrows to Main Street (completed 2019), and improvements to Orchard Avenue. The Committee also provided high-level review of selected development proposals. The development team on the Water Tank properties—a 600-acre area between Broadway and South Camp Road—sought comment from the Committee on trails-related issues, as development of that property becomes imminent.

The Committee also evaluated the results of recent applications for Walk Friendly and Bike Friendly Community designations and considered ways to put this feedback into action. Bronze Bike Friendly Status was maintained, and the community did not achieve status as a Walk Friendly Community. The Urban Trails Committee also provided input to the City related to Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW's) new statewide policy to collect user fees for all users of the Riverfront trail that pass through Connected Lakes State Park. The Committee also analyzed possible trail sections along irrigation rights-of-way in Orchard Mesa Irrigation District, and forwarded a recommendation for a trail segment to serve as a pilot project to Public Works. The Committee issued guidance on complete streets projects on South Camp Road and Orchard Avenue.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

The Urban Trails Committee issued several letters of support for partner organizations and City Departments pursuing grant funding for multimodal infrastructure projects. In April, the Urban Trails Committee gave its formal support to a recommendation from New Mobility West for

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improvement of I-70B at 1st Street and Grand Avenue, and asked the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to pursue a more pedestrian-friendly, four-lane solution for the site instead of CDOT's proposed six-lane section. In March 2019, the Urban Trails Committee delivered a letter to the City of Grand Junction City Council endorsing a policy aimed at updating Transportation Capacity Payments, a crucial mechanism for funding complete street improvements.

In September, the Urban Trails Committee issued a letter of support for the Downtown Development Authority's grant application, aimed at securing funding to develop an Artline on 7th Street south of Main Street. The Artline is planned to consist of various public art installations aimed at activating the street and improving both vibrancy and sense of safety for pedestrians and cyclists. In October, the Urban Trails Committee issued a letter of support for the acquisition of land at the end of the recently constructed Monument Connector Trail by the Colorado West Land Trust. The lease was acquired in November, 2019, and will allow for a paved trail connection reaching within 3,000 feet of the Colorado National Monument East Entrance. In November, 2019 the Urban Trails Committee issued a letter of support for a Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) grant application for infrastructure at the Riverfront at Dos Rios, to be completed in accordance with the Complete Streets Policy and in December, a similar letter supporting a Multimodal Opportunities Fund grant application for a new bicycle-pedestrian bridge connecting Downtown with the Riverfront at Dos Rios.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The Urban Trails Committee prioritized Neighborhood Improvements and Safe Routes to School projects to be considered for 2019 Program Year Community Development Block Grant funding. The top four priorities were approved for funding by the City Council. These included ADA Accessibility Improvements in various locations near public buildings, as well as sidewalk improvements for Safe Routes to School at B Road/Mesa View Elementary, at B-1/2 and 27-1/2 Road Safe Neighborhood Route, and at Lorey Drive from Westlake Park to 1st Street. These projects are presently in the design phase, with construction anticipated to be completed in Spring 2020.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESSES

The Urban Trails Committee and its members participated in various long-range planning workshops. Members commented on CDOT's plans for the intersection at 1st and Grand, which is a component of I-70B improvements. Members participated in workshops for the Comprehensive Plan process being undertaken. Project Engineers for the Comprehensive Plan attended an Urban Trails Committee meeting and solicited the Committee's input on elements of the Plan related to

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transportation and connectivity. The Committee also attended workshops and reviewed planning documents for the 2045 Transportation Plan produced by the Regional Transportation Planning Office (RTPO).

COMMUNITY STREETS EVENT

The Urban Trails Committee hosted the third annual Community Streets Event on Saturday, October 19th, 2019. The event was a great success with over 800 participants throughout the day. It was modeled after the “Open Streets” concept that temporarily closes a street to motorized traffic, allowing the street to be used for other community activities. The event closed 10th Street from Belford Avenue to Main Street to non-local vehicular traffic and left Grand and Gunnison Avenues open for cross traffic. The event showcased the connection from Colorado Mesa University to Downtown and offered a number of activities and informational booths along the route and at Washington Park. Twenty-one community groups and 20 local businesses participated. Funding for the event was provided by the Riverfront Foundation, Alpine Bank, CMU Foundation, St. Mary’s Hospital, the Downtown Development Authority, Grand Junction Federal Credit Union, Mesa County Public Health and the City of Grand Junction.

BIKE MONTH

Urban Trails Committee, once again, participated in Bike Month Activities in May. Bike Month is a cooperative effort spearheaded by Mesa County Public Health. Committee members participated on the Planning Committee for Bike Month, and developed events and programming. Committee members distributed promotional materials and volunteered at the breakfast event at City Hall and at the bicycle rodeo for the end-of-the-month celebration.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN COUNTS

The Urban Trails Committee participated for the third year running in the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project, which aims to provide consistent data collection for use by governments and citizens. This year the Committee drafted and approved an Active Transportation County Policy. This document helps simplify and standardize the counting process. Counts were taken at five locations in 2019, and the data was compiled and analyzed by staff in the Public Works Department.

WAYFINDING PROJECT

Since 2018, the Urban Trails Committee has developed and promoted a valley-wide Wayfinding system intended for the Riverfront Trail and six other major routes connecting through the City of

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Grand Junction. This project has been pursued with the cooperation with the City of Grand Junction Public Works Department, the City of Palisade, the City of Fruita, and Mesa County. A policy draft and possible routes continue to be developed. Additionally, several pilot signs and pavement markings were tested. In May, Bicycle Colorado and the UTC applied for a Unilever's Degree Deodorant and Blue Zones – Made to Move grant, for the purpose of funding the Wayfinding Project valley-wide. To accomplish this, relationships and support were fostered with many entities and a twenty-page proposal was submitted along with letters of support from the various municipal organizations. The grant was not awarded but the UTC learned a lot from the experience to take forward to future grant opportunities. Work completed will be helpful in identify and preparing for future funding opportunities for this project.

For more information, contact the Urban Trails Committee at ComDevUTC@gmail.com.

UTC Meetings are held at City Hall, 250 N 5th St, Grand Junction CO on the second Wednesday of every month, from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. The public is welcome to attend.