

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
October 10, 2023, 5:30 PM
MINUTES

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Commissioner Teske.

Those present were Planning Commissioners; Shanon Secrest, Kim Herek, Melanie Duyvejonck, and Keith Ehlers.

Also present were Jamie Beard (City Attorney), Niki Galehouse (Planning Supervisor), Dave Thornton (Principal Planner), Tim Lehrbach (Senior Planner), Rick Dorris (Development Engineer), Trent Prall (Engineering and Transportation Director), Henry Brown (Mobility Planner), Madeline Robinson (Planning Technician), and Jacob Kaplan (Planning Technician).

There were 10 members of the public in attendance, and 2 virtually.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) from August 22, 2023, and September 12, 2023.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Brookwillow Village Filing 6 Rezone

RZN-2023-160

Consider a request by Senergy Builders, LLC to zone 0.23 acres from PD (Planned Development) to R-12 (Residential – 12 du/ac) located at the intersection of Brookwillow Loop and Orion Way, Parcel #2945-041-25-002 – WITHDRAWN

2. PERS Investments Annexation

ANX-2023-439

Consider a request from PERS Investments, LLC to zone 1.49 acres of property within the PERS Investments Annexation to C-2 (General Commercial) located at 3175 D Road.

Staff Presentation

Tim Lehrbach, Senior Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Tracy States with River City Consultants was present on behalf of the applicant.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Teske asked Staff why they felt Criteria 1 had not been met. Tim responded that because there was not currently a city zoning, there were not subsequent events to invalidate the original findings.

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

There were no comments from the public or from online attendees.

The public comment period was closed at 5:44 p.m. on October 10, 2023.

Discussion

No discussion occurred between the commissioners.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Secrest made the following motion “Consider a request from PERS Investments, LLC to zone 1.49 acres of property within the PERS Investments Annexation to C-2 (General Commercial) located at 3175 D Road.”

Commissioner Herek seconded; motion passed 5-0.

3. TEDS Manual Update

TEDS-M-2023-461

Consider a Request by the City of Grand Junction (City) to Amend Title 29 of the Grand Junction Municipal Code to modify and clarify various provisions of the Transportation Engineering Design Standards (TEDS).

Staff Presentation

Dave Thornton, Principal Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and the team behind the TEDS Manual update.

Director Trent Prall provided context for the TEDS Manual update in relation to the 2020 Comprehensive Plan and the Ped Bike Plan. He elaborated on the costs associated with road improvements in the past and what to expect in the future.

Development Engineer Rick Dorris presented a history of the TEDS Manual Update.

Mobility Planner Henry Brown presented on the summary of an analysis of cities and their street sections and right-of-way widths.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Ehlers asked about the variables used when comparing Grand Junction to the peer cities Henry mentioned. He asked what would happen if the width of sidewalks was reduced to five feet instead of six. He asked how much of the Ped Bike Plan’s high priority connections would be created via the proposed road improvements per the TEDS Manual update. He asked

about the requirements for landscape strips and if the detached walks would trigger additional landscaping requirements. He expressed concerns that the increased infrastructure costs to accommodate multimodal transport would impact housing affordability. Lastly, he asked why there weren't more members from private sectors on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the TEDS rewrite.

Commissioner Secrest clarified that the TEDS Manual and the Zoning and Development Code served as the implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan, the Ped and Bike Plan, and the 2020 Comprehensive Plan. He asked why a section of the TEDS Manual pertaining to the City's GIS Map had been removed from the draft. He expressed concerns that elements of the Ped and Bike Plan would be codified through adoption of the new TEDS Manual. He asked what the increased cost per year would be to implement the proposed road improvements.

Commissioner Herek asked what alternatives were considered pertaining to pedestrian connectivity when drafting the TEDS Manual.

Commissioner Duyvejonck asked about the potential benefits to public health with the TEDS update. She shared some statistics from the Mesa County Community Health Needs Assessment.

Commissioner Ehlers further asked about the difference in health benefits between a five-foot and a six-foot sidewalk.

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Tom McClousky made comment about the issue between the five-foot versus a six-foot sidewalk and it's clear that the six-foot sidewalk width is more beneficial. Commissioner Ehlers then asked the citizen what he would prioritize more with affordable housing or transportation functionality.

Members of the WCCA requested denial of the TEDS Manual update because it is not ready. They elaborated that the major concerns were the increased cost to homeowners due to development requiring increased infrastructure. They stated that not enough alternatives had been considered and that the plan just needed a bit more time before it was ready.

Ron Abeloe stated that there were variables that were not considered when evaluating the costs associated with the road improvements. He noted that housing costs would increase too because additional infrastructure would be needed during development.

David Niemen is an avid cyclist and drives a vehicle, is in favor of the TEDS update to pass.

Andy Gingerich made comment that he is proof that owning a vehicle would be more detrimental to his finances than having better connectivity in the city where he didn't need a vehicle.

Garret Davis commented that people were moving to the Grand Valley because of the lower cost of living and that the increased infrastructure costs proposed in the TEDS Manual would prevent that.

Jane Quimby agreed that the plan is not ready.

The public comment period was closed at 8:11 p.m. on October 10, 2023.

Trent Prall made a response to the public's comments that they utilized several different entities to comprise the TEDS update and reached out to members of the public for several months.

Commissioner Secrest asked Trent what changes could be made to the plan if it did not pass tonight. Trent responded that the alternative was to reduce the buffer between pedestrians and traffic but then the plan would be unnecessary and would not represent the goals outlined in the 2020 Comp Plan.

Commissioner Herek asked if the Ped Bike Plan had specific language about transitioning to a Stress Level 2 per Trent's presentation. She clarified that if the TEDS Manual were to be changed based on the preceding comments and discussion, it would no longer meet the goals of the recently adopted Ped and Bike Plan.

Commissioner Ehlers argued that the Ped Bike Plan is broad in its definitions of how to meet the outlined goals and that the draft TEDS Manual could be modified to reduce costs while still meeting the expectations as outlined. He further questioned how many stakeholders were involved during the draft period and what alternatives were proposed. He questioned the quality of the plan if it is going to take 100 years for the plan to be paid for.

Commissioner Teske asked for clarification on what effort had been made to evaluate the differences between a 5 ft and a 6 ft sidewalk. Additionally, he wanted clarification about context sensitivity in regards to lighting for pedestrians using pathways.

Discussion

Commissioner Secrest commented that the TEDS update will eventually pass, but right now may not be the time.

Commissioner Duyvejonck made comment that she is in full favor of passing the plan tonight as is.

Commissioner Herek agreed with Commissioner Duyvejonck and that a lot of research has gone into making this update.

Commissioner Ehlers stated seeking balance is still needed before passing the TEDS update.

Commissioner Teske emphasized that it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to determine whether the plan as presented is adequate to accomplish the goals outlined, not to arbitrate on the fiscal aspects of accomplishing the plan. He stated he has a concern that everyone has stated the plan could be better, but not stating how it could be better.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion “On this topic of the TEDS Manual update we remand it back to Staff for a maximum of 8 weeks in which time they should receive all proposed alternatives and give it due diligence to understand what those impacts are and if the visions of the Bike and Ped Plan and all of the principles or as many principles as possible of the Comp Plan can be achieved with various alternatives and understanding those costs.”

Commissioner Secrest seconded; motion failed 1-4.

Commissioner Herek made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the adoption of the updated Transportation Engineering Design Standards (TEDS), TEDS-M-2023-461, I move that the Planning Commission forward a conditional recommendation of approval to include the proposed changes related to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan references with the findings as listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Duyvejonck seconded; motion failed 3-2.

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion “Chair Teske, on the adoption of the updated Transportation Engineering Design Standards (TEDS), TEDS-M-2023-461, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval with the findings as listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Duyvejonck seconded; motion failed 0-5.

The plan will move forward to City Council. The conclusion of this hearing is the Planning Commission did not recommend that the City Council adopt the 2023 TEDS Manual.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Ehlers moved to adjourn the meeting.

The vote to adjourn was 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.