

Problem Statement

Is There Really a Problem?

For many years land use decisions in and around Grand Junction have been guided by the Growth Plan Map (which is related to a sewer service plan, also known as the Persigo Agreement). In recent years it has become increasingly apparent that the Growth Plan Map has major shortcomings as a means of responding to complex issues related to the pace of growth we have experienced. We are now faced with the challenge of limited land resources to accommodate a projected almost-doubling of our population in the next 25 years. It is increasingly apparent that low density sprawl, combined with irregular extensions of our boundaries is creating challenges for cost-effective services for our citizens. In addition, we are growing up to the boundaries of our adjacent communities, and need to take their plans into account in making our own land use decisions. Finally, City departments have been operating for some time with their own, independent planning documents loosely tied to the assumptions of the Growth Plan. The City has increasingly found that these plans need greater coordination and common direction.

Why the City is the Appropriate Agency to Address the Issue

To address these and other issues, the City of Grand Junction has determined that it needs a more comprehensive plan for growth ---- a Comprehensive Plan that would identify overall directions and capacities for growth as well as interrelate the various departments of the City in capital improvements planning. Recognizing the value of coordinating our plans with our neighbors, the City has invited adjacent communities, Mesa County, and citizens to participate. At the same time, we realize that 85% of future residents are projected to locate in or near the City's natural growth boundary, and therefore City will take the lead and has the primary responsibility for preparing the plan.

The City has a Reasonable Approach

To undertake the planning effort the City has organized an extensive opportunities for input-from public work sessions and web-based outreach down to detailed scrutiny by a citizen steering committee and a committee of technical experts. Adjacent communities and the County will review and comment through regular meetings of an intergovernmental "round table". Each department of the City will provide detailed input in the form of existing documents and periodic reviews of draft plans. The Council and Planning Commission will have regular updates and opportunities for input. Near the end of the process the public will be given additional opportunities to help shape the plan through public adoption hearings before the City Council.

"Continuing as We Have Been" is Not Working

The Growth Plan was a fairly simplistic approach to planning that resulted in a land use pattern that has spawned traffic congestion and long commutes to work and shopping. There are numerous instances of incompatible land uses being placed next to each other. There are imminent requests for land use decisions that will require major expenditures to provide roads, schools, utilities and other public services. A significant portion of near term growth, as well as long-term growth, will not be accommodated within the boundaries and assumptions of the Growth Plan and Persigo Agreement. If we are to address our future in a way that preserves our quality of life and fiscal sustainability as a community we must make a concerted, cooperative effort now.