



Grand Junction Area
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

2025 Spring Election Guide

Focused on Business Priorities for Economic Strength





SPRING ELECTION GUIDE 2025

A message from the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce President & CEO

Local elections matter. The decisions made by the Grand Junction City Council have a direct impact on businesses—shaping policies on development, infrastructure, workforce, and economic growth. With four council seats on the ballot, this election presents a critical opportunity to elect leaders who understand the needs of our business community and the role a strong economy plays in supporting a vibrant city.

Historically, Spring municipal elections see lower voter turnout, meaning every vote carries even more weight in shaping the future of Grand Junction. This is your opportunity to have a say in the leadership and policies that will influence our local economy for years to come. Don't sit on the sidelines—engage in the process, share this guide with those around you, and encourage others to make informed decisions at the ballot box.

At the Chamber, we work every day to advocate for a business-friendly environment that fosters opportunity, innovation, and growth. Our focus in this election is not on political parties, but on candidates who are committed to smart policies that support businesses, job creation, and long-term economic sustainability.

Your voice matters. Your vote matters. Let's make it count.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Candace Carnahan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Candace Carnahan

President & CEO

Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce

INTRODUCTION

This Election Guide serves as a reference as you consider candidates in select races for the upcoming election on April 8, 2025. Also included are a few ballot measures we have identified as having direct impact on the business community and economic base.

1. Introduction
2. The Process
3. Candidate Questionnaires and Endorsements
4. Local Ballot Measures
5. Election Day Information

THE PROCESS

Candidate Questionnaires

Each candidate was provided an opportunity to submit a questionnaire answering eight questions about their candidacy. The answers to these questions are provided in each section. Please note that submitted answers are shown exactly as submitted up to the 100-word limit that candidates were instructed to follow. The Chamber does not correct grammar, spelling, and general editing errors. Each candidate followed a strict word count requirement to ensure consistency.

Candidate Interviews

In addition to the written questionnaires, candidates were invited to participate in a panel interview with the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce Endorsement Committee. This committee includes one board representative and five additional representatives from the business community. Chamber staff is present only to facilitate the interviews and record the comments of the committee. Candidates in each race were all asked the same questions related to business priorities in our community such as regulatory pressures on legacy industries, protection of natural resources, government transparency, and economic development. All interviews were held to a strict time limit for consistency.

Candidate Forum

The final step in our endorsement process included invitations to participate in our Candidate Forum as part of the March Quarterly Membership Luncheon. Candidates faced a variety of questions provided by attendees related to business issues, each having an opportunity to answer each question related to their race. This forum is open to both Chamber members and the community as an opportunity for candidates to express their perspectives on business-related topics prior to the upcoming election.

Board Decision

The Chamber Board carefully considers candidate endorsements through a thoughtful and independent evaluation process. While staff facilitate the process, only Board members have a vote in the final decision. Board members review notes from the Candidate Endorsement Committee's interviews, responses from the candidate questionnaires included in this guide, and the candidates' remarks at the public forum. This comprehensive approach ensures that endorsements are based on direct insights from the candidates themselves, with a focus on their understanding of economic issues, business priorities, and community impact. The final decision reflects the Board's collective judgment on which candidates are best positioned to support a strong and vibrant business environment.

District A



Alexis Hitzeroth



Cody Kennedy

What specific policies or initiatives would you support to ensure Grand Junction remains a business-friendly community?

When I'm on City Council I'll advocate for creating a Business Liaison within the City of Grand Junction. Whether it's navigating the challenging planning and development processes, connecting businesses with the folks they need to speak with in the city organization, or simply being an advocate for their needs and interests, I think it's time we had a voice within the city who's on the businesses' side.

Grand Junction thrives when businesses succeed. I support reducing unnecessary regulations, streamlining permitting, and keeping taxes and fees predictable. We need infrastructure that supports growth without overburdening businesses. Public safety is critical. I'll keep advocating for responsible housing policies to ensure a strong workforce. I back targeted, performance-based incentives that generate real economic benefits. I supported the 29 Road Interchange to drive growth, though voters didn't approve it. Equally important is what I don't support, like the proposed linkage fee, which would hurt Grand Junction's competitiveness.

How would you balance economic growth with responsible fiscal management in city budgeting and spending?

The primary role of local government is to ensure that basic services are met for residents and businesses, and that is the most important focus of the budgeting process. Once those needs are met, we should take a holistic view and look at what the City of Grand Junction can be doing to create an environment where businesses and individuals can thrive and meet their highest potential, while using tax dollars responsibly. We can foster success by making the community a place where businesses want to be because of our high quality of life and low cost of doing business.

Economic growth and fiscal responsibility go hand in hand. The city must prioritize essential services (public safety, infrastructure, and housing) while ensuring spending aligns with long-term benefits. I support a budget that focuses on needs over wants, reduces waste, and leverages private investment where possible. Economic growth expands the tax base, allowing the city to fund services without overburdening businesses or residents with new fees. That's why I oppose excessive costs like the proposed linkage fee, which discourages development. Instead, we should foster growth that increases revenue organically, keeping taxes low while maintaining the services our community depends on.

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District A



Alexis Hitzeroth



Cody Kennedy

How do you view the role of public-private partnerships in addressing economic and workforce challenges, and can you give an example of where you believe collaboration is needed?

Businesses are great at what they do, and one of the ways government can provide that same great service to the community is by partnering with the private sector. A perfect example of this is the proposed Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). By bringing in a company who are truly experts in the recycling industry, the city will be able to create a facility that leverages the knowledge and ability of the private sector to provide a cost-effective and efficient public service to residents.

Public-private partnerships are essential for tackling economic and workforce challenges without overburdening taxpayers. By leveraging private investment and industry expertise, the city can achieve better results while maintaining fiscal responsibility. One area where collaboration is critical is expanding career and technical education. The city should work with local businesses, Mesa County Workforce Center, and CMU Tech to align training programs with industry needs. This ensures a skilled workforce ready for high-demand jobs in manufacturing, construction, and healthcare. Strengthening these partnerships helps businesses find qualified employees while providing residents with better career opportunities and economic stability.

Attainable workforce housing is a growing concern for local employers. What strategies would you support to encourage the development of housing that meets the needs of middle-income workers in Grand Junction?

The city has been working to increase the stock of Affordable housing in our community, but there's a lot of room to improve on attainable/workforce housing, which is best created by the private sector. We need to streamline the planning and permitting processes, keep costs to developers ensure costs to developers are kept low, and create an environment where it's easy and efficient to develop new housing. Only by increasing overall stock can we have a significant impact on affordability, and we must work with the private sector to do so efficiently and without enormous taxpayer expense.

A strong workforce needs attainable housing, but the solution isn't more government fees or mandates—it's removing barriers to development. I support streamlining permitting, reducing unnecessary regulations, and ensuring infrastructure investments keep pace with growth. Collaboration with homebuilders is key. I've met with local developers to identify challenges, including lot availability, financing, and utility costs. Instead of adding costly regulations, we should explore creative solutions like public-private partnerships, flexible zoning, and infrastructure investments that make housing projects viable. When the city works with and not against builders, we can expand housing options for middle-income workers.

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District A



Alexis Hitzeroth



Cody Kennedy

What should the city's role be in supporting infrastructure improvements (roads, broadband, utilities) to attract and retain businesses?

The city must provide and maintain basic infrastructure so that businesses can do what they do best, and fill in the gaps that aren't achievable by the private sector alone. A great example of this is the city's Carrier Neutral Location for broadband—by bridging the gap from the Interstate to central Grand Junction and providing a way for businesses to connect in a cost-effective way, we can encourage innovation and competitiveness in the broadband market, giving residents the best of all worlds. This is exactly how it should be done!

The city's role in infrastructure is to ensure businesses and residents have reliable roads, broadband, and utilities without unnecessary delays or excessive costs. Well-planned infrastructure attracts investment, supports workforce growth, and keeps Grand Junction competitive. I support prioritizing infrastructure projects directly impacting economic development, such as key road improvements and industrial site readiness. The city should also work with broadband providers to expand high-speed internet access, especially in underserved areas. However, funding must be responsible and balance between public investment and private-sector partnerships so businesses can grow without passing unnecessary costs onto taxpayers.

How do you plan to engage with the business community and industry experts when forming policies that impact economic development?

We have to be listening consistently to our business community, as they are the backbone of our success. They often have the most expertise when it comes to particular issues, and we need to leverage their knowledge to ensure our government is acting in the most effective manner to be good stewards of our tax dollars. I will listen and engage with the Chamber and other business organizations on any decision, as they represent an important voice in our community processes.

I believe policies should be shaped by those most affected. That means listening to business owners, industry experts, and the public before making major decisions. The 4th and 5th Street redesign is a prime example of what happens when that doesn't happen. Many businesses felt blindsided by changes that disrupted traffic flow, delivery access, and customer convenience. City leadership must do better. I'll continue engaging directly with business owners, attending stakeholder meetings, and advocating for transparency. Economic development policies should reflect real-world impacts, not just theoretical goals, ensuring businesses have a voice in decisions that affect them.

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District A



Alexis Hitzeroth



Cody Kennedy

What is your stance on the City of Grand Junction's use of impact fees and other business-related costs, and how would you balance necessary city revenue with ensuring businesses remain competitive?

Impact fees are an important part of how we make sure that the city can grow in a sustainable way that doesn't negatively impact existing businesses and residents, but they need to be implemented fairly and thoughtfully, without creating an undue burden on new businesses and homeowners. We should be cautious about viewing them as a panacea for our budget; if we discourage businesses and future residents from coming here through outsized fees, we'll have a whole set of other problems. Let's ensure we remain competitive, while also being responsible fiscal stewards.

Impact fees must balance funding infrastructure without discouraging development. Businesses expect to contribute, but excessive fees, like the proposed linkage fee, drive investment elsewhere. A recent study found Grand Junction's proposed fees are much higher than competing cities, hurting job creation, housing affordability, and economic growth. Instead of excessive fees, the city should streamline processes, prioritize spending, and leverage private-sector partnerships. Growth should pay its fair share, but city policies shouldn't make doing business here more expensive than in competing communities.

Closing Statement: What would you like the business community to know about you as a candidate for Grand Junction City Council?

I served our country for 13 years as a Staff Sergeant in the United States Army, and I'm excited to bring that leadership and commitment to service to the Grand Junction City Council. I'm also a small business owner, so I know firsthand some of the challenges and obstacles that come with entrepreneurship and trying to build something with your own two hands—I won't throw stumbling blocks in the way of our vital business community.

I am pro-business and understand Grand Junction's success is tied to business success. As a retired police officer, real estate investor, and current city council member, I understand the challenges businesses face, from public safety to the rising costs of workforce housing. I believe in policies that encourage growth. This means keeping taxes and fees predictable, ensuring infrastructure supports development, and making city government a partner, not an obstacle. I'll continue pushing for transparency, accountability, and real engagement with the business community. Grand Junction should be a place where businesses thrive, jobs grow, and families can afford to live.

The Chamber Endorses Cody Kennedy

The Chamber Board believes Cody Kennedy demonstrates an unwavering commitment to asking thoughtful questions, understanding the economic impact of decisions, and actively listening to the needs of businesses. His approach aligns with the need for informed, balanced leadership that prioritizes economic growth and opportunity while ensuring our overall community continues to thrive. We sincerely appreciate Alexis Hitzeroth's service and her willingness to step up for the City of Grand Junction, but Kennedy's dedication to these key principles makes him the stronger choice for this role.

District D



Laurel Cole

What specific policies or initiatives would you support to ensure Grand Junction remains a business-friendly community?

I would support policies and initiatives that promote tourism, investing in necessary infrastructure improvements, and supporting local business sustainability. Some ways that the City can help ensure that Grand Junction remains a business-friendly community would be to increase broadband access, develop partnerships to increase workforce housing, and ensure that policies and initiatives do not negatively impact already existing businesses or discourage new businesses from coming to the area.

How would you balance economic growth with responsible fiscal management in city budgeting and spending?

Economic growth is part of responsible fiscal management, as the more the economy grows the greater the revenue available for the city to reinvest into the community. I believe that economic growth is a major factor that impacts several other areas of the community such as sales tax revenue, higher income job availability, and diversified workforce opportunities. By prioritizing City projects based on need, economic development can be supported.

How do you view the role of public-private partnerships in addressing economic and workforce challenges, and can you give an example of where you believe collaboration is needed?

Public-private partnerships are the cornerstone in addressing economic and workforce challenges. The City's role should center around such partnerships with leaders in the field to create solutions and initiatives that encourage a strong local economy to increase workforce opportunities. An of where collaboration is needed is observable in the recent changes to 4th and 5th streets. Before implementing a major change to an area where many businesses are centered, feedback from business owners and organizations that support local business should have been consulted for feedback and solutions that did not negatively impact businesses.

Attainable workforce housing is a growing concern for local employers. What strategies would you support to encourage the development of housing that meets the needs of middle-income workers in Grand Junction?

With several years of experience in housing affordability, I believe there are ways to incentive a more affordable homeownership product. One way this can be achieved is to reduce impact fees and create incentives for smaller square footage homes that can be sold for a lower rate than current market homes though reducing cost of design through removing variable ceiling height, crown modeling, upgraded countertops/flooring, using standard windows, etc, to reduce the build cost of the home, and in turn reducing the sale cost of the home while still maintaining profit margins.

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District D



Laurel Cole

What should the city's role be in supporting infrastructure improvements (roads, broadband, utilities) to attract and retain businesses?

The city's role in supporting infrastructure should be to support transportation systems (roads, public transportation, etc), ensuring affordable and reliable access to utilities (including broadband), ensuring zoning and land regulations are business friendly, and public safety.

How do you plan to engage with the business community and industry experts when forming policies that impact economic development?

This is an area where I believe we can improve as a city. We have many intelligent and creative experts in both the business community and economic industry that should be contributors to policies that impact the economic development of Grand Junction. With transparent communication and collaboration, we can create innovative solutions that benefit the community in a better way.

What is your stance on the City of Grand Junction's use of impact fees and other business-related costs, and how would you balance necessary city revenue with ensuring businesses remain competitive?

A complete answer requires reviewing current revenue and expenses to determine if there are other ways to offset the current/proposed increase in impact fees for potential reduction. Impact fees duly affect economic growth as increased fees are added to both new commercial development and workforce housing, which can make it more difficult to attract new businesses to the area or expansion efforts for existing businesses. I believe that solutions exist to address the impact of development that have not yet been considered or reviewed for feasibility. The balance is in solid fiscal management and collaborative and innovative solutions.

Closing Statement: What would you like the business community to know about you as a candidate for Grand Junction City Council?

As the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, housing affordability is a problem I believe we need to work to address as a community. Housing costs impact our current residents, as well as economic development, which in turn restricts the amount of opportunities our community has to access higher paying jobs. This is a cycle I believe we can work together to address in innovative and collaborative ways. My platform is based on transparent communication, fiscal accountability, and housing affordability and while I do not have all the answers, I think together we move towards to solutions.

The Chamber Endorses Laurel Cole

The Chamber Board believes Laurel Cole's commitment to our community and her forward-thinking approach to collaboration make her a strong leader for the future. Her willingness to learn from past efforts while seeking new opportunities sets her apart as someone who will foster thoughtful, solutions-oriented progress. Additionally, her experience in the housing sector positions her well to navigate the critical challenge of attainable workforce housing—an issue that directly impacts economic growth and business sustainability.

District E



Randall Reitz



Robert Ballard

What specific policies or initiatives would you support to ensure Grand Junction remains a business-friendly community?

Grand Junction's economy is strong and growing. Businesses relocate here due to our business-friendly environment and families move here for our jobs. The City's principal economic policy is supporting our economic development partners. I'm an adamant Chamber supporter. When the Chamber asks local businesses, work-force shortage is what keeps them up at night. That's why I've partnered closely with CMU, supporting their mission through funding and advocacy. Attainable housing is Council's top priority: investing with our partners, starting down-payment assistance, removing impact fees from affordable housing and ADUs, and declining new forms of impact fees.

I believe the City Government should prioritize providing the basic infrastructure to serve local businesses and help them grow today. Currently, overambitious projects, like the changes to 4th and 5th street, don't match the needs of our residents and families that waste taxpayer dollars and hurt our local businesses. City Government should avoid policies that impose an undue burden on our local businesses' ability to thrive and expand. Business owners have expressed how substantial raises to impact fees limit their ability to grow and provide new opportunities, so I would oppose those.

How would you balance economic growth with responsible fiscal management in city budgeting and spending?

During strong economic times, the City's fiduciary role is to balance pro-growth policies with fiscal discipline, preserving flexibility for future downturns. This is most clearly represented in the 10-year capital budget. Under City Manager Caton, our 10-year capital plan was balanced for 5 years. The current budget only balances capital projects for 2 years. Dennis Simpson and I have called to return to the 5-year capital balance. Council will address this issue at the March 5th workshop. This will require difficult decisions regarding public safety, roads, parks, and economic development. But, it's the right way to manage taxpayers' money.

As the economy grows, the municipal government's tax revenue needs to be predictable and practical. It should not take on expensive projects it doesn't have money to spend. Rather, they should be hyper-focused on providing the services that help businesses grow.

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District E



Randall Reitz



Robert Ballard

How do you view the role of public-private partnerships in addressing economic and workforce challenges, and can you give an example of where you believe collaboration is needed?

Our highest need for collaboration is to assist Grand Junction families with our housing crisis. Attainable workforce housing requires partnership between developers, nonprofits, and the government. Developers take on risk, construct homes, employ local workers, and pay taxes. The government provides incentives, ensures safety and sustainability, and exercises restraint regarding new fees and codes. Nonprofits bridge between the government and the developers, ensuring that the homes the partners create are affordable to those in need and tailored to their difficult circumstances. The collaborative nature of our current impact fee process has highlighted how these partnerships can benefit all three groups.

Public-private partnerships are important to fill in the shortfalls between free market demand and the needs of the community. These relationships are beneficial in solving the “chicken or egg dilemma” in economic development. For example, when a lack of necessary infrastructure prevents job-producing industries from moving to our community, a public private partnership can help resolve the problem. However, we must take special care to ensure that the necessary incentives that drive our free market (supply and demand) remain in place.

Attainable workforce housing is a growing concern for local employers. What strategies would you support to encourage the development of housing that meets the needs of middle-income workers in Grand Junction?

I’m an “all-of-the-above” councilor on attainable workforce housing. During my time on Council we’ve: --Removed all impact fees on affordable housing and ADUs; --Partnered with the Chamber in passing a ballot measure permitting 99 year leases of City property for work-force housing; --Provided direct financial support to builders of attainable housing and infill housing in blighted areas; --Funded a mortgage down-payment program with Housing Resources of Western Colorado; --Created a quickly expanding land-banking program; and --Engaged with the building and development community as partners rather than adversaries. Expect an expansion of this collaboration in my second term.

It is important to let builders build. There is a high demand for low-cost starter homes in our valley, but developers cannot risk investing to meet that demand because of the high costs associated with just breaking ground. I think we can even sweeten the deal by reducing fees and regulations specifically for these types of homes, however, I would not impose higher fees or restrictions on premium housing.

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District E



Randall Reitz



Robert Ballard

What should the city's role be in supporting infrastructure improvements (roads, broadband, utilities) to attract and retain businesses?

The City should contract with local businesses for the vast majority of infrastructure projects. During my time on council we enacted safeguards to limit the City's self-performance of construction projects, including my requirement that these be approved during the annual budget process. Currently, 99% of the budget for capital projects is directed to businesses. Based on my input, the city has walked back code requiring undergrounding of powerlines and limiting drive-throughs. I'm excited that the City has proactively engaged broadband companies and enticed two to open up shop here.

This is the City's primary role in supporting our economy. We want job-producing businesses to see Grand Junction as open for business and that means providing reliable infrastructure to facilitate new and expanding businesses, while keeping taxes low. We also need to listen to our current small business owners to make sure we retain and grow their opportunities by streamlining government processes and permits to create predictable outcomes.

How do you plan to engage with the business community and industry experts when forming policies that impact economic development?

I respect our local industry leaders, and you won't hear me lecturing our economic partners, as others might. I'll continue meeting with Chamber and industry leaders to understand their needs and put their insights at the heart of policymaking. I'm particularly grateful to leaders like Candace Carnahan and Diane Schwenke for their ongoing counsel. I have a close cadre of business leaders to whom I turn for insight about middle-income developments, unintended consequences of code changes, and work-force development. These partnerships ensured passage of the rec center ballot measure. This is how we make smart policy.

Primarily, I want to personally communicate with the businesses and industries that are directly impacted by the proposed policy. I will also reach out to organizations like the chamber and GJEP that have a pulse on our local economy and have a deep understanding of how policy impacts commerce.

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District E



Randall Reitz



Robert Ballard

What is your stance on the City of Grand Junction's use of impact fees and other business-related costs, and how would you balance necessary city revenue with ensuring businesses remain competitive?

In my field, patient-rights groups advocate for “nothing about us...without us”. My Council took this commitment seriously, convening and collaborating closely with impact fee stakeholders. This group provided excellent feedback on the nexus study and our process. Their participation strengthens their businesses and our economy. Construction costs have skyrocketed for developers and the City. The City has already eliminated impact fees on all affordable housing projects and on ADUs. I support staff’s recommendation against adding linkage fees and municipal facility fees. I also plan to vote to reduce other impact fees below maximum allowable reported by the consultant.

I do not like how we use impact fees. The revenue is often used to fill in budget shortfalls and fund special projects, instead of paying for new growth infrastructure. Instead these fees raise costs for developers and builders, and the costs are passed down to the homebuyer. If the city is struggling to pay its bills, it should focus on reducing spending, not raising costs on our community.

Closing Statement: What would you like the business community to know about you as a candidate for Grand Junction City Council?

I ran for office to make a difference for this special town and for the families I serve in clinic. I was astounded by the workload—it’s a full-time job! I learned from investing hours each month seeking out constituent ideas and feedback. I’ve worked diligently on time-intensive special projects like passing the recreation center, creating the CMU social work retention pipeline, and directing COVID relief funds to creating Orchard Mesa’s only mental health nonprofit. I couldn’t have done this work without the Chamber community, and am blessed to count you among my friends and neighbors

I am pro-business and free market oriented. I want to help businesses succeed, and from my future seat on city council that means facilitating with necessary industry and getting out of the way. I’ve hear clearly from business leaders that they don’t feel heard, particularly around transportation projects that prevent and complicate access to commercial zones. Customers won’t wait in traffic jams or circle around for a parking space all to make room for bike lanes. They’ll go elsewhere. We need more practical solutions over urban solution examples that prioritize social engineering.

The Chamber Endorses Robert Ballard

The Chamber Board believes Robert Ballard’s willingness to challenge the status quo and seek new solutions sets him apart as we look toward the future. His approach aligns with the need for leadership that critically evaluates policies and explores opportunities for growth. We deeply appreciate Randall Reitz’s open communication and willingness to listen during his current term on City Council, qualities that have made our working relationship with him a true asset. However, Ballard’s proactive mindset and commitment to asking tough questions make him the right choice for this role.

At-Large



Ben Van Dyke



Kenneth Scissors

What specific policies or initiatives would you support to ensure Grand Junction remains a business-friendly community?

I'm a business owner, so I know how frustrating red tape, high fees, and bad policies can be. I'll fight to cut unnecessary regulations, speed up permitting, and keep taxes and fees in check. Small businesses are the backbone of our city—we should support them, not make it harder to succeed. Public safety and good infrastructure matter too—businesses need safe streets, reliable roads, and a city that works. Right now, the City isn't listening to business owners. That will change if I'm elected. I'll fight for policies that help businesses grow, not struggle.

The two key elements for the city to encourage a business-friendly community are: to meaningfully involve the business community early in the process when policy that affects their businesses is contemplated, and to ensure excellent fundamental necessities—safety, transportation, education, housing, culture, and recreation. I would advocate for reviewing how we use consultants on business-related matters in terms of involving the stakeholders from the very beginning and throughout the process, and narrowing the scope of the consultants' input when local expertise is available.

How would you balance economic growth with responsible fiscal management in city budgeting and spending?

The City needs to focus on real priorities—public safety, roads, and economic growth—without wasting taxpayer money. Too often, they spend on projects nobody asked for instead of fixing real problems. I'll push for a common-sense budget that keeps Grand Junction growing while keeping costs low for businesses and families. The City shouldn't raise fees or taxes when it can cut waste instead. Smart spending means investing in things that help businesses and residents, not pet projects. If the City manages money wisely, we can grow without burdening local businesses.

Economic growth brings a mix of opportunity, revenue, and expense which challenges the city's fiscal management. The key for the city is to clearly distinguish between spending on needs versus wants, and prioritize the budget accordingly. In some years there will be more left over for desired but not truly necessary expenditures than other years. Taking a long view for adding amenities is required to make sure we do not get ahead of ourselves at the risk of rising debt burden and/or getting behind on maintenance and provision of basic services.

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At-Large



Ben Van Dyke



Kenneth Scissors

How do you view the role of public-private partnerships in addressing economic and workforce challenges, and can you give an example of where you believe collaboration is needed?

The City doesn't have to do everything alone. I understand the Mesa County Workforce Center has a board with a seat held for the City; and recently the Chamber was awarded a grant to work on improving the local workforce. Instead of relying on government handouts, we should foster the collaborations already in our community with businesses and educators for our high-demand jobs. I support smart partnerships that help businesses grow, expand our workforce, and strengthen our economy. Stronger businesses mean more jobs—without wasting taxpayer dollars.

I am a strong supporter of public-private partnership as long as there is mutual trust and transparency. The most glaring need at this time is on housing which will be further discussed in the next question. The effectiveness of collaboration depends on the quality and trust level of the relationships involved. Frequent, frank conversations between partners where any simmering discord can be safely discussed and resolved is key to success on each venture and critical for success in future ventures. I will commit to nurturing lasting relationships with our private sector partners.

Attainable workforce housing is a growing concern for local employers. What strategies would you support to encourage the development of housing that meets the needs of middle-income workers in Grand Junction?

The City makes it too hard and expensive to build housing. We need to cut red tape, speed up approvals, and reduce costly fees that drive up home prices. Affordable housing isn't just apartments—people want options, including single-family homes. Over-regulation makes that harder. The best way to fix the housing shortage is to let builders build, not drown them in paperwork and fees. Public-private partnerships can help, but the best solution is removing barriers that stop new housing from being built. We need more homes, lower costs, and fewer government roadblocks.

The middle-income part of the broader housing crisis disproportionately impacts the business sector. The strategies to help middle earners attain housing must be approached in the context of the entire housing crisis. The Grand Junction Housing Strategy is a good start, but we need a more complete plan that is forged from input from local experts and stakeholders including our citizens, business sector, non-profits, city, and county. For middle-income workers, every dollar matters to qualify for a mortgage so we should look at all obstacles and prioritize lowering them (see "impact fees" below), while also promoting higher wages.

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At-Large



Ben Van Dyke



Kenneth Scissors

What should the city's role be in supporting infrastructure improvements (roads, broadband, utilities) to attract and retain businesses?

Businesses need good roads, reliable utilities, and strong broadband. Instead of spending money on useless projects, the City should maintain and fix our streets, upgrade broadband, and ensure reliable city services. Traffic flow should be improved, not made worse by bad planning. If we want businesses to stay and grow, we must make it easy to operate here by investing in the right infrastructure. Public safety is part of that too—well-lit streets, safe neighborhoods, and solid emergency services help businesses thrive. I'll fight for common-sense infrastructure improvements that actually benefit the community.

It is the city's responsibility to provide the level of infrastructure required to serve the community's needs, including those of new and growing businesses to encourage economic growth and prosperity. When particular businesses have infrastructure needs that exceed the standard level, the city should address those on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration the benefits that the businesses bring that could offset the additional expense as well as how other priority budget items could be impacted. Input from local business experts should be sought to assist in making these challenging decisions.

How do you plan to engage with the business community and industry experts when forming policies that impact economic development?

The City Council needs to listen to businesses, not just government insiders. As a business owner, I know what it's like to be ignored. I'll make sure business owners, industry leaders, and workers have a voice in City policies. That means regular meetings, advisory groups, and open discussions before decisions are made. The City should work with businesses, not against them. I will always seek input from real business owners to ensure policies support growth, not stifle it. Your voice will be heard.

The key to engaging the business community on forming policy is to include them very early in the process before there is momentum in a particular direction. If outside consultants are needed, the local stakeholders and experts should have an opportunity to weigh in on the scope of the consultation. By tapping local expertise the city can reduce the cost of consultants, keep the process on track for our particular needs, improve relations with the private sector, and ultimately come up with the most balanced policies.

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At-Large



Ben Van Dyke



Kenneth Scissors

What is your stance on the City of Grand Junction's use of impact fees and other business-related costs, and how would you balance necessary city revenue with ensuring businesses remain competitive?

Impact fees shouldn't be a hidden tax on businesses. Right now, the City is pushing new fees that will raise costs on builders and businesses. That means higher prices, fewer jobs, and less growth. I support keeping impact fees fair and reasonable. The City can't fund everything by constantly charging businesses more. Instead, we should grow the economy, cut waste, and make smart financial decisions. The City should make it easier to do business here, not harder.

Impact fees are necessary to help pay for the infrastructure costs associated with growth, but the challenge is to determine the correct portion of total costs the impact fees should cover to be fair to all. I agree with the city's recommendation to remove linkage and municipal fees. Since transportation and parks bring the highest fees, I favor taking a pragmatic look at how those fees will be spent to ensure they are only calculated for clearly needed high priority uses. I favor reducing impact fees for middle housing to make more product available as well as streamlining building approval.

Closing Statement: What would you like the business community to know about you as a candidate for Grand Junction City Council?

I'm not a politician—I'm a business owner, a problem solver, and a lifelong Grand Junction resident. I know what it takes to run a business, create jobs, and invest in this community. I'll fight for lower fees, fewer regulations, and smarter spending. Businesses create jobs and opportunity—we should help them, not make it harder to succeed. Grand Junction needs leaders who listen, who understand business, and who will fight for economic growth. I'm running for City Council to make sure your voices are heard. I'd be honored to have your support.

I came to Grand Junction in 1998 to raise a family, practice medicine, engage in local business and non-profit ventures, and recreate in the great outdoors. I have learned a lot about the importance of supporting economic diversity and growth along the way, especially through my time on the city planning commission. I am well prepared and capable of advancing policy that best balances the needs and desires of the community and helps us grow and prosper without leaving anyone behind.

The Chamber Endorses Ben Van Dyke

The Chamber Board believes Ben Van Dyke's experience as a business owner, his firsthand understanding of managing employees, and his strong business-first mindset make him the right choice for this role. His deep-rooted passion for this community—shaped by both his business and long family history—drives his commitment to smart economic growth and local prosperity. We appreciate Ken Scissors' service on the planning commission and his attention to fiscal details, which have made him a valuable partner. However, Van Dyke's direct experience in business leadership and his dedication to the community's future set him apart.

Local Ballot Measures

CITY OF GRAND JUNCTION QUESTION 2A

Shall Article II, Section 3, Article II, Section 25, and Article IV, Section 35 of the City Charter be amended to: (i) change the date of general municipal elections to the general election date in November of odd-numbered years beginning in 2027; (ii) conduct such elections as coordinated elections with Mesa County in accordance with terms of an Intergovernmental Agreement for each such election; and (iii) amend and extend the terms of the City Council to implement such change in election date for the purposes stated in Ordinance 5246, and as follows and as described below?

3. General and Special Municipal Elections. A municipal election shall be held in the city on the first Tuesday following the first Monday of November of each odd-numbered year and shall be known as the General Municipal Election. All other municipal elections that may be held shall be known as Special Municipal Elections.

25. General Election Regulations.

The provisions of any state law, now or hereafter in force, except as the council may otherwise by ordinance provide, relating to the qualifications and registration of electors, the manner of voting, the duties of election officers, the canvassing of returns, and all other particulars in respect to the management of elections, except as otherwise provided in this article, so far as they may be applicable, shall govern all municipal elections; provided, also, that the council shall meet as a canvassing board and duly canvass the election returns within fourteen days after any municipal election. Whenever any member of the council is a candidate for re-election, the council shall appoint some justice of the peace or notary public of said city to take the place of said candidate upon said canvassing board as a member thereof. All Municipal Elections shall be conducted as coordinated elections, and the Mesa County Clerk shall have all statutory power and authority to conduct such elections under and in accordance with the terms of an intergovernmental agreement by and between Mesa County and the City as time to time amended. In the event Mesa County is unable to conduct a Special Municipal election in compliance with applicable Charter and ordinance requirements, then such special election shall be conducted by the City, as provided by ordinance not inconsistent with this Charter.

35. Officers—Terms. That the elective officers under the Charter of Grand Junction shall be members of the council as hereinafter provided, all of whom shall be nominated and elected by the registered electors of the city as herein provided. The elective officers shall be elected for four-year overlapping terms. Four elective officers will be elected at one regular election and three elective officers shall be elected at the subsequent regular election. The terms of all elective officers shall commence at ten o'clock a.m. on the second Monday in January following the election and shall be for a term of four years each and until ten o'clock a.m. on the second Monday in January following the election and qualification of their successors. The Councilmember terms prescribed under Article IV, Paragraph 35 of the Charter applicable to City Council Districts B, C, and one At-large, elected April 4, 2023, shall be extended to ten o'clock a.m. on the second Monday in January 2028 following the November 2027 election and qualification of their successors. The Councilmember terms prescribed under Article IV, Paragraph 35 of the Charter applicable to City Council Districts A, D, E, and one At-large, elected April 8, 2025, shall be extended to ten o'clock a.m. on the second Monday in January 2030 following the November 2029 election and qualification of their successors.

The Chamber Supports Question 2A

The Chamber Board supports the proposed charter amendment to move Grand Junction's municipal elections to November of odd-numbered years, aligning them with Mesa County's general election cycle. This change is expected to increase voter participation, improve efficiency, and reduce election costs—factors that contribute to a more predictable and business-friendly policy environment.

By coordinating elections with Mesa County, businesses and residents may benefit from a more engaged electorate and streamlined election processes. The cost savings for the City could allow resources to be redirected toward initiatives that support economic growth. Additionally, a set election schedule provides businesses with greater predictability in leadership transitions and policy direction.

While we recognize concerns such as potential delays in policy changes due to council term extensions and the possibility of local business issues receiving less focus in larger election cycles, we believe the benefits of increased participation and efficiency outweigh these challenges. Ultimately, aligning municipal elections with the county and state cycle fosters a more stable and well-represented decision-making process, supporting a thriving local economy.

Local Ballot Measures

CITY OF GRAND JUNCTION QUESTION 2B

Shall Article IV, Section 38 of the City Charter be amended to increase the salary of City Council and to provide for a basis to set and to increase the City Council salary in future years, for the purposes as stated in Ordinance 5247, and as follows and as described below?

38. Salaries, meetings. At least two meetings of the City Council shall be held monthly at such times as may be fixed by the council, such two meetings to be known as the regular meetings. All other meetings of the City Council shall be known as special meetings or adjournments. The President of the Council shall be paid a salary of \$750.00 per month and all other councilmembers shall each be paid a salary of \$500.00 per month.

Beginning with the City Council terms commencing on the first Monday of May 2027 or the second Monday of January 2028 if a majority of City electors approve Ordinance 5246 establishing November of odd years for Municipal Elections, the President of the City Council shall be paid an annual salary calculated as 22% of the Mesa County, Colorado Area Median Income (AMI) for a four-person household as said AMI is annually determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and all other councilmembers shall each be paid a salary calculated as 15% of the Mesa County Area Median Income (AMI) for a four-person household as said AMI is annually determined by HUD. The City Council's annual salaries shall be prorated and paid on a monthly basis until the expiration of each member's term. After May 2027 or January 2028 as applicable, the annual salaries of the President of the City Council and the other members of City Council shall be adjusted annually, by ordinance, in accordance with the percentages of the most recent Mesa County AMI for a four-person household specified herein.

The Chamber Opposes Question 2B

The Chamber Board opposes the proposed charter amendment to increase City Council salaries and establish automatic adjustments tied to the Mesa County Area Median Income (AMI). While we recognize that higher compensation could encourage a broader pool of qualified candidates, we also see a strong slate of individuals in this election cycle who were willing to serve under the current compensation structure. This suggests that financial barriers to service may not be as significant as presumed.

Additionally, the proposed structure for future salary increases removes direct voter oversight, instead tying adjustments to an external metric (AMI) that does not necessarily reflect the city's economic conditions or council performance. This approach reduces accountability and may lead to unintended financial commitments without community input.

While we support efforts to ensure dedicated and effective leadership, we believe this is not the right solution. A more transparent and voter-driven approach would better serve the community while maintaining trust in how public funds are allocated.

Election Day Information

Election Day is Tuesday, April 8, 2025

For additional information, please visit www.govotecolorado.com or visit the Mesa County Elections Office at: 200 S. Spruce Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501 or (970) 244-1662

Secure 24-hour Ballot Drop Box Locations:

- **Mesa County Central Services (drive-up)**, 200 S Spruce St, Grand Junction, CO 81501
- **GVT West Transfer Facility (drive-up)**, 612 24 ½ Rd, Grand Junction, CO 81505
- **Department of Human Services**, 510 29 ½ Rd, Grand Junction, CO 81504
- **Colorado Mesa University**, 1299 N 12th St - Robinson Theatre, Grand Junction, CO 81501
- **City Hall**, 250 N 5th St, Grand Junction, CO 81501

BALLOTS MUST BE RETURNED BEFORE 7:00 P.M. ON ELECTION DAY