

## **DRAFT FOR REVIEW & COMMENT**

**City Manager**  
**City of Fruita, Colorado**

### **The Grand Valley and Fruita**

The City of Fruita, Colorado, sits high on the Colorado Plateau along the banks of the majestic Colorado River, eight miles west of Grand Junction and 17 miles east of the Utah border. The Grand Valley takes its name from the river, originally called the Grand River. Early settlers irrigated this high desert valley, capitalizing on abundant sunshine to build a major agricultural region, rich with crop-growing farms and fruit-growing orchards. From this foundation, the city has become like no other place in Colorado, and residents cherish and actively cultivate their multifaceted, admittedly quirky-funky identity.

Visitors instantly feel a sense of welcomeing, acceptance, and mutual respect, which explains how Fruita (pop. 13,946, 8.18 sq. mi., elev. 4,498) has successfully maintained equilibrium between its multiple identities and interests, including its agricultural roots, multi-generational constituency, thriving arts and culture communities, and its reputation as a world-class mountain biking destination. The 142-mile Kokopelli Trail (bikepacking) connects the city to its other famous partner, Moab, Utah.

As the gateway to the Colorado National Monument, and surrounded by public lands, Fruita is an outdoor sports paradise, featuring mountain biking (18 Road), road cycling, golf, hiking, trail running, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, river rafting, camping, skiing and ~~the singular Imondi Wake Zone, a water sports adventure park where guests ride wake-boardings via an expansive cable system.~~—The city has also invested heavily in parks and recreation amenities, whose highlights include Little Salt Wash Park, the Fruita Community Center, an expansive bike and trail system, and skate parks that are the envy of the region. Tourism is a major driver of the ~~drives the~~ economy, and residents enjoy a healthy festival schedule, including the Fruita Fall Festival (110 years), a Thursday Night Concert (and film) Series in Civic Center Memorial Park, and the endearing Mike the Headless Chicken Festival (25 years). The newly constructed Mulberry Plaza is a popular gathering space downtown.

Positive energy permeates this Western Slope, forward-looking small town, where down-to-earth neighbors know and truly care for each other. City leaders are committed to thoughtful, responsible, and respectful growth, attracting quality primary employers and supporting a robust business community.—Fruita has the vision, commitment, and the resources to grow methodically into whatever it wants to be.

Mesa County School District #51 serves the city (high, middle, elementary (2), Montessori, and charter), and residents make heavy use of the Mesa County Libraries Fruita Branch. About 15 minutes away in Grand Junction, Colorado Mesa University (CMUA) has an enrollment of over 10,000 students. Family Health West manages Fruita's

critical care hospital, and Community Hospital and St. Mary's Regional Hospital are in Grand Junction.

Grand Junction Regional Airport is about 144 miles away, and Denver International Airport is about a four-hour drive along I-70.—Amtrak's famous California Zephyr, which connects Chicago and San Francisco, runs through Grand Junction and offers another connection to Denver.—Grand Valley Transit provides local bus service. The City of Fruita collaborates with all major local stakeholders include Mesa County, all area municipalities, CMU, FHE USA, Johns Manville, the Fruita Area Chamber of Commerce, the business, arts, and culture communities, The Business Incubator, Grand Junction Economic Partnership and many others.

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To learn more about the City of Fruita, please visit <https://www.fruita.org>.

### **City Organization**

Founded in 1884 and incorporated ten years later, Fruita adopted its home-rule charter in 1981 and operates under a council-manager form of government. Citizens elect the mayor directly to a two-year term (limit three consecutive) and six councilors to four-year, staggered terms (limit two consecutive). Councilors elect-choose the mayor pro tem from their number for a two-year term.—Healthy, functional, and hard-working, the current city council enjoys the trust of both community and city staff.—Elections are in April of even-numbered years. The city council appoints the city manager, the city attorney and the municipal judge. The city manager hires and oversee all of the other city staff \*\*with significant input from department heads. \*\* (Need to confirm)

Fruita has six major departments: public works, police, parks and recreation, planning and development, general government, and administration. The Lower Valley Fire Protection District provides fire protection and emergency medical services. The proposed FY 2025 Budget of \$42.3 million (GF \$\_\_\_million) supports 127.31 FTE.

One key to the city's success is their-it's highly effective integration of all comprehensive, strategic, and operational plans and community surveys, which are constantly reviewed and diligently implemented, making Fruita a model jurisdiction for organizational health. Seeking to be the employer of choice, the city has made respectable strides in market pay with more work to come.

Issues currently facing the city include growth and its impacts, facilities space needs, aging infrastructure, workforce and attainable housing, economic development to attract primary employers, and employee retention and recruitment. Major projects include the Launch (repurposing a 4042-acre parcel along the Colorado River), continued development of a city-owned industrial park, the Mews, a 50-unit LIHTC housing development, redevelopment of the 3.3 acre Reed Park, dog park, update to land use codes

~~continued development of a city-owned industrial park(I did not think we owned this – Phillip and Venca do),  
and meeting the needs of this well-informed, highly-engaged community that loves Fruita like nowhere else in the world. The Mews, a 50-unit affordable housing project that will come online soon, is a particular source of pride.~~

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### **City Manager Position**

Fruita has enjoyed tremendous stability in the city manager position – the last two managers each served for over 10 years. The mayor, all city councilors, the outgoing city manager, and members of the city's leadership team all collaborated on the preparation of this document.

As chief administrative officer, the city manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the city and the department heads who comprise the city's leadership team, all in furtherance of implementing the policy priorities of the city council. ~~The City Manager must actively interactions with the community to help meet the needs of this well-informed, highly-engaged community that loves Fruita like nowhere else in the world.~~ Pursuant to the city charter, the city manager's performance is reviewed annually.

### **Qualifications**

A four-year degree in public administration, political science, business administration, or a related field, ~~a minimum of 7 and up to ten~~ years of ~~progressively progressing~~ responsibilities ~~and~~ experience in local government, including three to five as a municipal manager, assistant, or major department head, are all preferred. Any equivalent combination of training and experience may be considered at the sole discretion of the city. Residency in the city is required, and a graduate degree is ~~also desirable~~ preferred.   
\*\*\* We need to talk about this section – I do not agree but council needs to decide.

### **The Ideal Candidate**

More than any other trait, the next city manager must understand and fully embrace all aspects of Fruita's unique culture, demonstrating equal deference to all of its diverse components, and to persons from every walk of life. ~~More still, the successful candidate plans to immerse in life in Fruita and become an engaged, contributing part of the community.~~

Equally important is the ability to pick up where the outgoing city manager left off and maintain the positive work culture and momentum driving the entire organization. This necessarily includes coming up to speed immediately on Fruita's sophisticated, effectively integrated comprehensive, strategic, and operational plans and systems. The ability to prioritize and execute projects is essential, as is a total commitment to excellence and continual improvement in the provision of municipal services.

The ideal candidate ~~is also~~must be knowledgeable and experienced in local government, with strong, demonstrated leadership and management skills.—These include leadership by example, the ability to inspire staff and the community, and to foster a positive, professional work environment all the .—~~This includes maintaining while~~ accountability throughout the organization. The next city manager is values-based, mission-driven, visionary, and creative, and knows when to take good risks and push the envelope.

The preferred candidate has experience with creative economic development models, as well as major capital funding. The city has a successful track record in public-private partnerships and low-income tax credit housing projects, so experience in these areas is desirable.—The next city manager also has a strong understanding of municipal finance experience with budget planning, development, and management.

In this relationship-driven~~n???~~ role, the ideal candidate has expert-level inward- and outward-facing communications skills, as well as a genuine interest in the welfare of others. This includes being a world-class listener and relationship-builder. The preferred candidate is politically astute, but apolitical and will foster and maintain effective relationships with all regional partners and stakeholders.

The next city manager is calm, adaptive, intelligent, emotionally intelligent, passionate, gracious, patient, and well-rounded, with the optimal blend of humility and confidence. Please also bring a sense of humor to match the one already here, as well as commitment to maintaining work-life harmony and positive work culture.

### **Total Compensation**

The hiring range for this position is \$165,000 to \$195,000, with the slaraly determination being based ~~and appointment will be made depending~~ upon the qualifications and experience of the selected candidate.—In addition, the following benefits are provided: medical (employee covered 100%, dependents 95%), dental (employee and dependents covered 100%), vision (voluntary), life, AD&D, and long-term disability insurances; Retirement benefits customary to the position are offered through MissionSquare, 401(a) mandatory, 457(b) optional. This position enjoys paid time off, sick leave, paid holidays, a vehicle allowance, and professional memberships. Relocation assistance is subject to negotiation.

### **Apply**

To be considered for this excellent professional opportunity, please email only your cover letter and resume to [apply@columbialtd.com](mailto:apply@columbialtd.com), naming your files Last.First.CL and Last.First.Resume.—Receipt of your submittal will be acknowledged within two business days.—All applicants will be updated on their status following the Recommendation of Candidates.

### **What Happens When**

Absent unforeseen circumstances, the recruitment will follow the schedule below. Be mindful of the filing deadline and final interview dates, which are unlikely to change.

**Schedule Dates**

Filing Deadline: December 1, 2024  
Preliminary Interviews: December 9-10, 2024  
Recommendation of Candidates: December 17, 2024  
Finalist Interview Process: January 9-10, 2025

If you have any questions regarding the recruitment process, or this opportunity, please feel free to call Andrew Gorgey directly at (970) 987-1238. For more information, visit the Columbia Ltd website: <https://columbialtd.com>.

**Quick Facts**

Population: 13,946  
Area: 8.18 sq mi  
Elevation: 4,498 ft  
FY 2025 Budget (proposed): \$42.3M (GF \$ )  
FTE: 127.31