



**FRUITA**  
COLORADO

## AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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**TO:** FRUITA CITY COUNCIL AND MAYOR

**FROM:** KIMBERLY BULLEN, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

**DATE:** JUNE 17, 2024

**AGENDA TEXT:** LETTER OF SUPPORT – A Request to Authorize the Mayor to Sign a Letter of Support for a River Corridor Master Planning Process.

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### BACKGROUND

The Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative (RCI) is a community-driven initiative focused on supporting and maintaining a healthy river corridor (Colorado and Gunnison Rivers in Mesa County) and the associated needs, uses, and values for generations to come. The RCI was formed in 2020 to address the acute need for enhanced coordination, planning, and collaboration on river corridor-related activities. A Core Team leads it with representatives from RiversEdge West, Colorado Mesa University, One Riverfront, and American Rivers.

The RCI Core Team hosted three multi-jurisdictional planning workshops in Grand Junction on November 7th, 2023, February 6th, 2024, and May 8th, 2024, to convene planners and professionals from Mesa County, Fruita, Grand Junction, and Palisade to discuss the future of the Grand Valley River Corridor, craft a shared vision for the River Corridor, and discuss planning strategies to support the development of an inter-jurisdictional River Corridor planning framework.

#### The Grand Valley River Corridor Vision

*“The communities of the Grand Valley are committed to a data-driven approach to steward a resilient, vibrant, and healthy river corridor that supports the values of agriculture, habitat and wildlife, recreation, economic growth, and sustainable development benefiting today’s and future generations.”*

Representatives from all four jurisdictions agreed that a letter of support from each elected body would serve to continue working collaboratively along the Grand Valley River Corridor and to move forward with a multi-jurisdictional River Master Plan.

The Grand Valley’s River Corridor extends from De Beque, Colorado to the Utah state line and encompasses the Gunnison River from Bridgeport to the confluence with the Colorado River. The river corridor is the lifeblood of the community and is a vital economic, cultural, and ecological resource that supports the Grand Valley’s well-being and prosperity.

The RCI Vision includes the following:

- Engage river corridor stakeholder groups to identify common values and challenges.
- Provide a platform and resource for river corridor stakeholders, fostering coordinated collaboration on future river-centric endeavors, and leading to informed decision-making.

- Develop strategies to address shared goals, objectives, and challenges.
- Foster community education and connection with the river.

To address the Vision, the RCI sought funding through the Colorado Water Conversation Board and Colorado River District to support four distinct work efforts extending from 2023-2025.

- **Facilitation and Outreach:** Create a public-facing presence for RCI and the River Corridor (Contracted with Strategic by Nature, October 2023-2025)
- **Riparian and Floodplain Health Assessment:** Study the riparian health and floodplain of the river corridor (Contracted April 2024-2025)
- **Flow Conditions and Preference Analysis:** Understand community values and preferences for river flows (Conducted in Partnership with the River Network, October 2024-2025)
- **Framework for Planning Coordination:** Develop a framework or agreement among jurisdictions for future river corridor planning (Contracted with OV Consulting, September 2023-May 2024)

These efforts are coordinated through the RCI Advisory Council which meets quarterly and is comprised of a diverse set of 27 stakeholders including local governments and organizations in the Grand Valley. There are several attachments included with this cover sheet, including (1) RCI Summary, (2) the sample Letter of Support, and (3) the Planning Framework.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

- Representatives from each jurisdiction have contributed significant time and associated in-kind match. Since 2023, over \$6,000 of in-kind support has been contributed through the various workshops and RCI Advisory Council meetings, demonstrating a concerted commitment to the process outcome.
- The fiscal impact includes identifying necessary funding and developing cost share models to hire a contractor to facilitate the River Corridor Master Plan.

## **APPLICABILITY TO CITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This project applies to the City of Fruita's Value of Quality of Place where Fruita values our geographic natural resources and landscapes, and we continue to improve and enhance recreational offerings.

## **OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COUNCIL**

- Approve a River Corridor Master Planning Letter of Support.
- Take no action.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is the recommendation of staff that the Council by motion:

**AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO SIGN A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR A RIVER CORRIDOR MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.**