

**GUNNISON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 23, 2025**

The Gunnison County Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting in the Planning Commission Meeting Room in the Blackstock Government Center, 221 N. Wisconsin, Gunnison, Co. and on Zoom **Present:**

Chairperson – Roland Mason Vice-Chairperson – Eric Phillips Commissioner – Fred Niederer Commissioner – Julie Baca Alt. Commissioner – Catherine McBreen Alt. Commissioner – Sean Patrick BOCC – Jonathan Houck BOCC – Liz Smith BOCC – Laura Puckett Daniels	Director of Community and Economic Development – Cathie Pagano Director of Planning – Hillary Seminick Planning Technician – Aidan McComas Matt Hoyt – County Attorney Anton Sinkewich – City of Gunnison Others present as listed in text
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Absent: Barvitski

Recused:

Zoom: McBreen, Philips, Neiderer, Baca

With a quorum present Chairperson Mason opened the October 23, 2025 regular meeting of the Planning Commission at 8:49am. Mason seated Alternate Member Patrick as a Voting Commissioner

Moved by Patrick, seconded by Phillips to approve Planning Commission meeting minutes, dated Sept 4, 2025. The motion passed unanimously in support.

Moved by McBreen, seconded by Phillips to approve Planning Commission meeting minutes, dated September 17, 2025. The motion passed unanimously in support.

Moved by Patrick, seconded by McBreen to approve Planning Commission meeting minutes, dated September 18, 2025. The motion passed unanimously in support.

Moved by McBreen, seconded by Phillips to approve Planning Commission meeting minutes, dated October 2, 2025. The motion passed unanimously in support.

Staff announcements/ miscellaneous:

Staff noted the next meetings are November 6, 2025 and November 20, 2025.

Cont. Joint Public Hearing: SG-25-00001 | Gunnison Area Plan Special Area Regulations

Public hearing on the proposed Gunnison Area Plan and Special Area Regulations with Gunnison County Planning Commission and Gunnison County Board of Commissioners.

Staff Presentation

Pagano: Staff reviewed the SAR/GAP and proposed increasing lot sizes—single-family from 9,000 to 11,000 sq. ft., and duplex lots accordingly. Density requirements increased; any project over 17 units per acre triggers a Minor Impact Review.

Pagano: New language addresses character and scale relative to neighboring development. Larger developments will be located near highways, with smaller housing types set back to ensure visual transitions.

Seminick: Presented density scenarios. Scenario A: 7 units/acre, lowest density, mix of home types.

Puckett Daniels: Confirmed 7 units/acre is the minimum in the current draft.

Seminick: Clarified visuals are conceptual, intended only to illustrate density.

Seminick: Scenario B: 12 units/acre; includes required green space. Some units may need to be smaller to accommodate density.

Seminick: Scenario C: 17 units/acre; includes more duplexes and townhomes, fewer single-family units.

Niederer: Requested review of Scenario A and clarification on unit-per-acre calculations.

Seminick: Explained differences due to total acreage versus developable acreage.

Smith: Asked about density at Van Tuyl Townhomes and the overall neighborhood.

Pagano: Estimated 20–23 units/acre overall, with 25 units/acre in the townhome section.

Seminick: Explained 10-ft setbacks and reiterated that visuals are abstract and not site-specific.

Pagano: Emphasized importance of construction type and green space requirements.

Puckett Daniels: Noted visuals cannot reflect real-world topography or site constraints.

Smith: Asked how density requirements are affected by physical constraints.

Seminick: Confirmed density would be affected by developable area limitations.

Pagano: Noted most parcels avoid hazardous areas by design; variance options could be considered in future updates.

Puckett Daniels: Asked whether density minimums apply to total parcel acreage or developable area.

Pagano: Confirmed they currently apply to total acreage.

Mason: Asked whether a variance could be offered for projects unable to meet the 7 units/acre minimum, suggesting flexibility to encourage development.

Puckett Daniels: Stated the intent is to maximize developable land near urban areas.

Smith: Asked if a variance process could be added for parcels with limited development potential.

Pagano: Suggested exploring that option but cautioned against writing regulations for exceptions.

Niederer: Asked about the process to amend the SAR/GAP if issues arise in the future.

Pagano: Explained amendments would be submitted to Community Development and reviewed by the BOCC.

Puckett Daniels: Noted amendment requests will likely occur regularly. Commented on Land Use Resolution amendments and noted the inclusion of public hearings for such amendments.

Hoyt: Clarified that SAR amendments do not require a public hearing or notice; only property interest holders may propose them. Clarified the Board may receive written or oral public comments for SAR amendments.

Niederer: Confirmed that public hearings are not required for SAR amendments.

Hoyt: Affirmed; noted participation depends on proximity and property interest. Commented that proximity and property interests concerning SAR amendments applies to those within or adjacent to the Special Area boundaries.

Smith: Observed amendments could occur without public hearings.

Pagano: Stated the amendment process remains at the Board's discretion.

Puckett Daniels: Noted the Board generally encourages public comment regardless.

Seminick: Added that typical city lots in Gunnison have roughly nine units per acre, often including ADUs.

Pagano: Requested direction from the Board on next steps concerning revisions.

Smith: Highlighted that public concern centers on infrastructure limitations and asked how the process addresses those.

Pagano: Explained developments creating 100+ trips/day must submit traffic studies; Public Works may require studies.

Mason: Asked how infrastructure issues are handled if areas cannot support increased density.

Pagano: Noted developers must meet SAR standards; site constraints may limit feasibility.

Puckett Daniels: Stated it is the developer's responsibility to address site constraints.

Mason: Expressed concern high density and infrastructure costs could deter development.

Pagano: Noted developers often find workable solutions.

Smith: Asked whether infrastructure costs could be distributed among multiple developers rather than placed on one.

Pagano: Explained the Board declined road impact fees; infrastructure follows, not precedes, development.

Smith: Reiterated community concerns about infrastructure and asked if future needs can be anticipated.

Puckett Daniels: Acknowledged utility and connectivity challenges; discussed funding options to reduce developer burdens.

Smith: Emphasized the need for continued public input on these topics.

Houck: Stated the SAR/GAP applies area-wide, not parcel-by-parcel, and cautioned against overanalyzing details at this stage.

Puckett Daniels: Noted that specific development impacts can only be assessed once proposals are submitted.

Smith: Asked whether developers can pay into infrastructure funds, so no single developer is faced with excessive costs associated with development and improvement. Asked whether, with high density development encouraged, if it is reasonable to predict some level of infrastructure improvement.

Mason: Raised concerns about how SAR minimums and maximums may affect northern vs. southern areas, potentially limiting future options.

Puckett Daniels: Noted constraints exist everywhere; variance processes could help maintain flexibility and community character.

Smith: Said lowering minimum density further is unnecessary; suggested reviewing impact fees for future infrastructure funding.

Seminick: Explained infrastructure (e.g., roads) is typically built concurrent with development; CDOT access points change post-development.

Puckett Daniels: Concluded with emphasis on maintaining robust public engagement and addressing ongoing concerns.

Gunnison Area Plan

Pagano: Explained the GAP is a high-level policy document outlining future vision, while the SAR is a regulatory document that operationalizes the GAP. Noted the GAP would stand-in for the Three-Mile Plan document. Stated the plan will be used both by the City and the County.

Sinkewich: Stated the plan focuses development into specific areas.

Pagano: Noted adoption protocols and relationship between the two documents.

Niederer: Asked how the SAR relates to the IGA, noting the Planning Commission has not reviewed the IGA, which complicates approving the SAR without that context.

Hoyt: Clarified that under Colorado law, intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) are executed by the Board of County Commissioners, which shares authority and jurisdiction between governments.

Pagano: Confirmed the IGA belongs to the Board.

Puckett Daniels: Stated authority for SAR adoption rests with the Board and that processes exist to ensure consistency between the SAR and IGA.

Pagano: Added that implementation details can be reviewed further if needed.

Hoyt: Noted the IGA and SAR are intended to be read together. Noted if there is a conflict, the IGA is to default to the SAR.

Puckett Daniels: Mentioned ongoing coordination with the City and requested a City update.

Sinkewich: Reported staff received direction to complete the document, with adoption expected before year-end.

Phillips: Asked about the wildlife planning tool and whether it can be shown alongside the GAP.

Pagano: Stated the wildlife tool will be used in daily application reviews; acknowledged challenges in integrating wildlife data.

Pagano: Outlined next steps for GAP completion.

Puckett Daniels: Noted the GAP reflects three years of collaboration, multiple drafts, and coordination with the City.

Mason: Called for a motion to recommend Gunnison Area Plan to the Board of County Commissioners.

Moved by Phillips, seconded by Patrick to recommend the Gunnison Area Plan to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion passed unanimously in support.

Special Area Regulations

Niederer: Raised concern over interpretive language. Asked if Planning and Zoning classifications affect property taxes.

Hoyt: Clarified taxation is determined by the Assessor based on actual use, not zoning or planning actions.

Niederer: Recommended using net developable area instead of gross, noting gross calculations restrict flexibility.

Seminick: Said regulations were written for typical conditions, not exceptions. Areas were selected for minimal hazards, supporting the gross developable approach. Staff will define what qualifies as developable.

Mason: Asked if switching to net developable area would limit density and whether developer flexibility should be prioritized.

Seminick: Said fewer regulations align with the goal of streamlining the process.

Niederer: Expressed concern over losing land to non-developable areas.

Seminick: Explained the intent is to let developers determine density for their parcels within a zoning framework.

Niederer: Questioned the need for strict minimum and maximum density if the goal is to encourage development.

Puckett Daniels: Asked whether calculating net versus gross area would significantly affect outcomes.

Niederer: Said absolute limits impose unnecessary constraints under the SAR.

Puckett Daniels: Noted all planning to date is based on gross area; changing now would alter density requirements.

Seminick: Clarified roads and rights-of-way are excluded when calculating density.

Pagano: Said height revisions are intended to help meet density goals.

Mason: Asked if removing roads and sidewalks reduces achievable density.

Puckett Daniels: Warned reducing density could weaken regulations that support the GAP policy.

Mason: Noted staff reduced minimum and maximum standards and requested Board feedback.

Baca: Expressed support for staff's reduction and use of gross developable area.

Phillips: Expressed support for staff's reduction and use of gross developable area.

Patrick: Expressed support for staff's reduction and use of gross developable area.

McBreen: Expressed support for staff's reduction and use of gross developable area; noted concern about overregulation.

Smith: Expressed support for staff's reduction and use of gross developable area.

Puckett Daniels: Noted new language was added to promote transitions between neighborhoods and soften development edges.

Public Comment

Mark Hatcher: Dos Rios 3 homeowner and HOA President. Asked how high- and low-density developments are being addressed. Emphasized the importance of wetlands, whether manmade or natural, and noted changes include the Dunbar Family Tract, the only area within the South Urban Transition Zone.

Rus Halpern: Fairway Lane resident. Questioned whether the Gunnison Rising project is being revived and if its 1,900 planned units already meet local housing needs. Urged that the Dunbar Tract be left undeveloped, stating demand does not justify the proposed additional units.

Steve Jenkins: Asked whether a response was provided to the submitted petition. Opposed inclusion of the Dunbar Ranch in the SAR and expressed concern that public comment will not be allowed in future SAR matters. Cited inadequate public notice and environmental concerns related to wetlands near Dos Rios.

Jeff Wilkinson: Fairway Lane resident and developer. Supported efforts to modernize regulations but said Fairway Lane cannot accommodate additional traffic. Urged adherence to all regulatory processes and stated proposed density near Fairway Lane is incompatible with the neighborhood. Noted Antelope Hills could be more suitable and less impactful to wildlife.

John Schaffer: Tomichi Trail resident. Raised concerns over traffic impacts from future development and asked when density thresholds would trigger infrastructure upgrades. Encouraged preserving non-developable areas as public or green spaces.

Wendy Naugle: Thanked staff for reducing density. Asked for clarification on whether high-density development would trigger a minor impact review.

Lauren Koelliker: Valley Housing Fund representative. Spoke in support of the GAP and SAR, noting they modernize outdated regulations and promote diverse, well-planned development.

Pamela Hatcher: Tomichi Trail resident. Questioned why the Dunbar Tract is the only southern area identified for development and why the County is not utilizing land it already owns.

Response to Public Comments

Pagano: Explained that County regulations and the Army Corps of Engineers only regulate naturally occurring wetlands. Uncertain about the status of the Gunnison Rising project. Stated Antelope Hills poses accessibility and topographic challenges and would have greater wildlife impacts than the Dunbar Tract. Noted that infrastructure, utilities, and overall improvements must be addressed in planning for large-scale developments. Clarified that the Dunbar Tract is not the only site identified for potential development under the GAP; several parcels south of the City are also included.

Houck: Requested clarification on uranium contamination.

Pagano: Explained the County industrial park was formerly the site of a uranium mill. Contaminated soils were removed in coordination with the Department of Energy (DOE). The DOE confirmed the Dos Rios area was not contaminated, though the County retains ownership of previously affected land.

Houck: Added that the DOE established buffer zones and removed contaminated soil from developed areas.

Seminick: Addressed residential building height standards.

Puckett Daniels: Clarified there is no current development application for the Dunbar Tract.

Pagano: Stated the applicant only requested a pre-application conference to review concepts and was advised they could either wait for SAR adoption or proceed independently.

Hoyt: Noted that a future application would become quasi-judicial, and receiving information about a future application is unfair to the applicant and others affected. Cautioned against receiving information about a future application.

Deliberations:

Hoyt: Reviewed Standards of Approval, including Development Activity, Rationale and Need for Designation, Boundaries, Community Plan or Technical Study, Alternatives, Adverse Impacts, and Expected Benefits.

Niederer: Expressed concern with Section 1-110(C)(6), stating the North and South Urban Transition Zones differ and should be considered separately. Opposed removal of public comment opportunities, especially for affected property owners. Supported the North Zone but not the South.

Mason: Asked if the South Zone should be revisited and requested specifics from Niederer. Noted both zones would be affected by approval.

Phillips: Concerned there has not been sufficient deliberation to approve the SAR.

Smith: Sought clarification on public comment. Noted comment opportunities would remain for developments triggering a minor impact review, though not for administrative reviews.

McBreen: Also concerned about limiting public comment but comfortable moving forward if comment opportunities remain.

Baca: Had no additional questions. Opposed removing sections as suggested by Niederer and preferred keeping the document intact.

Patrick: Acknowledged public concerns and supported further discussion of the South Urban Transition Area.

Mason: Emphasized the importance of public comment. Comfortable moving forward but asked if the North and South could be regulated separately.

Pagano: Said separate regulations have not been considered. Differing standards would complicate future reviews and create inefficiencies for developers and staff. Noted it is difficult to plan for future developments without applications in hand. Asked whether the Commission needs additional information.

Hoyt: Clarified the Commission's action is a recommendation, not an approval. The Board may accept, modify, or deny it.

Mason: Asked if recommending the SAR ends the public hearing process.

Hoyt: Explained no additional public hearing is required under the Land Use Resolution. The joint public hearing serves as the formal public process.

Puckett Daniels: Requested more time to consider the GAP/SAR and address public requests to remove the Dunbar Tract from the South Zone.

Pagano: Noted the option to continue the public hearing or close it and continue deliberations.

Puckett Daniels: Requested acceptance of additional written public comment.

Pagano: Asked what further information the Commission would need before the next meeting.

McBreen: Requested staff responses to questions raised during public comment.

Mason: Requested examples of current City and County developments with unit counts for context.

Smith: Requested additional discussion on infrastructure requirements.

Next Steps

Moved by: Baca, seconded by Phillips to close the public hearing, leaving the public comment period open through November 5th. The motion passed unanimously in support.

November 6th will be a regular Planning Commission meeting.

Work Session: LUC-24-00008 | Treasure Mountain Ranch – Minor Impact

Treasure Mountain Ranch, Inc. applied for a Minor Impact Land Use Change at 3881 Forest Service Road 314 to consolidate 16 parcels into 9, complete three boundary line adjustments, and cluster new development, including four new residential structures (5,089 sq. ft.) and one maintenance barn (4,900 sq. ft.) within a 1.9-acre building envelope in the historic Crystal townsite.

Staff Comments

Seminick: Noted the summary from the September 17th site visit in the Staff Memo. Stated staff's recommendation is for Planning Commission to comment on the site visit notes. Noted Planning Commission can either schedule an additional work session or to schedule a public hearing, further Planning Commission can direct staff to draft a nonbinding decision document for consideration at a public hearing.

Applicant Response

Stuart Gillespie: Asked for clarification on some minutes.

Next Steps

Staff will work with the applicant to schedule the public hearing.

Moved by: Mason, seconded by Baca to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with approval.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:28 pm