



Grand Junction Visitor and Convention Bureau

Envisioning Recap November 18, 2016 10:00 a.m.

Hill Aevium conducted an envisioning session with representatives from Grand Junction. Attending the session were as follows:

- ✓ Mayor Phyllis Norris, Mayor of Grand Junction
- ✓ Mr. Greg Caton, Grand Junction City Manager
- ✓ Mr. Sam Williams, Powderhorn General Manager
- ✓ Ms. Kristi Pollard, Grand Junction Economic Partnership
- ✓ Mr. Ken Mabery, Colorado National Monument Superintendent
- ✓ Mr. Robbie Breaux, Avalon Theatre Foundation
- ✓ Ms. Jodi Doney, Grand Junction Regional Airport
- ✓ Mr. Doug Simons, Enstroms Candies
- ✓ Mr. Doug Simons, Jr., Enstroms Candies
- ✓ Ms. Allison Blevins, Downtown Business Improvement District
- ✓ Ms. Nattana Johnson, Owner of Short-term Vacation Rentals

Following is a brief recap and notes from the session. **Bold** items were reiterated by multiple participants, while *italicized* items were items that were common themes amongst the attendees. The first two items as well as the last item were presented to the group in its entirety, while items 3 and 4 were presented in a small group format.

1. Participants were asked to write down the reason that they were attending and what they hoped to achieve (LARGE GROUP).

- a. Here to develop a *strategic plan* for improving the Valley's economy through tourism and outdoor recreation.
- b. To learn what the *future* vision of marketing our city looks like and hoping to emphasize outdoor recreation more.
- c. I'm interested in seeing tourism expand as an industry and finding a *collaborative* path forward with *goals* and milestones.
- d. I want to know and plan for next 10 to 20 years and hope to have some *goals* to work into future plans.
- e. Learn what's new and happening in GJ and make sure good ideas move forward.
- f. Love to help with visioning and *obtaining a broader vision* for the Valley.

- g. To help *shape a vision for our community* and would like to better understand the direction.
- h. I'm here to learn all I can about this community and its vision. I hope to have info to take back and *grow* from.
- i. Help shape future marketing for GJ and *obtain a common vision*.
- j. To ensure that all creative industries in GJ are promoted and knowing that *we all know and promote GJ as a gem in the desert*.
- k. Interested in seeing our community grow. Help guide the vision.
- l. *Collaborative expansion/growth*, the future/new ideas, broader vision that shapes the future, promote creative industries, gem in the desert

Participants are most interested in developing a strategic plan with common goals and visions that will promote growth for their “gem in the desert”.

2. Alignment Exercises (LARGE GROUP):

❖ TRUE of FALSE:

- a. Overnight visitors contribute more to the local economy than Day visitors
- b. Vacation/Pleasure/Leisure is the #1 driver of visits to GJ
- c. The majority of visitors to GJ are repeat visitors
- d. The majority of visitors are between the ages of 45-64.

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that all the statements were true.

❖ Attendees were asked to determine the single most important outcome for a marketing and advertising strategy to increase overnight visitation is to:

- a. Attract first time visitors
- b. Attract younger visitors
- c. Focus solely on activities contained within the city limits
- d. Present Grand Junction as a regional destination

Participants agreed that the outcome for marketing and advertising should be to “Attract First Time Visitors”.

❖ Where are today’s participants from (show of hands):

- a. Born and raised in GJ
- b. Relocated from elsewhere in Colorado
- c. Relocated from outside of Colorado

Three Participants are born and raised in Grand Junction, while the remaining attendees are split equally between relocating from within Colorado or from outside of the state (four each).

❖ Grand Junction Relocators were asked what they felt was most compelling about Grand Junction as a visitor:

- a. Downtown
- b. Value
- c. **Colorado National Monument**
- d. Fun, small town

- e. **Outdoor recreation activities - fishing, hunting camping, skiing, biking, rafting**
 - f. Shopping
 - g. **Weather**
- ❖ **Grand Junction Natives were asked what their friends and family find most compelling on their first visit to Grand Junction:**
 - a. Grand Mesa
 - b. **CO Nat'l Monument**
 - c. Powderhorn
 - d. Downtown
 - e. Explore CMU
 - f. Mall/Big Stores
 - g. Wine
 - h. **Outdoor Activities – Hiking, Mtn. Biking, Hunting, Camping, Trails**
 - ❖ **Both Grand Junction Natives and Relocators were asked if they felt those items changed over time and through the course of multiple visits:**
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. **No** – Mall person

64% of individuals felt that these compelling activities or experiences did change over time and through course of multiple visits, while 27% did not feel these items changed.

3. The Visitor Mindset (SMALL GROUP):

- ❖ **The first time visitor IS:**
 - a. **A mountain biker**
 - b. Surprised by how much they like it
 - c. Age 45 – 64
 - d. Comes to visit wineries
 - e. Escapes Denver to visit small town
 - f. Family
 - g. Sight Seeing
 - h. On way to Moab and happens to stop
 - i. Explorer
 - j. Student/Family
 - k. Dirt biker (Passing through on a trip)
 - l. Wine lover
 - m. Candy lover
 - n. Traveler
 - o. Unique experience
 - p. **Adventure**
 - q. Memories
 - r. Dining/Shopping
 - s. **Value**
 - t. Budget Friendly Activities
 - u. In 30's

- v. Willing and able to spend money
- w. **Outdoor sports person**
- x. Active
- y. Pre-kids
- z. Cyclers
- aa. Off Road Biking
- bb. Snowmobiler



❖ **The first time visitor WANTS:**

- a. Good Food
- b. Good Weather
- c. To be welcomed
- d. To see the monument
- e. To see the wine country
- f. An easy way to get around
- g. A great and easy experience
- h. Affordable Activities
- i. A casual welcoming experience
- j. Exercise
- k. Fresh air
- l. Relaxation
- m. Fun
- n. Jeep Rental
- o. Motorbike rental
- p. To explore

❖ **The first time visitor HATES:**

- a. **Not knowing where to go/What?/Where?/Confusion**
- b. **No Night Life**
- c. Distance to get here
- d. Bad Weather
- e. To be like where they came from
- f. Highway eye sore
- g. Hillbilly “white trash” reputation
- h. Transients
- i. Perception of aged/dated
- j. Choice in night and lodging
- k. **No shopping opportunity or poor shopping**
- l. Lack of Environmental Friendly ideas

❖ **The first time visitor CHERISHES:**

- a. **Small Town Feel**
- b. A Unique and Authentic Experience and Good Food
- c. Variety
- d. **Fun experiences**
- e. **Outdoor Adventures/Environment/Activities**

❖ **The first time visitor RESPECTS:**

- a. A down to Earth Mentality
- b. **Kind, local People**

- c. Beauty
- d. Stark Beauty of the Area

❖ **The participants were asked to determine the top ten attractions or experiences most likely to draw first-time visitors:**

- a. **Wine**
- b. **Colorado National Monument**
- c. Powderhorn
- d. **Downtown**
- e. **Mountain Biking**
- f. Lunch Loops
- g. **Hunting**
- h. 18 Road
- i. **Golfing**
- j. An event
- k. **Colorado Mesa University**
- l. **Dinosaur Country**
- m. Bin 707
- n. **Grand Mesa**



An overwhelming majority agreed that wine, mountain biking, and Colorado National Monument were the largest draw for first-time visitors with the remaining bolded items evenly distributed behind the majority picks.

4. The Competition (SMALL GROUP):

(Almost all attractions can be differentiated from the competition with the following qualifiers: accessibility, variety, diversity, value and mild climate)

❖ **The participants were asked to determine which of Grand Junction’s top ten attractions/experiences does it share with its competitors:**

- a. Colorado National Monument* - accessible; puts red canyon arches close to lodging and amenities of a city, this is true mainly for CO and TX market; less appealing for UT and AZ
- b. Agritourism – Peaches, Wineries & Vineyards, Lavendar; easier to get to than Paonia Durango
- c. Outdoor Recreation – longer season, accessibility, variety, diversity, for golf, hiking, mountain biking, road cycling, dirt biking, river rafting, kayaking, BLM Land is “never ending”
- d. Powderhorn* - old school, pure skiing, “skiing the way it used to be”
- e. Grand Mesa* - world’s largest flat-top mountain, contrast of alpine lakes to the Grand Valley
- f. Mesa State University
- g. Unique Retail – Enstroms; Mtn towns appreciate finding “city” stores like Cabelas and shopping malls
- h. Medical Tourism
- i. Special Events
- j. National Park, OHV - Fruita, Palisade, Durango, Montrose
- k. Night Life/Access to Skiing -

Vail, **Telluride**, Ouray, Summit, Glenwood

*Represents attractions that are only in Grand Junction.



❖ **For each attraction, what would compel a first time visitor to choose Grand Junction over the competition:**

- a. **Weather, home base, diversity (“Ing”, Scenery, Attractions, Land, Terrain)**
- b. **Value**
- c. Access
- d. No crowds
- e. Wine
- f. **Colorado National Monument**

❖ **Which attractions are most likely to draw first-time visitors from the Front Range:**

- a. **Wineries**
- b. Lack of Crowds
- c. **Colorado National Monument**
- d. BLM

❖ **Which attractions are most likely to draw first-time visitors from Neighboring States:**

- a. Hunting

❖ **Which attractions are most likely to draw younger first-time visitors:**

- a. **“Ing” activities**
- b. Colorado National Monument
- c. Season
- d. Weather
- e. **Value**

❖ **Which attractions are most likely to draw women:**

- a. Wine
- b. **Food**

❖ **Which attractions are most likely to draw families:**

- a. Value
- b. Dinosaur activities

❖ **Which attractions are most likely to draw Mountain Communities:**

- a. **Weather**

5. The Value Proposition (LARGE GROUP):

❖ **What are the top 3 reasons to visit Grand Junction for the first-time:**

- a. Outdoor Recreation – “Ing” activities
- b. Colorado National Monument/Open Lands
- c. Wineries/Agritourism

❖ **What are the advantages/disadvantages of “Colorado’s Wine Country”:**

- a. **Pros** – appealing, wine fest, we own it, not as seasonal, 16 years of brand equity, People like wine, accessible, affordable, Colorado ease about it, brings people in, 6,000 people came to winefest and sold out all hotels, we own it, unique to state, not as seasonal, romance, people love it, appear more sophisticated, recognize us for the area.
- b. **Cons** – Doesn’t deliver, Not family, wine is not that great, not cool, tired brand, too narrow, something you do after the “ing” things, old people, not universal, not that huge, over hyped, careful to hang our hat on it, snobby, exclusive not inclusive
- c. **Pro and Con - Not Napa**

❖ **SIDE COMMENTARY:**

- Grand Junction is much better for mountain biking than Moab because of variety, diversity and accessibility, plus a longer season.
- Bangs Canyon for dirt biking and jeeping is world class
- GJ is the only place in Colorado where you can do so many different activities in one day
- Grand Junction has more mountain bike trails than Crested Butte claims—not tracked
- People go to Hot Tomato in Fruita, but say they have not been to downtown GJ because it is too hard to get to
- Perception of a pass through
- People from the mountains come for the shopping amenities
- Come for Colorado National Monument, but stay because GJ small city
- People that live in GJ want to know people when they walk in somewhere
- Residents direct visitors and guests to Fruita or Palisade first