



City of Gunnison

City of Gunnison
201 W. Virginia Avenue
Gunnison, CO 81230

June 1, 2018

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests
Attn: Plan Revision Team
2250 South Main Street
Delta, CO 81416

Dear Mr. Armentrout and the GMUG Forest Planning Team:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the GMUG Forest Revision Plan. City Staff has had the opportunity to review the Assessment Reports, the comments provide by Gunnison County and the Gunnison Public Land Initiative. I would like to express appreciation for all of the work the Forest Service, local organizations, committees, and individuals have done on the extensive process of revising the GMUG Forest Plan. We are pleased to have Councilor Mallory Logan participating on the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee (STORC) to communicate and connect the strategic goals of the City with the emerging priorities of the GMUG Forest Plan. In reviewing the GMUG Assessment Reports, I see at least three assessment areas that the City has a keen interest in because they are complementary to the City's strategic efforts to foster long-term prosperity in the Valley. They are the Benefits to the People: Multiple Uses, Ecosystems Services, and Socioeconomic Sustainability, Scenic Character, and Infrastructure.

The protection and responsible management of public lands are critical to the health and wellbeing of the City of Gunnison and to the tourism based economy of the Gunnison Valley. We recognize that national forest and public lands conditions, uses, and impacts are changing. Although the City is adjacent to public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, the nearby Gunnison National Forest lands are an integral part of the socioeconomic fabric of our community as the lands provide a variety of recreational, academic, and professional opportunities for the University students, our citizens, and visitors. The City deems it necessary to have the revised Forest Plan be proactive in ensuring that it can offer recreational, educational, employment opportunities in the Gunnison National Forest year-round and still protect the natural resources.

Due to the fact that thousands of people come to the Valley to utilize the surrounding public lands in multiple ways, it is critical that strong stewardship exists in order for it to have positive economic impact in the Valley for years to come. In particular, I just wanted to highlight a point

from the Gunnison Public Lands Initiative (GPLI) Initial Proposal on page 23, that shows how long-term management and recreational planning are essential priorities for public lands. We would also agree that protecting our public lands is critical for our recreational-based economy as pointed out in the GPLI Initial Proposal on page 36. Furthermore, we concur that maintaining the visual character and high-quality scenery of the forests is critical to our local economy as noted as in the GMUG Assessment Report on Scenic Character.

The City also recognizes the high importance of Infrastructure for the GMUG. The City is currently assessing and inventorying its own facilities, roads, and equipment in order to ensure longevity for the infrastructure and to maintain accessibility; therefore, we commend the GMUG's commitment to assessing its own infrastructure. Moreover, like Gunnison the revised GMUG Forest Plan is seeking to proactively expand broadband to enhance communication. The objective of installing fiber options for broadband internet expansion throughout the GMUG, primarily in the Gunnison National Forest, is an area for potential collaboration as developing abundant and redundant broadband is important pillar in the City's strategic priority of developing economic prosperity.

The City commends the thoughtful and thorough approach of the GMUG's revising process. For the City of Gunnison, the three standout assessments are the Benefits to the People: Multiple Uses, Ecosystems Services, and Socioeconomic Sustainability, Scenic Character and Infrastructure. In these three assessments, Gunnison sees the most potential for progress for our citizens and visitors, especially in the realms of recreational, academic, and professional opportunities. The City is encouraged by the information that the GMUG Revision process is gathering and feels that this work will be critical to the long-term vibrancy of the Valley.

Best regards,



Russ Forrest

City Manager, City of Gunnison