



## A G E N D A

### REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

La Junta, Colorado

January 22, 2026

4:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER (Chairperson)

ROLL CALL (City Clerk/Deputy)

Board Members

Supervisors

Others

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Ayala

Bennett

Fleischacker

Johnson

Lindner

Madrid

Mason

Miner

Saucedo

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

FUNDING APPLICATION

A. La Junta Elks Lodge #701 (Michael Perez)

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Chairperson)

Regular Meeting December 16, 2025

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Director)

December 2025

REPORTS – Project Updates

A. Plaza Building (Bennett/Mason)

B. Thyme Square (Sisroy/Scofield)

C. T.O.'s Building (Madrid/Johnson)

NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of Officers for 2026 (Chairperson) (Action)

1. Chairman

2. Vice-Chairman

3. Treasurer

B. Spark Grant Program (Discussion)

C. Director Comments

D. Governing Body's Comments

ADJOURN

## LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

**CALL TO ORDER:** The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting on Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bennett.

### Board Members Present

### Absent

Joe Ayala – arrived 4:03 p.m.  
Nancy Bennett  
Carly Johnson  
Toni Madrid  
Zach Miner  
Randall Roberson  
Angel Saucedo

Ben Mason

**Subject to approval at the  
January 22, 2026  
Urban Renewal Meeting**

### Also present:

Michael Hart, City Manager  
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk/URA Director  
Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk  
Niels & Maureen Rikhof, La Junta  
Cheryl Lindner, La Junta  
Marty Fleischacker, La Junta  
Damon Ramirez, La Junta

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESIGNATION – TREASURER

Randall Roberson announced his resignation from the Urban Renewal Authority. Randall thanked the URA for his time and experience here. Thoroughly enjoyed his time here. Did it mostly in honor of his Uncle Mac and Joe. There's some fresh blood willing to take the role and responsibilities presented, therefore, to allow all applicants an opportunity to serve, will be resigning, effective immediately.

### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – None

### FUNDING APPLICATION (Rikhof)

Maureen and Niels Rikhof presented a report on the funding application submitted for the Chestnut apartments:

- Thanked Melanie Scofield for assisting with the application process.
- Ready to perform the second project on the Chestnut Apts.
- The project ended up being a combination of the rough in, plumbing install, boiler room, and equipment; the sprinkler system install, and the exterior doors purchased and installed.
- Total price of this project will be \$234,579.54 per the bids that have been procured and selected.
- Requesting a \$50,000 grant and the rest as a loan, being \$92,289.77.

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- Exterior doors are necessary for safety to keep unwanted visitors out; the plumbing is necessary because one cannot have a functioning building without plumbing; sprinkler system per fire/building code, which falls under safety as well.
- Melanie Scofield – right now what is encumbered is \$50,000 for the grant for Time Square; \$10,000 for the Promenade Floral grant; if the board approves the loan of \$92,289.77 and encumber the grant for \$50,000 for the Chestnut Apts., that comes down to \$202,289.77. Looking back at the November financials, it is at \$627,721.08 minus the current application encumbrance(s), that would put the URA at \$425,431.31 in January and February because the URA wouldn't pay out those grants until then (the next fiscal year). If the board desires, could hold off until March or April for the new applications until TIF district funds are received.
- Joe Ayala – has anything, plumbing-wise, been done previously to other projects?
- Melanie Scofield – Yes, at Valley Tire partly for ADA compliance of a restroom. More was done, such as plumbing under the sink. It was not included originally in their application.
- Niels Rikhof – Just to clarify, there is no 'ADA plumbing' versus non 'ADA plumbing'. The construction of the bathroom is what considers it ADA compliant.
- Nancy Bennett – Are ADA restrooms being built in the Chestnut Apts.?
- Niels Rikhof – There are ADAU accessible units.
- Carly Johnson – How does the structure fit with the current URA rubric?
- Zach Miner – Following along, this makes the grant 35% of the total, which the URA has the ability to go up to 50% as far as the asterisk states.
- Toni Madrid – Generally, under a Google search, Urban Renewals tend to cover not only plumbing, and dependent on the program, it can cover items like roofing, sewer, heating, electrical, handicap accessibilities can fall under a URA.

The board further discussed whether or not the application and building qualify for a grant or loan from the URA. It was concluded that this application does, in fact, fall under the URA guidelines. The board also discussed the particulars within the URA grant and loan structure. This type of application is not typical; since it is for the same building that has already received funds from the URA. Also, this is a project that is being completed by the owners, and there are dates for completion. The Chestnut Apts. were also very blighted, and that is being addressed.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE FUNDING APPLICATION BY THE CHESTNUT APARTMENTS (NIELS AND MAUREEN RIKHOF) AS PRESENTED WITH THE GRANT AT \$50,000 AND THE LOAN AT \$92,287.77: Miner

SECOND: Madrid

AYE: Ayala, Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Miner, Saucedo

ABSENT: Mason

OPPOSED: None

The motion carries.

**MINUTES:** November 3, 2025

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the November 3, 2025 minutes. There being none, the board moved to a motion.

MOTION TO APPROVE NOVEMBER 3, 2025 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Johnson

SECOND: Saucedo

AYE: Ayala, Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Miner, Saucedo

ABSENT: Mason

OPPOSED: None

The motion carries.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – November**

No financial report was given; will be moved to the regular meeting agenda in January.

**REPORTS:**

**A. Plaza Building (Bennett/Mason)**

- Spoke to Derek today; kitchen sinks have been installed in the upstairs apartments.
- Pendant lights of the hallways in the apartments have yet to be installed; that is the last thing to be done upstairs.
- Duct work in the hood for the commercial kitchen downstairs is complete.
- The art room is next; expected to be done in about two weeks.
- The apartments will be ready to provide two revenue streams as soon as the Certificate of Occupancy has been awarded.
  - Melanie Sofield – Martin Montoya, Engineering Director, was able to issue a TCO; he did that on the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month for both of the upstairs apartments alone. No public is to be allowed downstairs. The reason for issuing the TCO is because the apartments have a separate entrance. Jane Daniels, the project manager, said that would suffice to issue the tax credits. Everything on the top floor is fine; it seems as Summit Sealants will be renting both temporarily. The premises is deemed to be revenue-making, which Robert Valdez at First National Bank has been looking for.
  - Nancy Bennett – First National Bank has decided to not make the bridge loan. Right now, Jane Daniels is working on another way to get it done. Feels confident that it will be done by the end of this week.
  - Zach Miner – Summit Sealants are renting the apartments, is that for show?
    - Melanie Scofield – No physical people are actually living there, but they are renting. It is to fulfill the requirements for the tax credits.
  - Joe Ayala – Was there a reason that First National Bank backed out of the loan?
    - Toni Madrid – It was deemed as too much of a risk; they were not willing to offer a loan is what I understood.
    - Zach Miner – I understood, also, that there was no for sure of who was backing this.

- Carly Johnson – First National Bank wanted to put a lien on the building.
- Joe Ayala – And the board is confident that they will receive other backing?
  - Nancy Bennett – That is what I gather.

**B. Thyme Square (Sisnroy/Scofield) – none**

**C. T.O.'S Building (Madrid)**

- Toni Madrid – Has received a bid from Sign Shop for just doing the windows. If the URA goes with just the windows, their bid was \$1,668.00. Zach, Angel and I had a conversation regarding installing a 'false wall' in front of T.O.'s. Is not ready to move forward with the façade beautification, as there are still some slight construction/improvements needed on the building.
- Carly Johnson – Has received a quote from Colorado Sublimation Printing, and they have provided us with the cost of \$1,600.00 exactly. That is for the windows and doors, as well as the install fee.
- Zach Miner – Would be glad to present a mock up at the next URA meeting. The construction would consist the 'false wall' and repairing the entire façade of the building. This would hide the entry area temporarily. If the owners sold or leased the property, that false wall can come down easily. The wall can be placed even during repairs and construction. The wall would be flush with the building.
- Melanie Scofield – Something else to keep in mind is how offset the building is from the street. As long as it doesn't impede the right of way view.
- Toni Madrid – Keeping the area clean is also an issue, and the La Junta Rotary Club has volunteered to keep the areas where wind blows trash and leaves in clean.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Board Vacancy Letters of Interest**

- Cheryl Lindner – Lived in La Junta since 1981. Has been in human services for more than 20 years. Has been a former business owner of two business. The business where currently employed has received assistance from the URA previously. Thinks it is important for this body to uplift things in the city. That is the primary motivation. Not the best initiator, but can assist with facilitation. Can attend most, if not all, meetings.
- Marty Fleischacker – Born and raised in La Junta. Started a business and worked closely with Randall Roberson's wife, Marty on a business in downtown as well as with the Chamber of Commerce. Recently have retired and is staying in La Junta. Currently owns the Promenade Floral shop on Highway 50. It is a successful business on the cusp of expansion. Has a great deal of pride in the community. Loves being a part of the community and assisting. Likes challenges and being integral parts of something. It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of this committee.
  - Zach Miner – You had just completed an application requesting for funds from the URA, did the ease or difficulty of that process have any influence on you applying to be a part of the URA?
  - Marty Fleischacker – It was a part of it, yes. Melanie made the process very easy with her guidance. Hopes that the committee can bring that kind of help and

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guidance to the public and give the information that the URA is, in fact, here to help.

MOTION TO APPOINT MARTY FLEISCHACKER AND CHERYL LINDNER TO THE URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY BOARD: Johnson

SECOND: Madrid

AYE: Ayala, Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Miner, Saucedo

ABSENT: Mason

OPPOSED: None

The motion carries.

MOTION TO APPOINT ANGEL SAUCEDO AND ZACH MINER TO THE URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY BOARD: Johnson

SECOND: Madrid

AYE: Ayala, Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Miner, Saucedo

ABSENT: Mason

OPPOSED: None

The motion carries.

### **B. Director Comments**

- Melanie Scofield – Did reach out to Mickey Bethel (Opera House Block – regarding the sidewalk situation that he brought forth to the URA last meeting) and is in possession of all the documentation and paperwork for the application process. Has not heard back from him, but will reach back out to him after the first of the year.
  - The next URA Work Session for the first quarter of 2026 will be with Paul Benedetti, the urban renewal attorney for Colorado. If the board has any suggestions for topics for work sessions, ideas for field trips, etc. Please contact Melanie.
  - Joe Ayala – Has the board looked into the idea of working with Main Street and Economic Development on one form?
    - Melanie Scofield – Have been looking at Lamar’s form, and it is extremely simplistic. It is just a matter of getting with the other heads of those other divisions and making sure everyone is on the same page.
  - Nancy Bennett – Wonders if a field trip to Trinidad may be valuable.
  - Zach Miner – Wondering if the board should do their ‘homework’ and try to come up with a town/city that has the same things that La Junta offers. Both Lamar and Trinidad have I-25 near those towns.
    - Carly Johnson – The highway does not go through the middle of those towns, as they have separate business districts that are near the highways. Believes Trinidad is incredible in what they are doing with Urban Renewal, entrepreneur groups, etc. Trinidad would be a great option.
    - Toni Madrid – Thinks that the board can sort out what doesn’t work. This group is really active in pursuing things to improve La Junta. Why not learn from other municipalities that are similar or not?

- Melanie Scofield – Hampton Inn payments were finished in 2024. It was costing the URA \$35,000 a year for the last 15 years. It started out as a \$400,000 agreement with a 3.5% interest and the URA has paid over \$500,000 to the Hampton Inn in those 15 years.

**C. Governing Body's Comments**

- Zach Miner – Have been bringing up comments regarding electronic signage in La Junta, and more specifically the sign near Abba Eye Care on Santa Fe and Highway 50 no longer works. Abba had received quotes to try to get it fixed. The sign at The State Bank (which now has been sold to Pueblo Bank & Trust) also does not work. Would like to explore the possibility for a bigger electronic sign in the middle of Santa Fe Plaza Park. May be an opportunity to draw several groups in. Otero College would be interested to put money into this idea; Pueblo Bank & Trust; possibly Main Street La Junta, Economic Development and URA. The Chamber of Commerce can be in charge of maintaining the sign. Can bring the full concept in a few months after more conversations have been had.
- Angel Saucedo – Last meeting, brought up the Ruiz Arts building, which currently has “The Broke ‘N Busted Boutique” sign installed. Had the opportunity to speak to Rena (owner of the building) and would like the sign removed. Having a sign from a previous business being still up on a current thriving business doesn't look good.
  - Toni Madrid – Does the sign not belong to The Sign Shop?
    - Cheryl Lindner – That is incorrect, the sign would belong to the building owner. As long as the sign is attached to the building, it is the building owner's responsibility to remove the sign themselves.
    - Damon Ramirez – Had spoken to Rena previously, and mentioned that the sign could be removed and then offer the owner some credit for a new sign at the shop; at the time, she was not ready to pursue a sign. The sign does belong to her, as she is the owner of the building.
    - Toni Madrid – Can the minutes reflect that The Sign Shop does not, in fact, own that sign?

The Sign Shop does not own the “Broke ‘N Busted Boutique” sign currently hung up on the Ruiz Arts building.

- Joe Ayala – would like to circle back to the idea that was brought up regarding the proposed “Spark Grant”. That would be for existing, operating businesses within the TIF district. Around \$5,000-\$10,000 for façade improvements, etc.
  - Toni Madrid – There is also \$35,000 that will no longer be going to Hampton Inn, and that money can now be reappropriated to this “Spark Grant”.
  - Angel Saucedo – If this will be done, then the URA should market those funds better. Feels that a lot of people don't know the URA exists.
  - Toni Madrid – Maybe a few members of the URA walked downtown and hands out flyers that talks about the “Spark Grant” and that is part of the URA strategic plan.

The next Urban Renewal Authority meeting will be held January 22, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. There will be no regular meeting in December.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

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Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk

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Nancy Bennett, Chairperson

# Spark Grant Program

Downtown Storefront Improvement Microgrants

Funding Source: Urban Renewal Authority (TIF Reinvestment)

## Purpose

The Spark Grant Program is designed to stimulate visible reinvestment in active businesses within the TIF District by supporting storefront and exterior improvements that enhance curb appeal, customer experience, and overall district vitality.

## Program Structure

Up to \$5,000 per business. Limited to the first 10 approved businesses each year. Annual investment of \$50,000. Funds are reimbursement based and issued only after approved work is completed.

## Eligible Improvements

Exterior, customer facing improvements visible from the public right of way, including doors, windows, vinyl window coverings, awnings, facade paint, signage, and storefront lighting.

## Eligible Applicants

Active, operating businesses located within the TIF District with a current city business license and properties in good standing. Tenant occupied buildings require written permission from the property owner acknowledging approval of the improvements.

## Application and Selection

Rolling application process. Applicants submit photos, a project description, cost estimates, timeline, and property owner authorization if applicable. Priority is given to high visibility projects, readiness to proceed, and private investment leverage.

## Funding and Safeguards

No funds are released upfront. Reimbursement is issued after approved work is completed, inspected, and paid invoices are submitted. URA approval is required before any work begins. Improvements must remain in place for a defined period.

## Outcomes

Improved storefront appearance, increased private reinvestment, strengthened business retention, and visible activation of the TIF District.

Spark Grants turn small public investments into visible private sector improvements that build confidence, momentum, and long term value within the district.