



Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office

June 21, 2023

To: Transportation Planning Region Boundary Study Advisory Committee Members,
Transportation Commissioners
Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee Members

CC: Shoshana Lew- CDOT Executive Director
Herman Stockinger- CDOT Deputy Director and Director of Policy

Re: Opposition to Modifying the Grand Valley Transportation Planning Region Boundary

Dear Transportation Planning Region Boundary Study Advisory Committee Members,
Transportation Commissioners and STAC Representatives,

This letter is signed on behalf of the Grand Valley Regional Transportation Committee (GVRTC); the governing board that oversees the Grand Valley Transportation Planning Region, the Grand Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Grand Valley Transit in response to the TPR Study done under HB23-1101.

Since the 1990s, the GVRTC has served the Grand Valley in synergy as an equitable representative of the people in both the urban and rural areas of Mesa County. Altering the current Grand Valley TPR boundary would greatly impact currently efficient governing structures and disrupt the unified transportation vision of both the Grand Valley TPR and the Grand Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The GVRTC stands in opposition to any modification to the current Grand Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR) boundary.

Disruption to Efficient Governing Structures

Currently, the Grand Valley TPR boundary follows the Mesa County boundary and is housed with the Grand Valley MPO in the Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office (RTPO). Staff in the office also oversee the funding and contract administration of Grand Valley Transit. This structure allows great collaboration and mentorship between the urban areas including Unincorporated Mesa County, Cities of Grand Junction and Fruita, and Town of Palisade, all of which are inside the Grand Valley MPO; the rural communities of Collbran and Debeque, as well as the transit system.

This synergy is seen monthly during Transportation Advisory Committee meetings where rural and urban staff come together to discuss transportation issues in Mesa County. This relationship is also important as we implement the Greenhouse Gas Rule for Transportation Planning into our travel-demand model and long-range plan. Changing the TPR boundaries would require an entirely new governing structure, such as a council of governments, and result in a segregation between the TPR and MPO meetings as different staff and elected officials would need to be present at each. With this, the relationships and collaboration we have built over the years would likely decrease, negatively impacting the transportation system in our communities. The increased complexity in governance would require more administrative staff hours that could otherwise be used toward the pursuit of regional transportation goals.

Muddy a Clear Transportation Vision for the Urban and Rural Areas of Mesa County

Historically, the RTPO has produced one long-range plan and the travel demand model for both the Grand Valley TPR and Grand Valley MPO. With this, we have one vision that guides our community and we work together to prioritize projects in the urban and rural areas of the county. This makes sense given the interconnectedness of the rural and urban areas of Mesa County with nearly 80 percent of workers in Mesa County also living in Mesa County. Changing the TPR boundaries would again segregate the current process such that the RTPO would produce the long-range plan for the MPO and CDOT would produce the plan for the TPR. With this, it would be more difficult to have a clear transportation vision in Mesa County and TPR funding would be competitive with counties outside of Mesa County. The current process has worked well for many planning cycles and we would like to continue to use this model into the future.

We understand the desire to look at TPR boundaries with fresh eyes to determine if transportation planning can be done more collaboratively or efficiently. However, we can confidently say that the Grand Valley TPR is well governed and brings together urban and rural areas to effectively plan for all of Mesa County. With this, we respectfully request that the Grand Valley TPR boundary remains as it stands today.

Sincerely,

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Mesa County

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