

MOAB AREA LAND USE

Moab Area Land Use Advisory Committee Meeting #2

May 1, 2019, 8:30-11:00am

Grand County Council Chambers

Summary of Final Direction Provided

1. Eliminate overnight accommodations as a use by rights throughout the area
2. Consider overnight accommodations north of downtown as part of overlay zoning
3. Preserve downtown as is, with a focus on considering small overnight accommodation projects as part of overlay zoning
4. No additional overnight accommodations south of downtown
5. Grandfather existing uses as legal non-conforming uses and establish triggers for expansions and improvements to meet new policies.
6. Prevent downtown from being redeveloped in the short term until codes can be shored up
7. Consider the form, massing, scale, fit, mixed use, performance standards for water and infrastructure as part of the overlay zones.
8. Address Community Nodes as follow-up efforts once the moratoria are resolved.
9. Consider the application of form-based codes, unit caps, etc. as follow-up efforts once the moratoria are resolved.

Meeting Notes

The purpose of the meeting was to review input from the Public Meeting held the evening before, and for the Advisory Committee to develop recommendations for the City and County regarding a preferred direction for addressing overnight accommodations.

The meeting began with a summary of comments and ideas from the six workshop group sessions. **Option 1 was eliminated outright, and Option 2 received little support.** There was significant support for Option 5, but questions arose about its political feasibility. **Most of the discussion focused on details and nuances of Options 3 and 4.**

Some wondered whether overnight accommodations could be permitted in some areas in some form without sacrificing the community, residential areas and affordable commercial space. There was discussion on the need for more **granular boundaries** between the various zones, and several members sought clarification on how the overlays would impact existing overnight accommodations. Would existing overnight accommodations become legal non-conforming uses, or would the overlay zones be attached to parcels immediately making them active, principal uses?

Several committee members indicated that if overnight accommodations were removed wholly from the area, **the uses would move to San Juan County and other areas to the south.** It was felt that this would continue to increase traffic impacts through the City, as visitors would travel to Moab for services and to reach Arches, for example.

It was generally agreed that **efforts should focus on solving the core problems related to overnight accommodations and the two moratoria**, and that related concerns such as traffic, multi-modal

transportation and infrastructure will be addressed in ongoing and follow-up efforts once the moratoria had expired. It was agreed that the impacts of overnight accommodations on water and services would be addressed as part of the ordinances, and that they could be refined and enhanced once the new ordinances have been adopted. The group acknowledged that traffic, noise, and congestion must be addressed, and that discussions of future growth in overnight accommodations and tourism should be predicated upon adequately addressing the capacity of public infrastructure, services, and quality of life concerns.

Several members voiced **support for concentrating development on the north end of the valley**, as this would make sense for the vast majority of day trip visits to the recreation areas north of downtown, including Arches NP. It was also generally acknowledged that the pattern in this area was basically set, as much of the currently vacant land holdings have been approved for future projects.

It was expressed that future development or redevelopment of **overnight accommodations in the downtown area, if allowed, should only be permitted as part of mixed-use projects** and that there should be requirements that future projects should have a **scale and form that fits in** and protects community gateways and surrounding viewsheds. This would help make downtown a more dynamic, pedestrian-scaled and walkable place.

It was also felt that the identified **Community Nodes should be mixed-use places that serve the surrounding neighborhoods and community as a whole**. They should provide places that are locally owned and operated and include uses that would not otherwise be feasible near the expensive commercial core. Some wondered if a maximum size should be established for each node.

Many felt that **they want Moab to be cool and funky** – a community of surprises that can be explored. It was generally concluded that **dealing with the community nodes will take additional time and resources beyond the scope of the moratoria** and will need to be addressed as follow-up efforts.

It was noted that the overnight accommodation market has experienced a distinct shift in recent years - the **existing “big fish” local hoteliers are being replaced by even “bigger fish” from outside of the area**. Developers also want to see mixed-use places, as they help make Moab a more interesting and engaging place. Some expressed an interest in significantly reducing the maximum size of overnight accommodations in order to preserve the existing local operators; others felt it may be too late to stop this from happening

The guiding principles were reviewed, and **it was felt that Guiding Principles 1, 7, 8 and 10** are the most applicable to this effort. It was also stressed that water is a critical consideration and should always be considered as decisions are made.

Some concern was expressed about the ability to stop something if use-by-right conditions are met. It was also noted that exactions can be an effective tool but must be tied to impacts. There was much discussion about **the mechanics of implementing overlay zones**. It was also indicated that a significant swing away from the dominance of overnight accommodations was required to counter the current imbalance, with an understanding that corrections may be required in the future.

Straw Vote Results:

- Eliminate overnight accommodations as a principal use (“use-by-right”) in most, if not all, areas.
- Boundaries to be refined, limiting growth south of city boundary.
- Don’t only limit overnight accommodations to one area, but focus on scale of the building as a way of making them fit in.
- Scale of everything is an issue – not just hotels.
- RV parks are more accepted than hotels as they aren’t permanent, but there were concerns about effects on viewshed.
- Metering overnight accommodations through the use of caps was considered a good idea because it allows assessing the incremental impacts overtime. However, there was some concern that this would be difficult to implement and may backfire and end up as a “floor” rather than a cap.
- Full-support for performance based standards related to water and energy
- General support for form-based standards, particularly in downtown and future Community Nodes.

Node at intersection of SR-313/US-191 and other outlying areas:

One member likes to the idea of space for trailers and RV out of town, while members of the County Planning Commission feel that campgrounds are at their limit without affecting the viewshed, noting that protecting the sense of arrival and the community gateways is essential. They also noted that these areas lack water, which pose significant environmental concerns. If any new development is allowed in these areas, they will require careful study to make sure they protect the viewshed. Also, it was felt that we shouldn’t give people false impressions that something can be approved when it cannot or will not be approved.