

Council Goals

Envision a safe, flourishing downtown that provides a strong commercial tax base

Strive to be active stewards of existing aging infrastructure

Recognize importance of experience, well trained, and community minded staff

Ensure its electorate is well informed of on-going successes and future plans

Envision a safe, secure community for its families and youth

Promote redevelopment of existing businesses and neighborhoods and increase quality of life for all its residents



AGENDA REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA CITY COUNCIL

La Junta, Colorado
October 6, 2025
6:00 PM
Council Chambers
Municipal Building
601 Colorado Avenue

CALL TO ORDER (Mayor Ayala)

INVOCATION (Mayor Ayala)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Mayor Ayala)

ROLL CALL (City Clerk)

Council Members
Ramirez (Ward 1)
Velasquez (Ward 1)
Ayala (Mayor)
Ochoa (Ward 2)
Pantoya (Ward 3)
Rikhof (Ward 3)

OATH OF OFFICE TO NEWLY APPOINTED COUNCIL MEMBER (City Clerk)
Carly Johnson, Ward 2

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (*5-minute time limit per person*)

INFORMATION

- A. LJHS Theatre
- B. 2026 Budget Revision (Aliza Libby)

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Regular Meeting Minutes September 15, 2025
- B. Application for a Special Events Permit by Otero College Foundation, Bethany Bender, Event Manager. The event is their 30th Annual International Foods Night to be held November 7, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at 2001 San Juan Avenue (Rizzuto Banquet Hall)
- C. Application for a Special Events Permit by American Legion Auxiliary Unit 9, Elaine Wittman, Event Manager. The event is their Annual Gala to be held November 15, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 2001 San Juan Avenue (Rizzuto Banquet Hall)
- D. Application for Renewal of a Tavern Liquor License by Tran & Yen LLC, d/b/a Asian Café, 414 W. 1st Street
- E. Application for Change of manager by Tran & Yen LLC, d/b/a Asian Café, from Charles Ly to Qiang He

NEW BUSINESS

- A. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA AMENDING TITLE 17 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING EXPEDITED REVIEW FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS (City Attorney) (Action)
- B. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA AMENDING TITLE 17 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING SIGN STANDARDS (City Attorney) (Action)
- C. Committee/Board Report
- D. City Manager Report

E. Community Events/Council Report

F. Governing Body Report

G. ADJOURN

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – September 15, 2025

STATE OF COLORADO)
COUNTY OF OTERO) SS
CITY OF LA JUNTA)

CALL TO ORDER: The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of La Junta, Colorado, was called to order by Mayor Ayala on Monday, September 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

INVOCATION: Mayor Ayala gave the invocation.



PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Ayala led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: The following Council Members were present:

Paul Velasquez, Ward 1
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

Absent: Damon Ramirez, Ward 1

Also present: Michael Hart, City Manager
Erin Harris, City Attorney
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Pam Denahy, Director of Tourism/Econ. Dev.
Todd Quick, Chief of Police
Josh Cobb, Police
Brad Davidson, Fire Chief
Gary Reed, Rocky Ford
Holly Huerta-Hudak, Library Board
Sheari Shoemaker, La Junta
Christina Tozzie, La Junta
Julie Worley, La Junta
Terry Smalling, Library Board
Heather Maes, Director of Library Services
Nick Burdick, Library Board
Erika Lively, La Junta
Nancy Bennett, La Junta
Sara Holt, Library Board
Carly Johnson, La Junta
Nancy Harrington, SECO News
Adrian Hart, SECO News
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette


Subject to approval at the
October 6, 2025
City Council Meeting


PROCLAMATION: September 2025 is Tarantula Trek Month. Mayor Ayala proclaimed September 2025 as Tarantula Trek Month. We also received a proclamation from Governor Jared Polis. (Receiving a proclamation from the governor gives us eyes that we normally wouldn't reach.)

EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARD

A. September 2025

- 1. Josh Cobb, Police – 5 years.** Josh started as a junior in high school on an internship with Swink School. After two years, he got into the reserve program where he became a volunteer police officer. During that time, there was an opening in code enforcement that he took until he went to the academy.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – September 15, 2025**INFORMATION**

- A. Brad Davidson (618 Colorado Avenue fire):** Gave a timeline of events that occurred during the fire that happened on September 4th. Thanked all of the mutual aid that responded, La Junta Police Department, Otero County Sheriff's Office, city staff, community members and college students.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (5-minute time limit per person):

1. Gary Reed, 18975 State Hwy 202, Rocky Ford: Want to thank the Fire Chief and the police. I have received tons of calls on the fire across the street. I'm glad we got some clarity on a lot of stuff. The next thing I want to say is just how quickly this got out of hand. With that being said, they acted really fast. I have a house a couple of blocks over. People were calling me saying my house is on fire. This was a city-owned property and we've had lots of questions on. I know the girl on the corner had to move some tenants possibly. Is that something that the city is accounting for because it was a city owned building or is that, what's the process for that, do you know? Again, I've said it before, we need as a community and as a city especially, we need to take care of our own houses before. There's been a lot of contention with landlords in the valley and how they're taking care of their houses. It could have been anyone of us. Whether it's a rental house or just residential. Anyway, I hope that kind of puts a little bit of water onto the heat about landlords. Also, quick shout out to Carly Johnson, first Tuesday of the month at Wild Roots Kava, she has her entrepreneurial thing going. It's really informative.
2. Adrian Hart (seconews.org), 201 Colorado Avenue: We're hosting our annual candidate forum. Any candidates on the ballot are welcome to join us. We'll have Jim Rizzuto moderate. It will be Monday the 29th. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. and we'll begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Picketwire for Performance and Visual Arts. We're going to invite everybody from Otero County.

REPORTS**A. Library Advisory Board (Holly Huerta-Hudak).**

- Handed out the annual report to City Council which highlighted strengths, weaknesses, short-term goals, long-term goals, capital improvements, policies, procedures, programs/guidelines to enhance library operation and library advisory board requests. The library just finished up their summer reading program which was fantastic and well attended by the community. The staff has been fantastic. They do well juggling their patrons and activities.
- Heather Maes: Through the Colorado Workforce Center, we had a teen work with us this summer. At the end of his hours, we were notified that the Workforce Center had submitted the library and Jayden for an award for the Governor's Summer Job Hunt. Both the library and Jayden received the award. On September 4th, we were presented the award at the Governor's Mansion Carriage House.

CONSENT AGENDA**A. Special Meeting Minutes August 28, 2025.****B. Regular Meeting Minutes September 2, 2025****C. Application for a Special Events Permit by La Junta Chamber of Commerce, Christina Tozzie, Event Manager. The event is the 4th Annual Tarantula Fest to be held September 27, 2025 from 12:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. at Live Well Park**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2025 CONSENT AGENDA: Ochoa

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 5-0 (Ramirez absent, Ward 2 Vacancy)

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – September 15, 2025**NEW BUSINESS****A. Letters of Interest – Ward 2 Vacancy.**

Carly Johnson: Thank you for considering me for this appointment. I've had the privilege of serving this community through my small business downtown, the Urban Renewal Authority, Kiwanis, and numerous community service projects. I didn't step forward for this role lightly. I believe that City Council is where the practical work gets done, like making sure streets are safe, infrastructure is reliable, and opportunities exist for families and small businesses to grow here in La Junta. If appointed, my commitment is simple. I will listen to the residents, do my homework, and work respectfully with each of you to move our community forward. This city has given me so much and I feel called to give back through service. Thank you for your trust and for the chance to continue building La Junta's future together.

Christina Tozzie: I did submit my interest in this Ward 2 seat as an interim position. I did not get on the ballot. As you all know, I have a son who is in high school and he will be graduating in three years and a 4-year term at this time just wasn't really feasible for my family and I. I do take strong interest in La Junta. I do support our small business community. I actually have my own small business as well. I not only write grants but help support small businesses and maybe some of the facets that they're not experienced in, like marketing. I've even done IT support for some of the small business clients that I have. I am a grant writer. I work for the state of Colorado in the Division of Military & Veterans Affairs. So, I also handle all the veteran's funds that go out through two of our major grants through that department. I haven't lived my whole life in La Junta but I've lived the majority of my life in La Junta and I just have this need to give back to the community that served me so well throughout my life. I think that I have a level head when it comes to issues for not only residents but also business owners and community members and I just want to do my part to continue that service. I serve on multiple non-profit boards and I'm requested very frequently to join other boards. But like I said, with my son graduating in three years, I do want to devote my short-term time to him because I don't get that time back but I am ready and willing to serve.

Julie Worley: I am going to withdraw my application because I really feel that you need to appoint Carly and give her three meetings before she's actually elected to the council. I had no idea and I'm very pleased that she put her application in and I would strongly suggest that you appoint Carly Johnson to this position. So, thank you for your consideration and thank you for all your service and what you do.

Council members had opportunity to asked additional questions of all applicants.

MOTION TO APPOINT CARLY JOHNSON FOR THE WARD 2 SEAT: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: Those voting YES: Velasquez, Ayala, Ochoa, Rikhof
 Those voting NO: Pantoya
 The motion carried 4-1 (Ramirez absent, Ward 2 Vacancy)

B. Committee/Board Reports

1. Senior Center Advisory Board (Council Member Velasquez):
 - Holding strong at about 493 members.
 - Started the La Junta Senior Center Gem of the Month and I'd like to recognize Ms. Juanita Hinkhouse for September's Gem of the Month for all she does.
2. Utilities Board (Council Member Velasquez):
 - (Water) The fire hydrant on 8th and Colorado had a compression plate problem and they had checked it two months prior to the fire. It was working fine but just like Murphy's Law says, things will break down in order of priority or importance of the task that you're undertaking at the same time. That is a clear indication that Murphy was out there with that fire.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – September 15, 2025

- (Water) With routine maintenance, there's a lot going on. As you're driving around the city and you see fire hydrants with white caps on the sides or on the top, that means that they've been looked at and they should be in working order but again, you can't discount Murphy out there.
- (Water) Reminder for customers to stay out of the meter pits to manipulate valves. If anything is damaged, the customer is responsible for the cost of repairs. Homeowners should have a master valve installed inside their home. Please call the utility office at 384-2546 during regular business hours.
- (Electric) We had a lineman working on a pole while it was on fire, that's just high risk. These are not only our friends and neighbors and employees of the city and people that you see drive by every day. They're putting their lives on the line.
- Shout out to the other departments, the street, water, police departments and everybody involved. One of the things that was most impressive was the community got involved. Not only did the Otero students get involved as well as other community members. Shout out to the people who offered up their homes to those who were displaced.

E. City Manager's Comments

- Invited council to the CML District meeting next Thursday the 25th in Las Animas.
- The Neighborhood Watch meeting is going to be next Wednesday the 24th at 6:00 p.m. at the Police Department.
- We are waiting to hear back about concrete availability for the tennis courts but we're positive it'll be started by October.
- Invited everyone out to the public budget hearing next Monday on the 22nd here in the Council Chambers.
- The Veteran's Coffee at the Senior Center is every Wednesday around 8:00 a.m. It's open to everybody. Come hang out, shake some hands, hug some necks. It's a good time to come out and socialize.
- Safeway – Myself, the Mayor, Pam Denahy and a few others have been working non-stop on the Safeway issue since it started last Tuesday. We are in the process of trying to get something figured out. We don't quite know what that is yet. I welcome all ideas anybody has.
- Everybody did a wonderful job the evening of the fire across the street. It was amazing the turn out that we had. Now that reports have been done, we're working with Ayers, which is our Brownfield consultant, along with the EPA and CDPHE for emergency grants for the clean-up.

F. Community Events/Council Reports

1. Tourism/Econ. Development Director Denahy:
 - Tarantula Fest is September 26th and 27th. There's lots going on. Dr. Paula Cushing and Dr. Cara Shillington will be at the college. Arachnophobia will be playing on Friday at the theatre. The bus tours are filled up. We'll have the parade, classic car show, vendors, food truck, contests, beer garden, Koshare dancers and bands along with the education pavilion. We are also partnering with the Art Project again this year.
2. Mayor Ayala:
 - Neighborhood Watch meeting September 24th at 6:00 p.m. at the Police Department.

G. Governing Body Reports

1. Council Member Rikhof:
 - Questioned if the Parks Board and Senior Center Board are also going to be having their meetings in the council chambers? (Mayor Ayala responded affirmatively.)
2. Council Member Pantoya:
 - Requested for Michael and Aliza to work on a budget that would have the shortfalls we're expecting losing the Safeway tax revenue.

City Manager Hart: It's going to be difficult to do that because it's not like everyone that exclusively shops at Safeway is going to just not shop anymore. They're obviously going to go somewhere to shop. Is that going to stay here in La Junta at Wal-Mart? Are they

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – September 15, 2025

going to go to one of our neighboring communities? It's difficult to plan what that shortfall is going to be. The shortfall we can do a little bit better on calculation is going to be on the utility side. So, yes, we can but it will be purely speculative.

- We received the report for Property Management showing all of the insured properties that we have. Are you working on another spreadsheet that would show us all the city-owned properties at the Industrial Park and then also all of the properties that we have housing structures that have been taken down already. Ones that need to be taken down. Something more broken down.

City Manager Hart: That's why it was requested multiple times from you all what you were looking for and with no response, we gave you all the most general broad spectrum as we could. If there's specific categories of what you're looking for, please respond to that email.

On that note, I talked to Brock this morning and we're looking at the bus tour to be able to take you on next month. Again, same thing, if there are specific properties you want to look at, please let me know.

3. Mayor Ayala:

- When we have these Property Management tours, make sure that you're getting with Mel so if there is something you guys want to see, we let them know because that list is massive. If we need to do more than one tour, we can do that. Just make sure we're all clear on what we want to see.
- Regarding the fire, I want to talk a little bit about how the city owned that. We had an EPA grant to where the city would have these houses in their care. They would get taken down and it was fairly quickly. Last year, that stopped and we have the Brownfield that we're doing now but it doesn't take that place of what the EPA was doing. They were doing anywhere from three to five a year which was amazing. But it's not that same way anymore. It's a lot tighter to get any EPA money and that one was on the list to tear down.

City Manager Hart: Brownfields funds do not actually do the demo. They do all the stuff up to the demo. That's when the EPA would jump in.

- When the city takes these houses, it's not to rent them out its because they need to come down. So, we're not getting that property across the street to do something with it. We're getting it to take it down because the people that had it were not able to do that.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joseph Ayala, Mayor

ORDINANCE NO. 1683

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
LA JUNTA AMENDING TITLE 17 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING
EXPEDITED REVIEW FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS**

WHEREAS, the City of La Junta, Colorado (“City”) is a statutory City and political subdivision of the State of Colorado, duly organized and operating under the constitution and laws of the State of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the City of La Junta’s Zoning Regulations allow for housing projects but do not directly address expedited review for affordable housing to be developed for its workforce and residents; and

WHEREAS, the City of La Junta opted into Proposition 123 on the 17th day of April, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the City of La Junta Planning Commission held a public hearing on the 16th day of March, 2023 and recommended the following amendments to Title 17-Zoning to provide incentives for the development of affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, the City Council is desirous of amending the zoning regulations to comply with CRS 29-32-104 Colorado’s Proposition 123 expedited review requirements; and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY
OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:**

Section 1. Section 17.01.80 of the La Junta Municipal Code is amended by the addition of the following definition, to appear in alphabetical order:

17.01.80. – Definitions.

* * *

“Affordable housing unit” means a dwelling unit which is available for purchase on terms that would be affordable to households based on Otero County’s AMIs earning one hundred (100) percent or less of the area median income for rentals or earning sixty (60) percent or less of the area median income for ownership of town residents, as adjusted for family size, and paying less than thirty (30) percent of their gross income for housing, including principal, interest, taxes, insurance, utilities, and homeowners’ association fees.

Section 2. Chapter 17 Article II of the La Junta Municipal Code is amended to add subsection 17.2.70 to read as follows:

17.2.70 Zoning Development Applications.

- (a) All applicants subject to these zoning regulations shall complete an application for zoning review on an application provided by the City.
- (b) Once an application for zoning review has been filed with the City, a pre-application conference with the City will be scheduled within 15 days of submittal if a public hearing is required.
- (c) At the pre-application conference, the applicant and the City Manager will discuss the proposed change, development, and/or review the appropriate land use review criteria or procedures.
- (d) Once the appropriate completed application is received, the City Manager shall commence review and notify the applicant of completeness within 15 days of submittal. Staff will review the development request and provide the applicant of the necessary procedures and the required materials for the public hearing.
 - 1. Complete applications will be scheduled for a hearing before City Council within 45 days of City staff's determination of completeness.
 - 2. Additional review time will be required for applications requiring professional review.
 - 3. If the application is determined to be incomplete, it will not be scheduled for a hearing before City Council or Planning and Zoning Commission until it is complete.
- (e) Projects that provide 50% or more affordable housing units of the total units within the project shall be expedited and a decision rendered within 90 days of a complete application being received by the City pursuant to this Article. Any administrative permit application, site plan, variance, conditional use, or other zoning permit for affordable housing is eligible for expedited review. This does not include rezoning, PUDs, subdivisions, or other applications requiring ordinances of the City Council. An applicant or the City may request an extension pursuant to C.R.S. 29-32-105(2) (b) and (c) or elect to not proceed with expedited review at any time throughout the review process. Upon a final decision being rendered, if applicable, the City shall issue a building permit once final plans are approved.
- (f) Development plan. Applicants applying for a zoning application shall be prepared to provide the following information to the City to allow the Staff to make a determination of the appropriate zoning procedures. The following list is not inclusive or exclusive of requirements for a development application.
 - 1. Completed application and fee as required by the City.
 - 2. Survey.
 - 3. Site plan.
 - 4. Parking plan, traffic studies, or CDOT access permit if warranted.

5. Utility and grading plan.
6. Landscape plan.
7. Architectural building elevations.
8. Lighting plan.
9. Historical characteristics.
10. A vicinity map.
11. A narrative describing the proposal and how the development meets the required zoning requirements of this chapter.
12. Other details as requested pursuant to the City review.

Section 3. Severability. If any section, sentence, clause, phrase, word or other provision of this ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining sections, sentences, clauses, phrases, words or other provisions of this ordinance, or the validity of this ordinance as an entirety, it being the legislative intent that this ordinance shall stand notwithstanding the invalidity of any section, sentence, clause, phrase, word or other provision.

Section 4. Savings Clause. Except as amended hereby, the La Junta Municipal Code, as amended, shall remain valid and in full force and effect. Any provision of the Code that is in conflict with this ordinance is hereby repealed as of the effective date hereof.

INTRODUCED, READ, APPROVED AND ORDERED PUBLISHED in full on first reading this 6th day of October, 2025.

CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO

Joseph Ayala, Mayor

ATTEST:

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

PUBLISHED in full in ____ a newspaper of general circulation in the City of La Junta, Colorado, on this ____ day of _____, 2025.

PASSED AND ADOPTED ON FINAL READING AND ORDERED PUBLISHED,
with any amendments, this ___ day of _____, 2025.

CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO

Joseph Ayala, Mayor

ATTEST:

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

PUBLISHED BY TITLE ONLY in The _____ a newspaper of general circulation in the
City of La Junta, Colorado, following final reading on this ___ day of _____, 2025.

ORDINANCE NO. 1684

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
LA JUNTA AMENDING TITLE 17 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE
REGARDING SIGN STANDARDS**

WHEREAS, the City of La Junta, Colorado (“City”) is a statutory City and political subdivision of the State of Colorado, duly organized and operating under the constitution and laws of the State of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the City of La Junta’s Zoning Regulations allow for signs that promote or identify business, locations, and other organizations throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, the City of La Junta Planning Commission held a public hearing on the 16th day of March, 2023 and recommended the following amendments to Title 17-Zoning to updates sign standards throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, the City Council is desirous of amending sign regulations in the zoning regulations to promote and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the City’s citizens and business community; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Chapter 17 Article V Sign Regulations. Sections 17.50.010-17.50.120 of the La Junta Municipal Code is hereby repealed and replaced with the following sections:

17.50.010 Declaration of intent; findings and purposes.

A. Findings. The City finds with respect to the display of signs:

1. That the time, place and manner in which signs are displayed on property within the City’s jurisdiction has a significant impact on the public health, safety and welfare.

2. That signs serve many important functions in the efficient operations and economic vitality of the City, including communication, identification and direction.

3. That the number, location, size, relative scale, design and construction of signs for public display have a significant impact on the community’s aesthetics and beauty.

4. That poorly designed, constructed, installed or maintained signs can present a significant danger to traffic and public safety and a harmful impact on the aesthetics and economic vitality of the City.

5. That, because legitimate and necessary interests of each zone district are different, each district requires the application of different time, place and manner regulations to achieve the purposes furthered in the sign code.

6. That the cumulative impacts that would accrue if every member of a residential neighborhood chose to display a sign could be harmful to the best interests of the City and its residents.

B. Purpose. The purpose of this Article is to promote the public health, safety and welfare, by providing uniform standards for the times, places, and manners in which all signs within each zone in the City shall be displayed. This Section advances the following legitimate and necessary public purposes:

1. Communication, Identification and Direction. To allow the reasonable display of signs for the purposes of communication, identification and direction, while protecting the public from the display of signs that are unsafe, unattractive, obsolete, out-of-scale or incompatible with surrounding property uses.

2. Transportation Safety. To protect the public, including motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians, by prohibiting the display of signs in a manner that results in visual distractions, impaired visibility or other dangerous conditions that impair transportation safety.

3. Safety. To protect the public by prohibiting the display of signs that are designed, constructed, installed or maintained in a dangerous manner.

4. Aesthetics. To protect, enhance and preserve the visual beauty and aesthetic character of the City by prohibiting the display of signs in a manner that detracts from the beauty and character of their particular location, adjacent buildings and uses and the surrounding neighborhood.

5. Economic Vitality. To support the economic vitality of commercial enterprises and investments while providing uniform standards that allow equal opportunity in the competition to attract and inform customers.

6. Equal Opportunity. To divide and allocate the cumulative benefits and impacts realized through the display of signs so that each member of the community possesses an equal opportunity to communicate, or not communicate, through the display of signs.

7. Privacy. To protect the privacy of the community members who do not wish to be overwhelmed by unsolicited communications displayed on signs visible to the public.

17.50.020. Applicability.

This article shall apply to all signs or attention-attracting devices located within the City. Signs or attention-attracting devices shall only be allowed as permitted by this

article. The provisions of Section 17.50.110, nonconforming signs, also apply to signs within the City.

17.50.030. Sign permits and administration.

A. Purpose. The purpose of the sign permit requirement is to assure compliance with the sign code, prevent waste and provide for the orderly, fair and uniform application of the sign code to all individuals and situations. This Section only addresses which signs require permits prior to installation.

B. Permit Required. A sign permit is required prior to the installation of any sign or group of signs, whose total aggregate square footage equals more than nine (9) square feet per property. In multiple-tenant nonresidential buildings or developments with an approved comprehensive sign plan, a separate permit shall be required for each business entity's signs. Any multiple-tenant nonresidential buildings or development existing at the time of adoption of this Code that do not have a comprehensive sign plan shall be required to create a comprehensive sign plan allocating sign area to each business or tenant by the owner of the property at the time of application pursuant to the requirements of this Article. Separate building and electrical permits may be required for signs and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

C. Exempt Signs. A sign permit is not required for the display of a sign or group of signs, whose total square footage equals nine (9) square feet or less per property.

D. Application for Sign Permit. The application for a sign permit shall include the following information:

1. Applicant's name, mailing address and phone number.
2. Location of the property where the sign will be installed.
3. Sign Type. Identification of the type of signs proposed.
4. Sketch. A sketch showing the proposed sign, including dimensions and any other information needed to calculate permitted sign area, sign height and type of illumination. A certification by a structural engineer may be required for a pole sign or projecting sign.
5. Location. A site plan which identifies the proposed location of the sign on the property, and the location and size of all other existing signs on the building or parcel.
6. Consent. A letter of consent from the owner of the building or property, if the applicant is not the owner.
7. Form. Any other information required on the form provided by the Administrator.

8. Nonrefundable permit fee.

E. Determination of Sufficiency. After receiving the permit application, the Administrator shall determine whether it is complete. If the application is not complete, the Administrator shall notify the applicant within ten (10) business days following receipt of the application and take no further action until the deficiencies are remedied.

F. Issuance of Permit.

1. Compliance with Standards. If the application is complete, the Administrator shall determine whether the application complies with the standards of this Article. The Administrator shall be authorized to issue the permit, issue the permit with conditions or deny the permit application.

2. Review. Review of the application shall be completed and notice sent to the applicant within ten (10) business days from the date the application was deemed complete.

3. Inspections Generally. All signs shall be subject to inspection to determine that the sign is being installed and/or maintained in accordance with the terms of this Chapter.

G. Expiration. Whenever the construction of any sign has not been completed within one hundred eighty (180) days after its approval, the permit shall expire and be of no further force of effect.

17.10.040. Types of signs.

A. Awning Sign. An awning sign is a type of wall sign that is painted, stitched, sewn or stained onto the surface of an awning. An awning is a shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall of a building and composed of nonrigid or ridged materials except for the supporting framework. Sign area shall only be the lettering or graphics affixed to the awning. All awnings must be a minimum of 8' above grade.

B. Canopy Sign. A canopy sign is a type of wall sign that is permanently affixed to a roofed shelter attached to and supported by a building, by columns extending from the ground or by a combination of a building and columns.

C. Election Signs. An election sign is a temporary sign displayed during the election season beginning ninety (90) days prior to an election and ending fifteen (15) days following the election for the purpose of expressing opinions concerning candidates, ballot issues and ideological positions.

D. Externally Illuminated Sign. An externally illuminated sign is a sign that is lighted from an external source.

E. Ground Sign. A ground sign is a freestanding sign where the entire bottom is in contact with the ground. Ground signs are also referred to as "monument signs."

F. Internally Illuminated Sign. An internally illuminated sign is a sign that is lighted from an internal source, including signs that are lighted from fixtures attached to the structure of the sign such as light tubes or exposed neon tube lighting.

G. Mural. A mural is a painted image located on a building wall. A mural is a type of wall sign. Murals that promote La Junta, that do not contain wording promoting an individual business, and are approved under the creative sign permit or ghost signs do not count towards a property's allowable sign area.

H Neon Sign. A neon sign is an internally illuminated sign that utilizes gas-filled tubes.

I. Nonconforming sign. A nonconforming sign is a sign that was lawfully established pursuant to the sign codes in effect at the time of its erection, but which does not conform to the standards of this Article.

J. Pole Sign. A pole sign is a freestanding sign being supported by a pole or poles and otherwise separated from the ground by air. Pole signs shall be a minimum of fourteen (14') feet above grade when located adjacent to or projecting over a pedestrian way.

K. Projecting Sign. A projecting sign is any sign structurally supported by a building wall and projecting from the surface of the building or wall. Projecting signs shall not be higher than the eave line or parapet wall of the building, shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet above grade when located adjacent to or projecting over a pedestrian way. When two (2) sign faces are placed back-to-back and are at no point more than two (2) feet from each other, the area of the sign shall be counted as the area of a single face if both faces are of equal area, or the area of the larger face if the faces are not of equal area.

L. Sidewalk Sign. A sidewalk sign is an advertising or business ground sign constructed in such a manner as to form an "A" or a tent-like shape, hinged or not hinged at the top; each angular face held at an appropriate distance by a supporting member. Sidewalk signs are also referred to as "sandwich board signs."

M. Temporary Sign: A temporary sign is a sign, attention-attracting device or advertising display constructed of cloth, vinyl, canvas, fabric, plywood, sidewalk chalk, or other light material that is intended for display for less than ninety (90) days per calendar year.

N. Window Sign. A window sign is a sign that is painted on, applied or attached to a window that can be read through the window.

O. Wall Sign. A wall sign is a permanent sign that is painted on, incorporated into, hanging from or affixed to the building wall, in such a manner that the wall becomes the supporting structure for, or forms the background surface of, the sign. Wall signs shall not be higher than the eave line or parapet wall of the building, and no sign part, including cut-out letters, shall project more than six (6) inches from the building wall.

P. Billboards. A larger outdoor sign typically of premise found along major roads and highways used to display advertisements to passing pedestrians and vehicles.

17.50.050 Time, place and manner for display of signs.

A. Residential Zones (AL, R-S, R-1a, R-1, R-2, R-3, PUD, M-S and M-P). Each dwelling unit on a lot with nonresidential uses in a residential zone may display up to the total sum of nine (9) square feet of signs. The display of signs in residential zones is limited to pole or ground signs that do not exceed five (5) feet in height, wall signs and window signs. Signs in residential zones may not be illuminated.

B. Residential Uses in Commercial Zones. Each lot with a residential use in a commercial zone may display up to the total sum of nine (9) square feet of sign area per dwelling unit. The display of signs related to residential uses shall be limited to pole, ground wall, and window signs.

C. Subdivisions and Planned Developments. Each subdivision or planned development may display one (1) pole or ground sign not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet per street entrance. Each final plat of a subdivision or final plan of a planned development must have an approved comprehensive sign plan for the display of signs on property owned or utilized in common by the lot owners or tenants of the subdivision or planned development. Up to thirty-two (32) square feet of sign area may be displayed at each entrance to a subdivision or planned development for no more than two (2) years from the beginning of the physical development process for the purposes of advertising the development and advertising property sales.

D. Nonresidential Uses in Commercial Zones. An owner or tenant of a lot used for nonresidential purposes in a commercial zone may display the following types of signs. No individual sign may exceed one hundred fifty (150) square feet in area. In no event shall the total amount of sign area displayed exceed two hundred fifty (250) square feet. Signs located on the C-S zone district do not have a maximum size and the total sign area shall be based on the property's linear street frontage. C-S zone district maximum sign area shall be (1.0) square foot of sign area for each linear foot of lot frontage on a street.

1. Wall, Pole, Ground or Projecting Signs: The owners or tenants of a lot used for nonresidential purposes in a commercial zone may display an aggregate sign area totaling no more than the larger of forty (40) square feet or one (1.0) square foot of sign area for each linear foot of lot frontage on a street. If there is more than one (1) floor of nonresidential uses, an additional one-half (0.5) square foot of sign area for each linear foot of building frontage on a street is available for each additional floor above the first.

2. Sidewalk Signs: The owners of businesses operating in a building in C-1 or C-2 zones may display one (1) sidewalk sign per building on the sidewalk adjacent to the public business entrance of the building. If the business entrance is not adjacent to a city street, the sidewalk sign may be placed at the nearest

sidewalk, but only with the express permission of the owner of the business that is adjacent to the location of the sidewalk sign. All sidewalk signs are limited in size to a maximum width of three (3) feet and maximum height of five (5) feet. No sidewalk sign shall be displayed that presents a danger to the public or impedes the reasonable flow of pedestrian traffic. Sidewalk signs may only be displayed while the business is open to the public and must be removed at all other times. Sidewalk signs do not require a sign permit and do not count towards total area allowed.

3. Temporary Signs: The owners of businesses operating in a building in a commercial zone may display no more than one (1) temporary sign at any given time. The total size of a temporary sign shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet. The total number of days in which signs may be displayed shall not exceed ninety (90) days per calendar year (January 1 to December 31). Temporary signs shall be of professional quality and displayed in a safe manner. Temporary signs may not be affixed to public property or infrastructure. Temporary signs do not require a sign permit and do not count towards total area allowed.

E. Election Signs; Additional Allowed Signage During an Election Season. During the political campaign period beginning ninety (90) days prior to an election and ending fifteen (15) days following the election. Each residential dwelling unit in any zone shall be allowed an additional nine (9) square feet of sign area for the purpose of expressing opinions concerning candidates, ballot issues and ideological positions. The height of individual election signs shall be limited as established in Table 17-L.

TABLE 17-K Time, Place and Manner for the Display of Signs		
<i>Zone District</i>	<i>Sign Type Permitted</i>	<i>Maximum Sign Area</i>
Residential (AL, R-S, R-1a, R-1, R-2, R-3, PUD, M-S and M-P)	Wall, pole or ground	9 sq. ft. per dwelling unit
Commercial (C-S, C-1, C-2, I-1, I-2) Residential Use	Wall, pole or ground	9 sq. ft. per dwelling unit
Commercial (C-S, C-1, C-2, I-1, I-2) Nonresidential Use	Wall, pole, ground or projecting	First floor: 25 sq. ft. or up to 1.0 times the linear footage of lot frontage Additional floors: Up to 0.5 times the linear footage of building frontage
Notes: Every New Planned Development, subdivision, multi-tenant building or coordinated development shall have a comprehensive sign plan once approved by building owner. The maximum size of any individual sign shall be 250 sq. ft. except in the C-S zone. Any existing nonconforming sign may be modified or replaced if it is not enlarged. Billboards- No new off premise billboards are permitted in City limits. No Max height for wall signs attached to a building.		

TABLE 17-L Illumination and Height of Signs		
<i>Zone District</i>	<i>Illumination</i>	<i>Maximum Sign Height</i>
Residential (AL, R-S, R-1a, R-1, R-2, R-3, PUD, M-S and M-P)	May not be illuminated	5 feet for pole and ground signs
C-S, C-1, C-2, I-1, I-2 Residential Use	May not be illuminated	5 feet for pole and ground signs
C-1, C-2 Nonresidential Use	Externally or internally illuminated	40 feet for pole and ground signs
Commercial (C-S) and Industrial (I-1 and I-2) Nonresidential Use	Externally or internally illuminated	60 feet for pole signs and 20 feet for ground signs

17.60.060. Prohibited signs.

The following signs are inconsistent with the policy, purposes and standards in this Article and are prohibited in all zoning districts.

A. Off-Premises Signs. The right to display signs on a property is limited to the actual residents of the property where the sign is displayed or to commercial entities actually doing business on the property where the sign is displayed, with the exception that a nonresident owner may display signs on a property for the purpose of promoting the sale or lease of the property where the sign is displayed. The City Council may allow off-premises signs to be displayed following a finding that the proposed sign promotes a legitimate and necessary public interest in public safety, traffic safety, wayfinding, location identification, public information or promotes the economic vitality or arts and culture of a commercial district. Special event signs are allowed 60 days prior to the event and are allowed for any special event approved by City Council. The City Council shall review sign permit applications for off-premises signs and approval shall be for events that do not require a special event permit but promote the Economic vitality or Arts and Culture of the Commercial District. The City Council shall determine at that time whether the sign area requested would apply towards the square footage of sign area permitted on the site.

B. Signs on Public Property. Unless otherwise provided for in the Code, no sign shall be displayed on public property or within the right-of-way of any road or highway without the written approval of the City Council and following a finding that the proposed sign promotes a legitimate and necessary public interest in public safety, traffic safety, wayfinding, location identification, public information or the economic vitality of a commercial district.

C. Moving Signs. Flashing, rotating, blinking or moving signs, animated signs, signs with moving, rotating or flashing lights or signs that create the illusion of movement, except for time and temperature devices, are prohibited.

D. Hazardous Signs. No sign shall be displayed that is erected in such a manner or location as to cause visual obstruction or interference with a motor vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian traffic or traffic-control devices, including any sign that obstructs clear vision in any direction from any street intersection or driveway.

F. Dangerous Signs. No sign shall be displayed that poses a danger due to poor design, construction, installation or maintenance.

G. Decrepit Signs. No sign shall be displayed that is in a state of disrepair, wear or ruin due to age or neglect. All signs, including signs exempt from these regulations with respect to permits and fees, shall be maintained in good condition and in compliance with all building and electrical codes.

H. Roof Signs. A roof sign is a sign which is erected, placed or maintained, in whole or in part, upon, against or directly above the roof, or which projects above the eaves of a pitched roof or above the walls of a flat roof. Signs which are manufactured into the material of awnings or on an approved bracket that does not project above the roof line shall not be considered roof signs.

I. Obsolete Signs. An obsolete sign is a sign or sign structure, excluding murals, which advertises an activity, product or business which no longer occupies the premises on which the sign is located. Obsolete signs shall be removed by the legal owner of record of the property within a period of ninety (90) days after the business, product or service is no longer located upon the premises where the sign is located. Obsolete signs that are an integral part of the facade or which are determined to be historically significant by the Administrator but which do not advertise a business or product on the site, are permitted.

J. Attention-Attracting Devices. Attention-attracting devices in general are prohibited, unless otherwise approved under this Article. Bow-flags or other like signs are allowed in Commercial or Industrial districts may only be displayed during regular business hours and be in good repair.

K. Uncivil Signs. There shall be no signs or pictures of an obscene, indecent or immoral character such as will offend morals or decency in accordance with constitutional standards.

17.50.070. Sign measurement.

A. All Signs Counted. The aggregate area allowed for signs shall include all signs displayed on the site.

B. Sign Surface Area. Sign area shall be the area within the outer boundaries of standard geometrical shapes which encompasses the sign facing, including copy, insignia, background and borders.

C. Sign Support. Supporting framework or bracing that is clearly incidental to the display itself shall not be computed as sign area.

D. Cut-Out Letter Signs. The area of cut-out letter signs shall be considered to be that of a single rectangle or square encompassing all of the letters used to convey the message of the sign and shall include the open space between letters of words within that rectangle or square. The height of letters will be measured on the uppercase letters.

E Multi-Face Signs. The sign area for a sign with more than one (1) face shall be computed by adding together the area of all sign faces visible from a single point, unless otherwise specified in this Article. When two (2) sign faces are placed back-to-back and are at no point more than two (2) feet from each other, the area of the sign shall be counted as the area of a single face.

F. Sign Height. The height of a sign shall be measured from the highest point of a sign to the ground surface beneath it. When berms are used in conjunction with signage, the height of the sign shall be measured from the mean elevation of the fronting street.



Sign Measurement Details

17.50.080. Sign location and appearance standards.

A. Creative Design. Creative designs are encouraged. Signs shall make a positive contribution to the general appearance of the street and commercial area in which they are located. A well-designed sign can be a major asset to a building. The City encourages imaginative and innovative sign design. The creative sign application procedure (Section 16-8-90 below) is specifically designed for artistic and unusual signs that might not fit the standard sign regulations and categories.

b. Externally Lit Signs. Illumination of signs shall be arranged in such a manner as to be reflected away from residential properties and the vision of motorists, bicyclists or pedestrians. Lighting shall be placed so as to light downward onto a sign and be fully shielded. Fixtures used to illuminate signs shall be aimed so as not to project their light beyond the sign.

C. Internally Lit Signs. Illumination of signs shall be arranged in such a manner as to be reflected away from residential properties and the vision of motorists, bicyclists or pedestrians. To reduce glare and increase the ability to read signs at night, it is recommended that internally lit signs use white lettering against a dark background color.

D. Location of Signs. The following setbacks for signs shall be met for street and driveway intersections: No sign shall be located within a "clear sight triangle" between the height of two (2) and ten (10) feet above the ground.

E. Architectural Elements. Signs should not be placed so that they cover essential, character-defining architectural details of a building.

F. Construction. All signs shall be made by a commercial sign manufacturer or be of similar professional quality. All signs shall be completed and erected in a professional manner and in accordance with this Chapter.

G Right-of-way. Any sign which projects over a right-of-way in such a manner that it may cause a danger to the public shall have supports, hangers or fasteners certified by a Colorado-licensed structural engineer.

17.50.090. Creative signs.

A. Policy and Purpose. It is the policy of the City to encourage the use of creative signs that exhibit a high degree of thoughtfulness, imagination and inventiveness. The purpose of the creative sign process is to establish standards and procedures for the design review and approval of creative signs which, due to their unique design and construction, will make a significant contribution to the aesthetic beauty, historic character and cultural identity of the community, yet due to their creative qualities or site constraints would not be otherwise allowed under this Code.

B. Applicability. An applicant may only request the approval of a sign permit under the creative sign section for a sign that employs design standards that differ from the provisions of Sections 17.50.050 and 17.50.060 above, and otherwise comply with all other provisions of the sign code.

C. Approval Authority. A sign permit application for a creative sign shall be subject to approval by the Planning Commission.

D. Procedure.

1. Submittal of Application. The applicant shall submit a complete application including all of the materials required in Subsection 17.50.030 D above. Murals that promote La Junta may be granted a fee waiver.

2. Staff Review. The Administrator shall review the application to determine whether it is complete. The Administrator shall forward a report to the Planning Commission, which summarizes the application's compliance with the review standards contained in Subsection (e) below and other applicable provisions of this Chapter. The technical comments and professional recommendations of other agencies, organizations and consultants may be solicited in drafting the report.

3. Public Notice. Public notice that the Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing to consider the application for a creative sign shall be provided as specified in Section 17.2.20 of this Chapter.

4. Public Action by Planning Commission. The Planning Commission shall conduct a public hearing to review the conformance of the application with all applicable provisions of this Chapter. The Planning Commission shall approve, approve with conditions or deny the application, or remand it to the applicant with instructions for modification or additional information or action.

E. Review Standards.

1. Impact Review Standards. No sign shall be approved under the creative sign process that the Planning Commission finds:

a. Will have a significant adverse impact on adjacent properties. The sign shall not adversely affect neighboring property owners, businesses or residents and should be compatible with the uses, character and identity of the area in which it is displayed;

b. Creates a dangerous condition. Granting the creative sign permit will not adversely affect public safety. The use of signs or attention-attracting devices should not significantly distract traffic on adjacent streets; or

c. Distracts from the important architectural, natural or historic features of the building or neighborhood in which the sign is displayed.

2. Design Review Standards. In addition to the Impact Review Standards, to approve a sign under the creative sign process, the Planning Commission must find that the unique and creative design of the sign will meet Standards a, b and c or Standard d:

a. Constitute a substantial aesthetic improvement to the site and have a positive visual impact on the surrounding area that justifies departure from the parameters of Section 17.50.0-50 and/or 17.50.060 above.

b. Utilize and/or enhance the architectural or historic elements of the building or location where it is displayed in an historic, unique and/or creative manner that justifies departure from the parameters of Section 17.50.0-50 and/or 17.50.060 above.

c. Provide strong artistic character through the imaginative use of design, graphics, color, texture, quality of materials, scale and proportion uses, character and identity of the area in which it is displayed.

d. A creative sign may be appropriate to provide reasonable visibility of a business's main sign in some rare situations where topography, landscaping, existing buildings or unusual building design may substantially block visibility of the applicant's existing or proposed signs from multiple directions. Despite the possibility of a creative sign permit, visibility of a sign or attention-attracting device may not be possible.

17.50.100. Nonconforming signs.

A. Authority to Continue. Any sign legally established on the effective date of this Zoning Code or any amendment thereto which does not conform with any provisions of the Zoning Code shall be allowed to remain and to be maintained in good repair, subject to the discontinuance provisions below.

B. Discontinuance. A legal nonconforming sign shall be removed if any one of the following conditions occurs. In all such cases of discontinuance, if a replacement sign is proposed it shall be constructed in accordance with the provisions of this Land Use Code.

1. If a change of use occurs, regardless of ownership, such that the new use would be a different classification under Table 17-D;
2. The principal use with which the sign is associated terminates for ninety (90) days or longer;
3. The principal building with which the sign is associated is demolished or destroyed;

4. The nonconforming sign is destroyed or damaged as a result of either an intentional act of the owner (other than for maintenance which shall not exceed two [2] weeks), an unintentional act of another or an act of nature, the replacement sign shall be constructed in conformance with the provisions of this Zoning Code if the estimated cost of restoration to its condition before the occurrence exceeds fifty percent (50%) of the value of the sign structure prior to being damaged;
5. The building official determines that the sign is an immediate hazard to the public health, safety and welfare because of disrepair, unsafe mounting, imminent dislodging or other safety factors.

Section 2. Severability. If any section, sentence, clause, phrase, word or other provision of this ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining sections, sentences, clauses, phrases, words or other provisions of this ordinance, or the validity of this ordinance as an entirety, it being the legislative intent that this ordinance shall stand notwithstanding the invalidity of any section, sentence, clause, phrase, word or other provision.

Section 3. Savings Clause. Except as amended hereby, the La Junta Municipal Code, as amended, shall remain valid and in full force and effect. Any provision of the Code that is in conflict with this ordinance is hereby repealed as of the effective date hereof.

INTRODUCED, READ, APPROVED AND ORDERED PUBLISHED in full on first reading this 6th day of October, 2025.

CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO

Joseph Ayala, Mayor

ATTEST:

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

PUBLISHED in full in ____ a newspaper of general circulation in the City of La Junta, Colorado, on this ____ day of _____, 2025.

PASSED AND ADOPTED ON FINAL READING AND ORDERED PUBLISHED,
with any amendments, this ___ day of _____, 2025.

CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO

Joseph Ayala, Mayor

ATTEST:

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

PUBLISHED BY TITLE ONLY in The _____ a newspaper of general circulation in the
City of La Junta, Colorado, following final reading on this ___ day of _____, 2025.