

Manti City Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

September 8, 2026
6:30 PM

MANTI CITY BUILDING
50 SOUTH MAIN STREET

TYPE OF MEETING	Planning Commission Meeting
ATTENDEES	Members: Alan Christensen, Heather Weiss, Gavin Cox, and Richard Gardner Also present: City Planner McKay Muhlestein and City Recorder Matt Gray
ABSENT	Members: Ben Bramwell
WELCOME	Chairman Alan Christensen

Regular Meeting

ITEM 1	Consideration of approval for minutes of the meeting of July 14, 2026
Chairman Alan Christensen welcomed all in attendance. It was noted that there were no changes to the July 14, 2026 meeting minutes. Chairman Christensen then requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes. A motion was made by Commission Member Heather Weiss and seconded by Commission Member Richard Gardner. Planning Commission Members voting “aye”: Alan Christensen, Heather Weiss, Gavin Cox, and Richard Gardner. Planning Commission Members voting “nay”: none.	
ACTION TAKEN	
Approval of the Planning Commission minutes from the July 14, 2026, meeting.	

ITEM 2	Manti City General Plan 2026 Update
The meeting was turned over to City Planner McKay Muhlestein to discuss the General Plan updates. The resident survey received about 400 responses, which is a strong response rate for a city of Manti’s size. Most respondents have lived in Manti for a long time, and many value the city’s small-town feel, historic character, access to the mountains, the temple, and the close-knit community. At the same time, people also said they want more jobs, more restaurants, more grocery and retail options,	

better youth activities, walking and biking trails, and better property maintenance. The survey noted a recurring tension: residents often want more businesses and services, but they are cautious about population growth and new development. Growth was one of the biggest themes. Only a small share of respondents wanted no growth at all, while many supported either the current growth rate or slightly higher growth. The group discussed how Manti could avoid becoming only a “bedroom community,” because even a quiet residential town still needs basic services, especially for people who cannot easily drive elsewhere. Housing was another major topic. Survey respondents strongly preferred single-family homes, but there was some support for duplexes, assisted living or retirement condos, mobile homes, tiny homes, and other more affordable options. Mr. Muhlestein emphasized that if Manti added more dense housing, good planning would usually place it near the historic core or services rather than pushing it to the edges of town. He also introduced the idea of identifying vacant or underused lots where carefully designed infill housing could work without changing the whole character of a neighborhood. Mr. Muhlestein described overlay zoning as a possible tool: instead of changing an entire residential zone, the city could create a special layer of rules for specific areas or types of vacant lots. That could allow certain lots that are currently too small or awkward under existing rules to be used productively, while still keeping the broader zoning structure intact. Commission members seemed interested in this because Manti has many vacant or underused parcels that are not helping the city economically or visually. The survey also showed strong interest in historic preservation, but the commission recognized the challenge of balancing preservation with housing needs. There was discussion of other cities that have used visual preference surveys or pre-approved design plans so residents can help define what “good growth” looks like. The idea is that people may not oppose density itself as much as they fear ugly buildings, traffic, parking problems, or loss of neighborhood character. For local business development, Mr. Muhlestein introduced the idea of accessory commercial units, similar to accessory dwelling units but for small businesses. These could allow low-impact businesses—such as a bakery, flower shop, photographer, accountant, tailor, repair shop, or small studios to operate from a small structure on residential property. The goal would be to give homegrown businesses a stepping stone before they can afford a Main Street storefront. Survey responses were generally favorable, especially if reasonable restrictions were included. Main Street revitalization was another major focus. Mr. Muhlestein gave examples from places like Green River, Helper, Brigham City, and Pottsville, Pennsylvania. Ideas included small, inexpensive improvements such as benches, planters, murals, window displays, cleanup days, façade improvements, and events that actually draw people onto Main Street. He emphasized that Manti does not have to invent everything from scratch because programs like Utah Main Street and national Main Street frameworks already offer guidance and grant opportunities. There was also discussion about using upper floors of Main

Street buildings for housing. Mr. Muhlestein noted that many historic downtown buildings traditionally had businesses below and residences above, and that Manti may have empty second-floor spaces that could become apartments if funding were available for electrical, plumbing, heating, and interior upgrades. He mentioned heritage-area grant funding that may be flexible and useful for this kind of work. Farmland preservation came up through the example of conservation easements. Mr. Muhlestein explained that these allow landowners to keep owning and farming their land while selling the development rights, often through a land trust or conservancy. Commission members saw both sides: it can preserve agriculture and open space permanently, but it can also limit future housing supply and create barriers to city growth if used too broadly or in the wrong places. The general feeling was that it could be useful in targeted areas, such as wetlands, wildlife habitat, or important open-space corridors, but would need carefully planned. Property maintenance was another community concern. Survey respondents complained about junk cars, weeds, unkempt properties, and vacant buildings. Instead of relying only on enforcement, Mr. Muhlestein shared examples of cities using beautification contests, yard awards, volunteer cleanup programs, and help-a-neighbor efforts for elderly or disabled residents. Commission member Weiss suggested tying this to water conservation by recognizing attractive xeriscape yards. There was also a brief discussion about data centers as a potential economic development tool. Commission member Weiss suggested that if a data center ever came to Manti, the city could negotiate aggressively for major community benefits, such as infrastructure, school funding, property-tax relief, or a pedestrian bridge. It was noted that data centers come with serious concerns, especially land and water impacts, and Mr. Muhlestein said previous discussions had shown many downsides for Manti. The meeting ended with Mr. Muhlestein outlining the next steps for the General Plan. He expects to have the plan finished by the end of October, with a draft ready around the beginning of October for review. The Planning Commission's role is mainly to provide feedback, especially on land-use issues, while the City Council will hold the formal public hearing and vote to adopt the plan. He also mentioned an upcoming public open house where residents could review the case studies and share input.

ITEM 3	Adjournment of the meeting
After the presentation discussion Chairman Christensen requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Planning Commission Member Gavin Cox moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commission Member Richard Gardner. Members voting "aye": Alan Christensen, Heather Weiss, Gary Cox, and Richard Gardner. Members voting "nay": none.	

ADJOURNED	7:50 P.M.
NEXT MEETING DATE	October 13, 2026

