



Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

SUBJECT: RAISE Grant – Access, Affordability and Safety for Workers in the Gunnison Valley

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Tourism and Prosperity Partnership (TAPP) is pleased to offer our support of Gunnison County's application for a FY24 RAISE Grant to advance public infrastructure. This public infrastructure will provide safe access to jobs for local tourism industry workers.

TAPP's mission is to grow the prosperity of Gunnison County residents by focusing on growing our tourism economy while also diversifying the economy beyond tourism. Our amenity-based economy is reliant on tourism. If businesses can't properly staff, the visitor experience will diminish, and visitation will decrease. This could be detrimental to our local economy. In addition, as we work to diversify our economy beyond tourism, one of the main hurdles companies face is the availability of housing.

Crested Butte is no exception to the rural affordable housing crisis in Colorado. Many workers commute up to 30 miles each way. The Whetstone community housing development in Crested Butte will provide housing security for these essential workers. It will tackle issues such as overcrowding, low-quality housing, high utility costs and rising rents. It will also prevent workers from having to move due to their rental housing being sold or converted to a short-term rental.

The cost of public infrastructure often hinders workforce housing projects. The Whetstone workforce housing project cannot move forward until planned road improvements are completed. The RAISE grant will contribute to advancing designs of these public infrastructure projects so the desperately needed Whetstone community housing development can be built on schedule.

The proposed road improvements meet all the economic, quality of life, and equity goals of the RAISE program by making the roads safer and providing secure housing for members of the tourism workforce. TAPP supports this infrastructure project because it would improve the quality of life for people who work in the tourism industry, a vital piece of Gunnison County's economy. We urge and value your support of Gunnison County's RAISE grant application.

Kind regards,

John Norton
TAPP Executive Director