

DRAFT

May 10, 2016

Colorado Department of Transportation
Attn: Mr. Shialen Bhatt
4201 E. Arkansas Avenue
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Mr. Bhatt:

The purpose of this letter is to express interest in the Colorado Pedals Project and explain the City's request for a grant application in the amount of \$2.5 million under this exciting program. During the past ten years, the City has actively pursued the redevelopment and expansion of public transportation facilities. In 2012, Gunnison was presented the Silver Award by Bicycle Friendly Communities, which was primarily due to City leaders prioritizing non-motorized transportation. Gunnison now seeks to make a transformative change by implementing a Complete Streets model along the City's urban highway corridors. This letter summarizes the ongoing Gunnison Complete Streets project and enumerates the details that make this project worthy of funding through the Colorado Pedals Project.

In 2015, the City began the public scoping process for developing a new Comprehensive Plan. Resoundingly, the community endorsed development of new bike lanes and pedestrian facilities. In fact, citizens lobbied the Council to take immediate action for redeveloping the urban highway corridor. The City Council then appropriated approximately \$40,000 for a Complete Streets public scoping process. In 2016, the Council appropriated another \$100,000 for a design/build program for our U.S. Highway 50 corridor.

In conjunction with an extensive public outreach program, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Region 3 staff and City began discussing engineering design details. During the past seven months several webinars involving Region 3 staff have taken place. A milestone meeting occurred on April 21, 2016, when City Council representatives and consultants from Fox, Tuttle and Hernandez travelled to CDOT's Grand Junction office for a day-long program meeting. As a result of this meeting, CDOT Region 3 and the City have formed a partnership for the submittal of a Colorado Pedal Project grant.

The U.S. High 50 urban corridor, with rights-of-way ranging from 95 feet to 200 feet in width, traverses the city in a general east/west direction. The highway effectively segregates the community's neighborhoods and land uses, and constrains non-motorized travel.

Gunnison Complete Streets is focused on funding the design and construction of bicycle facilities along the U.S. Highway 50 corridor (Tomichi Avenue). The project includes intersection designs facilitating non-motorized movements across the 100+ foot wide urban highway corridor. Preliminary engineering designs propose the construction of parking protected bikeways on each side of U.S. Highway 50 through the majority of the community. The design also proposes two improved intersection crossings, one on each end of this corridor. These would provide safe, non-motorized crossings, fulfill traffic calming desires and serve as iconic community entry features. Design has also focused on the U.S. Highway 50/State Highway 135 intersection. The desire is to develop emblematic and functional Complete Streets elements to the community's Central Business District as well.

In 2012, CDOT Region 3 and the City initiated a *Highway Access Control Plan* on the eastern Highway 50 corridor, and using a partnership approach this landmark project took about one year to complete. Now the community has called for City leaders to transform our urban highway system and the Region 3/City partnership has been rekindled. Gunnison has invested approximately \$140,000 to bring the community's vision to a point of detail with preliminary engineering, design and cost estimates (\$2.5 million) vetted through an ongoing public process. Council is enthusiastic about possibilities for this partnership to result in a transformative community change.

Please feel free to contact Steven Westbay (Community Development Director) or City Council directly if you have any questions or desire to discuss this opportunity in more detail.

Sincerely,

Mayor Richard Hagan

Mayor Pro Tem Robert E. Drexel

Councilor Leia Morrison

Councilor Stu Ferguson

Councilor Matthew Schwartz

CC: Mr. Michael Lewis (CDOT Deputy Director)
Mr. Kenneth Grant (CDOT Bike Czar)
Mr. David Eller (Director, CDOT Region 3)

Enclosure: U.S. Highway 50 Design Plan Set

