

February 28, 2024



Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) FY2024 RAISE Grant Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The City of Aspen is in full support of the RFTA FY2024 RAISE planning grant proposal to develop a locally preferred alternative BRT alignment through the City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado, to improve BRT service within the City of Glenwood Springs and throughout RFTA's multi-county service area.

RFTA is the second largest transit agency in Colorado, and the largest rural transit agency in the nation. RFTA provides affordable, convenient year-round public transit services across a 70-mile rural service region between Rifle and Aspen, linking eight member jurisdictions, which include six municipalities and two counties. The RFTA Board of Directors is an innovative and trusted decision-making body, truly embracing the organization's mission of connecting the region with transit and trails.

As a member of RFTA, the City of Aspen is a primary workforce destination, a regional economic engine and an international mountain/resort tourist destination. As far back as the 1970's, the City has been heavily subsidizing and incentivizing transit to meet community mobility, sustainability and climate action goals. As the southern terminus of the 42-mile SH-82 *Veloci*RFTA BRT corridor, Aspen recognizes that improvements made anywhere in the corridor provide benefits to the whole transit network.

The 42-mile *Veloci*RFTA BRT system, implemented in 2013 with the support of USDOT's *Very Small Starts* grant program, currently terminates at the southern end of the City of Glenwood Springs, leaving the majority of the City and the I-70 corridor with limited transit service. RFTA intends to extend BRT to downtown Glenwood Springs and to the western part of the City, ultimately creating a more reliable connection to the I-70 corridor. Western Garfield County is where population and employment growth is predominantly occurring due in part to more affordable housing options. Creating a transit corridor with a dedicated guideway and/or transit priority is an essential prerequisite to efficient and reliable BRT service, consistent with the rest of the regional BRT system.

The Glenwood Springs BRT Alignment project aligns with the RAISE grant program criteria, and the City of Aspen encourages the USDOT to approve a full planning grant award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "TORRE", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Aspen Mayor Torre