



**EAGLE COUNTY**

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May 6, 2024

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

RE: Cottonwood Pass Blue Hill Safety Improvements - MPDG 25/26

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Eagle County (EC) is pleased to submit the Eagle County Cottonwood Pass Blue Hill Safety Improvements Project MPDG application. The 2025/2026 MPDG funds requested for the Cottonwood Pass project will be used to improve the safety and mobility of the vital road connection for local residents, region visitors, and the occasional I-70 detour traffic with curve softening, enhanced sight distance, and increased road width to accommodate two-way traffic movements.

The improvements of this Project will advance local and regional goals in safety, resiliency, and connectivity along a significant local route between the rural towns of Gypsum and Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, and others along Colorado Highway (CO) 82 in the Roaring Fork Valley of Western Colorado. The location and length of Cottonwood Pass provides opportune redundancy during I-70 closures through Glenwood Canyon, and is used by travelers during closures due to the shorter travel times it provides compared to the official detours. However, Cottonwood Pass is a narrow, largely unpaved, and residential byway not designed for interstate traffic. When Glenwood Canyon is closed, thousands of interstate travelers reroute causing traffic volumes on Cottonwood Pass to increase over 800%. The Blue Hill section in particular has substantial safety and operational issues with two-way traffic conflicts through the narrow stretch, combined with tight curves with limited sight distance and steep grades.

If awarded MPDG funding through our partnership with CDOT, Eagle County has committed to complete the funding package for the Cottonwood Pass project as necessary to address any project cost increases beyond the current cost estimate or identified contingencies. Funding from Eagle County is subject to annual appropriations and must be approved by the Board of County Commissioners in a public meeting. CDOT will provide the matching funds as identified in the grant application.

Thank you for considering MPDG funds for the Eagle County Cottonwood Pass Blue Hill Safety Improvements Project.

Sincerely,

Jill Klosterman  
Chief Financial Officer