

Strong Communities Infrastructure Grant Program: Letter of Intent Form (LOI)

Email: dcaris@fruita.org

Name: Dan Caris, Planning & Development Director

Jurisdiction (municipality/county): City of Fruita/Mesa County

Priority Project Summary:

Our priority project is building attainable housing in Fruita, especially for those who work and explore in the area. The goal is to provide affordable housing options for those who earn at and below 140% of the area median income (AMI). Recently, Fruita completed a market study that showed the need for affordable housing to accommodate and improve the quality of life for Fruita residents.

In order to achieve this, we have worked closely with Together, We Grow Development (TWGD) to create a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for an infill site at 614 Raptor Road. This site was chosen due to its proximity to Downtown Fruita as well as the accessibility to I-70. The property is adjacent to a hotel, truck dealerships, the Dinosaur Journey Museum, camping, outdoor recreation and the James M. Robb Colorado State Park. All these locations provide work close to the housing so that residents can easily get around and participate within the community. Furthermore, there will be payment in lieu of performance to assist in providing additional childcare facilities in the area. We are already working with a childcare provider that will be 0.25 miles from the property. Roots of Wonder Early Learning Center is building a brand new, nature-based childcare facility. This early learning center will be opening 74 new childcare spots for children ages 6 weeks to 6 years old; as well as provide up to 20 new local jobs.

This project is already well under way and our next steps include obtaining the final PUD approval by 12/18/23. Having this affordable housing in Fruita will not only help to grow our local economy but provide a place of comfort for those who need it the most. This is just one step in our mission to sustain our community and increase accessibility.

The City of Fruita uses a mix of innovative concepts to incentivize and promote affordable housing developments. Prior to 2019, the City of Fruita's Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code contained many standards that produced almost all single-family detached residential products. As the City was growing at a high rate during the early 2000's, nearly all housing built in Fruita was single-family detached with nearly no incentives for affordable housing. Then in 2019, we were in a great position to change that.

During the many public engagement open houses used to update the Comprehensive Plan, Fruita residents expressed their desire to incentivize and support a mix of housing types, especially affordable housing. We found that the Land Use Code at the time contained many barriers that deterred higher density, infill developments, accessory dwelling units, multi-family housing options and affordable housing developments. Shortly after the Comprehensive Plan was

put into place, the Land Use Code was updated to remove nearly all the barriers described above, including but not limited to affordable housing options. One major change is the use of a streamlined development process to help move these types of applications through the review process more effectively to promote growth. This grant would help us to finish the Raptor Road project and continue to provide infrastructure that will benefit those who work, live and play in Fruita.

Additional Project Ideas:

At this time, there is no other project as developed as the Raptor Road housing that meets the requirements of SCIG funding.

What is the location of your priority project: 614 Raptor Road, Fruita, CO 81521

What is the estimated total budget for your priority project: \$63,412,812

What is the estimated amount of funding you would request from DOLA for your priority project: \$4,000,000

Does the project have the required 20% local matching funds? Yes

Who are your key project partners? The City of Fruita, Fruita Housing Authority, TWG Development, McCool Development Solutions, STUDIO Architecture, Roots of Wonder Early Learning Center