



January 8, 2025

Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

To Whom it May Concern:

The Town of Mead expresses our support of the application submitted by the City of Loveland (Loveland) to the U.S. Department of Transportation for funding from the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) grant program. The Highway 287 Flood Mitigation Project will increase resiliency to flooding, improve safety, reduce long term costs, provide equitable mobility options and promote economic prosperity in Northern Colorado.

The Highway 287 Flood Mitigation Project is of paramount importance to Loveland as the implications of non-action include threats to a major transportation route (US Highway 287), critical facilities, and businesses. Using PROTECT grant funds, the Highway 287 Flood Mitigation Project will replace the US 287 bridge over the Big Thompson River with a structure capable of safely passing the 100-year (1 percent annual chance) flood, whereas the existing structure cannot pass the 10-year without overtopping. The existing structure does not meet current hydraulic criteria for even a local residential roadway, much less a critical U.S. highway. The lack of resiliency of this bridge and roadway cost the community \$9.9 million dollars in the most recent 2013 flood, which would be approximately \$30 million in today's dollars. It cost local businesses millions more in damages to private property and business closures. The Big Thompson River has sustained 13 damaging floods – the most recent occurring in September 2013 resulting in significant damage to public infrastructure and private properties in the Loveland area. The US 287 bridge nearly failed from scour undermining the piers and north abutment, and the highway was closed for more than two weeks as the river overtopped the roadway. Many businesses were closed for months due to significant flood damage. The need for more resiliency in this area following the 2013 flood led to the creation of the Big Thompson River Corridor Master Plan. This plan identifies numerous projects and river maintenance activities to implement along the nine-mile stretch of the river through the Loveland area. The US 287 Flood Mitigation project is currently the highest priority capital project identified. The project is also listed in both the local and the Larimer County Hazard Mitigation Plans. Resiliency is at the heart of this project.

The proposed project will construct a new, elevated bridge and prevent overtopping of the highway during a future 100-year flood. The reconstructed highway will include four through lanes, a center turn lane where needed, a median to provide both safety and improved aesthetics, safer access control to existing business properties, bike lanes, a safe sidewalk system, and pedestrian connections to the Big Thompson River corridor trail and adjacent public parks. It meets future multi-modal transportation needs while even reducing overall pavement area when compared to existing conditions. The project also allows for realignment of the river channel to create a better natural open space corridor, a healthier river



and riparian corridor, safer recreation, reduced scour potential, and improved sediment transport functions. The completion of the Highway 287 Flood Mitigation Project will allow other planned corridor improvements and economic development projects along US 287 and State Highway 402, creating further resilience within the community.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Loveland's PROTECT application for the Highway 287 Flood Mitigation Project. We encourage you to give the application from the City of Loveland a positive review for award of funding, which we believe the project merits.

Sincerely,

Colleen G. Whitlow
Mayor