



October 20, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Vail Valley Partnership is the regional chamber of commerce, with over 900 members throughout Eagle County who collectively represent over 80% of the local workforce. We are dedicated to the economic vitality of the valley, and as such our board of governors – which includes residents & business operators throughout Eagle County – has identified workforce housing as our number one priority.

As most know, Eagle County faces a gap in the availability of ownership and rental housing that is affordable for local residents. Residents are burdened by high housing payments. Employees are forced to commute long distances. According to the annual workforce survey, employers believe that the availability of workforce housing is a critical or major problem in Eagle County. The Eagle County Housing Assessment shows a shortfall of 4,500 units to meet current needs.

Workforce and affordable housing has long been an issue in Eagle County. Addressing our affordable housing issue is essential to the continued success and growth of our business community across industry sectors. As such, we support the proposed Belden Place neighborhood.

Currently and anecdotally, units that have been long-term workforce rentals are being removed from that market as they are converted into short-term rentals. This has the potential to grow both catch-up and keep-up needs for workforce housing.

We request that projects seeking Vail Valley Partnership support meet the following criteria, and believe that Belden Place fits each of these:

1. Demonstrate commitment to the future through incorporating resident occupied workforce housing units/employee housing units at or above the minimum required by local code and that result in a net increase in workforce housing stock (i.e., more housing created than jobs created);
2. Utilize resident occupancy requirements in their deed restrictions;
3. Actively engage neighboring communities before and during the process through various stages of approval (planning & zoning, design & review, elected boards, etc.);
4. Be located in appropriate in-fill locations throughout the county, and/or in areas designated and zoned for housing development;
5. Be cognizant of regional transit and transportation impacts and mitigate these impacts through their development plans.



In addition to our specified criteria, this specific project also provides a variety of other benefits to Minturn and the Eagle River Valley, including:

- Attainable homes for local, resident families who have a choice in what kind of home they would like to live and invest in;
- A new, comprehensive neighborhood development that supports the ongoing renaissance of Minturn- possibly being the first form of a true neighborhood, infill development in decades;
- A much-needed “missing middle” home choice, to fill in a ‘gap’ in the existing housing market for reasonably priced homes in the upper valley.

We want to ensure our community can remain competitive to keep locals local and to support our business community. We encourage local governments and boards to approve appropriate in-fill projects and to be open-minded and flexible to grant appropriate variances to local code to facilitate the development of these projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Chris Romer", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Chris Romer  
President & CEO  
Vail Valley Partnership