

GUNNISON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION MEETING AGENDA – REVISION #1

DATE: Tuesday, September 23, 2025

Page 1 of 1

PLACE: Board of County Commissioners' Meeting Room at the Gunnison County Courthouse
(REMOTE OPTION BELOW)

8:30 am

- Tourism and Prosperity Partnership Board Update

9:30 am

- Senator Hickenlooper's and Senator Bennet's Staff; Latest Federal Developments and Gunnison County Priorities

10:30 am

- Break

10:40 am

- Kebler Pass Trailhead Winter Parking Permit Discussion

11:10 am

- **ADDED** Legislative Priorities Discussion
- Adjourn

Please Note: Packet materials for the above discussions will be available on the Gunnison County website at <http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/meetings> prior to the meeting.

ZOOM MEETING DETAILS:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://gunnisoncounty-org.zoom.us/j/89798905619>

One tap mobile

+12532158782,,82753657556#,,,,*471302# US (Tacoma)

+13462487799,,82753657556#,,,,*471302# US (Houston)

AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Tourism and Prosperity Partnership Board Update

Action Requested: Discussion

Parties to the Agreement:

Term Begins:

Term Ends:

Grant Contract #:

Summary:

TAPP Update

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Holly Perry

Submitter's Email Address: hperry@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review:

Required

Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mlamonica

Discharge Date: 9/17/2025

County Attorney Review:

Required

Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by:

Discharge Date:

Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes No

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirmie

Discharge Date: 9/18/2025

Consent Agenda

Regular Agenda

Worksession

Time Allotted: 60

Agenda Date: 9/23/2025

September 2025 Tourism and Prosperity Partnership (TAPP) Presentation Detail

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Overview

TAPP has continued to work towards maintaining a robust tourism economy while also diversifying our economy beyond tourism. The recently released Dean Runyan and Colorado Tourism Office study estimated \$372.5 million in visitor spending in Gunnison County in 2024. That is a growth of 3.1% over 2023. That also includes 2,600 jobs directly tied to that spending (up 5.4%), with earnings by those employees of \$106.9 million (up 10%). Tourism remains the economic lifeblood of our community and must be maintained to keep our economy churning. At the same time, TAPP is working hard to smooth the booms and busts and wean our reliance on tourism by developing other sectors to our economy.

Thus far, 2025 has proven to be a bit more of a rocky year for tourism than 2024. In winter 2024/2025, we saw a downturn in visitation and spending. We attribute this to multiple factors. First, we have become heavily reliant on drive market traffic, specifically from the Front Range of Colorado. We had a slow start to the ski season with cold temperatures and a lack of consistent snowfall. In addition to this, we suspect that uncertainty in the economy has made some less apt to take trips. For the spring of 2025, our added marketing efforts seem to be paying off; we were able to overcome some of the downturn in winter with both May and June LMD collections coming in higher than last year. The full story of summer is yet to be seen, but early indications are that we were able to maintain similar tax collections with higher lodging rates and longer length of stay as opposed to more visitors. This is a very different picture than we have seen in other mountain destinations.

Our efforts to diversify beyond tourism continue to bear fruit and gain the attention and funding from state-level offices. We are trying to reduce barriers for our exporting businesses through programs like the opening of the Hub. We hope that this investment will become a self-sustaining venture that offers space for export businesses to house their operations into the future.

Similar to our tourism and ICELab efforts, we find that the Gunnison Valley's strategic advantage is its natural capital and access to the pristine lands that surround our population centers. We continue to lean into this advantage when it comes to our efforts with Western, where we have seen growing student opportunities via a world-class field station at Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory.

While we have had success in 2025 thus far, we are conservatively budgeting for 2026. We are projecting that LMD collections will come in flat to last year in our planning. We are reducing our ask of the LMD while also expanding our winter marketing in order to offset a downturn we saw last year.

Source: [Tourism Economic Impact](#)

Marketing

Spring (May and June) Tourism

Increased spring visitation

TAPP is starting to see the spring marketing campaigns of the last few years paying off in a big way. There were 20% more overnight visitors to Gunnison County this May and June than during these months last year. Though growth in visitors happened county-wide, the growth was skewed towards the south end of the county. More individual people visited the south end of the valley than the north end during this period. This is in line with TAPP's goals of growing south valley tourism during the spring shoulder season.

Despite the growth in the number of south valley visitors, their stays tend to be about a day shorter than north valley visitors during May and June. Something to work towards in the future is extending the length of south valley trips. One way to do this would be to increase fliers, who tend to stay longer.

Source: [Placer May + June visitation report](#)

Gunnison sales tax increases

The City of Gunnison sales tax data reflects these same trends, with sales tax collections up year over year for April, May and June. Gunnison businesses and the municipality are benefiting from more visitors during this historically slow season.

Source: [City of Gunnison spring sales tax spreadsheet](#)

Summer (July and August) Tourism

Difference Between North and South Valley

There was a big difference between the south and north ends of the valley during July and August. The south end of the valley saw about the same number of visitors as last year, but they stayed longer than visitors did last year. The north valley saw a 7% drop in visitors year over year, but visits were slightly shorter. County-wide, a 4% drop in unique visitors was mostly offset by a longer length of stay.

Source: [Placer July + August visitation report](#)

Spring and Summer Flights

Excellent Flight Performance

Spring and summer flights performed well, with an average load factor of 73%. This high load factor is especially impressive due to a 63% capacity increase.

Source: [Jeff Moffett report to TAPP board of directors. 9/4/2025](#)

“Non-Snow” Marketing Campaign Report

Main Campaign Performance

With campaign performance data still coming in, the preliminary report shows that the spring and summer tourism marketing campaigns performed well. Working with our media agency, TAPP ran a full funnel ad campaign, ranging from awareness campaigns on platforms like Spotify all the way down the funnel to retargeting campaigns that focused on driving conversions among people who had already interacted with ads. Audience profiles included gravel bikers, mountain bikers, and a more general “outdoorsy” audience, focusing heavily on Texas and the Front Range.

Meta and Google Search ads were the stand-out performers and the main drivers of traffic to the site. These platforms also achieved the lowest costs per click.

TAPP executed our most wide-reaching content creator partnerships yet, with Jess Hana and Jeff Kendall-Weed showcasing the area to their large audiences on Instagram and YouTube, respectively.

This spring and summer, TAPP and our agency worked together to find more platforms on which to reach gravel bikers, since they’ve been a tricky group to target in past campaigns. Reddit ended up being an excellent way to connect with avid gravel bikers.

Source: [Colvita Creative summer 2025 campaign report](#)

Source: [Jess Hana Instagram](#)

Source: [Jeff Kendall-Weed YouTube](#)

Camping Stewardship Campaign

The camping stewardship campaign had a very high cost per click but achieved a high click-through rate and high time on site. Next summer, we will work to get the cost per click down.

Source: [Colvita Creative summer 2025 campaign report](#)

Fall Visitation Forecast

Fall Lodging

Lodging rates are up 8% year-over-year, while occupancy is down about 7%. Length of stay is up 5%.

Source: [Key Data fall lodging booking forecast](#)

Fall Flights

September, October and November flight bookings are pacing ahead of last year in double-digit percentages, per the private air command report email from Bill Tomcich.

Winter Visitation Forecast

Last Winter's Slump

As TAPP reported in our May 2025 presentation, visitation for the 2024-2025 ski season fell 8% from the previous winter.

Source: [May 2025 TAPP LMD presentation](#)

2024 Statewide Visitation Decline

A report last month by the Colorado Tourism Office showed that out-of-state visitors declined in 2024 from the previous year. Destimetrics reported a summer slowdown in lodging bookings in resort towns across the West. In 2024, international visitation has tanked, down double digits compared to 2023.

Source: [The Colorado Sun, Aug. 4, 2025](#)

Winter Lodging

The lodging forecast for this winter shows room rates up and occupancy down from winter '24-25. However, it's still early. Most people haven't booked their winter trip yet, so this data is incomplete and should be taken with a grain of salt. The data is also skewed towards Mt. CB and commercial lodging, so it's not a full picture of the county.

Source: [Key Data winter 2025-26 lodging booking forecast](#)

Winter Flights

Winter flight bookings are on par with last year, per Bill Tomcich's private air command report email. Again, it's still very early.

“Snow” Campaign Design

Earlier Start

Ads will begin running a month earlier this year to capture the high-value visitors who book early. The campaign will also work in tandem with ski gear drops and Epic Pass sales.

Source: [Book>Direct booking window report](#)

Chicago Flight Focus

The campaign will promote the Chicago flight and raise awareness of Gunnison and Crested Butte in the Chicago and Midwest markets.

“Snow” Marketing Budget Increase

To better align funding with areas of need, TAPP has added a \$100k boost 2025/2026 winter marketing budget and proposed an additional \$100k boost to 2026/2027 winter marketing. There are two reasons for this:

1. There is more opportunity for growth in winter visitation, where travelers stay longer and spend more than their summer counterparts. Plus, winter travelers have a much smaller footprint on the land than summer ones, in that they are more likely to fly and the impacts are limited to more hardened areas.
2. Colorado overall is seeing a downturn in skier visits, losing share to Utah.

Source: [The Colorado Sun, Aug. 4, 2025](#)

PR Shift

This winter, TAPP will shift more funds toward contracted partnerships with content creators and away from traditional PR. This shift aligns with industry trends, with many marketers opting for guaranteed promotion instead of FAM trips with no guaranteed ROI. TAPP will also host a group of content creators during one week this winter, also in alignment with industry trends. Hosting multiple creators in market at the same time increases brand visibility

and saturation among our audience. New marketing manager Meredith Zaltsman's expertise in this area will guide TAPP's strategy and project execution.

Western

With Western Colorado University's increased focus on place, we're aligning with the Western marketing department to offer support and collaboration wherever possible on paid and organic channels.

Source: [Western marketing landing page](#)

In addition to further aligning with Western's marketing department, we continue to build value through the post-graduate program in partnership with Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory. The partnership is bringing value to RMBL while also giving post-grads real-world experience. In addition to this experience, datasets and projects are being integrated on campus to further build up the student experience. Funding via federal grants was initially promising for this program, but those have not panned out. Instead, there has been a shift to fund these projects moving forward, with some recent successes with the Chrest Foundation and private donors. Similar to our other projects, we hope that TAPP funding will seed a partnership that maintains on its own in the future.

Source: [Western/RMBL Post Grad Update Sept 2025](#)

ICELab

Who is the ICELab?

- Founded in 2016, the ICELab is the Gunnison Valley's entrepreneurial support organization. "ICE" stands for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. The ICELab is a part of the Tourism and Prosperity Partnership (TAPP), which holds a professional services agreement with Gunnison County to support sustainable tourism, economic development, and the success of Western Colorado University.
- The ICELab's mission is multifaceted in efforts to create more high-paying jobs in Gunnison County, to support local businesses that export products or services out of the county, and to nurture connections between local entrepreneurs, established businesses, mentors, investors, and state business resources.
- The ICELab has put great effort into gaining national recognition for rural Colorado as a place where outdoor industry brands can find success. While Gunnison County is the primary focus, the ICELab sees the success of entrepreneurs in all of rural Colorado as imperative to its mission.

What success has the ICELab had?

Metric Goals accomplished from 2019 - 2024:

- Recruited 4 companies to move to the Gunnison Valley
- Started working with 38 companies in the Gunnison Valley
- Created over 70 jobs with over 40 of them being >\$60k (+114% AAW of Gunnison County)
- Saw a cumulative revenue increase of >\$7.8 million from the companies who interface with the ICELab
- Placed nearly 40 WCU Students/Grads in Internships & Careers
- Developed 5 Training Programs for the Entrepreneurs of the Gunnison Valley

Cumulative Metrics	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
Companies Recruited	1	1	2	2	3	4	4	4	5	4	6	4
Jobs Created	5	5	12	22	20	33	30	46	45	62	60	74
Jobs >\$60k Created	1	3	3	6	5	10	8	29	13	34	18	44
Revenue \$ Increase	\$200,000	\$847,000	\$700,000	\$1,144,971	\$1,500,000	\$1,633,426	\$2,500,000	\$4,134,013	\$4,000,000	\$5,847,376	\$5,500,000	\$7,794,607
WCU Interns/Grads placed	2	5	4	13	7	19	11	23	16	34	21	37
***These metrics are cumulative year over year												

Key ICELab Supported Company Successes



Product being sold in every REI location across the country

"DOO CO RIGHT" & "Clean 14" initiatives have garnered national attention

All Early-Stage Capital and Retention Grant recipient



REDI Grant Awardee

One of Gunnison's Largest Employers

Global Exporter



Recruiting employees from across the country resulting in 8 FTE in rural CO and opening properties outside the state



Relocated to Gunnison CO after completing the Moosejaw Outdoor Accelerator

Recently announced their largest licensing deal to date with Burton Snowboards

ICELab Nationally Recognized Programs

Outdoor Industry Funding Summit

- 28 companies have attended from 15 states (including CO)
- Received OREC grant funding in 2023 to support the event, Conor Hall attended and presented to the group of founders, investors and sponsors
- This program has garnered national attention and led to the ICELab's role in Outside Ignite for 2025
- Companies Who Received Investment:
 - Hest, Electric Outdoors, Stoked Plastic & More

Moosejaw Accelerator

- 250+ Companies Applied
- 40+ States Represented
- 2 Companies Relocated to Gunnison County
- 3 Companies Still Considering Relocation
- 1 Company Relocated from Front Range to Rural Colorado

Outside Ignite

- Added in 2025 as part of the Outside Festival & Summit
- Nationwide Pitch Competition with 180+ Applicants
- \$100,000 Prize to the Winner
- The ICELab is seen as a leader in the funding landscape for outdoor industry companies and has played an important role in the creation and facilitation of this event

What will future success look like for the ICELab?

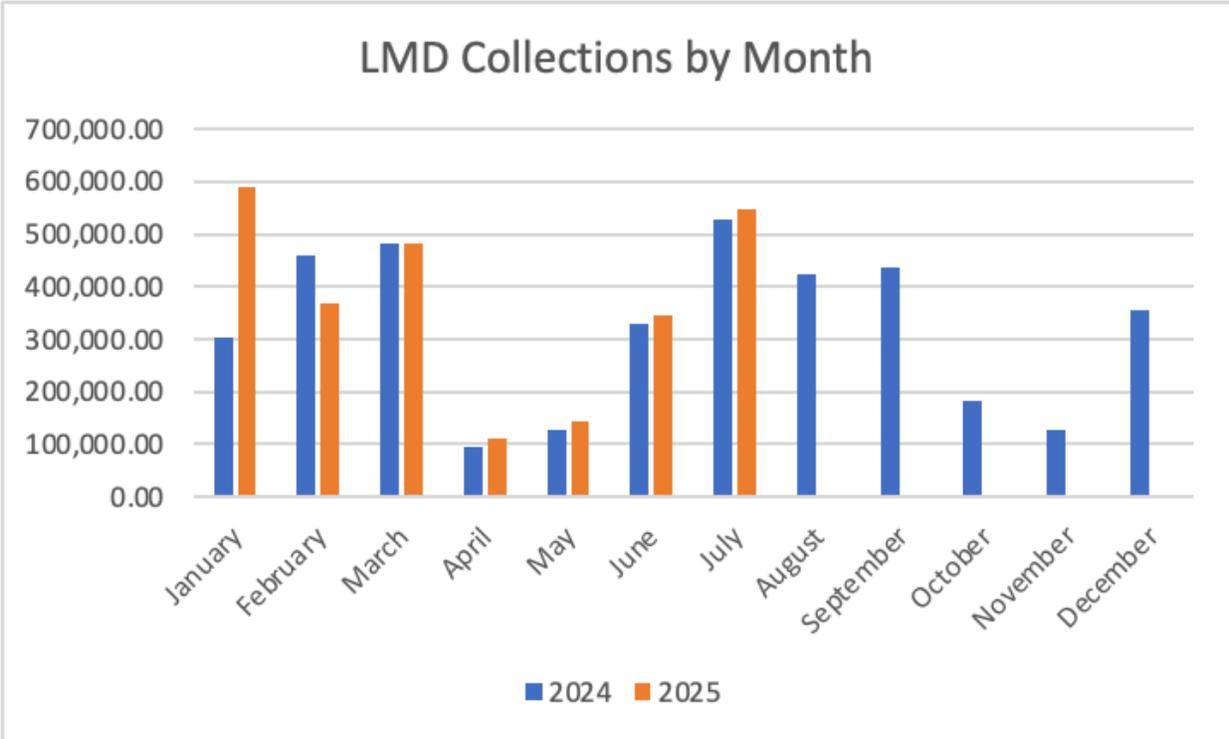
Metric Goals to accomplish by 2030:

- Recruit 7 new companies to move to the Gunnison Valley
- Start working with 20+ new companies in the Gunnison Valley
- Create 50+ more jobs with 30+ of them being >\$60k/year salary
- See a cumulative revenue increase of >\$9million from the companies the ICELab works with
- Place 30+ WCU Students/Grads in Internships & Careers
- Continue and improve the 5 Training Programs for the Entrepreneurs of the Gunnison Valley

Budget Document

LMD Collections Through June 2025

While there was an outlier in late collections coming in for January, we would otherwise be pacing flat to last year. For this reason, as well as uncertainty in the economy, we have decided to project overall LMD revenues to be flat to last year. We expect that with the January bump and decent pacing that the picture likely could be better as the year closes out.



2026 Proposed Budget

The TAPP Board of Directors is recommending the LMD Board allocate \$3,125,000 from 2025 collections to TAPP spread evenly across the months of 2025.

**G-CBTA
Recommended Budget
2026**

	General	ICELab	STOR	TA Non-Snow	TA Snow	Western	TOTAL
Income							
Income	3,125,000	210,896	10,000	0	0	0	3,345,896
Interest Earned	18,000	0	0	0	0	0	18,000
Total Income	3,143,000	210,896	10,000	0	0	0	3,363,896
Gross Profit	3,143,000	210,896	10,000	0	0	0	3,363,896
Expenses							
Admin/Other	14,242	216,309	0	1,926	1,926	0	234,403
Content Creation	400	0	0	92,236	96,751	0	189,387
Digital Media	3,658	2,250	20,000	483,123	494,673	20,000	1,023,705
Personnel	18,209	315,172	0	163,597	167,697	0	664,675
Press Trips	0	20,000	0	39,514	41,715	0	101,230
Print Media	0	600	0	24,435	41,209	0	66,244
Public Lands Experie	0	0	13,000	0	0	0	13,000
Research	52,009	0	29,545	0	0	0	81,554
Social Media	0	0	0	180,593	344,507	0	525,100
Special Projects	0	195,750	0	0	0	165,000	360,750
Subcontractors	28,920	0	0	11,265	11,400	0	51,585
Travel/Meals/Enterta	4,818	20,950	0	3,900	600	0	30,268
Visitor Centers	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	50,000
Websites and Apps	31,200	0	0	0	0	0	31,200
2026 Proposed Expe	203,457	771,031	62,545	1,000,589	1,200,478	185,000	3,423,101
Net Operating Incom	2,939,543	-560,135	-52,545	-1,000,589	-1,200,478	-185,000	-59,205
2025 Budget	204,017	996,165	137,318	992,460	997,733	205,833	3,533,527
2025 Actual/Fcst	200,352	1,161,614	78,938	906,553	1,060,340	164,667	3,572,464



TOURISM & PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP



Local Marketing District Board Presentation

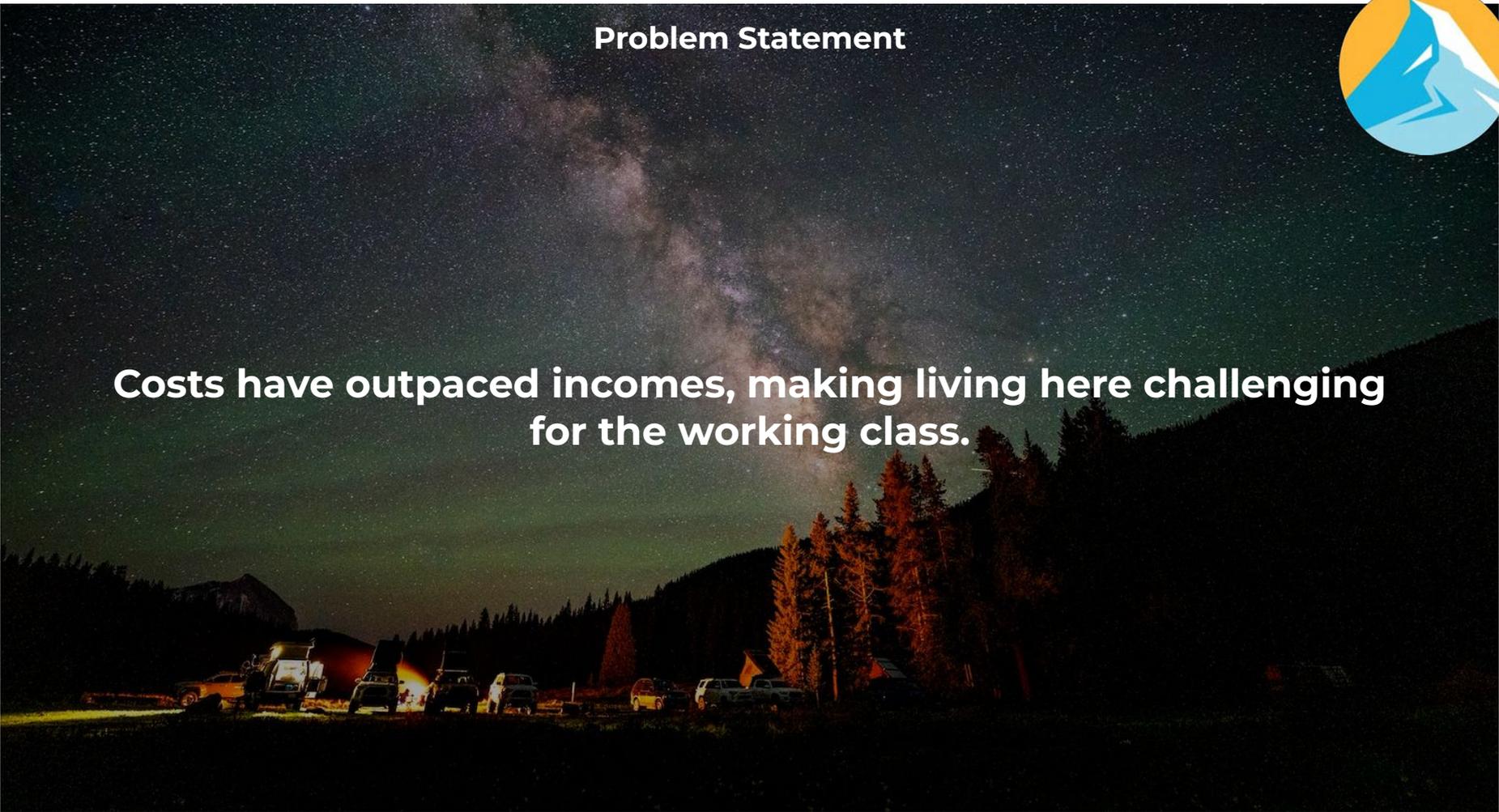
September 23, 2025

- **TAPP overview**
- **Marketing report**
- **ICELab report**
- **Other project updates**
- **2026 annual operating plan and budget request**

Problem Statement



Costs have outpaced incomes, making living here challenging for the working class.



TAPP Vision



To strengthen community prosperity through strategic tourism initiatives and diversified economic growth.



TAPP Mission

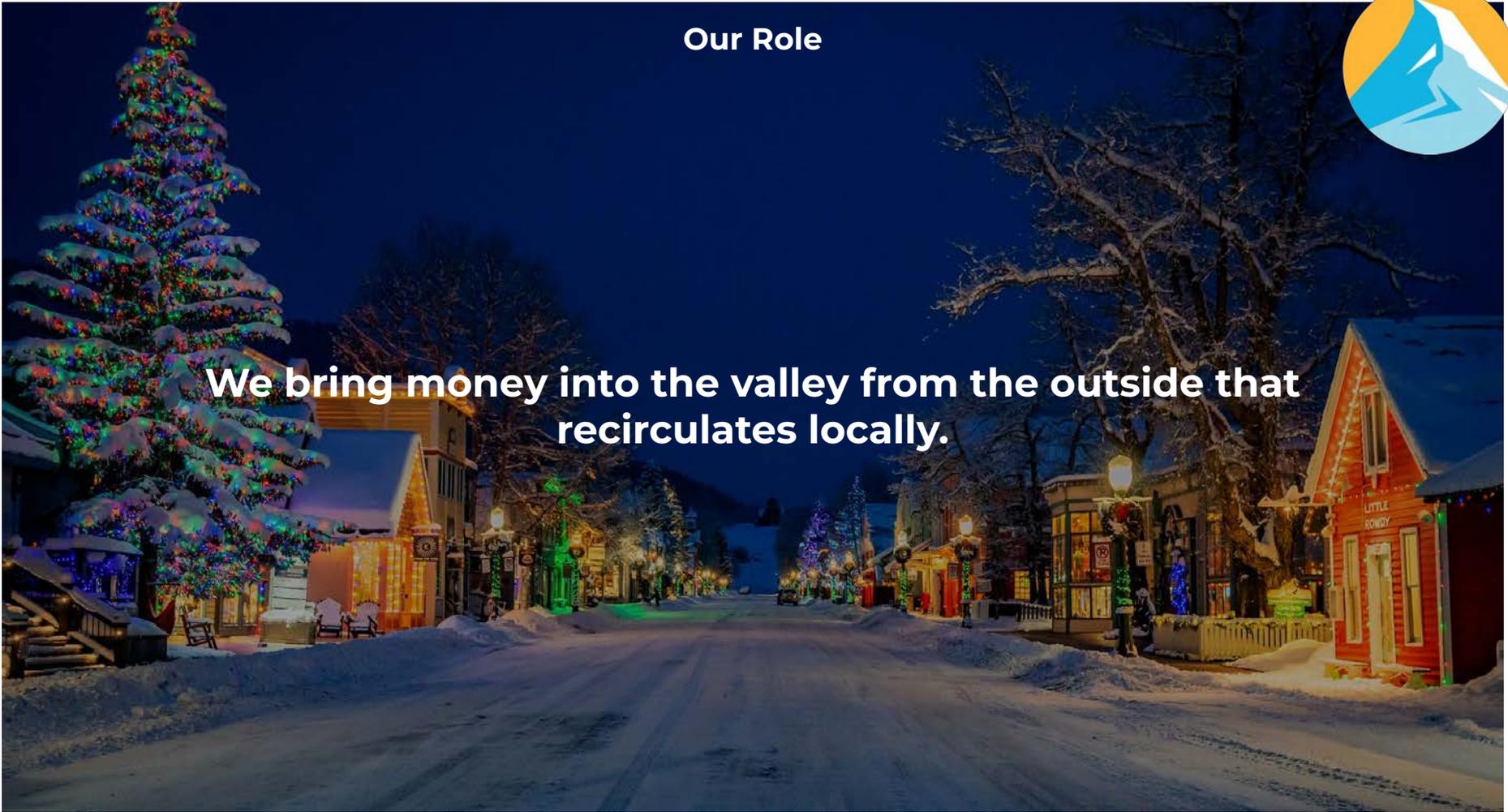


The mission of the Tourism and Prosperity Partnership (TAPP) is to leverage Local Marketing District and grant monies to develop and maintain a robust and diversified Gunnison County economy.

Our Role



We bring money into the valley from the outside that recirculates locally.



What We Do



Tourism spending



Gunnison Valley Economy

Second

**Homeowners and
Remote Workers**



**Western student
spending**



**Exported products
and services**





Strategic Focus

Economic Development and Diversification

Tourism

Exports

Western

Brand Message

Natural capital and lifestyle

Summer

**Trails and public
lands**

Winter

**Extreme skiing and
small towns**





Outcome

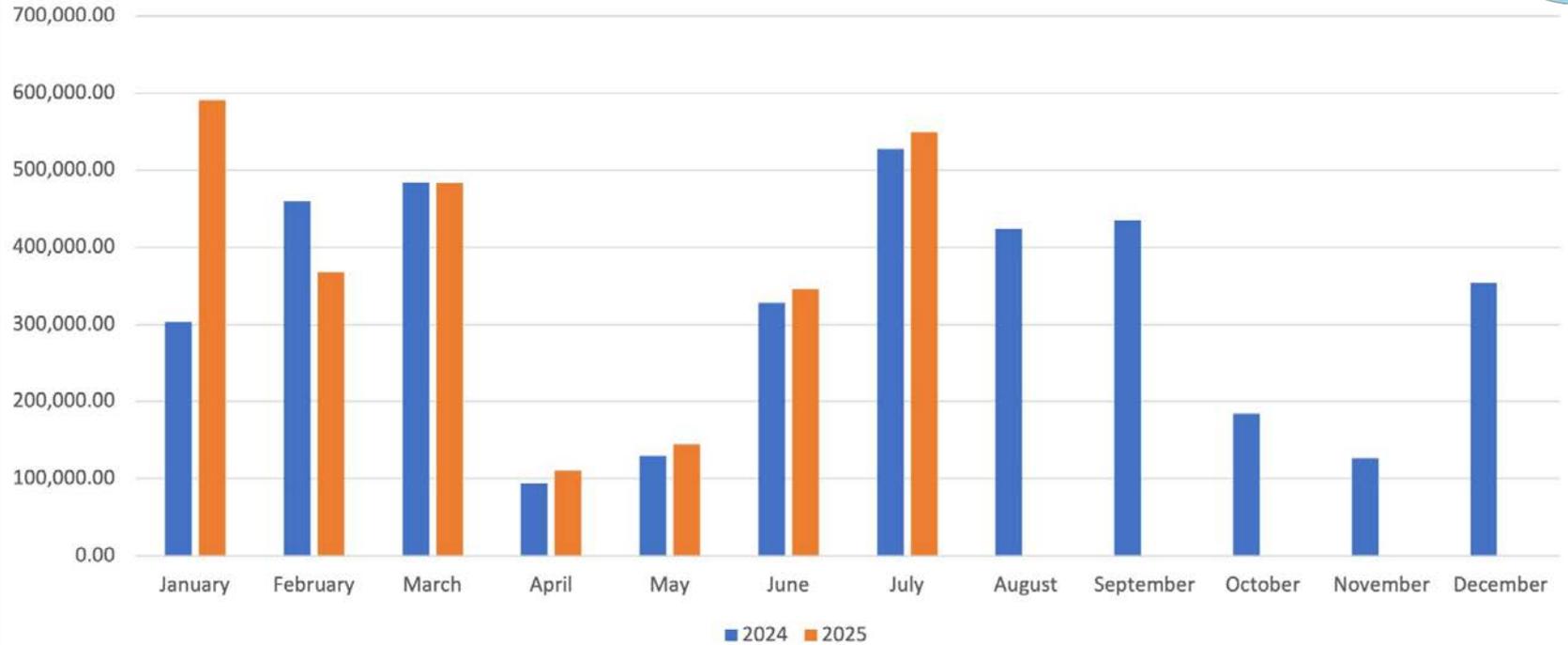


Diversifying our economic drivers will wean our reliance on tourism. Stabilizing our economy and growing wages will close the gap to affordability, allowing the community to prosper.

2025



LMD Collections by Month



Marketing Update



- **“Non-snow” visitation report**
- **“Non-snow” marketing report**
- **Winter tourism forecast**
- **Winter campaign design**

Spring and summer visitation overview (pg. 2-3)



- **Spring (May and June)**
 - County visitors increased 20% over last year
 - More growth in south valley
 - Spring marketing campaigns paying off, esp. with gravel bikers
- **Summer (July and August)**
 - South valley saw the same number of visitors, but they stayed longer
 - North valley saw fewer visitors, length of stay was slightly shorter than last year
- **GUC flight bookings were strong**
 - 73% load factor on 63% year-over-year capacity increase

“Non-snow” marketing campaign report (pg. 3)



- **Campaign started running in early April and wraps up this week**
- **Meta, Google Search and YouTube were top performers**
- **Discovered more platforms to connect with gravel biking audience**
- **Leaned more heavily into content creator and brand partnerships**
- **Camping stewardship campaign had a high cost-per-click but high engagement**



Fall and winter visitation outlook (pg. 4-5)



Fall (September and October)

- Lodging rates up 8% over last year
- Occupancy down 7%
- Length of stay up 5%
- Flight bookings are strong

Winter (ski season)

- Visitation was down 8% last winter
- Collapse of international visitation continues to affect other destinations in the state, but Gunnison Valley visitors are nearly all domestic
- On very early data, room rates for the coming winter are up and occupancy is down
- More Chicago flights this winter



“Snow” marketing campaign design (pg. 5-6)



- Opportunities and threats in winter
- \$100k boost in '25-26 and \$100k boost in '26-27 winter campaign spends
- Relying less on drive market, increasing focus on fly market
- Winter guests
 - Are more likely to fly
 - Spend more
 - Have less impact on the land
- Ads will launch in September (a month earlier than usual) to capture high-value, early booking travelers
- Targeting the Chicago and Midwest market to promote Chicago flight
- Growing content creator and brand partnerships
- Adopting more sophisticated processes for email and social media
- Collaborating with Western marketing department

RMBL/Western (pg. 6)



- **5 student projects have benefitted RMBL and WCU**
 - Senior capstone, summer interns, independent and course specific
- **Student and graduates: growth and professional development**
- **1 Job placement in the valley (work-in-progress)**
- **Future Funding and collaborations**
 - 2 NSF Proposals- not funded
 - Chrest Foundation-Funded \$75,000/year
 - Donor \$20-30k/year for data management



Metric Goals accomplished from 2019 - 2024 (pg. 6-8):

- **Recruited 4 companies to move to the Gunnison Valley**
- **Started working with 38 companies in the Gunnison Valley**
- **Created over 70 jobs with over 40 of them being >\$60k (+114% AAW of Gunnison County)**
- **Saw a cumulative revenue increase of >\$7.8 million from the companies who interface with the ICELab**
- **Placed nearly 40 WCU Students/Grads in Internships & Careers**
- **Developed 5 Training Programs for the Entrepreneurs of the Gunnison Valley**



ICELAB



- **The Hub Construction**
 - Tracking on budget
 - On schedule for EOY completion
- **Outside Funding Sources**
 - OEDIT (\$150k / 3 years)
 - Region 10 (\$12K)
- **Tenants**
 - 4 signed LOIs
 - Ongoing conversations
 - Exporting good or service outside of the Gunnison Valley
 - Growing interest in shared resources/infrastructure





18



- **Outdoor Industry Funding Summit 2025**
 - Economic uncertainty
 - Looking ahead to 2026
- **Western Coworking Space**
 - Continuing to deepen the Western connection
- **Local, regional and state partnerships**

How We'll Do It 2026 Goals



Tourism

- Minimize flight MRC's and grow winter lodging revenues over last year
- Grow shoulder seasons and south valley visitation to smooth the boom and bust of summer tourism

ICELAB

- Grow the Hub to a point where it is breaking even
- Continue to build and maintain investor network through Outdoor Industry Funding Summit
- Build the Gunnison Valley brand through trade shows

Western

- Create opportunities for students to interface with real world experience via RMBL research
- Incorporate Western into our marketing initiatives

Stewardship

- Drive visitors to paid lodging over camping
- Integrate stewardship messaging into all organic and paid content

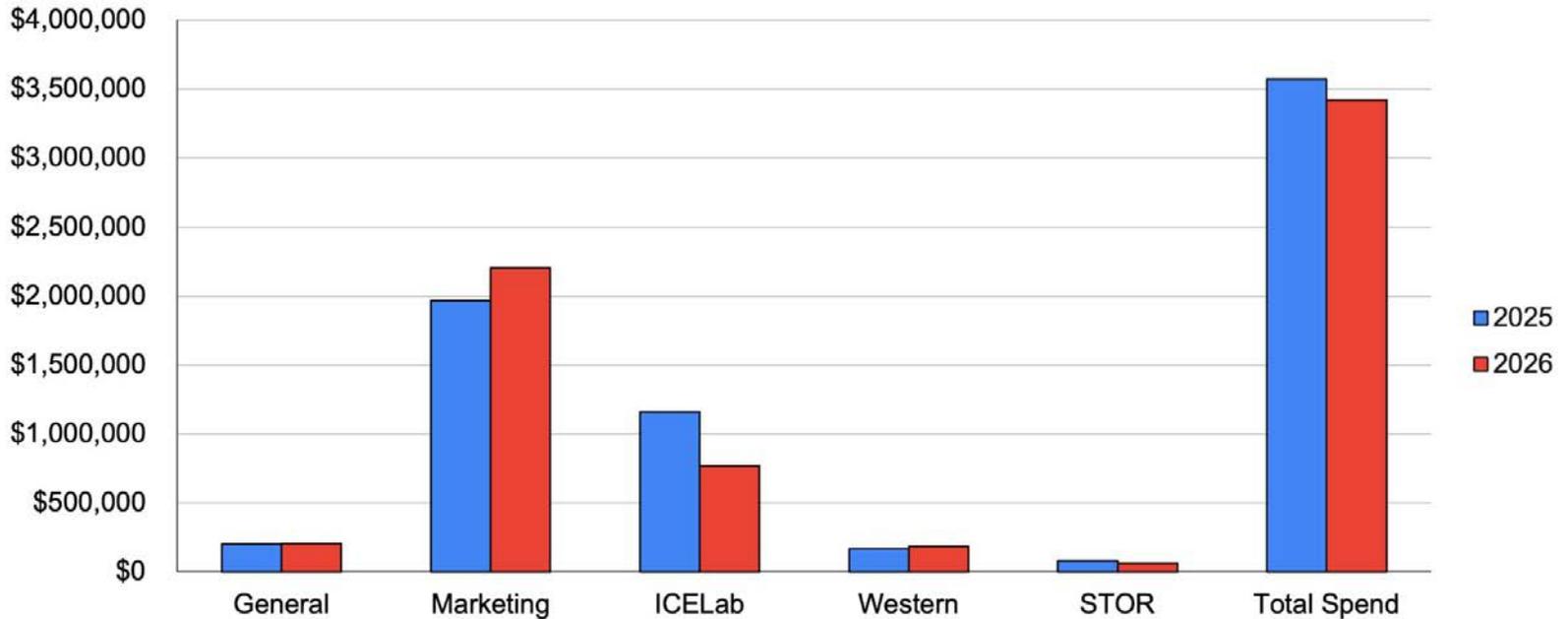
Tasks	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tourism												
Snow Marketing	[Active]								[Active]			
Non-Snow Marketing			[Active]									
ICELAB												
The Hub	[Active]											
OIFS									[Active]			
Trade Shows				[Active]					[Active]			
Western												
Post Grads	[Active]											
Marketing	[Active]						[Active]					
Stewardship												
Camping to lodging			[Active]									
Messaging	[Active]											

LMD Recommendation

\$3.125 million of 2025 collections (pg 9-10)



2025 v. 2026 TAPP Spend





Long Term KPI's

Overall

- Growth in tax collections
- IMPLAN jobs data to track trends by industry

Tourism

- Outpacing competitive set, especially in times of state or national tourism downturns
- LMD revenue growth by season
- Airline passengers flown
- Overall economic impact

Economic Development

- Companies recruited
- Jobs created
- Jobs over AMI created
- Revenue \$ increase
- WCU interns/grads placed
- Capital invested

Western

- Recruitment and retention
- Funding and philanthropy
- Entrepreneurial initiatives
- Publicity and media



Outcome



Diversifying our economic drivers will wean our reliance on tourism. Stabilizing our economy and growing wages will close the gap to affordability, allowing the community to prosper.

AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Kebler Pass Trailhead Winter Parking Permit Discus

Action Requested: Discussion

Parties to the Agreement:

Term Begins:

Term Ends:

Grant Contract #:

Summary:

Annual discussion of the Kebler Winter Trailhead Parking Permit management approach.

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Martin Schmidt

Submitter's Email Address: mschmidt@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review:

Required

Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mlamonica

Discharge Date: 9/10/2025

County Attorney Review:

Required

Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by:

Discharge Date:

Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes No

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirmie

Discharge Date: 9/18/2025

Consent Agenda

Regular Agenda

Worksession

Time Allotted: 30

Agenda Date: 9/23/2025



195 Basin Park Drive

Gunnison, CO 81230

Phone: (970) 641-0044

publicworks@gunnisoncounty.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: BOCC and Matthew Birnie
FROM: Martin Schmidt, Assistant County Manager for Public Works
DATE: September 16, 2025
SUBJECT: Kebler Pass Trailhead Parking Permits
COMMENT:

The issue on the agenda today is specifically about the structure of the permit system for the winter of 2025-2026. Staff does anticipate that future regulations will continue to be similar.

The County has long maintained multiple plowed parking lots on CR 12 for backcountry access that restrict overnight parking. The demand for parking at this trailhead and the increasing number of year-round residents living off grid and beyond the plowed road makes management of the parking area a necessity. Initially, overnight parking was allowed in order to accommodate the few locals who live year-round. The overnight parking has continued, but the permittees have become more diverse and numerous. This is the only trailhead managed in this way by the County and is only feasible due to the land.

In 2020 a large stakeholder meeting was held to gather information and allow for input on the process. The subsequent seasons have been informed by this meeting and continue to shape staff recommendations. Public Works designates different areas for parking at the trailhead. There is a section for overnight vehicles, day-use vehicles, snowmobiles (all over the snow vehicles) and forest service commercial permittees. Over 6 years we have averaged \$329 per parking spot to provide this service. In the winter of 2024-2025 we had one for the least expensive plow seasons in our records and the average price per spot dropped to \$308. Commissioner Puckett-Daniels and Assistant County Manager for Public Works, Martin Schmidt attended the Irwin Community Association meeting in July 2025 to hear and discuss a multitude of concerns including winter parking.

The confirmation of septic and County code compliance will still be used to determine eligibility for a parking permit. This approach has been upheld by the courts. Permits are not issued to owners of vacant land or properties with pending enforcement actions. Additionally, State law requires current registrations on all vehicles that travel over the snow. There are 56 overnight parking spots available at the trailhead and the permitted residences are checked at the time of application with the assistance of Community Development.

With the completion of the MEMC land exchange last fall, the land historically used for the Winter Trailhead is now County land. This allows the County to manage the lots more directly and ensure future accessibility. There are no land management changes proposed for the upcoming winter.

In the winter of 2024-2025 we did not sell out of parking permits, but we are aware of at least 5 persons that willfully disregarded the regulations and were ticketed as a result. Additionally, the rising cost may have resulted in some persons making the distinction between wanting and needed parking permits. This also shows that our current overnight lot is capable of sustaining the current demand. We will not be issuing trailer permits for the upcoming winter.

2019-2020 Permit Protocol:

\$100.00 per permit, 1 initially then 2nd after 12/2/19 / 1 Trailer tag issued / unlimited snowmobile tags

2020-2021 Permit Protocol:

\$125.00 per permit, 2 initially (max of 2) / 1 Trailer tag issued / 5 snowmobile tags

2021-2022 Permit Protocol:

\$125 per permit, 2 initially (max of 2) / No Trailer tags issued / 5 snowmobile tags

2022-2023 Permit Protocol:

\$125 per permit, 2 per property (max of 2) / 1 Trailer tag issued / 5 snowmobile tags

2023-2024 Permit Protocol:

\$200 per permit, 2 per property (max of 2) / 1 Trailer tag issued / 5 snowmobile tags

2024-2025 Permit Protocol:

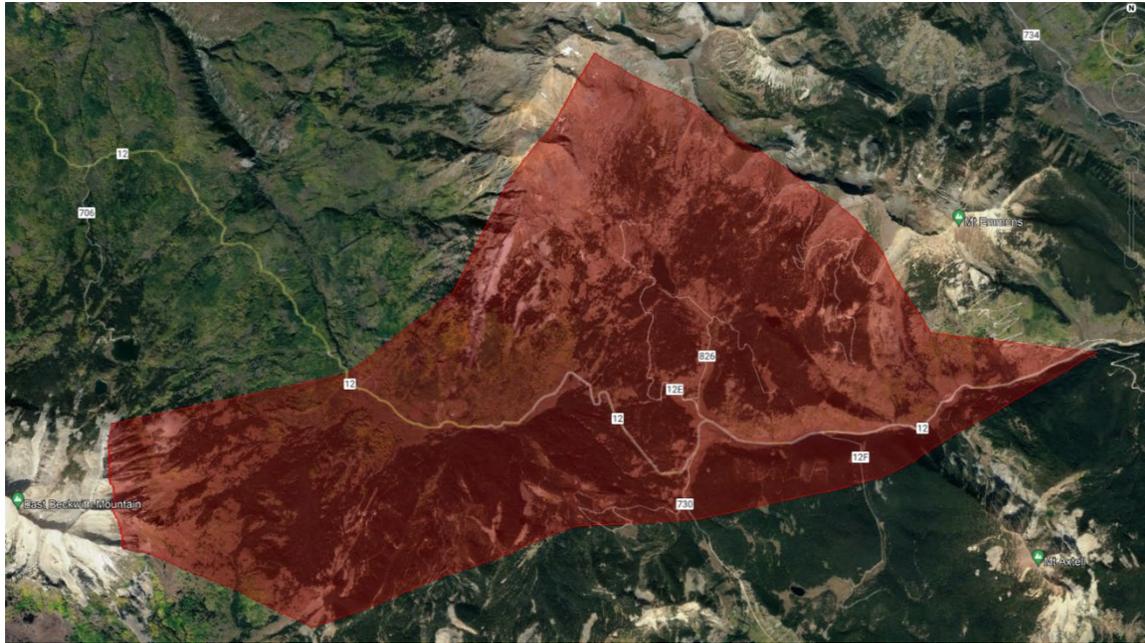
\$300 per permit, 2 per property (max of 2) / Trailer tag not available / 5 snowmobile tags

Winter Season	Vehicle Permits	Trailer Permits	Snowmobile Tags
2024 - 2025	48	0	99
2023-2024	51	15	94
2022-2023	56	30	134
2021-2022	56	0	128
2020-2021	55	38	138
2019-2020	49	26	172
2018-2019	44	23	108

Staff Recommendation:

For the 2025-2026 season the Public Works staff is recommending two (2) permits are offered per qualifying residential property until no spots are available. With a parking permit, the following will be made available: up to five (5) snowmobile tags per property. Staff is recommending no trailer tags be issued again because the historically used lot lies outside of County property. This will also mitigate future increases in permit fees required to offset the costs of providing overnight trailer parking. Proof of valid registration for over-the-snow vehicles will be required in order to comply with state law. The average costs since 2018 directly associated with snow removal, signage, construction of a specific lot (mortgaged over 20 years) and administration is \$308 per spot. In order for the cost of the service to not be borne by the

public at large, the permits will be \$300 each with an eye to reducing costs through efficiency and the removal of trailer storage. Permits will only be issued for the specific area from the Winter Trailhead, heading west to the Bracken Creek Drainage (near horse ranch Park) and including the Coal Creek Drainage, and allows for the maximum number of occupied residences in the area to be served (map attached). Plowing of the overnight lot will occur when all other County plowing has been accomplished and 2 days' notice via email has occurred. All vehicles will be required to park in the correctly designated areas. Permits will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis starting **October 28, 2025 at 8 am**. Ticketing and towing will begin on December 5, 2025.



Approximate boundary lines for permit eligibility.



Parking Lot Organization Plan.