

NON-BINDING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

I. PURPOSE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes a cooperative partnership between the **City of Craig** (“the City”) and the **Northwest Colorado Innovation Center** (“NCIC”) to build and operate an Innovation Center at the Craig Industrial Park to advance economic diversification, entrepreneurship, industrial workforce training, and business incubation within the City of Craig and the greater Northwest Colorado region.

Under this agreement, the City of Craig intends to lease or sell to NCIC a minimum of 0.75 to 1.5 acres of City-owned land, with utilities and infrastructure extended to the site at the Craig Industrial Park for the development of an Innovation Center. The Innovation Center will serve as a hub for business incubation, industrial workforce training, and small-business and entrepreneurial development.

The City of Craig recognizes the shared benefit of building the Northwest Colorado Innovation Center at the City-owned, 25-acre Craig Industrial Park to anchor the new industrial park, train workforce for the industrial park tenants, support business incubation of new startups, and provide workforce training for coal transition workers. The presence of an Innovation Center at Craig Industrial Park will enhance the marketability of the sites at the Park.

NCIC will be responsible for fundraising, building, and operating a world-class Innovation Center to support the shared objectives of fostering entrepreneurship, workforce training, and business incubation and opportunities that will strengthen Craig’s economy, support primary jobs, and tax replacement. The Innovation Center will be scaled to the size of the site, its regulatory requirements, and the changing economic and workforce development needs of the region and the City of Craig.

II. BACKGROUND

The Northwest Colorado Innovation Center, a 501(c)(3) rural development hub, was established by the Northwest Colorado Development Council to support regional economic development, economic diversification, and workforce and community development in Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt Counties and their seven communities.

Mission: To foster innovation, entrepreneurship, workforce development, economic prosperity, and diversification through sustainable, community-led development. Northwest Colorado Innovation Center will coordinate and facilitate regional collaboration and support regional marketing, business growth, and attraction, and community development.

Vision: Northwest Colorado will be a thriving economic center with a diverse economy, driven by a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a climate of innovation that creates opportunities and fosters a high quality of life for our people.

Board Composition

The NCIC Board of Directors will range from 9 to 13 directors, with the specific number to be determined by the board from time to time. The board shall be comprised of the following people:

Appointed Directors: 6 directors (the “Appointed Directors”) appointed by members of the Northwest Colorado Development Council (“NWCDC”) pursuant to its internal rules, with 2 directors representing each of Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt Counties (the “Counties”).

Elected Directors: The remaining directors (“Elected Directors”) shall be recruited from sectors present in the Counties, including but not limited to private, nonprofit, education, economic development, and workforce development sectors, with generally equivalent representation from each of the Counties.

As a 501(c)(3), NCIC must adhere to strict financial requirements, including annual reporting to the IRS, public disclosure, and meticulous recordkeeping. NCIC is committed to transparency and accountability and will have regular audits.

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this MOU are to:

1. Establish a permanent home for the Northwest Colorado Innovation Center within the City of Craig.
2. Construct a world-class incubator that includes office space, incubator tenant space, and industrial training facilities focused on primary jobs and sectors.
3. Deliver industrial skills training programs to support workforce readiness and job creation in high-demand fields.
4. Provide business consulting, incubation, access to financing, and entrepreneurship support to small businesses and startups.
5. Create a collaborative environment for tenants, entrepreneurs, and partners to innovate, manufacture, and grow new ventures.
6. Strengthen Craig’s and Northwest Colorado’s economic base through economic diversification, innovation, and industry-led partnerships.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES

A. City of Craig shall:

1. Negotiate a long-term lease or sale of (in consultation with the NCIC) a development-ready site measuring no less than 0.75 acres within the Craig Industrial Park for the sole purpose of constructing and operating the Northwest Colorado Innovation Center. The City shall make the final determination as to the lease/sale and the specific acreage following the completion and adoption of the Business and Industrial Park Master Plan. The City will endeavor to make the final determination as to the lease/sale within six (6) months of the completion and adoption of the Business and Industrial Park Master Plan.
2. It is the intent of the City to negotiate and enter a long-term lease agreement or a sale of up to 1.5 acres of land, after ensuring compliance with the City Municipal Charter, City Code and other applicable statutory requirements. Final approval of any lease/sale is at the sole discretion of the City Council.
2. Extend utilities and road access to the parcel as outlined in the City's original concept for the Craig Industrial Park. The utility and road development will occur in line with the phased development of the Park and will not be contingent on the construction needs of the NCIC. The City's financial cost is limited to planned infrastructure investments for the Park and will not contribute to individual costs of the NCIC.
3. Provide reasonable cooperation and support through the City's planning, zoning, and permitting processes to facilitate project development, including sharing engineering and survey reports that the City must undertake as part of its development of the Craig Industrial Park.
4. Designate a staff liaison to serve as the City's point of contact for the project.
5. Collaborate with NCIC on public communication, press releases, and community engagement related to the project.
6. Retain a vested interest in the project's economic benefits and outcomes, but shall not be responsible for operations or ongoing funding obligations beyond the lease/sale of the land.
7. The City will cooperate and assist to the extent possible in any application for any grant funding that may be available to the NCIC for purposes of construction of the Innovation Center.

B. Northwest Colorado Innovation Center shall:

1. Design, construct, and equip the Innovation Center on the parcel. Following the receipt of the land, the NCIC shall provide a quarterly report to the City detailing fundraising efforts/results, design, and construction progress.
2. The Innovation Center is envisioned as a new metal building with high-end finishes, large flex spaces, a modern design and facade, a cutting-edge product development lab, training facilities, and state-of-the-art equipment and technology to realize NCIC's mission and vision. The new home for the Northwest Colorado Innovation Center will be a point of pride for Northwest Colorado and the City of Craig; serve as a beacon of hope; and catalyze an innovative ecosystem that will foster manufacturing and other primary sectors.

3. The Innovation Center will be scaled for the size of the parcel and designed to be adaptable to the changing demand for workforce training and business incubation for:

- Industrial training areas for workforce development and skill-building programs.
- Manufacturing and primary sector tenants
- Office space, common areas, and conference rooms for NCIC staff and business tenants
- Support high-bay (25 feet or higher ceiling heights) with clear span (no support columns or structures that impede manufacturing or industrial processes) and trucking dock doors.
- Reinforced concrete floors
- Large flex space and removable walls that allow maximum flexibility to support the needs of new tenants and different workforce training configurations

4. Operate, manage, and maintain the Center as the primary responsible entity.

5. Deliver ongoing programs and technical services to support incubator tenants and the larger entrepreneurial ecosystem in the tri-county region, including:

- Business consulting, coaching, and entrepreneurial training
- Access to resources, capital, and financing opportunities for small businesses and startups, including NCIC's new revolving loan fund, Northwest Catalyst Capital
- Workforce and industrial skill training in partnership with education and industry collaborators

6. Track and report key performance indicators and metrics, such as the number of businesses assisted, startups launched, jobs created, incubator tenants supported, and workers trained

7. Recognize the City of Craig as a founding partner in all public communications and signage related to the project. The parties agree that all public communication shall be jointly approved by both entities prior to release to the public.

8. Seek and secure additional funding from public, private, and philanthropic sources to complete construction and support ongoing operations.

V. FUNDING AND LIABILITY

Except for the lease/sale of the development-ready land by the City as defined herein, no additional financial obligations are created by this MOU. Each party is responsible for its own costs, staff, and expenses. The NCIC shall be solely responsible for all costs associated with the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the facility.

This MOU does not create a joint venture or legal partnership. Neither party shall be liable for the acts or omissions of the other. The MOU is non-binding and does not create a financial or legal obligation on behalf of the City.

SIGNATURES

City of Craig

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

Northwest Colorado Innovation Center

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____