

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
BUDGET  
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AND PENSIONS  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

March 22, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in support of an application submitted by the City of Wenatchee for the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grants* program for the Apple Capital Loop project.

The City of Wenatchee is seeking an INFRA grant to address several transportation challenges facing the 11 mile loop spanning both sides of the Columbia River in the Wenatchee Valley. Known as the Apple Capital Loop, these roadways carry over 100,000 vehicles per day and provide a critical link to the Interstate system through U.S. 97 North to Canada, U.S. 2/U.S. 97 West to ports on the West Coast, and SR 28 South to I-90. This project would complete four interconnected projects to accommodate existing and anticipated growth in traffic levels, reduce freight delays and congestion, and increase safety.

SR 285/North Wenatchee Avenue would be improved by modifying intersections, replacing sections of the two-way center left turn lane, replacing a signaled intersection at U.S. 2 and Easy Street with a roundabout, upgrading traffic signals, and building an underpass at McKittrick Street to eliminate an at-grade crossing on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) mainline. A new 2.3 mile bypass corridor, known as the Confluence Parkway, would be built to move freight, transit, and other traffic off SR 285/North Wenatchee Avenue and connect with U.S. 2/U.S. 97 through a new bridge over the Wenatchee River. This would include an underpass at Miller Street and a pedestrian overpass to eliminate conflicts with the BNSF mainline, and complete the Apple Capitol Loop Trail System connecting non-motorized commuters to education, retail, and health care services. Road improvements and on/off ramps from U.S. 2/U.S. 97 would establish access to the Wenatchi Landing which would open more than 280 acres of land for commercial, residential, and recreational development in East Wenatchee. Finally, SR 28 in East Wenatchee would be widened to accommodate five lanes of traffic and intersections would be improved to enhance safety and mobility.

Wenatchee is a hub for Washington State's international apple industry and other tree fruit in North Central Washington. The current transportation system limits the City of Wenatchee to only two points of access through the Apple Capital Loop. Fifty percent of the urban area's population and about 75 percent of the jobs are located in Wenatchee and depend upon the Apple Capital Loop. This project would create an important third access to and from the city and improve the overall connectivity for travel through and within this urbanized area. This is also important for evacuations during emergencies like the 2015 Sleepy Hollow wildfires, which destroyed homes and businesses and shut down the BNSF mainline for three days.

Completion of the Apple Capital Loop project would improve the flow of traffic, ensure freight moves safely and more efficiently through a regionally significant transportation corridor, and enhance accessibility for residents and businesses alike in the Wenatchee Valley.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Wenatchee's application. Please contact Bree Rabourn in my Seattle, WA office at 206-553-0724 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patty Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patty Murray  
United States Senator