

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of our constituents in Washington's 8th and 4th Congressional Districts, we respectfully request support for the application submitted by the City of Wenatchee to the U.S. Department of Transportation's INFRA Grant Program. Completing Wenatchee's Apple Capital Loop Project is a vital investment for North Central Washington's economic sustainability and community stability.

The Wenatchee Valley is a key transportation hub at the crossroads of highways going east to Spokane, west to Seattle, north to British Columbia, and south to Yakima and the Tri-Cities. It is the heart of Washington, settled in a rural part of the state East of the Cascade Mountains. The nearest Interstate Highway is 40 miles away. The 11-mile Apple Capital loop carries more than 100,000 vehicles each day. Freight, businesses, commuters, transit, emergency services, residents and visitors must travel on it.

The Apple Capital Loop project is the result of years of planning by local, state and regional jurisdictions including the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Yakama Nations. The Apple Capital Loop supports the various layers of this region's economy by bringing together vital, interconnected projects that comprise the backbone of our regional transportation network, and the local component of the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN). The project has broad support throughout the communities in the area as evidenced by investments of more than \$100 million over the past decade through private and public partners. This multi-modal network of projects will yield improved safety, system reliability, and congestion relief coordinated with deployment of a modernized, rapid-charge battery electric commuter transit system with faster speed and increased frequency. At completion, it also will allow much-needed investment in housing, retail, and industrial development by bringing additional infrastructure to the area. It will leverage more than \$200 million in investments by our agricultural sector in production, storage, and transportation.

Investing in the Apple Capital loop will shore up a functioning backbone to Wenatchee's transportation system. Access to this system is not only important in trade and retail, but to building and strengthening the community. Wenatchee has a growing population, and in the last decade the municipal has invested in bike lanes, green spaces like the loop trail by nearby Columbia River, and other ways to encourage outdoor activity for families in the area. The Apple Capital Loop is a vital part of this growth; it eliminates the risk of pedestrian-train accidents in a high trespass location with a pedestrian overpass.

This pedestrian option also allows community members without reliable transportation a way to access the loop trail and neighboring East Wenatchee.

The impacts of climate change and recent wildfire events underscore the important safety element to implementing this project. The Wenatchee Valley, surrounded by publicly owned forestlands, experienced extreme wildfires in 2014 and 2015 including one event that reached the city's urban core. These events impact the entire region but especially our most vulnerable populations which are more susceptible to wildfires, floods, and other natural disasters. Without investments in the Apple Capital Loop, Wenatchee will continue to only have one way in and out of the north end of the city. During the last fire evacuation efforts, it became alarmingly evident to my constituents that we must enhance our ability to respond to future emergencies and safely evacuate citizens.

The Apple Capital Loop project will create significant new opportunities for continued economic growth by opening access to development, potentially bringing investments of over \$500 million to this region. As the most trade-dependent state in the nation, this project will increase infrastructure connectivity and position our state to continue to grow exports. Preserving the strong commerce connections of the state will only strengthen our relations abroad and bring economic prosperity back to the state and nation.

This INFRA Grant will significantly advance the safety and economic welfare of this community for decades to come. The Apple Capital Loop project provides an opportunity to highlight the ability of an area like the Wenatchee Valley to come together and use federal, state, local, and private funding in an efficient and effective manner.

As we work collectively to build our infrastructure back better than it was before, we encourage you to consider investing in the Apple Capital Loop. This pivotal project will impact the commerce, community, small businesses of the rural municipal in Washington state. We are pleased to support completing the Apple Capital Loop and thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,



Kim Schrier, M.D.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Dan Newhouse
MEMBER OF CONGRESS