



March 9, 2021

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

RE: Support for the Apple Capital Loop INFRA grant

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Link Transit patrons, I urge your support for the City of Wenatchee's application for the Apple Capital Loop INFRA grant. Link Transit is the public agency that provides public transportation services for the residents and visitors of Chelan and Douglas Counties. This is a 3,000 square mile area in central Washington State; however, the core of our operation is in the Wenatchee metropolitan area. All of our routes depend on the Apple Capital Loop, as the sole access to the central urbanized area of the community where most services are located.

Our community faces a unique geographic challenge, as the City of Wenatchee is effectively an island (bounded by the Columbia and Wenatchee Rivers and the Cascade Mountains), with only two bridges to access the central region to its business, industry and government services. At its core, the Apple Capital Loop project is an effort to cost effectively improve multi-modal access for freight, businesses, residents and visitors to the center of the Wenatchee region. The proposed projects are critical to the future success of our public transit service as every single transit route Link Transit operates traverses the Apple Capital Loop to reach our multi-modal transit center. A transit center where linkages to Amtrak, Intercity bus services, SeaTac airporters, adjacent transit service providers and local taxi and on-demand services are provided.

The Apple Capital Loop project is a culmination of years of planning by regional jurisdictions and broad community engagement in the Wenatchee Valley. The projects will improve safety, mobility, system reliability, freight movement as well as Link Transit services. The Apple Capital Loop projects are critical to the success of our Link Transit Vision 2020 service plan, were our community recently increased local sales tax to fund a nearly 40% expansion of transit service. This service expansion depends on the Apple Capital loop improvements to effectively:

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- a) double the frequency of local bus service on North Wenatchee Ave,
- b) deploy and integrate the traffic control system with the buses Computer Aided Dispatch/Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) system,
- c) provide all day – 15-minute regional Bus Rapid Transit like service on the proposed Confluence Parkway,
- d) Deploy nineteen (19) - 100% battery electric, wirelessly fast charged transit buses,
- e) Install and utilize four (4) 350 kW wireless opportunity chargers
- f) Reduce travel time over our existing commuter buses from Leavenworth and Chelan by at least 7 minutes through the benefits of Confluence Parkway,

By providing additional frequency, hours of coverage and congestion relief for business and citizens in Central Washington, the projects will create valuable travel time savings improving the efficiency and reliability for Link Transit's service. A service, which moves over 1 million riders annually and has a goal to grow and serve over 2 million.

Link Transit is currently investing over \$20 million in bus capital, electrification, automation and passenger amenity assets for services along the Apple Capital Loop corridor and will be spending an additional \$1.5 million + in annual operating expenses for the expanded services along this corridor. This level of investment and commitment demonstrates the importance of this project to Link Transit. Congestion and delay in the Loop corridor has already begun to erode the reliability of our public transit. Without these planned improvements, the cost of congestion will greatly reduce the effectiveness of the public investment in transit and this agency's ability to support the economic future of North Central Washington.

This INFRA grant will be combined with more than \$100 million of public and private funding to complete the Apple Capital Loop and leverage more than \$200 million of investment made by our agricultural sector in production, storage and transportation. The projects propose real innovations in infrastructure, permitting and leverage. This opens developable properties with the adopted plan in place that have the potential to bring \$500 million in reinvestment to our region and improve overall goods and citizen movement. Though this area is rural, our industries and products touch the world; this is why the 12 regional leaders, who comprise the Link Transit's Board of Directors, have identified this as critical to our community's future.

Thank you for your consideration of this vital funding application.



Richard DeRock  
General Manager