



March 8, 2021

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue
SE Washington, DC 20590

Re: Support for the Apple Capital Loop INFRA Grant

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Our Valley, Our Future, Nuestro Valle, Nuestro Futuro (OVOF), we urge support for the City of Wenatchee's application for the Apple Capital Loop INFRA grant. The OVOF 2017-2021 Action Plan was created through a large-scale community outreach campaign that surveyed more than 3,500 residents about what they consider to be the biggest challenges facing the region, as well as what projects they believe can be utilized to overcome those challenges. Among the plan's action items is the Apple Capital Loop project. During the outreach campaign, survey respondents identified transportation infrastructure improvements as a major need for the region. Indeed, "traffic" was the top answer to this question, "What is Our Valley's greatest weakness as a place to live?" The second most popular answer to that question was "population growth" and the seventh-most popular was "travel limitations."

The Apple Capital Loop project is the result of years of planning by regional jurisdictions and broad community engagement in the Wenatchee Valley. The Apple Capital Loop supports economic vitality on a local, regional, and national level by bringing together four vital, interconnected projects that comprise the backbone of our regional transportation network, and the local component of the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN). The completion of the Apple Capital Loop will provide reasonable access to the pedestrian/bike Loop Trail, provide a pedestrian bridge connection to East Wenatchee without dangerously walking across the tracks, and remove two at-grade rail crossings. The project will also employ a variety of pedestrian and public transit friendly amenities such as wider sidewalks, street buffers and street crossings at appropriate intervals.

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. The impacts of climate change and recent fire events underscore the important safety element to implementing this

project. The Wenatchee Valley, surrounded by publicly owned forest lands, experienced extreme wildfires in 2014 and 2015. The Sleepy Hollow fire burned more than 30 acres within 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. The Apple Capital Loop will enhance our ability to respond to future emergencies and safely evacuate citizens, particularly through the Confluence Parkway bypass segment. Safe and consistent access to transportation is a critical component for supporting our diverse, rural community.

Our Valley, Our Future is a grassroots, collaborative effort to better the region for generations to come. Our broad outreach work mirrors the results of other community engagement that has occurred around this pressing transportation issue. Thank you for your consideration of the Apple Capital Loop INFRA grant application. The region's future depends on the completion of the Apple Capital Loop.

Thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,



Steve Maher

Our Valley, Our Future coordinator

On behalf of the OVOF Board of Directors