

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 Board of Directors of the Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce (WVCC), I am writing to ask for your support of the City of Wenatchee's application for the Apple Capital Loop INFRA grant. The WVCC is confident this grant, if approved, will significantly advance our regional economic opportunities for decades to come.

We wholeheartedly believe this grant, if provided, will significantly advance this valley's vision for a vibrant north central Washington and create ladders of opportunity across geographic, political and cultural boundaries. The Apple Capital Loop project is the result of years of planning by regional jurisdictions and broad community engagement. The Apple Capital Loop supports economic vitality on a local, regional, and national level 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).

Wenatchee is one of only eight metropolitan areas in the nation not on the National Interstate System. The Apple Capital Loop is unique because it connects the highway corridors within our region that go both east-west and north-south. Our community recognizes the unique importance of the Apple Capital Loop through ongoing investments. As the region and valley continues to grow, this vital connection needs investment beyond what can be secured locally. Given the importance of this region to the State and the Nation, federal investment is necessary to sustain the transportation capacity of the Apple Capital Loop. Furthermore, Wenatchee is a rural economically disadvantaged area working hard to diversify the regional economy. This project specifically addresses farm to market and warehousing trade for the fresh fruit industry.

Specifically, 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.

WENATCHEE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VALLEY

This INFRA grant will be combined with more than \$100 million of other local public and private funding to complete the Apple Capital Loop. It will leverage more than \$200 million of investments by our agricultural sector in production, storage and transportation. This INFRA Grant will significantly advance the health, safety and economic welfare of this community for decades to come. We are rural, we don't have the benefit of an interstate and this project provides opportunities to highlight the ability of a region to come together and use federal, state and local funding in an efficient and effective manner. The region's future depends on the completion of the Apple Capital Loop.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. Please contact me with any questions regarding the WVCC's support for this application via email at Shiloh@wenatchee.org or by phone, (509) 662-2116.

Sincerely,



Shiloh Burgess
Executive Director
Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce