



March 1, 2019

Secretary Elaine L. Chao
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 Chao:

On behalf of the communities of Wenatchee Valley in Washington State we urge support for the City of Wenatchee's application for the Apple Capital Loop INFRA grant. The Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center's mission is to foster dynamic connections to the unique heritage of the Wenatchee Valley through: Honoring the Arts, Preserving & Sharing Our History, Celebrating our Culture, and Exploring Science & Ingenuity. The Museum gathers and educates people to celebrate and preserve the history, arts, sciences and rich diversity of this region and its people. As stewards of our shared heritage, the Museum wholeheartedly believes this grant, if provided, will significantly advance our regional economic and cultural opportunities for decades to come, with the potential to provide opportunities for developing a community-wide understanding and appreciation for the Native history and heritage of our Valley.

The Apple Capital Loop project is the result of years of planning by regional jurisdictions and broad community engagement in the Wenatchee Valley. One key challenge is limited property for economic development. The five project segments will improve safety, mobility, system reliability, freight mobility and congestion relief for the citizens and businesses of Central Washington. At completion, it also will allow much needed investments in housing, retail, and industrial development by bringing infrastructure to vacant and fire damaged lands throughout our community.

It will also provide much needed opportunities for sharing our region's Native American history, especially that of the Wenatchi/P'squosa people, as well as offering the potential to engage the broader Valley community in projects and programs that enhance awareness of the heritage, culture, and lifeways of the Native Americans of our Valley.

For thousands of years before Euro-American settlement, our Valley was inhabited by indigenous peoples, the Wenatchi/P'squosa. The natural area at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia Rivers (an area affected by the Apple Capital Loop project) was a vibrant place for the tribes of the region to gather to trade, fish, and arrange marriages, as well as for celebrations and ceremonies for millennia. Although many of the Wenatchi/P'squosa were displaced or relocated to the Colville and Yakama Reservations in the 1800s, the confluence of the two rivers still hold great import to them. The Museum is currently working with Wenatchi/P'squosa Elder, Randy Lewis, to record his memories and other tribal histories of the confluence and what is today the Horan Natural Area.



Thank you for your consideration of this application. This INFRA Grant will significantly advance the health, safety and economic welfare of this community for decades to come. In addition, the Apple Capital Loop project will create significant new opportunities for expanding the public's engagement with and knowledge of the area's tribal history and that in turn will help us build a more welcoming and inclusive community. It also holds the potential to help our Valley's residents develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for our shared heritage and our natural environment.

I can be reached at 509-888-6242 or ksturgeon@wvmcc.org for further questions or information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Keni Sturgeon", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Keni Sturgeon
Executive Director