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A closer look at the roads plan

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WENATCHEE — The **Apple Capital Loop project** (the roadways, not the trail) is made up of five separate Wenatchee Valley projects with a combined cost of \$253 million.

Led by the city of Wenatchee, a group of local agencies are applying for a U.S. Department of Transportation grant that would award them \$152 million. The group would pay for the rest with gas taxes and local funds.

For more information visit applecapitalloop.info.



North Wenatchee and Confluence Parkway

North Wenatchee Avenue today sees 40,000 trips per day and is the worst bottleneck in the valley, according to project documents. If nothing is done to ease traffic and the area continues to grow at its current rate, there could be as many as 60,000 trips per day in about 20 years, Jeff Wilkens, executive director of the Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council said on Friday. Traffic would be gridlocked.

The fear in that scenario, according to Steve King, the city's economic development director, is that businesses would leave North Wenatchee Avenue because customers can't get in and out of their parking lots.

The proposed Confluence Parkway would be two lanes with few stop signs and run parallel the Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail from about Hawley Street over the Wenatchee River to Confluence State Park and up to Highway 97A.

With the addition of the parkway, Wilkens projects that North Wenatchee Avenue would have the same number of trips in 2040 as it does today, and the parkway would absorb the 20,000 or so growth in trips.

The city would also connect McKittrick Street to Hawley Street with a railroad underpass. The area the road extension cuts through would eventually be redeveloped into hundreds of housing units and three-quarters of a million square feet of workspace.

The Loop Trail would be tweaked, too. Currently situated against the railroad tracks as it approaches the Wenatchee River from the south, the city wants to shift the trail further inland, close to the edge of wetlands and on the eastern side of a PUD storage facility on the 1000 block of Hawley Street, King said.

The North Wenatchee project is estimated at \$59 million and would begin in 2020. Confluence Parkway is estimated at \$116 million and would begin in 2021.

Cascade Interchange

With 280 acres of housing development planned in the north end area between Odabashian Bridge and Sunset Highway in Douglas County, the existing road network needs some changes, according to officials.

The latest design plans call for a on and off ramps from the eastern edge of the bridge to Empire Avenue, which will be extended over or under Highway 2/97. There'd also be a pair of roundabouts on the north and south sides of Empire Avenue near the highway.

The project is estimated at \$24 million and would begin in 2020.

Sunset Highway

Two-lane Sunset Highway in Douglas County is scheduled to widen to five lanes between Ninth Street and 19th Street N.W. with two north and south lanes and one middle turn lane. From 19th to 23rd, the highway would taper off to three lanes — one in each direction with a middle turn lane. Intersections will be designed to allow U-turns.

The highway has a peak volume of about 19,000 trips a day, Wilkens said. He added that with the additional lanes the highway “could easily support 40,000 cars a day.”

The project’s estimated cost is \$58 million. Funding is already secured and construction is expected to begin in 2024.

Pipeline Pedestrian Bridge extension

South Wenatchee residents, who make up 30 percent of the city’s population, don’t have easy access to the Pipeline Pedestrian Bridge and the Loop Trail, King said. Their options are to walk down to Thurston Street near the Link bus station and then back up the Loop Trail — an extra mile round trip — or cross the train tracks, which the city considers dangerous.

The bridge extension would go over the train tracks and land on Bridge Street. The city wants to develop that area into a plaza for food trucks and socializing.

The project is estimated at \$4 million and construction would begin in 2021.

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