

MARIA CANTWELL

WASHINGTON



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

March 29, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of the City of Wenatchee's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program. The Apple Capital Loop project will allow for more efficient and safe movement of traffic and freight. With grant funding, the project will advance economic opportunity in the region for decades to come.

The Wenatchee Valley is home to 75,000 people and is an urban hub for all of North Central Washington. It is one of only eight metropolitan areas in the country located away from the national interstate system and the area depends on the Apple Capital Loop, where 110,000 vehicles, including 2,700 trucks and 20 trains intersect daily. 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). 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.

The Wenatchee Valley is a key transportation hub for Washington state's \$2.6 billion tree fruit industry. According to the City, \$1 billion worth of tree fruit travels through Wenatchee's transportation network annually in order to reach terminals around the Puget Sound for distribution. This activity has resulted in increased congestion and delayed freight access to nearby cold storage facilities and fruit packing warehouses on North Wenatchee Avenue. The Apple Capital Loop project will also create new opportunities for business and housing by providing access to vacant developable land, which will continue economic growth and bring investments that the City estimates will bring up to \$500 million into the region.

Additionally, this project is vital to ensuring public safety. The Wenatchee Valley is surrounded by publicly owned forests and the extreme wildfires the region experienced in 2014 and 2015 exposed serious safety concerns. The Sleepy Hollow fires devastated the region and burned more than 30 acres within in the City of Wenatchee's urban core. Currently, there is only one way in and out of the north end of the City, significantly limiting the capabilities of emergency

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responders. The Apple Capital Loop project will enhance the ability of emergency responders to efficiently and safely evacuate citizens.

The Apple Capital Loop project will support continued regional growth, ease mobility of agricultural products to market and enhance safety. I am pleased to support this critical project and thank you for your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Cantwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator