



Washington State Legislature

February 22, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast
Washington, D.C. 20590

Secretary Buttigieg:

We write in support of the City of Longview's application to obtain a \$13,420,000 DOT grant to leverage \$85 million in state funding to complete construction of the Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection (IWOW) Project.

As state Legislators representing the business owners and employees working in Longview, we have been supportive of -- and fought -- for inclusion of this project in the 2015 Connecting Washington Act transportation investment package. Of the \$16.1 billion CWA package, an investment of \$85 million was dedicated for the IWOW project. At the time of inclusion, this amount was anticipated to completely fund this project. Unfortunately, since 2015, costs for the project have escalated primarily due to findings that deeper foundations are necessary for the intersection. A federal investment would leverage the state's already significant investment to ensure the project is completed to its maximum potential to continue to improve the economy of Cowlitz County.

The IWOW project is critical to the community's economy. The project is located in the heart of the community's industrial waterfront area where State Route (SR) 432 (Industrial Way) and SR 433 (Oregon Way) intersect and provides direct access to Washington's third largest port, the Port of Longview, the growing Mint Farm Industrial Park and several other industrial businesses along the Columbia River. Economic activity in this area moves over 20 million tons of freight annually via truck through the project site.

The IWOW intersection experiences heavy congestion, particularly during peak periods, that cause significant delays for traffic accessing the industrial district. The congestion is exacerbated by three at-grade roadway/railway crossings that bring an average of 4 trains through the intersection each day. Existing train traffic routinely blocks the roadways between 5 to 7 minutes and cuts off the Port, industrial properties, and neighboring communities from emergency services. The resulting backups require about 15 to 20 minutes to return to non-blockage conditions. Economic projections have found that by 2040, 24-30 trains will cross through the intersection each day.

The IWOW Project will eliminate the at-grade rail crossings by elevating the roadway and creating more efficiencies in the intersection to accommodate current and anticipated growth of both truck and rail traffic. The project is critical to improving the economy in an economically distressed community that heavily relies on the jobs and economic activity of the industrial businesses located in and around the project the area and we respectfully request that Longview be awarded funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Senator Jeff Wilson
19th Legislative District



Representative Jim Walsh
19th Legislative District



Representative Joel McEntire
19th Legislative District



Senator John Braun
20th Legislative District



Representative Ed Orcutt
20th Legislative District



Representative Peter Abarrno
20th Legislative District