



# Board of Commissioners

County Administration Building  
207 Fourth Avenue North, Rom 305  
Kelso, WA 98626  
TEL (360) 577-3020  
FAX (360) 423-9987  
[www.co.cowlitz.wa.us](http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us)

## COMMISSIONERS

February 10, 2021

Arne Mortensen  
District 1

Dennis P. Weber  
District 2

Joe Gardner  
District 3

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

CLERK OF THE BOARD  
Tiffany Ostreim

**Subject:** County Support for the City of Longview's grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for the Industrial Way, Oregon Way intersection Project.

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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

As a local government in partnership with Longview, we supported inclusion of this project in the 2015 Connecting Washington transportation investment package. The \$16.1 billion investment included \$85 million for the IWOW project, which at the time was anticipated to completely fund it. 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 drive 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 annual gross truck tonnage 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 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 and industrial properties from emergency services. The resulting backups requires about 15 to 20 minutes to return to non-blockage conditions. Economic projections have found that by 2040, 24-30 trains will cross through 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. The project is critical to the community who heavily relies on the jobs and economic activity of the industrial businesses located in the area.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

**Board of County Commissioners  
of Cowlitz County, Washington**

  
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Joe Gardner, Chairman

  
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Dennis P. Weber, Commissioner

  
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Arne Mortensen, Commissioner