

November 15, 2021

The Honorable Andy Billig, Majority Leader  
Washington State Senate

The Honorable Laurie Jinkins, Speaker  
Washington House of Representatives

The Honorable Emily Randall, Majority Whip  
Washington State Senate

The Honorable Marcus Riccelli, Majority Whip  
Washington House of Representatives

The Honorable Steve Hobbs, Transportation  
Committee Chair  
Washington State Senate

The Honorable Bill Ramos, Assistant Majority  
Whip  
Washington House of Representatives

The Honorable Rebecca Saldaña, Transportation  
Committee Vice Chair  
Washington State Senate

The Honorable Jake Fey, Transportation  
Committee Chair  
Washington House of Representatives

The Honorable Mark Mullet  
Washington State Senate

The Honorable Sharon Wylie, Transportation  
Committee 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair  
Washington House of Representatives

Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives:

We write to strongly encourage you to support a strong and just recovery by passing a transportation investment package in 2021 that includes funding for the Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation Project. Now is the time to invest in advancing this transformative project to ensure a sustainable future for Washington state.

Growth projections for the Cascadia region are startling, with populations expected to increase by more than 30% -- or 3-4 million additional people – in the next 30 years according to the Cascadia Innovation Corridor’s “Cascadia Vision 2050” report<sup>1</sup>. Without additional strategies to accommodate this unprecedented growth, the current challenges in providing affordable housing and managing traffic congestion (and resulting carbon emissions) will get worse.

For the past five years, a broad group of stakeholders has been working to advance the vision of building ultra-high-speed ground transportation to connect the anchor cities in the region—Vancouver, BC; Seattle, WA; and Portland, OR, and the communities in between. With support from Washington State, the State of Oregon, the Province of British Columbia, and the private sector, the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) commissioned reports studying the feasibility and economics of the project.

The initial feasibility study<sup>2</sup> showed robust ridership, revenue projections, an estimated \$355 billion in economic growth, and 200,000 new jobs related to construction and ongoing operation. The “business

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<sup>1</sup> [https://connectcascadia.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Cascadia-Vision-2050\\_Published.pdf](https://connectcascadia.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Cascadia-Vision-2050_Published.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/LegReports/17-19/UltraHighSpeedGroundTransportation\\_FINAL.pdf](https://wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/LegReports/17-19/UltraHighSpeedGroundTransportation_FINAL.pdf)

case analysis<sup>3</sup> demonstrated that the project is economically viable. The most recent report<sup>4</sup>, completed in late 2020, outlines a framework for governance and potential funding paths for the project.

We have the unique opportunity to leverage state dollars with a significant federal match. We are encouraged by the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Federal funding will undoubtedly necessitate a matching state investment for many projects. The current U.S. House budget reconciliation proposal includes up to 90 percent federal funding match for high-speed rail.

Funding this project now will allow WSDOT, in partnership with the State of Oregon and Province of British Columbia, to move this project forward. Gov. Inslee requested \$3.25 million to advance the project and initiate community engagement and planning, develop a financial plan and strategy, and establish a coordinating entity to address system governance. Depending on the final federal legislation, it may be necessary to provide additional state funding to match a federal investment.

Accordingly, we request that you include funding for the Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation project in the state package. This project represents a future of robust mobility, equitable access to opportunity, good jobs, more affordable housing, and a safe, sustainable environment.

Thank you for your consideration,

Van Collins  
President & CEO  
ACEC Washington

Amaxra

Paige Mallot  
Chair  
Cascadia Rail

Craig Jelinek  
President & CEO  
Costco Wholesale

Cassie Franklin  
Mayor  
City of Everett

ACT | The App Association

Joe Fain  
President & CEO  
Bellevue Chamber of Commerce

Vlad Gutman-Britten  
Washington Director  
Climate Solutions

Jon Scholes  
President & CEO  
Downtown Seattle Association

Expedia Group

HNTB Corporation

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<sup>3</sup> <https://wsdot.wa.gov/planning/studies/ultra-high-speed-travel/2019-business-case-analysis>

<sup>4</sup> <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017/08/28/CascadiaUHSGT-FrameworkForFuture-ExecutiveSummary.pdf> and Full Report: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017/08/28/CascadiaUHSGT-FrameworkForFuture-FinalReport.pdf>

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