

July 27, 2021

Honorable Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation:

We write to strongly urge your support for federal recognition and funding for the Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation<sup>1</sup> project as part of the reauthorization of surface transportation legislation this year. This transformative infrastructure project is a key element of the Cascadia Innovation Corridor<sup>2</sup> initiative, an initiative borne from and supported by multi-stakeholder engagement from the private sector and government as an economic and sustainability priority for the Cascadia region.

Launched in 2016, the initiative creates a vision for the region stretching from British Columbia through Washington State to Oregon. A major component of the initiative is development of ultra-high-speed ground transportation through the corridor. The project's important goal is to create better connections that will catalyze innovation, shared prosperity, and job growth, and allow the region to address its shared concerns around lack of affordable housing and traffic congestion amid population increases.

Growth projections for the Cascadia region are startling, with populations expected to increase by more than 30% -- or 3-4 million additional people -- by 2050. 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.

The mega-region needs to move quickly to embrace big, bold ideas that will prepare it for the continued growth to come and sustainably preserve the region for future generations. Recently, the Cascadia Innovation Corridor released the "Cascadia Vision 2050" report<sup>3</sup>, calling for better connections between the region's urban centers and creation of "hub cities" to accommodate our growing populations. Ultra-high-speed ground transportation is the key to linking these communities and job centers.

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. With support from Washington State, the State of Oregon, the Province of British Columbia, and the private sector, the Washington Department of Transportation commissioned reports studying the feasibility and economics of the project.

The initial feasibility study<sup>4</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 case analysis"<sup>5</sup> demonstrated that the project is economically viable. The most recent report<sup>6</sup>, completed in late 2020, outlines a framework for governance and potential funding paths for the project. Now it is time to take the next step—federal recognition and funding for this critical project. Other regions of the country are developing high speed rail corridors. Projects are underway in Florida, Texas, and California. The Northeast states are working together on a plan for their region. Cascadia has taken the critical first steps, but federal support is needed to advance this project.

<sup>1</sup> <https://wsdot.wa.gov/planning/studies/ultra-high-speed-travel/ground-transportation-study>

<sup>2</sup> <https://connectcascadia.com/>

<sup>3</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>4</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)

<sup>5</sup> <https://wsdot.wa.gov/planning/studies/ultra-high-speed-travel/2019-business-case-analysis>

<sup>6</sup> Executive Summary: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017/08/28/CascadiaUHS GT-FrameworkForFuture-ExecutiveSummary.pdf> and Full Report: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017/08/28/CascadiaUHS GT-FrameworkForFuture-FinalReport.pdf>

The development of ultra-high-speed ground transportation will unleash the full potential of Cascadia businesses and other innovators, strategically address the concerns that can otherwise arise from continued growth, and improve the quality of life for the region's residents. This project represents a future of robust mobility, equitable access to opportunity, good jobs, and a safe, sustainable environment.

Accordingly, we request that you support federal recognition and funding for the Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation project as it moves into its next phases.

Thank you for your consideration,

Van Collins  
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ACEC Washington

Amaxra

Alex Wick  
Founder & CEO  
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seattle metropolitan chamber of commerce



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