

**U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell**  
**Bellevue Sound Transit Link East Opening**  
**April, 27, 2024**  
**Sen. Cantwell Opening Remarks**

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

**Sen. Cantwell:** Well, thank you, Claudia.

Oh my gosh, it's so great to be here with everyone today on such a celebration for an accomplishment. I want to thank Goran Sparrman, certainly Executive Dow Constantine. I can't tell you how many times Dow, in his role as county exec, and as a key member of this transportation organization, made this a reality.

But I'd also like to thank Councilmember Balducci, Mayor Robinson, Mayor Birney, and others who also fought this fight. But I don't want to forget Monty Anderson and the hard work of the tradesmen and women, Monty, thank you.

But I can't emphasize enough how much I appreciate my partner in Washington, D.C., Senator Patty Murray. Because, long ago, when this idea had to be born, she was working hard to make sure that our region did the hard work on Sound Transportation policy.

But you have no idea today, the number one thing that the other side of the aisle always says is, let's get rid of transit in the budget. You have no idea how many times she's had to stand up to fight that fight, and I've been right there with her. But now that she's the chair of the Appropriations Committee, they don't say that as much.

So, the future is right behind us. And you can see that our region has become an economic powerhouse in so many things. In computer science, in space, in next generation technology. But that doesn't all work, if we can't get to and from work. And this is about a transportation system that is going to help nearly 6,000 daily riders now get from Redmond to downtown Bellevue in 14 minutes, instead of the 40 minute trip that it might take by bus or by car. That is connecting people to where they need to go.

And as Claudia said, it is about building more affordable housing. Part of the city partnership with Bellevue is to build more affordable housing along the 2 line, adding over 550 new affordable projects on Sound Transit properties along the route. That will make more affordable housing.

But we were glad that the TIFIA federal loan of \$1.3 billion helped finance this infrastructure, got it going, and allowed Sound Transit to save between \$200 and \$300 million, and leverage the funding to get this project going.

Congratulations to everyone. I too will continue to fight for more federal dollars in transportation. Our economy's working, let's continue to make transportation an enabler of that economy.