

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 21, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write in support of an application submitted by the City of Seattle for the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grants Program* for the East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement project.


The East Marginal Way Corridor is a major freight corridor that connects seven Port of Seattle terminals with freight rail yards and a multitude of industrial and warehousing operations to the national highway system. As the City of Seattle and the Northwest region continue to rapidly grow and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, improvements to the East Marginal Way Corridor, one of the nation's most critical internal transportation centers, are essential to promote national and international economic competitiveness.

In March 2020, the West Seattle Bridge was suddenly closed to vehicular traffic and its estimated reopening date is not until 2022. One of the alternate routes is the lower bridge on Spokane Street, which feeds directly onto East Marginal Way South. The Spokane Street route is also the location of the West Seattle Bridge bike trail, which is part of a regional bicycle route extending to communities south of Seattle. Since the closure of the bridge, weekday bike trips are estimated to be at 80% of their pre-COVID levels compared to 23% for vehicle trips and have increased to 110% on the weekends.

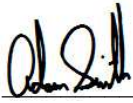
In addition to the congestion and traffic delays experienced on East Marginal Way, increased multimodal traffic often leads to unpredictable weaving and turning conflicts due to significant speed differentials between cyclists and drivers. This funding would be used to construct a protected bike lane to reduce fatalities, increase visibility, and protect the nearly 1,000 bicycle riders that use the corridor each day. Additionally, it would construct adaptive traffic signals, relocate railroad tracks, and provide adequate lighting as well as adding a Dynamic Message Sign (DMS) that would inform motorists of current traffic conditions. This project would allow the city to improve freight mobility and access in the region, and reduce traffic accidents and fatalities for pedestrians, cyclists, and heavy haul freight trucks.

Overall, these critical improvements would increase safety and mobility for Seattle residents, while also generating numerous economic benefits for the nation. Thank you for your consideration of the City of Seattle's application.

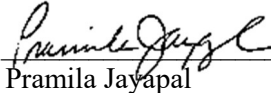
Sincerely,


Patty Murray
United States Senator


Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress