

JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER
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December 18, 2020

Andrew Rasmussen
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highways Administration
Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 E. Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

Dear Mr. Rasmussen,

I write to express my strong support for the City of Ridgefield's 2020 Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) application to complete the north segment of the Gee Creek Trail (Trail). The Trail is the centerpiece of Ridgefield's long envisioned trail network built in segments over several years. I have been assured by project sponsors and local governments that the property owners and neighborhoods adjacent to the trail have been communicated with about this project and support it.

FLAP funding would leverage previous public investments to support the Trail network. The north segment, running from Heron Drive to Main Avenue, is the last critical piece to connect all the other segments and fully establish the Trail that extends approximately four miles from Ridgefield High School at the south end of the City to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge just north of the City limits. Providing this multimodal access to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, the community's downtown core and waterfront is critical to effectively leveraging significant public investments already made. These investments include \$90 million from Washington State Ecology for a 15 year cleanup of containments in the waterfront area, \$3 million to complete other segments of the Trail and a \$3.3 million FLAP funded project on Ridgefield's Main Avenue that this segment will connect to.

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge welcomes over 160,000 annual visitors. The Refuge also attracts 3,000 students annually and is a high-priority Urban National Wildlife Refuge serving diverse communities across Southwest Washington. After completion of this final trail segment, a continuous trail will provide a safe, separated ADA accessible facility for students, pedestrians and bicyclists from the Ridgefield downtown, waterfront and the Wildlife Refuge.

Again, I'm pleased to support the City of Ridgefield's 2020 FLAP grant application. The project builds on significant public investments and will provide additional multimodal access to an urban National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely,

Jaime Herrera Beutler

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress