



CITY OF PENDLETON

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The Honorable Elaine Chao, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I my name is Stuart Roberts. I am employed as the Chief of Police by the City of Pendleton, Oregon. I respectfully submit this letter for your contemplation in support of the City of Pendleton's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY2020 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) program. The city's grant proposal in concert with the Oregon Department of Transportation appropriately prioritizes the reconstruction of the Southgate (US Highway 395) and Interstate 84 (I-84) Interchange. Currently, the identified area poses significant risk to motorist and pedestrians alike. However, it is my professional opinion that the proposed redesign would not only mitigate ongoing safety issues, but also improve connectivity for first responders.

Under its current construction, the Interchange is failing to meet its purpose of safely and efficiently controlling the traffic flow between the aforementioned highways while connecting residential and commercial areas of the city divided by the Interstate. Currently, the proximity of the project interchange to the intersection(s) of Southgate and Tutuila Road/SW Hailey Avenue where 24 vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic lanes converge creates significant congestion that frequently results in traffic crashes. High traffic volume along Southgate also results in consistent backups on Hwy 395 and I-84 (off/on-ramps). The morning and afternoon commutes bring the area to a virtual standstill causing frustrated drivers to make unlawful and/or dangerous maneuvers. Inclimate weather causes commercial trucks to spin out, and block traffic due the grade of the highway causing further safety issues and blockage. Finally, residents routinely travel significant distances to avoid the Interchange placing more burden on residential streets.

As referenced previously, BUILD funds will be used to reconstruct the Interchange by extending access ramps off the Interstate, expanding Hwy 395 capacity, and improving intersections, which will improve traffic flow and safety at the largest choke point in Pendleton. Completion of this project will turn this poorly designed/troublesome Interchange into an asset for the region by reducing congestion while enhancing economic development by improving access to the most rapidly growing commercial and residential area(s) of town.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stuart A. Roberts
Chief of Police

