



Fourteen business and civic leaders traveled to Washington DC on September 4-6 to press their case in support of \$15 million to widen the south half of the Bypass to four-lanes and remove roundabouts. The group included County Commissioner Pam Holmquist, Kalispell Mayor Mark Johnson, Kalispell City Manager Doug Russell and several leaders of the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce.

“The Bypass is at 2040 projections just two years after opening the complete route”, said Kalispell Chamber president Joe Unterreiner. “With a strong state match provided by the Montana Department of Transportation, an 8-1 benefit-cost ratio, and nation-leading population growth rates, this project is highly qualified for funding approval”.

The group met with and received strong support from our congressional delegation of Sens. Daines and Tester, and Congressman Gianforte. Additional meetings were held with the U.S. Chamber's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee where we had the special opportunity to make our case to the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation Jeff Rosen and also emphasize the importance of FAA reauthorization to keep pace with the nearly 17% airline passenger growth we are experiencing at Glacier Park Airport.

The delegation also learned that grant recipients could be announced earlier than the originally listed date of Dec. 18, which would be welcome news for a project that is ready to go as soon as funding is available, Unterreiner said. "That would be great for us if it works out that way," Unterreiner said. "It would allow us to get started more quickly."

