

MARIA CANTWELL

WASHINGTON



United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

July 15, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of the City of Spokane Valley's application to the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program for the Pines Road/BNSF Grade Separation Project. Once completed, this project will improve commercial and residential traffic flow, public safety, and quality of life for those living in the area.

The City of Spokane Valley is seeking a RAISE grant to eliminate the at-grade rail crossing at Pines Road where it intersects the BNSF mainline. The current at-grade railway-highway crossing at Pines Road poses problems to traffic and safety. According to the City of Spokane Valley, people and freight are delayed an average of 20,000 times per year at the roadway-railway crossing, totaling over 1,000 hours of gate-down time annually. According to the Washington State Department of Transportation Washington State Rail Plan, almost 94% percent of Washington's east-west bulk cargo rail traffic travels through this corridor, with an average of 62 freight and two passenger trains daily. This rate is expected to increase to 114 trains by 2035. In 2018, Washington state's Joint Transportation Committee released its *Prioritization of Prominent Road-Rail Conflicts*, which ranked the Pines Road/BNSF grade separation project as the top priority in Washington State.

The Pines Road/BNSF Grade Separation project will build an underpass at Pines Road where it intersects with the BNSF mainline that will accommodate up to four total tracks, three more than exist today. The increased capacity of the underpass and improved efficiency of the intersection of Pines Road (SR 27) and Trent Avenue (SR 290) will improve safety and reduce the risk of road-related commodity spills that can occur at at-grade crossings. The project will also replace an existing signalized intersection of two state highways (SR 27 and SR 290) with a dual-lane roundabout that will improve congestion and reduce the number and severity of highway collisions. This project will help improve the efficiency of the rail movements along the corridor and improve safety, noise, and congestion.

Spokane Valley's Pines Road/BNSF Grade Separation Project will efficiently, safely, and economically serve the City of Spokane Valley, Spokane County, and the Spokane region. Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Cantwell". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator