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Affiliated with:  
American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees  
Washington State Labor Council

April 11, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Washington State Council of County and City Employees (WSCCCE) endorses Spokane Valley's application for funding for the Pines Road/BNSF Grade Separation project and urges you to fund this regionally significant project. This project will grade separate a highway-rail at-grade crossing and provide non-motorized transportation facilities through the grade crossing and its adjacent intersection of two state highways. The mobility and connectivity elements of this project will immensely benefit the active transportation community, especially this project's Historically Disadvantaged Community.

On behalf of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the WSCCCE represents over half of the City's 100-person workforce. Spokane Valley's population is 103,000 and its staff operates on a lean and efficient model which prides itself on providing exceptional service. The City employs 54 unionized staff that work across all facets of local government.

Federal funding for this project will provide an immediate impact for unionized workers throughout the region. City staff engineers, technicians, and inspectors will work the next two years to construct the improvements. City building and development staff will support the permitting, construction, and inspection of private development that will be created by the construction and completion of the grade separation project. Outside of City Hall, the project supports a regionwide unionized workforce of emergency responders, contractors and builders, and skilled trades across a variety of industries.

The safety and economic impacts of the project are not limited to the unionized workforce. The project eliminates 4-hours of stopped traffic caused by the 67-train crossings every day. The new undercrossing of Pines Road at the tracks all but eliminates the risks associated with train-vehicle collisions. The existing project area does not provide any accessible, non-motorized route across the rail tracks. The improvements mitigate this lack of infrastructure and take it one step further: there is a new trailhead connecting to the adjacent Centennial Trail and Spokane River, which is a park system spanning from Spokane, WA, to Coeur d'Alene, ID.

I ask you give the City's application for Federal funding the full and fair consideration it deserves. This is an important project for union workers in the region, state, and across the county.

Respectfully,

Scott Davies  
Staff Representative