



March 31, 2016

**SUPPORT APPROVED
FOR 2017 FASTLANE II**

City Councilmembers
City of Spokane Valley
11707 E Sprague, Suite 106
Spokane Valley, WA 99206

**RE: Pines Road and Barker Road/BNSF Grade Separation Projects for the 2016 USDOT
Grant Application**

Dear Mayor Higgins and Members of the Council:

I am writing to express my support of the 2016 FASTLANE grant application for the Pines Road and the Barker Road/BNSF Grade Separation projects. As the Superintendent of the Central Valley School District in the Spokane region, I am keenly aware of the potential detrimental effects of these at-grade crossings. Pines Road, Barker Road, and the BNSF tracks provide a vital transportation link to the businesses and residents along the BNSF tracks and I-90.

These projects would significantly improve a key link to I-90 and the BNSF railroad for expanded freight use, and are crucial to jobs and economic development for our region. Because of the current status of existing intersections, many freight trips are forced to access I-90 via a circuitous route, experiencing congestion due to inadequate capacity for vehicles accessing the Barker Road and the Pines Road/I-90 interchanges. Additionally, Pines Road and Barker Road serve as a secondary access to a major commercial and industrial area in Spokane County; these intersections are frequently over capacity.

The high train volumes intersecting Pines Road and Barker Road at the at-grade crossings are an increasing safety risk. Removing the at-grade rail crossings will improve public safety by reducing the potential for rail/vehicle collisions and improve emergency access to residents and businesses.

Both proposed grade separation projects will help improve the efficiency of the rail movements along the corridor and address environmental, noise, safety, and congestion issues impacting the City's street network.

A new overpass at these intersections will be an important transportation facility for the city of Spokane Valley, Spokane County, and the Spokane region. In order to help our businesses and community thrive, we urge you to provide funding crucial to the construction of the Pines Road and Barker Road/BNSF Grade Separation projects.

Sincerely,

Ben C. Small
Superintendent