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December 14, 2016

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 2017 USDOT Grant Application

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Greater Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce to express our support of the 2017 FASTLANE grant application for the Pines Road and the Barker Road/BNSF Grade Separation projects. As the President & Chief Executive Officer of a business organization in the Spokane region, I am keenly aware of the potential detrimental effects of these at-grade crossings, especially given the proposed growth in train traffic through Spokane from increased oil and coal shipments to the west coast. 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.

The businesses in our organization provide thousands of jobs, and many are dependent on freight access to I-90 in order to sell our their products. Improved access will help make our businesses more competitive. We are committed to The BIG 5 initiatives and most of them are directly or indirectly dependent on improved access.

We believe strongly in the future of Spokane Valley as a regional center for manufacturing. 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 business and our community thrive, we urge you to provide funding crucial to the construction of the Pines Road and Barker Road/BNSF Grade Separation projects.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Morgan".

Katherine Morgan,  
President & CEO