

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705
December 14, 2016

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I write to offer my strong support for the application submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FASTLANE Grant Program by the City of Spokane Valley. Grade separation of two intersections near the city's growing industrial core is essential to the efficient movement of freight bound for international markets across the United States.

Each day, 50 to 60 trains pass through Spokane Valley, traveling between Seattle, WA and Chicago, IL along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway corridor. Trains entering the city from both directions often create a wall of rail cars 3 miles long, delaying vehicles at down gates by 6,000 hours a year. These delays are expected to nearly double by 2030. As rail use in Washington state surges over the next three decades, the risk of train-vehicle collisions and congestion will increase exponentially at unmitigated at-grade crossings.

With over 4,100 vehicles crossing the tracks every day, Barker Road is the principal north-south arterial in the City of Spokane Valley. An overpass at Barker Road eliminates two at-grade rail crossings on the line, carrying traffic over BNSF tracks and creating a new interchange that eases congestion along nearby arterials. Pines Road would be reconstructed to pass under four BNSF tracks, allowing the city to close an at-grade crossing one mile to the west. Grade separation at Pines Road creates an unencumbered link between businesses, residents, and regional transportation corridors.

Both projects improve the efficiency of rail movement along the corridor and alleviate environmental, noise, safety, and congestion issues impacting regional mobility and quality of life. Grade separation at these critical intersections would elevate each crossing's level-of-service from an "F" rating to an "A" rating.

Completion of the Barker Road and Pines Road grade separation projects would significantly improve a key link between Interstate-90 and the BNSF railway, increasing safety while promoting the creation of new, family-wage jobs in the region. I ask for your full and fair consideration of the City of Spokane Valley's application to the FASTLANE Grant Program.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

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