



7 April 2016

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

Re: City of Seattle - South Lander Street Grade Separation FAST Grant Application

Dear Secretary Foxx:

Amtrak is pleased to support the City of Seattle's South Lander Street grade separation FAST grant application. The South Lander Street project will construct a grade separated crossing over BNSF's tracks on South Lander Street between 1st and 4th avenues. This crossing will provide a roadway unimpeded by rail operations and remove an average of 4.5 hours of surface traffic delay and 500 safety violations per day, improving the mobility of tens of thousands of people and directly benefitting freight access to port and manufacturing facilities critical to the local and national economy. In addition, this project will significantly improve the safety in this region of the city by eliminating freight, passenger and commuter train operations with all vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic on South Lander Street.

The Amtrak Seattle Maintenance facility is just north of South Lander Street and is bisected by South Holgate Street, which has similar, yet significant, safety and congestion concerns. Amtrak supports the operations of two of our national network trains—the Coast Starlight (Seattle-Los Angeles) and the Empire Builder (Seattle-Chicago), operates the State-Supported Amtrak Cascade inter-city passenger rail service (Eugene, OR-Vancouver, BC), and provides locomotive and car maintenance for Sound Transit Sounder Service at this location. Amtrak continues to invest in our Seattle Maintenance Facility to meet the actual, and planned, service growth of the Washington's State-supported Amtrak Cascades service, as well as, Sound Transit commuter service. The negative impacts to congestion and safety in this region will only get worse as all rail traffic, and general purpose and freight vehicle volumes increase if projects like the South Lander Street grade separation are not actualized.

South Lander Street Grade Separation will increase safety by separating trains from people driving vehicles, walking and riding bikes. Additionally, it would result in improved operations, and safety, of freight, passenger, and commuter trains by eliminating the current conflict at South Lander Street. This project, and its benefits, would leverage the over \$800 million in ARRA funding that Washington State received, and is currently investing in the rail corridor of the region. The grade separation at South Lander Street will also improve and ensure reliable access for public safety and emergency responders that would need to travel east/west in this area of the city. Reduced vehicle and truck delay and congestion will benefit the environment, ease access to regional transit hubs and employment centers, and improve reliability for travel to/from Interstates 5 and 90—creating dependable access to one of the largest port operations in the United States.

Amtrak supports the City of Seattle's FAST grant application for this important project that would benefit the city, state, and region. Following the grade separation of South Lander Street, we look forward to working with the City and other stakeholders, including the BNSF Railway, on the closure of South Holgate Street that would eliminate the significant safety and congestion concerns where this city street bisects an active rail yard. This improvement, would build upon the success of the South Lander Street grade separation, to improve public safety and rail operations, reduce congestion by closing an at-grade location where surface traffic and freight mobility is significantly impacted by rail traffic and would focus that traffic to safe and reliable routes that are already grade separated. The South Lander Street Grade Separation project, combined with past, and future, projects in the area will improve the region's overall safety, economy, and quality of life.

Sincerely,



Kurt Laird

Deputy General Manager

Cc:

Senator Maria Cantwell

Senator Patty Murray

Governor Jay Inslee

Congressman Jim McDermott