



King County

Metropolitan King County Council

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May 30, 2015

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

RE: City of Seattle Northgate Non-Motorized Access to Transit and Education
TIGER application

Dear Secretary Foxx:

We support the City of Seattle's application for a United States Department of Transportation TIGER grant. This grant would help fund the Northgate Non-Motorized Access to Transit and Education project, including a bicycle and pedestrian bridge and bike share service that will connect the two Districts we represent on the King County Council.

Northwest companies like Amazon, Microsoft, and Boeing are thriving and expanding, bringing new faces to our region each day. In March 2014, the United States Census Bureau announced that King County was the fourth fastest growing large county in the country over the past three years, having added 37,000 new residents or a 1.8% population increase in 2013 alone. This population growth has exacerbated our region's transportation challenges. Today, our transit agencies are seeing near record levels of ridership, our roadways are congested, and our economy is being impacted from the delay in moving people and goods.

That is why the expansion of light rail north along Interstate 5 is such a pivotal project for our region. Our ongoing investments in transportation infrastructure help our region harness the potential that comes with the influx of new residents. But as our population continues to grow, providing access to transportation infrastructure that is quick, reliable, and attractive is vital. Without it, we risk isolating thousands of potential transit users and large swaths of our community.

The proposed Northgate pedestrian and bicycle bridge is a case in point. Residents on the east side of I-5 and those on the west will be able to safely access key community assets on each side of the interstate. These assets include a community center, library, Northwest Hospital & Medical Center, and the Northgate Mall. Without this vital bridge over I-5, most of these facilities will not be able to safely access the light rail station. The bridge combined with bike share will also provide access to regional rail service for a much larger portion of North Seattle. Non-motorized access to Northgate's many bus routes will be a more attractive option for the economically disadvantaged neighborhoods of Licton Springs, Bitter Lake and North Park.

The improvements would also greatly expand access to North Seattle College, with its two-year and four-year degree programs, over 50 certificate programs and over 14,000 students. The college, home to the Opportunity Center for Employment and Education, a one-stop shop for social, educational and employment services, could be reached in a reasonable time from much further away than at present, benefitting students, Center patrons and the region. Non-motorized access presents a low cost, healthy means of transport with beneficial environmental effects.

For these and many other reasons, we urge you and the Department of Transportation to support the City of Seattle's application for TIGER funds for the Northgate Non-Motorized Access to Transit and Education project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Larry Phillips, Chair
King County Council, District Four


Rod Dembowski, Councilmember
King County Council, District One