



CITY OF SEATTLE

March 19, 2021

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

Re: City of Seattle West Seattle Bridges Grant Application

Secretary Buttigieg:

The City of Seattle is proud to present the West Seattle Bridges Project for consideration for an Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant. The sudden and unexpected closure of the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge is a locally declared civil emergency and restoring this bridge – the busiest local street within our city – far exceeds local revenues and typical grant programs.

Restoring the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge to full capacity is critical to the Seattle region's ability to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Before accelerated structural cracking forced the City of Seattle to suddenly close the bridge to traffic on March 23, 2020, it was carrying more than 84,000 cars and trucks, along with 25,000 bus riders, every weekday. It connected one-sixth of Seattle's population and numerous small businesses with downtown Seattle, Qualified Opportunity Zones, Port of Seattle terminals, freight rail yards, industrial businesses, King County's largest manufacturing and industrial center, and the national highway system.

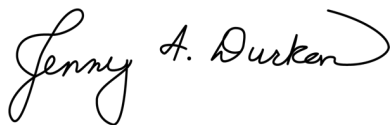
The good news is that we have a plan to repair and reopen the high bridge and are moving forward with the rehabilitation project to ensure this regional connection can be safely restored as soon as possible, targeting a re-opening date as soon as mid-2022. The repair project will also ensure the structural resilience of the parallel movable West Seattle Low Bridge, maintaining its primary role as a connection for freight and industrial traffic – a connection critical to the ongoing Northwest Seaport Alliance Terminal 5 expansion project that sits adjacent to the West Seattle Bridges. Terminal 5 and adjacent seaport terminals are designed to serve as a trade conduit for 13 states, supporting 28,000 jobs and \$8.7 billion per year in business output.

Restoring the high bridge to full traffic and transit capacity will also remove traffic detours in place since the closure. The neighborhoods directly impacted by those detours are home to our region's highest concentrations of people of color, including indigenous, immigrant, and refugee populations and now have significantly increased traffic on local streets during the

bridge closure. This has added pollution to communities who already experience greater health, public safety, and economic disparities, including higher rates of asthma and lower rates for life expectancy compared with the rest of the Puget Sound region.

The City of Seattle has already prioritized \$100 million in local funding for the projected \$175 million program and begun engineering work that would allow the repairs to proceed immediately with the infusion of the requested INFRA grant funds for construction. Grant funding for this important safety project is essential to meeting our aggressive timeline and restoring mobility for our residents and all travelers in the region. For the above-stated reasons, we greatly appreciate the US Department of Transportation consideration of this application for INFRA funding to repair and reopen the West Seattle High Bridge and we humbly await your positive response.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jenny A. Durkan



Council President Lorena González



Councilmember Lisa Herbold



Councilmember Debora Juarez



Councilmember Andrew J. Lewis



Councilmember Tammy J. Morales



Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda



Councilmember Alex Pedersen



Councilmember Kshama Sawant



Councilmember Dan Strauss

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg

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CC: Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Governor Jay Inslee
Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal
Congressman Adam Smith