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July 11, 2018

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
 Secretary
 United States Department of Transportation
 1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
 Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am pleased to write in support of King County's and the City of Kirkland's joint application for "Bridges Supporting Mobility and Connectivity Through Three East King County Interchanges" to the U.S. Dept. of Transportation's FY 2018 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants Program.

When right of ways were cleared to make way for rail lines to snake across the country, they shaped communities and supported massive economic growth. Today, in rapidly growing eastern King County in the Puget Sound region of Washington State, those same right of ways are evolving to provide essential new choices in connecting people to jobs, services, businesses, and destinations. With your help, in the form of a BUILD discretionary grant investment, our region will achieve major milestones in repurposing one of these, historically known as the Eastside Rail Corridor, into a 42-mile long, active transportation corridor.

A BUILD grant investment will allow completion of three bridges that are essential for safe and efficient non-motorized movement through three major interchanges within this corridor. These interchanges, at Totem Lake in the City of Kirkland and at NE 8th and SE 8th in the City of Bellevue, are critical nodes in what will become the most heavily used portion of the corridor. These projects build on the multi-million dollar investments in acquisition and development made by the State of Washington, King County, Snohomish County, Sound Transit, Puget Sound Energy, and the cities of Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville. These bridges will help connect communities – urban, suburban, and rural – to each other, support choices among transportation modes, and enhance vitality and mobility within this network of job centers along the eastern shores of Lake Washington.

The finished projects will add value to recent public-private partnership contributions and leverage planned investment. For example, Google invested over \$3 million in public amenities in the

corridor along its expanded campus in Kirkland just south of the Totem Lake Urban Center. A public-private partnership involving a private health care organization, Bellevue, King County, and the State of Washington has raised \$7.5M that will support improvements to the iconic Wilburton Trestle at SE 8th. In combination with BUILD funding, these public-private investments will make this corridor into a new route for commuters from south and east King County as well as a tourist destination.

On behalf of The Trust for Public Land, I urge a favorable review of this application. The Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit that creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. We support the connectivity and active transportation benefits these projects will offer. Thank you for your consideration of the numerous benefits "Bridges Supporting Mobility and Connectivity Through Three East King County Interchanges" will provide for Puget Sound residents.

Sincerely,



David Patton
Northwest Area Director

cc: Metropolitan King County Council
Kirkland City Council
US Senator Patty Murray
US Senator Maria Cantwell
Congresswoman Suzan DelBene
Congressman Dave Reichert
Congressman Adam Smith