



July 16, 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,

On behalf of Transportation Choices Coalition (TCC), 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. TCC is a statewide organization bringing together partners to ensure Washingtonians have more transportation choices and access to opportunity.

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, located 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 the repurposing one of these right of ways, 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 8<sup>th</sup> and SE 8<sup>th</sup> 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 the City of Kirkland just south of the Totem Lake Urban Center. A public-private partnership involving a private health care organization, the City of Bellevue, King County, and the State of Washington has raised \$7.5M that will support improvements to the iconic Wilburton Trestle at SE 8<sup>th</sup>. 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.



I urge a favorable review of this application. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelsey Mesher".

Kelsey Mesher,  
Advocacy Director, Transportation Choices Coalition

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