



November 5, 2008

The Honorable Adam Smith
2402 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

The City of Seattle, the Port of Seattle and City of Kent are pleased that Congress is seriously considering passage of a federal economic recovery program that would provide both needed infrastructure improvements and create family wage jobs in a difficult economy. National organizations, such as the US Conference of Mayors and the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), are calling on their membership to send them “ready-to-go” projects – those projects that have completed their environmental and design phases—to illustrate the need for an economic recovery package.

We have shared with our national organizations a handful of “ready-to-go” projects and we wanted you to have a copy of these projects, as well. We believe that this economic recovery program would improve our transportation network, brighten the state’s and region’s employment picture and allow taxpayers to see projects implemented immediately.

Below is a joint list of four “ready-to-go” roadway projects supported by the City of Seattle, the Port and City of Kent. More detailed information on each of these projects, including their benefits, information on project cost and funding needs, and an estimate of the number of construction jobs each project would create, is attached. The list includes:

- Spokane Street Viaduct
- East Marginal Way Grade Separation
- Mercer Corridor Project
- S. 228th Street Grade Separation Phase 3

These projects are important for improving freight mobility and safety, reducing traffic congestion, supporting economic development and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Puget Sound region. Today, more than 9,000 direct jobs and an additional 9,000 supported jobs exist in moving international cargo at the Port of Seattle. In the next 20 years, the Port expects to double the amount of imported cargo, which will require significant improvements in the region's roadway and rail infrastructure. These projects will work together to help move freight and people more efficiently, and preserve and grow jobs in many sectors throughout the region.

In addition to these locally sponsored projects, we also want to highlight two ready-to-go state-sponsored projects: the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project and the I-5/SR 509 Corridor Completion and Freight Improvement Project. These two mega projects are also critical to improving freight mobility and addressing safety concerns, while helping to spur economic development opportunities in the Central Puget Sound region.

Depending on the amount and type of funding made available, the City and the Port would also support construction of "ready-to-go rail" projects that improve capacity on the rail mainline and make it possible for freight and passenger trains to co-exist more efficiently. The attachment includes a few examples of "ready-to-go" rail projects that improve overall rail movement in the I-5 corridor.

As Congress moves forward with developing an economic recovery package, we ask that any highway infrastructure funding should be distributed as is done today: some through WSDOT; some through the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). This provides maximum flexibility to cities, counties, and states in advancing projects. Using this program structure means that, in addition to the guaranteed share of Surface Transportation Program funds reserved for the states, local officials and local areas within the state would receive a balance of the funds based on population, as provided in federal law. We believe that this process can be done without delaying the obligations of funds and will ensure that federal dollars are used in the most judicious manner.

In closing, the Port of Seattle, the City of Seattle and City of Kent are excited about the potential opportunities a federal economic recovery program will provide in improving the transportation network in the State of Washington and within the Puget Sound region. These recommended projects are important for the region's economy because they will improve to the movement of international cargo and other goods and spur additional economic development opportunities in key areas of the region.

Please let us know if there is additional information you need or if we can assist in any way through this process.

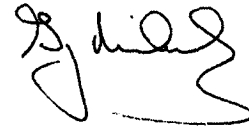
Sincerely,



Tay Yoshitani
Chief Executive Officer
Port of Seattle



Suzette Cooke
Mayor
City of Kent



Greg Nickels
Mayor
City of Seattle

cc: Washington State Congressional Delegation
Port of Seattle Commission
Paula Hammond, Secretary, Washington State Department of Transportation

Attachment:

Greater Seattle Area Ready-To-Go Projects

Supported by the City of Seattle and Port of Seattle

The City of Seattle and Port of Seattle would like to highlight five roadway projects critical for improving freight mobility, reducing traffic congestion, supporting economic vitality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Puget Sound region.

Spokane Street Viaduct (City of Seattle)

Project Cost: \$170 M

Project Funding Need: \$40 M to \$50 M

*Jobs Created: Between 1,380 and 1,725

The Spokane Street Viaduct is the primary east-west route which connects trucks between the Port of Seattle container terminals and the regional highway system. It is a critical transportation spine in the Duwamish industrial area that serves over 70,000 existing jobs and has considerable growth potential. The existing viaduct is narrow, congested and unreliable due to frequent accidents. The design to widen the Spokane Viaduct is completed. Construction will occur in phases as the funding package is completed.

Project Benefits:

- Provides a widened structure by 41 feet on the north side for a new acceleration-deceleration lane, wider lanes and shoulders, a possible eastbound transit/HOV lane, and a permanent median.
- Reconfigures the west-bound ramps to current design standards.
- Completes the seismic strengthening of the viaduct
- Repaves the existing upper roadway deck and installs variable message signs will be installed
- Rebuilds the lower roadway will be with curbs, gutters, sidewalk and landscaping along the north side.
- Constructs a new eastbound, two-lane loop off-ramp at 4th Avenue South
- Improves overall roadway safety
- Increases overall roadway capacity will be increased
- Results in increased travel efficiency, reduced congestion
- Supports improved freight mobility connecting the Port marine terminals to the regional highway system

East Marginal Way Grade Separation (Port of Seattle)

Project Cost: \$44 M to \$48 M

Project Funding Need: \$10 M to \$16 M

*Jobs Created: Between 240 and 380

The East Marginal Way Grade Separation project provides a roadway/rail grade separation allowing freight traffic and other vehicles to pass over rail lines which better connects port terminals, rail yards, warehousing and manufacturers.

Project Benefits:

- Improves safety by eliminating rail/highway conflicts at the existing at-grade crossing
- Reduces vehicle delay at railroad tracks through grade separation
- Improves air quality by reducing delay-related idling of trucks and other vehicles
- Facilitates greater efficiencies in an area of significant intermodal and multimodal activity
- Complements ITS activity at the Port and City
- Increases overall roadway capacity will be increased
- Reduces vehicle idling which result in reduced green house gas emissions
- Supports Argo Yard Truck Street which removes truck traffic from East Marginal Way

Mercer Corridor Project (City of Seattle)

Project Cost (Phase 1): \$192 M

Project Funding Need (Phase 1): \$50 M

*Jobs Created: 1,450

For more than 40 years, the Mercer Corridor has been one of the City's most significant transportation challenges, dividing neighborhoods, clogging city streets, and stalling traffic on Interstate 5 and State Route 99. The Two-way Mercer Corridor Project will ultimately create a two-way arterial from I-5 to Elliott Avenue, providing a more direct route, improving access to jobs in the surrounding employment centers and reconnecting neighborhoods. Phase 1 is between Dexter Avenue and I-5 and other phases are being considered to the west between Dexter Avenue and Elliott Avenue which the Port believes are necessary to improve east/west movement of freight and other commerce, as well as access to Port facilities.

The Mercer Corridor project is linked to the Alaskan Way Viaduct project as an interim freight route during Viaduct construction. Additionally, it is an important element of each of the potential Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement scenarios.

Project Benefits:

- Supports the transportation needs of South Lake Union, a global health and high-tech center that is slated for 20,000 new jobs by 2024
- Provides a direct route from I-5 into and through the area to serve existing and future travel needs
- With two-way Mercer, the I-5 off-ramp will operate more efficiently, accommodating 10% to 25% more of the projected demand exiting the freeway

- Enhances the route to Fremont/Interbay for cars and trucks and reduces queues from I-5 by reducing weave movements and reducing number of turns to get through South Lake Union
- Optimizes use of the street network by removing barriers, such as turn restrictions, and makes it easier to get around by car, truck, foot, or bike
- Reduces collision risks at the high-volume intersection of Mercer and Fairview and the I-5 ramps
- Creates easier access to I-5 and downtown from Eastlake by creating a direct connection to Fairview
- Supports transit use through convenient pedestrian access and a street network that allows east-west transit service
- Improves access to South Lake Union and neighborhoods to the north and west during construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project and as part of replacement solution
- Improves the east/west freight route in the long term and provides an interim freight route during Alaskan Way Viaduct construction

S. 228th Street Extension and Grade Separation (City of Kent)

Project Cost (Phase 3): \$ 25 M

Project Funding Need: \$15 M

*Jobs Created: 515

The S. 228th Street Extension and Grade Separation project is a three-phase project which provides a key freight link through Kent's industrial center from SR 167 to I-5. Phase 1 is complete and Phase 2 is under construction. Phase 3 will provide the grade separation over the Union Pacific rail line. The combination of Phase 2 (grade separation of the BNSF rail line) and Phase 3 will increase roadway capacity, eliminate rail/auto conflicts and allow for faster speeds and efficiencies for both UP and BNSF mainline rails.

Project Benefits

- Provides a critical, grade-separated link through the warehouse/industrial center of Kent
- Links the valley warehouse/industrial center to SR 167 and I-5
- Connects directly to SR-509, once funding for the project is secured (see I-5/SR 509 project description below)
- Eliminates at-grade train/vehicle conflicts
- Allows for increased rail speed
- Assists Sound Transit with plans to increase passenger rail service through the area
- Reduces stops-and-starts and engine idling, thus reducing vehicle emissions

I-5 Corridor Rail Improvements between Seattle and Vancouver (Burlington Northern Railway Company and Union Pacific)

The following rail projects are currently underway and under funded or have completed environmental and design phases and are waiting for funding. Each project would construct new trackage that will increase efficiency for both freight and passenger rail operations, benefiting communities throughout the I-5 corridor.

- Vancouver Bypass: Allows for a bypass of rail congestion at a critical junction of east-west and north-south tracks.
- Point Defiance Bypass: Creates a separate route for high speed passenger trains, thus increasing the capacity of the main line for freight trains.
- Kelso to Martin's Bluff 3rd Main Track: Adds a third main line track which separate passenger traffic from freight traffic, allowing an increase in the number of passenger trains.

*Job estimates from Federal Highway Administration (35,000 jobs per \$1 B invested) 2008. The jobs created are specifically for the dollars requested, not necessarily the entire project cost.