



Washington State Senate

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Senator Mike Hewitt
Senate Republican
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April 8, 2016

Honorable Matt Watkins, Mayor of Pasco
Pasco City Hall
525 N. Third Ave.
Pasco, WA 99301

Dear Mayor Watkins

RE: Letter of Support for the City of Pasco Lewis Street Project

Thank you for this opportunity to note my support for the Lewis Street undercrossing project in seeking federal grant funding. This project is very important to our community. I would provide community connectivity and cohesion, economic redevelopment of our downtown, safe multi-modal access, and reliable and redundant access.

The current Lewis Street undercrossing of the BNSF rail yard, which was built in 1937, is a narrow undercrossing with an adjacent pedestrian pathway. The structure does not meet ADA requirements, is structurally deficient and does not meet design standards – with no shoulders and very narrow lanes. The City has been seeking funding to replace this undercrossing with an overcrossing that spans the rail yard and also provides a safe connection for bikes and pedestrians.

Community Connectivity and Multimodal Access – While Lewis Street is a critical connection for the City as one of only two crossings of the BNSF yard that bisects the City, it has become unreliable for transit and school buses, emergency vehicles, bicycles, trucks and pedestrians. Replacement of the undercrossing would reconnect the City and provide a critical link for economic development, safety, and security.

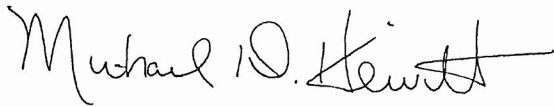
Community Cohesion – Downtown Pasco is a designated Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) area with strong representation of minority and low income residents and businesses. The success of the HUB as well as economic redevelopment of Pasco depends on reliable connections, especially Lewis Street. Lewis Street provides important connections and if rebuilt provides an important connection for transit, pedestrian, and bike modes that serve low income and minority populations.

Economic Redevelopment – Lewis Street is an important east-west connection for economic development. It connects the business downtown to the west with the Port and industrial development areas in the east. Lewis Street is an important link to meet the community and regional growth and if rebuilt as a modern structure to current design standards, can accommodate trucks, bikes and emergency vehicles.

Environmental Sustainability – Lewis Street is a key connection for the Pasco Street network. The Lewis Street undercrossing structure under the BNSF railyard is in a poor state of repair. Even if it were repaired it does not meet ADA design standards for pedestrians and does not adequately accommodate buses, trucks, or bikes. If the Lewis Street undercrossing structure fails or becomes unusable, all trips including autos, bike, bus, truck and pedestrian would be detoured or diverted increasing total vehicle miles and emissions. Replacing the Lewis Street structure over the BNSF railyard would provide for a complete street network accommodating all modes and providing system redundancy and a critical connection for emergency vehicles.

In 2015, the Washington state legislature approved a 16-year package of transportation earmarks including \$15 million dollars for replacing the Lewis Street undercrossing in the 2019/2021 biennium. This investment brings this long needed improvement closer to reality. With matching grant investments like TIGER and FASTLANE, this project can transform and renew Pasco.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael D. Hewitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Senator Mike Hewitt

16th Legislative District