



BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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April 11, 2016

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

Subject: City of Pasco, Lewis Street Overcrossing

Dear Mayor Watkins:

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG), as Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Transportation Management Area (TMA) for the Kennewick-Pasco-Richland Urbanized Area is writing in support of the TIGER VIII application submitted by the City of Pasco for the Lewis Street Overcrossing Project.

The Lewis Street Overcrossing project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The project supports goals of a transportation system that provides access for goods, services and people while minimizing total costs to the local, state and federal systems. The project also meets the need for sustained regional economic growth.

Lewis Street connects the east and west regions of Pasco bisected by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) yard. Built in 1937, the 79-year-old underpass fails to meet current design standards and is in serious need of reconstruction. As the primary link across the BNSF yard south of Interstate 182, Lewis Street is vital to connecting and enhancing all aspects of the Pasco community. An overcrossing to replace this undercrossing is partially funded and would provide a critical link for all transportation modes, including a safe connection for bikes and pedestrians and widespread benefits for industrial growth in Pasco.

The Benton Franklin Council of Governments Board has recognized and prioritized the value of this project by directing limited regional Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds to the project. We were very pleased that the Washington State legislature made a \$15 million investment toward the project's construction when it passed the strategic Connecting Washington package in 2015.

Unfortunately, fully funding a vital improvement like the Lewis Street Overcrossing is far beyond the capacity of our programs.

The City of Pasco is working hard to assemble the remaining needed funds to begin construction in 2019, but needs help to do so. I urge your careful consideration of the City's funding request and your partnership with the City and Washington State to complete this important project.

Sincerely,

Bob Koch, President
Benton Franklin Council of Governments