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Pasco City Hall
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City Manager's Office

June 10, 2016

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

Dear Mayor Watkins:

I am writing to express Ben Franklin Transit's (BFT's) support of the City of Pasco seeking federal grant funding for the Lewis Street Overpass Project. One of BFT's strategic priorities is to maximize community growth and connectivity throughout the Tri-Cities to provide maximum value to our customers. BFT recognizes the importance of a robust inter-city transportation system to the regional economy and believes that the Lewis Street Overpass Project will make an impact in furthering connectivity throughout our community.

As you know, the current Lewis Street undercrossing of the BNSF rail yard, 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 provides a safe connection for bikes, transit passengers, vehicles, and pedestrians.

Lewis Street is an important East-West connection for economic development. It connects the businesses downtown to the West with the Port and industrial development areas to the East. Lewis Street is also an important link to meet the community and regional growth and if rebuilt as a modern structure to current design standards, can accommodate transit vehicles, trucks, bikes, and 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.

Sincerely,

Gloria Boyce
General Manager
Ben Franklin Transit