

August 22, 2013

Peter Hahn, Director
Seattle Department of Transportation
700 Fifth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124-4996

Kevin Desmond, General Manager
King County Metro
King Street Station
201 S Jackson St, Rm 415
Seattle WA 98104-3856

RE: Transportation Alternatives Program grant applications

Dear Mr. Hahn and Mr. Desmond:

The Cascade Bicycle Club works to create better communities through bicycling. We are a nonprofit organization with more than 22,000 activists in Seattle and 15,000 total annual members, and we work to serve the roughly two-thirds of people in the Puget Sound region who want to bicycle more often but don't. One leading reason people cite for not bicycling is the lack of safe and comfortable places to bicycle.

Cascade strongly supports Seattle's 2013 Transportation Alternatives Program grant application for constructing the Northgate Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge, and supports King County Metro's grant application for the Northgate Pedestrian Plaza and Cycling Connection.

In 2012, more than 500 Cascade members and hundreds of neighborhood residents took action in support of shifting Sound Transit's station-access investments from building a parking garage toward investing in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Most important among the bicycle and pedestrian investments was the construction of the Northgate Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge across Interstate 5, creating a direct connection from the North Seattle Community College and the UW Medicine Center to the future Link light rail station. Without that connection, both the community college and medicine center would be beyond a reasonable walking distance of 20 minutes.

As a result of the community's advocacy to get a greater investment in bicycle and pedestrian access to the station, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle agreed to each invest \$5 million in the bicycle/pedestrian bridge. This grant would help fill the remaining construction costs.

A bridge across I-5 is the single most important non-motorized connectivity infrastructure investment for the Northgate Urban Center. The bridge would provide critical access to transit – whether it's

today's Metro Transit Center or the future Link light rail station – for thousands of students, workers and residents who are currently cut-off by the I-5 freeway, which prevents transit from being within a reasonable walking distance.

In fact, a station-access study by Sound Transit shows the bridge is one of the most effective infrastructure investments for increasing ridership on its future light rail line. Once the light rail and the bridge are built, college students will be able to easily travel between different college campuses in the region, including North Seattle Community College, the University of Washington, Seattle Central Community College, Seattle University and Highline Community College.

For bicyclists, the bridge will also provide a key east-west connection. Seattle's topography limits the number of east-west routes across the city that can be relatively flat for bicyclists, and the I-5 freeway further limits those options. The city's Bicycle Master Plan calls for building the Northgate Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge as it is one of the few opportunities to create an east-west connection.

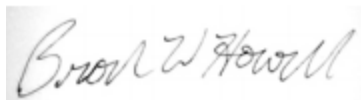
Other city and neighborhood plans call for the building the bridge as a way to re-integrate the neighborhood bisected by I-5.

The Northgate Pedestrian Plaza and Cycling Connection will also be an important part of the network of access improvements at Northgate.

The plaza will be the focal point for pedestrian access to the Link light rail from new mixed-use residential, commercial and retail development. The project will also improve pedestrian and bicycle access along NE 100th Street and 3rd Avenue NE, and create a new Transit Roadway for Metro buses around the future light rail station.

Thank you for pursuing the 2013 Transportation Alternatives Program grant applications. Both the Northgate Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge and the Northgate Pedestrian Plaza and Cycling Connection are key catalytic projects that will help redevelop the suburban auto-dominated area to a pedestrian-, bicycle-friendly urban area. If you have any questions about Cascade's support for this project, feel free to contact me at 206-856-4788 or brock.howell@cascadebicycleclub.org.

Sincerely,



Brock Howell
Policy and Government Affairs Manager
Cascade Bicycle Club

CC: Michael James, SDOT Policy and Planning
Gary Prince, King County Metro