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May 15, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Intent to assume transfer of the State Route 523 (N/NE 145th Street) & Interstate 5 (I-5) Interchange Project from the City of Shoreline

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Washington State Department of Transportation, after multi-year coordination with the City of Shoreline in regard to its State Route 523 (N/NE 145th Street) & Interstate 5 (I-5) Interchange Project ("Interchange Project"), WSDOT submits this letter of intent regarding a project transfer from the City of Shoreline to WSDOT after environmental documentation and 30% design is completed. WSDOT would complete all elements for right-of-way certification, final design, and construction, delivering a completed project.

It has been stipulated that the City of Shoreline must transfer a fully funded project for this to occur. The City of Shoreline is currently applying to the U.S. Department of Transportation for Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Program grant funding. The total project cost is approximately \$25 million. The BUILD grant funding would provide for the remaining balance of the project and allow the transfer to move forward on schedule in fall 2020.

WSDOT staff have worked closely with the City of Shoreline regarding this Interchange Project and agree that the 145th/I-5 interchange, as it is today, creates a bottleneck that interferes with safe and effective connections along this corridor for all users. SR 523 is a regional travel corridor linking I-5 with SR 99 and SR 522, and it provides a critical link for freight, commuters, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. It provides access to the regional transit system that connects or will soon connect to our regional growth centers. The number of commuters accessing these growth centers is projected to increase significantly with the new bus rapid transit and light rail services, which will be operating in this corridor by 2024.

WSDOT has been coordinating with the City of Shoreline and other agencies and their projects in this vicinity. The City of Shoreline has built a strong regional partnership for this project with WSDOT; its local elected leaders; Shoreline's state and federal legislative delegations; north Lake Washington cities of Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, Bothell, and Woodinville; the City of Seattle; King County; regional transit agencies, including King County Metro and Sound Transit; the Puget Sound Regional Council; and a number of citizen advocacy organizations.

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As the City of Shoreline progressed the Interchange Project from the conceptual phase to the design phase, our agency asked the City of Shoreline to evaluate roundabouts as an alternative approach for the interchange improvements in addition to the originally proposed preferred design option in their Intersection Control Evaluation. The City's traffic modeling results, as well as national empirical research, have demonstrated that roundabouts are safer and perform better for all modes of transportation at a lower cost than the initial standard proposed improvements. WSDOT concurs with this safety-first approach.

Having supported this project and coordinating with Sound Transit (regional transit authority), which will have both light rail station mitigation and new Bus Rapid Transit facilities that will converge on this Interchange Project area, WSDOT and the City of Shoreline see several advantages in transferring this Interchange Project to WSDOT once environmental documentation and 30% design have been reached (the City of Shoreline has a consultant under contract through these milestones). Some of those advantages include:

- WSDOT has governance of the interchange. Permitting would be able to be expedited more readily in-house.
- WSDOT has a larger staff and more readily available resources for a project of this nature.
- WSDOT is working with Sound Transit and their area projects and would be well-suited for the overall coordination of constructing projects in this area.

WSDOT commends the City of Shoreline for taking initial steps to keep their residents mobile with improvements to safely and efficiently access the region's strong investment in transportation. These improvements will benefit multiple local municipalities and their residents. With the large number of infrastructure improvements required in one of the fastest growing regions in the nation, WSDOT is not able to fund this project; therefore, require that the City secure all necessary funding prior to a transfer to our agency.

It is the intent of WSDOT to assume this project in its entirety once the stipulations above have been met. If full funding is secured, the current schedule would have WSDOT enter into an agreement with the City of Shoreline late this year, 2020, outlining the transfer of this project. WSDOT believes this to be a vital project and a successful partnership for all those involved, and strongly encourages your support to fund the Interchange Project. WSDOT looks forward to working with you for a successful partnership in delivering the completed project.

Sincerely,



Brian Nielsen, PE
Deputy Regional Administrator
Northwest Region