

August 15, 2003

Barbara Gilliland, Director
Sounder Commuter Rail
Sound Transit
Union Station
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

RE: Traffic Signal at the Intersection of Wood Avenue and Zehnder Street

Dear Ms. Gilliland:

I am writing to explain the City of Sumner's position Sumner regarding safety improvements for the Zehnder crossing of the BNSF railroad line. The City offered to take the lead and prepare the design and manage the construction of the traffic signal. The signal will be the property of the City and the City will be responsible for all O&M costs, repairs and replacement over time. The design of the signal will be done by a professional engineering firm, but the City is willing to contribute its staff time as lead agency. Construction administration is managed by the Public Works engineering staff with only limited input from the consulting engineer which includes the final inspection and startup.

The cost of operating a traffic signal today is \$3,500 per year. The controller and other electronic gear have a life of no more than 20 years. Using 4% as the average value of money and assuming a 60% residual value, the present value of the City's contribution comes to \$228,000 and this is only for the next 20 years. The City is and has been willing to take the lead in making this safety improvement on behalf of the rail companies. From a traffic point of view, the volume is small, the crossing has been eliminated as a truck route and therefore not warranted under this criteria. The reason for the traffic signal stems from an order by the WUTC to allow the rail companies to increase speed and volume on the BNSF tracks.

The Highway/Railroad Crossing program under T-21 may fund 100% of this cost if we wait until WSDOT receives funds from the reauthorized program covering the period of 2004 through 2009. I spoke with Mark Brooks in Local Programs at WSDOT and it appears that it would be mid-2005 at the earliest and may be well into 2006 before this signal can be completed if we wait for this program. This program funds improvements to railroad crossings and railroad signals and gates, not street traffic signals, and for this reason, neither your staff nor I applied for funds. Local Programs interpreted the program liberally and did fund the street traffic signal at 15th Street in Puyallup and would consider the Zehnder crossing an eligible project.

Ms. Gilliland
August 15, 2003
Page 2

In summary, the City is willing to take the lead in having ~~and have~~ the improvements constructed, and we will operate and maintain the signal. ~~The project cost, not including staff time, is \$250,000.~~ The City will proceed immediately if Sound Transit and the other rail companies using the tracks pay the project cost. The project cost, not including staff time, is estimated to be \$250,000. If Sound Transit chooses ~~you choose~~ not to fund the project at this time, the City ~~we~~ will work with your staff and pursue a federal grant and build it as soon as funds are available.

Sincerely,

William J. Shoemaker, P.E.
Public Works Director

cc: Mayor Barbara Skinner, Sumner
Andrew Neiditz, City Administrator, Sumner
Melissa Flores, Project Coordinator, Sounder Commuter Rail