



Board of Directors: Theresa Noack, District 1, Laura Gates, District 2, Justin Voelker, District 3, Fred Helms, District 4, Mike Bly, District 5 **Superintendent:** Kelly Shea

3830 N. Sullivan Rd., Bldg. 1, Spokane Valley, WA 99216 Phone: 509.924.1830 Fax: 509.927.9500

March 27, 2020

City of Spokane Valley
10210 E Sprague Ave
Spokane Valley, WA 99206

Dear Councilmembers and County Commissioners:

I am writing to support the City of Spokane Valley and Spokane County's joint application for funding of the Bigelow-Sullivan Corridor Freight Mobility and Safety project.

As Superintendent of the East Valley School District, this project will have an enormous impact on the East Valley community. Making improvements to the transportation infrastructure along the north Sullivan corridor that connects to the Bigelow-Forker corridor will positively enhance vehicle traffic as it connects the northern and eastern parts of the Spokane Metro area. These enhancements will lead to:

- a safer travel route for motorists as well as safer walking routes for pedestrians;
- more efficient travel, saving time and resources and reducing traffic congestion;
- continued development of industrial properties creating more local jobs;
- more efficient and increased capacity of freight to meet supply demands;
- and, create a 21st century communication infrastructure.

I know there are many more advantages to this project than what I have listed above, but from a school district perspective, I want to highlight one additional benefit that is specific to East Valley. This project really cuts through the heart of our district. This project, in addition to the potential crossing projects at Pines and Trent as well as Barker and Trent, will open up our district for both business and residential growth. As people can more easily navigate across the valley floor, more businesses will open. As more jobs become available, more people will want to move into the area, and as they do, many will want to live and work in the same community. This will lead to further development of neighborhoods for families to live and raise their children. These children will then enroll in the East Valley School District, something our district will benefit from and is in need of.

For the past two decades, East Valley has continued to decrease in student enrollment. Most of our district lies outside the urban growth area and as a result, we do not have the housing for new families to move into. Therefore, we do not have new students to replace the students who are graduating. As enrollment declines, so does the level of opportunities we can provide to our students. Declining enrollment leads to decrease in state funding which then leads to reductions in programs for students. This project can be, and I believe will be, a game changer for the East Valley School District. It will give us the chance to grow and to prosper as a community. It will give us the opportunity to not just fight to keep the programs we currently have, but the opportunity to expand them and give our kids more. It is what our children deserve.

Sincerely,

Kelly Shea, Superintendent
East Valley School District #361