



To: Mayor Strickland and Tacoma City Council Members; Shon Sylvia, Debbie Terwilleger and Metro Parks Board Members; Executive Dammeier and Pierce County Council Members; Representative Fey, Representative Jinkins and Senator Darneille; Old Town Business District; BNSF Railway

Re: Pedestrian Safety at Tacoma's Old Town Railroad Crossing

City and Community Leaders,

I am writing on behalf of the North End Neighborhood Council in support of safety improvements at the Old Town railroad crossing. As you know, there have been two recent fatalities at that site, Cale Tyler in November of 2015 and Alexandria Lewis in November of 2016. Because there are slow and fast trains, because there are trains going both directions, and because there are currently inadequate safety features, this heavily used pedestrian site is a public safety hazard.

When Ruston Way was an industrial area, the current format of the railroad crossing perhaps made sense. Most traffic to and along the waterfront was in cars. But today, the Ruston Way waterfront is one of Tacoma's greatest recreational and hospitality business assets. The parks and water and businesses are enjoyed by thousands of pedestrians, many of whom live outside the North End. But even with all of this use and even with all of the development along the water, pedestrian access remains outdated, inadequate, and unsafe.

We are asking for three things. The first two, improved, even active, warning signs and pedestrian safety gates, should happen immediately. We do not need another death at the tracks before these basic improvements should occur.

The third, we recognize, will take some time, but it's an important and necessary improvement as use of the waterfront increases. There needs to be grade separation at that site in the form of a pedestrian bridge that reaches over the tracks and over Ruston Way. That would be the best safety improvement, and it would also be a significant aesthetic improvement as well. Although expensive, there are a number of natural funding partners: BNSF because of their interest in keeping pedestrians away from the tracks, Metro Parks because it will improve access to their waterfront

parks, the Old Town Business District because of the link it will provide between Old Town businesses, and Washington State and Pierce County because the Tacoma waterfront is a regional asset. The current crossing is a relic and a reminder of tragedy. An attractive pedestrian bridge would be a source of pride for what we're able to achieve together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KCP', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kyle C. Price
NENC Chair on behalf of the NENC