



Council Member
Larry Phillips

APR 22 2008

Received
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Moving forward... on Rail!

April 22, 2008

Larry Phillips
King County Council
516 3rd Ave., #1200
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Dear Mr. Phillips:

Our organization has led the fight to retain the tracks on the Eastside Rail Corridor (a.k.a., the BNSF Woodinville Subdivision), and we are very pleased to have won at least a temporary victory. A year ago everyone from WSDOT Secretary MacDonald to BNSF executives to County Executive Sims to the PSRC told us that the tracks were as good as gone, a trail would occupy the corridor, and, in the distant future when there was "sufficient need", the corridor just *might* be used for an undetermined form of mass transit.

Our position was that once the tracks were removed, it would be politically impossible to bring them back, the need for passenger rail on the Eastside was *now*, and throwing away a viable rail corridor serving a rapidly growing and increasingly congested area was an act of extreme public irresponsibility. Efforts by our organization helped educate an ill informed public into supporting retention of the rails, running trains on those tracks and proclaiming quite loudly the absurdity of destroying a valuable transportation resource at a time when replacing that resource would be prohibitively expensive.

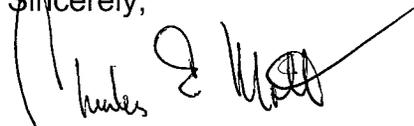
In this regard you have been outstanding in your early and continued support for retaining the rails in place, and your support for the corridor's being put to the most reasonable and practical use – as a regularly scheduled passenger rail line. It is fascinating to note that while Mr. Sims remains supportive of a trail sharing the use of the corridor, he now says, "...no trail can proceed that does not protect transportation uses," a statement that would not have been made a few months ago.

We greatly appreciate your "watching guard" over the corridor. There have been instances in our state where passenger rail infrastructure, from tracks to perfectly good passenger depots, have literally disappeared overnight when some party did not want the retention of passenger service. This did not occur here.

We found an interesting contradiction in the *P-I* story of April 14. A BNSF representative said that the only value of the tracks was for scrap, yet later in the same article mentioned continuing freight service and the return of the Spirit of Washington Dinner Train! Would the business savvy Temple family risk running their dinner train, with its major liability exposure, on a track worthy only for scrap? We grant that running comprehensive commuter rail would require significant upgrades to the existing track, but even a major track overhaul would be dramatically cheaper than building more lane capacity on I-405 or developing new transit corridors serving the Eastside. We believe that the feasibility study of the corridor just started by Sound Transit will show that the investment of public dollars is in the region's best interest.

Again, thank you for your support. Preserving the line, changing public opinion and altering the announced positions of those in authority required not only advocacy groups such as ours, but the efforts of public officials, of which you were indeed the most prominent. Let us keep closely in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles E. Mott", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Charles E. Mott
Chairman, All Aboard Washington