



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Lincoln Ave Underpass Dedication
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Lincoln Avenue Underpass Officially Dedicated

A dedication ceremony for the Lincoln Avenue underpass will take place this Thursday, May 24th at 11:15 a.m. Local, state, and federal officials, representatives from the Yakima business community, and other project partners have been invited to attend the dedication. Yakima Mayor Micah Cawley will serve as the master of ceremonies for the event.

The dedication ceremony will take place on the new Front Street bridge, which spans the underpass.

The underpass, which was opened to traffic earlier this month, sends both vehicles and pedestrians beneath BNSF Railway tracks. The benefits provided by the underpass include improved driver and pedestrian safety, enhanced air quality due to the reduction of exhaust emissions from cars waiting for trains to pass, and faster response times for police, fire, and other emergency services providers.

Numerous underpasses or other “grade separations” have been built in cities across Washington State since the late 1990’s when train traffic to and from Western Washington ports began to significantly increase, including along BNSF’s Stampede Pass line which runs through Yakima.

The Lincoln Avenue underpass and a twin underpass on MLK, Jr. Blvd. have been in the planning stages for more than a decade. It took that long for the City to secure funding to pay the costs of construction of the underpasses. The Washington State Congressional delegation (spearheaded by U.S. Senator Patty Murray), the 14th District state legislative delegation, and current and past Yakima City Council members have played key roles in securing more than \$35 million so far from state and federal sources for construction of the two underpasses.

BNSF has also contributed more than \$1.5 million toward completion of the two underpasses.

The City is still working on securing about \$5 million more in funding needed to pay for the MLK, Jr. Blvd. underpass. The City is confident that several pending requests for additional state and federal funding will be given closer consideration now that the Lincoln Avenue project is complete.

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