



**Group Health Cooperative**

Group Health Headquarters  
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Seattle, WA 98109

[www.ghc.org](http://www.ghc.org)

The Honorable Raymond H. LaHood  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: City of Seattle MERCER WEST TIGER IV application

March 8, 2012

Dear Secretary LaHood:

Group Health Cooperative is pleased to write in support of the City of Seattle's application for the US Department of Transportation TIGER grant. Funding from this grant will be dedicated to the Two-Way Mercer West project.

The Mercer Corridor is a critical transportation connection that carries more than 70,000 people a day. It has been a major traffic bottleneck in the Seattle area, limiting access to the growing South Lake Union area, the Seattle waterfront, the Seattle Center, and major federal and state highways. This project is vital because it supports four key sectors of the regional economy including: information technology, biotechnology, travel and tourism, and international trade.

Group Health Cooperative is a consumer governed not-for-profit health care organization that has its corporate headquarters located in the South Lake Union neighborhood adjacent to the project. As a progressive health care organization with employees that have a passion for healthy behavior, many of our employees walk, bike or take mass transit to work and will greatly benefit from the proposed improvements. Overall, approximately 850 Group Health staff work at our headquarters, making us one of the largest employers in the area.

Group Health would like to point out a few of the important benefits the project will provide the well-being and health of the citizenry of South Lake Union:

- *Mercer West will carry 55,000 vehicles daily, extending street, bicycle and sidewalk improvements from Ninth Avenue North to Queen Anne Avenue North.*
- *This project will provide badly needed pedestrian and bicycle connections between the Queen Anne and South Lake Union neighborhoods.*
- *Improvements included in the Mercer West project are recommended in both the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan and the Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan.*

- *The Mercer Underpass will increase from four-foot sidewalks squeezed between a retaining wall and traffic with no buffer, to eight-foot sidewalks and a six-foot planting strip buffer in addition to a ten-foot bike path.*
- *The project creates a continuous east-west bikeway from the east side of South Lake Union to Lower Queen Anne.*
- *Mercer West will connect bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure from South Lake Union and Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop to the Olympic Sculpture Park on Elliott Bay and Kinnear Park in Lower Queen Anne.*
- *The improvements will reduce 5,000 vehicle miles traveled in the downtown and South Lake Union neighborhood.*
- *Mercer West will provide transit connections to Bus Rapid Transit to Ballard.*
- *The project creates bus loading islands on Dexter Avenue that will allow reliable transit service and separate bikes from buses.*

Sincerely,



William Biggs  
Vice President, Administrative Services  
Group Health Cooperative

**cc:**

Senator Patty Murray  
Senator Maria Cantwell  
Governor Christine Gregoire  
Congressman Jim McDermott  
Mayor Mike McGinn, Seattle