

March 9, 2012

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

**Subject: City of Seattle MERCER WEST TIGER IV Application**

Dear Secretary LaHood:

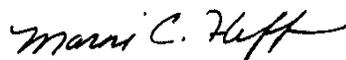
I am pleased to write in support of the City of Seattle's application for the US Department of Transportation TIGER grant, which will be dedicated to the Two-Way Mercer West project.

The Mercer West project will complete the final piece of the larger Mercer Corridor project, and is the critical link to make the entire system work. As the lead facilitator for the 32-member Mercer Stakeholder Committee, the Mercer West project was the key element that allowed the group to reach a *consensus agreement* to support the overall corridor improvement project. The additional benefits derived from Mercer West will include:

- Creating a direct link for freight traffic travelling between Interstate 5 and the industrial areas located west of the corridor in the Interbay and Ballard neighborhoods of Seattle,
- Providing an excellent bicycle and pedestrian facility that connects the neighborhoods on each side of Aurora Avenue (State Route 99),
- Reducing the vehicular chokepoint that would otherwise occur under Aurora if the roadway is not widened from four to six lanes, and
- Reconnecting Mercer Street to the north-south street grid at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and providing a connection to the new SR 99 Bored Tunnel replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

It is critical that Mercer West be funded immediately so that its construction can be coordinated with the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement's North Access Project. The segment of Mercer Street under Aurora Avenue (SR 99) must be widened first so that it has the additional capacity needed to accommodate traffic that will be detoured from Broad Street in order to construct the Bored Tunnel portal. In addition, Aurora Avenue (SR 99) itself will need to be rebuilt across Mercer Street, and this must be completed before it can accommodate the new access ramps from the Bored Tunnel North Access project. The two projects must proceed together so that the neighborhood impacts are reduced during construction and so that the full functionality of the transportation system can be realized.

Sincerely,  
Heffron Transportation, Inc.



Marni C. Heffron, P.E., P.T.O.E.  
President