



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

Tuesday, March 13, 2012

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. 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 (SLU) 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.

Seattle BioMed is a 400 employee, not-for-profit biomedical research institution located in the heart of the South Lake Union urban center. Over the past several years, SLU has experienced exponential growth with the addition of University of Washington Department of Medicine, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Headquarters, PATH and Amazon. This growth has significantly impacted the movement of employees and freight into and out of the SLU area.

Upon completion of the Two-Way Mercer East project, we will have successfully moved Seattle's 30 year old "Mercer Mess" somewhat to the west. The Mercer Corridor will continue to experience significant traffic issues west of the now under construction bored tunnel project for US 99. Upon completion of the north portal of the bored tunnel, it will be difficult to fix the Mercer West issue.

The Mercer West project will provide improved pedestrian and bicycle access between SLU and the Queen Anne neighborhoods. It will improve mass transit routes. It will reduce congestion.

Freedom from Infectious Disease

It will improve freight routes. It will create jobs. These improvements will happen only if we complete the project and the time to do the work is now.

Sincerely,



Randal Hassler
Chief Operation Officer

cc:

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