



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

Thursday, March 15, 2012

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As Executive Director of The Children's Museum, Seattle, 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 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.

The Children's Museum, Seattle is one of many tenants located on the Seattle Center Campus. Because of our location, the Museum's success as a non-profit organization, as an informal educational institution, and as a tourist destination is dependent upon the access provided by the Mercer Corridor. Each year, the Museum welcomes 240,000 visitors: families from all over the Puget Sound Region, the Pacific Northwest, the country, and yes, the world. Many of these visitors, especially those visiting Seattle from elsewhere, arrive at our doors from I-5 via Mercer Street. The Mercer West project will not only continue to improve this I-5/Seattle Center access, it will also link us and our neighbors to the SR99 Bored Tunnel scheduled to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Because of this, the Mercer West project is key in improving multidirectional access to the Seattle Center and all its cultural amenities, The Children's Museum, Seattle included.

This is an exciting time for The Children's Museum, Seattle and for the Seattle Center as a whole. We at the Museum have spent the last three years developing a new, and better, lease agreement with the Seattle Center. Approved on December 19, 2011, this new lease agreement allows us to move forward in partnership with the Seattle Center, an iconic landmark celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and looking forward to the Next Fifty years of Seattle history. This is the time to improve on the treasures that our neighborhood has to offer. Existing plans for renovation and improvement cannot move forward without the completion of the Mercer West project. It is critical to the continuing revitalization of South Lake Union, Uptown Seattle, and Queen Anne.



**The Children's Museum, Seattle**

*The Kenneth and Marleen Alhadeff Exhibit Center*

Preserving Play since 1979

As a business resident and a profound supporter of the Seattle Center, I implore you to consider the City of Seattle for the US Department of Transportation TIGER grant.

Sincerely,

Donna Marie Bertrand

Executive Director

The Children's Museum, Seattle

206-576-2306

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cc:

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