

March 14, 2012

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

**Re: Mercer West TIGER Grant Application**

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to support Seattle's TIGER grant application for the Mercer Corridor West project. This grant will allow Seattle to complete the transformation of the Mercer Corridor into the "Main Street" of two of the Puget Sound region's designated regional growth centers, Uptown Queen Anne and South Lake Union. Regional growth centers are crucial part of the region's VISION 2040 strategy for accommodating the 5 million people expected to live in the region by 2040. They are identified for high-density housing and employment growth, as well as for regional funding, and are served by high levels of transit service.

The Mercer Corridor project also is very important to implementing our Regional Economic Strategy, which focuses our region's economic development efforts on seven clusters and six economic foundations. The Mercer Corridor is a vital linkage for the Logistics and International Trade cluster, providing access to the Port of Seattle's Terminal 91, Terminal 86 Grain Facility, and Fisherman's Terminal and Maritime Industrial Center as well as BNSF's Balmer Rail Yard from Interstates 5 and 90 and State Routes 99 and 520. It also serves one of the region's designated regional manufacturing/industrial centers, Ballard/Interbay, helping to preserve and attract family-wage jobs.

The Mercer Corridor supports the region's Information Technology cluster, connecting industry leaders such as Amazon.com, Classmates.com, RealNetworks and F5Networks. It also serves the region's Tourism cluster providing access for visitors from around the world to the Port of Seattle's cruise terminals, the Pike Place Market and the Seattle Center with its array of world-famous attractions including the Space Needle, the Olympic Sculpture Park and Lake Union Park.

South Lake Union, Uptown Queen Anne and the Ballard/Interbay centers also serve as the hub of our region's Life Sciences cluster, one of the fastest growing sectors of our economy. Employers calling these neighborhoods home are diverse and include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the University of Washington School of Medicine, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Amgen, Group Health, Seattle Biomedical Research Institute and PATH. The Mercer Corridor connects these businesses and organizations, helping create what the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation called "a hub for innovation and gatherings of experts from many fields, perspectives, and countries who are dedicated to improving lives here and around the world."

The Mercer Corridor is a vital connection to the Alaskan Way Deep Bore Tunnel Project's northern terminus, in particular. The deep bore tunnel project is a key north south connection for the region, enhancing the long-term viability and efficiency of Interstate 5. The tunnel is expected to be completed at the end of 2015, so the state has closely partnered with the city on ensuring the work on the Mercer Corridor is coordinated and completed within this timeframe.

The Mercer Corridor West project is included in PSRC's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Transportation 2040 and in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Puget Sound region has recognized the significance of the Mercer Corridor West project to the success of our regional growth strategy with \$8.2 million of PSRC managed federal Surface Transportation Program funds.

The TIGER grant would allow Seattle to begin construction immediately creating needed construction jobs within the Puget Sound region. TIGER funding will ensure the Mercer Corridor West project is completed in a timely manner facilitating economic growth and prosperity for the Puget Sound region, the State of Washington and the entire nation. I urge you to support the Mercer Corridor Project – West Phase application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Drewel". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bob Drewel, Executive Director  
Puget Sound Regional Council