



March 15, 2012

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

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 area, the Seattle waterfront, Seattle Center and major federal and state highways.

The Mercer West Project, the second and final leg of a Mercer Corridor Initiative, is especially vital for Seattle Center given that the initial leg, the Mercer East Project, ends one block east of the Center. Not completing the second leg would create an untenable traffic situation obstructing access to the 74-acre Seattle Center campus for over 15,000 employees, patrons of over 30 cultural and educational organizations that reside on the campus, and the 12 million visitors to the Center each year.

Seattle Center serves as an economic driver for the surrounding neighborhoods, producing \$1.15 billion in annual business activity, \$387 million in labor income and \$56 million in annual tax revenues. Much of that activity depends on reliable access to the area, and the Two-Way Mercer West Project achieves that objective. It is critical to the success of other major transportation projects of importance to Center access, such as the SR-99 Bored Tunnel. It also will make long needed bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

City of Seattle
Mike McGinn, Mayor

Seattle Center
Robert Nellams, Director

ARTS

Book-It Repertory Theatre
INTIMAN Theatre
KCTS 9
Northwest Craft Center
Pacific Northwest Ballet
Pottery Northwest
Seattle Children's Theatre
Seattle Opera
Seattle Repertory Theatre
Seattle Shakespeare Company
SIFF Film Center
Teatro ZinZanni
Theatre Puget Sound
The VERA Project

ATTRACTIONS

Center House
EMP Museum
International Fountain
Seattle Center Monorail
Seattle Center Skatepark
Space Needle
The Academy of Interactive
Entertainment
The Children's Museum

FESTIVALS

Bite of Seattle
Bumbershoot
Northwest Folklife Festival
Seattle PrideFest

SEATTLE CENTER PROGRAMS

Concerts at the Mural
Festál Cultural Festivals
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Holiday Celebration
Movies at the Mural
Naturalization Ceremony
Student Showcases
Teen Tix
Whirligig
Winterfest

SPORTS

Seattle Storm (WNBA)
Seattle University Men's
Basketball (NCAA Division I)
Rat City Rollergirls

Accommodations for people with
disabilities provided on request

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The Seattle Center Century 21 Master Plan calls for mixed-use redevelopment of the two-block Mercer Garage property and enhanced pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighborhood. Mercer West is key to these and other Seattle Center improvements. Please support the City of Seattle's TIGER grant application.

Sincerely,



Robert Nellams
Director

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