

Seattle  Parks
FOUNDATION

March 13, 2012

Re: City of Seattle MERCER WEST TIGER IV application

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We are pleased to support 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.

Seattle Parks Foundation led a \$20 million private fundraising campaign to design and build Lake Union Park, a major urban gathering place just to the north of the Mercer Corridor. We have been ardent supporters of the Mercer project as transformative city infrastructure, critical to the future of Seattle's most vital new neighborhood—South Lake Union—and to the entire downtown.

Seattle Parks Foundation is an ardent advocate for safe, beautiful bike and pedestrian infrastructure. We are currently raising money to support design of the Lake to Bay Loop, which will connect South Lake Union to Seattle Center to the Olympic Sculpture Park on Elliott Bay (and to all other trails systems in the city). Mercer West is critical to this project. The current Mercer Underpass consists of unbuffered four-foot sidewalks squeezed between a retaining wall and high volume traffic. The new roadway—with eight-foot sidewalks, a ten-foot bike path, and a six-foot planting strip buffer—creates a continuous east-west bikeway from the east side of South Lake Union to Lower Queen Anne.

Parks Foundation is also pleased that the project reduces overall motor vehicle travel, creates significant storm water improvements, adds much needed green elements to our urban streetscape, and uses roadway materials that increase fuel efficiency.

The economic, community, environmental benefits of the corridor project to the city and region are phenomenal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Thatcher Bailey
Executive Director