



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**
Paula J. Hammond, P.E.
Secretary of Transportation

Transportation Building
310 Maple Park Avenue SE
Olympia, WA 98504-7300
360-705-7000
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

March 13, 2012

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to express the Washington State Department of Transportation's support for the City of Seattle's application for TIGER IV discretionary grant funds for the Mercer Corridor Project – West Phase.

The economic strength of Seattle and the state depend on an efficient transportation system. The Mercer West project will convert Mercer Street to a two-way corridor with upgraded intersections, new or improved sidewalks and new bike lanes. This project will provide a direct route between Interstate 5 and Seattle's waterfront, improving access to the industrial and port facilities on the city's west side.

The City of Seattle's two-way Mercer Street project also complements the investment we are making in State Route 99 with the replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The north end of the new SR 99 tunnel will be near Mercer Street, and drivers from northwestern Seattle neighborhoods will use this street to access the tunnel. Completion of Mercer West, including the new Aurora Avenue bridge crossing over it, must be completed in order to open the SR 99 tunnel to traffic in late 2015.

Improving Mercer Street, along with building the SR 99 tunnel, represents a comprehensive and integrated solution to today's transportation challenges. It is a way to move people, move freight, and move our economy forward. I hope you will give serious consideration to this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paula J. Hammond'.

Paula J. Hammond, P.E.
Secretary of Transportation