



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

RE: Mercer Corridor Project TIGER grant application

Dear Secretary LaHood:

Great City is a Seattle-based civic organization made up of environmentalists, neighborhood leaders, business people, and citizens working together to enhance our quality of life, help preserve our region's natural beauty, and make Seattle a model of economic and environmental sustainability. On behalf of Great City, I'm writing to strongly support the City of Seattle's application to the TIGER Grant to fund the Mercer Corridor Project.

As you know, the Mercer corridor exerts significant influence on the overall mobility of the City; however, we would also like to call attention to Mercer street's growing importance as a *place*. Mercer lies at the heart of South Lake Union – one of the largest neighborhood revitalization projects in the US. Major employment and cultural centers along the corridor represent four major sectors of our region's economy: Information Technology, Biotechnology, Travel and Tourism, and International Trade. Among others, the corridor links the Port of Seattle and cruise ship terminals at Elliot Bay, University of Washington Medical campus, Group Health, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Amgen, and Seattle Center – a major cultural center housing the Seattle Opera, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Seattle Repertory Theater. Soon Mercer will provide the principal access to Amazon.com Headquarters, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Headquarters, a new Lake Union waterfront park and the Museum of History and Industry. By the year 2015 it is estimated that total jobs along the Mercer Corridor would grow by over 247 percent, to 60,357 jobs. In addition to its position as an employment center, the City is also planning for dense residential growth to ensure that more people can live near their work.

However, as it operates today, Mercer and its immediate surroundings are a place to be avoided, particularly at peak hours. 80,000 daily users are trapped in heavy congestion, with buses that can't navigate the maze, a lack of crosswalks, and a hostile environment. Mercer has a high incidence of accidents, and is confusing and daunting to drive, bike or walk on, with some of the worst paving conditions in the city.

We support Seattle's initiative to finally fix the "Mercer mess" as it is commonly called by locals. The City has collaborated with neighborhood stakeholders as well as the broader region – Puget Sound Regional Council, King County, and Washington State – to devise a sustainable solution. The project transforms the public infrastructure within the South Lake Union neighborhood, not only to improve traffic flow but support smart growth through the creation of a vibrant and more livable center. The project includes Intelligent Transportation Systems elements, innovative natural drainage, and access to alternative modes

of transportation choice. It builds more than 30 blocks of sidewalks, new bicycle lanes, and reconnects the east and west sides of State Highway 99, returning neighborhood cohesion to this important area of our city.

Aside from the many benefits outlined above, a TIGER grant would also have a tremendous positive impact for the area by leveraging a significant private investment of \$31 million from adjacent property owners. We strongly urge you to support a USDOT grant, which will complete the funding for this critical piece of Seattle's urban infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration,

Joshua Curtis  
Executive Director, Great City