



Seattle City Council

September 10, 2009

Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation
West Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We are writing in support of the City of Seattle's application for the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) funding for the Mercer Corridor Project. Mercer is a key route linking Interstate 5 to Washington's State Route 99. It carries an average of 80,000 people per day and is critical to keeping people, goods, and services moving within Seattle and throughout the region, and provides significant new bicycle and pedestrian access through the corridor. These federal TIGER funds are necessary for the successful implementation of this important project.

The Mercer Corridor Project will create jobs now as well as act as an economic catalyst for the future. The route serves an area now known as Seattle's "Road to Global Health." UW Medicine, Group Health Cooperative, and the world headquarters of The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are all located in the South Lake Union neighborhood around the Mercer project. Nearly 6,000 new housing units and over 2.5 million square feet of commercial space have been or are being developed there.

Continued delay in the completion of this project jeopardizes these and other employment and housing developments. The Mercer Corridor Project must be completed to adequately serve the transportation needs of this burgeoning hub.

Two recent Seattle City Council actions demonstrate the City's support for this project. In May 2008, the Council approved a funding package for the Mercer Corridor Project. With this action, the Council authorized the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to continue work on the project. And, in March of this year, the City Council voted to allow SDOT to move forward with construction management planning, directed SDOT to actively seek federal grant funding for the project, and reaffirmed its commitment to the Mercer Corridor project.

The Mercer Corridor Project will help maintain and attract jobs, continue to accommodate freight, and provide alternative transportation mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists. We urge your support for this vital component of our regional economy and transportation system.

Sincerely,



Richard Conlin,
Council President



Jan Drago,
Chair, Transportation Committee

City Hall, 600 Fourth Avenue, Floor 2, PO Box 34025, Seattle, Washington 98124-4025
(206) 684-8888 Fax: (206) 684-8587 TTY: (206) 233-0025

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CC: Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Representative Jim McDermott
Mayor Greg Nickels