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To champion a healthy, vibrant urban core

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Wednesday, March 07, 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 is key to continued job growth in Downtown and the region. The corridor carries more than 70,000 people a day and supports four key sectors of the regional economy including: information technology, biotechnology, travel and tourism, and international trade. This corridor has been a notorious bottleneck for many decades, limiting access to the growing South Lake Union area, now home to the headquarters of fast growing Amazon.com the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Mercer West is critical to the success of other major transportation projects. Mercer West links the Seattle Center, the Port of Seattle, and neighborhoods in northwest Seattle with the SR99 Bored Tunnel replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct. All the planning around the downtown tunnel assumed that Mercer West would move forward. Without it, we can't take advantage of the investments we've already made. The project will improve freight mobility and access to the passenger cruise ship industry, which has an economic impact of \$393 million.

Completing Mercer West has been a priority for the city, the state and the region. An independent Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee comprised of 42 individuals met 15 times and reached consensus supporting the Mercer West project. In addition, over 50 events, or briefings between 2004 and 2009 have been held to present information and receive feedback.

Mercer West will improve street crossings and safety for pedestrians and connect bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure from South Lake Union and Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop to the Olympic Sculpture Park on Elliott Bay and Kinnear Park in Lower Queen Anne.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kate Joncas
President

cc:

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

