



March 8, 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:

NBBJ is a global architecture and design firm located just 1 mile south of the Mercer Corridor. As a strong supporter of the Mercer Corridor Project, 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 carries more than 70,000 people a day. It has been a major traffic bottleneck in the Seattle area, limiting access to the growing South Lake Union area, the Seattle waterfront, the Seattle Center, and major federal and state highways. This project is vital because it supports four key sectors of the regional economy including: information technology, biotechnology, travel and tourism, and international trade.

The project will offer the following benefits to the citizens of Seattle:

Economic competitiveness

- This project will create over 500 direct jobs, providing an economic boost to our region.
- Mercer West will carry 55,000 vehicles daily, extending street, bicycle and sidewalk improvements from Ninth Avenue North to Queen Anne Avenue North.
- 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.

Partnership

- 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.

The Honorable Raymond H. LaHood
March 8, 2012
Page 2 of 2

- The Alaskan Way Viaduct Stakeholders Advisory Committee also held dozens of public meetings and supported Mercer West as an integral part of the downtown tunnel project.
- Seattle Center Master Plan calls for mixed-use redevelopment of the two-block Mercer Garage property and enhanced pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighborhood. Mercer West is key to these and other Seattle Center improvements.
- As part of its work for future development, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is excavating for the widening of Mercer Street and providing the undergrounding of transmission lines that serve the entire South Lake Union neighborhood.

Livability

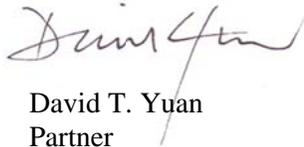
- There is a significant senior population in the Queen Anne and Elliott Bay neighborhoods, and Mercer West will improve street crossings for pedestrians around transit stops.

Pedestrians and Bicycles

- Improvements included in Mercer West project are recommended in both the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan and the Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Creates a continuous east-west bikeway from the east side of South Lake Union to Lower Queen Anne.
- Connects bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure from South Lake Union and Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop to the Olympic Sculpture Park on Elliott Bay and Kinneer Park in Lower Queen Anne.

We look forward to your support of the City of Seattle's application for the US Department of Transportation TIGER grant.

Sincerely,



David T. Yuan
Partner

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