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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

Friday, March 16 2012

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 carries more than 70,000 people a day. The University of Washington has a large and growing research function in this corridor that is intimately connected to our primary Seattle campus in Northeast Seattle and our Harborview Medical Center campus. Our continued investment in this corridor and the success of the programs we place there depends on our ability to provide predictable and efficient transportation connections for the faculty, staff, researchers and students who must move between the these facilities and our other campuses.

The University of Washington has made significant investments in public and private transit service, active transportation programs, and other transportation demand management measures in this corridor. Still, the existing congestion mutes the effectiveness of those measures in providing the efficient and predictable connections our constituents require.

This project extends street, bicycle, and sidewalk improvements from Ninth Avenue North to Queen Anne Avenue North – connecting the Queen Anne and South Lake Union Neighborhoods while simultaneously improving mobility throughout the corridor for all users. The project improves sightlines and safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

In addition to reducing congestion and speeding travel times, this project provides vital transit infrastructure that will increase transit speed and reliability while increasing safety. It will reduce vehicle miles traveled and will help the community maximize the benefit of other critical transportation investments, including the SR99 Bored Tunnel.

For each of these reasons, the Two-Way Mercer West project enjoys our enthusiastic support.

Sincerely,

Josh Kavanagh
Director, UW Transportation

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