



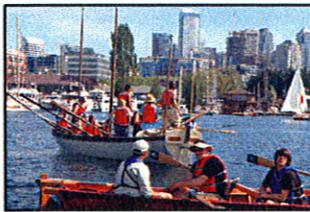
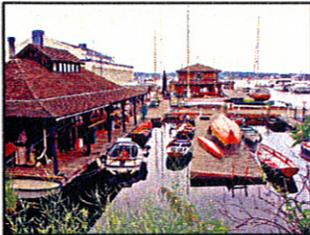
The Center for
WOODEN BOATS

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***Our Mission:** To provide a gathering place where maritime history comes alive through direct experience and our small craft heritage is enjoyed, preserved, and passed along to future generations.*

August 22, 2009

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

Re: Mercer Corridor Project TIGER grant application

Dear Secretary LaHood:

The Center for Wooden Boats (CWB) strongly supports funding for the Mercer Corridor Project in Seattle, including the narrowing of Valley Street.

CWB is a 30-year old hands-on maritime museum located (adjacent to the new Lake Union Park) and we serve about 100,000 visitors each year. The mission of CWB is to provide the public with access to the waterfront and maritime heritage. Access is free, and educational programming and exhibits are provided year-round.

While the primary benefits of the Mercer Corridor Project are economic, the secondary goals of providing access to The Center for Wooden Boats and Lake Union Park are enormous from our perspective. Currently it is very difficult and sometimes unsafe for pedestrians to cross over Valley Street into the park. In fact the neighborhood's community center won't bring their kids groups for programs at CWB because they perceive it to be too dangerous to navigate the blocks between our facilities.

The Center for Wooden Boats treasures Lake Union, Seattle's downtown urban lake, as a venue for recreation, education and industry. Because the Mercer Corridor Project improves sidewalks and installs new bicycle lanes it not only helps connect South Lake Union with the lake, it also helps connect South Lake Union with the neighborhoods around Lake Union through the Cheshiahud and Burke Gilman bike trails.

We strongly request your consideration of the funding request for Seattle's Mercer Corridor Project.

Sincerely,

Lori O'Tool
President, Board of Trustees
The Center for Wooden Boats

cc:
Senator Patty Murray
Representative Jim McDermott
Mayor Greg Nickels

Senator Maria Cantwell
Governor Christine Gregoire
Council President Richard Conlin