



CALLISON

August 24, 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:

Callison is a recognized world leader in the design and development of great spaces for people. As an architecture firm, we may focus on the actual creation of that space; however it takes both a progressive and historic viewpoint to understand the basis for success of urban environments.

We have been actively engaged in the South Lake Union area, both from a designer and community support perspective. The "Mercer Mess" simply does not work as it stands, and we need to find a way to balance transportation and pedestrian urbanity in a successful streetscape.

The current Mercer Corridor Project gets as close to that balance as we have seen with specific focus on the following:

Livability

- The project transforms the public infrastructure within the South Lake Union neighborhood, supporting smart growth and creation of a vibrant and sustainable urban center.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Components

- The project builds or improves more than 30 blocks of sidewalks and installs new bicycle lanes that connect to the urban trail system. It completes key segments of the Lake to Bay Trail and the Cheshiahud Trail around Lake Union.

Sustainability

- The Mercer Corridor project reduces greenhouse gas emissions, includes Intelligent Transportation Systems elements, integrates innovative natural drainage features, and supports bicycle, pedestrian, and transit use.

Economic Competitiveness

- The Mercer Corridor Project supports growth in 4 key sectors of Washington's economy: Information Technology, Biotechnology, Travel and Tourism, and International Trade. Major employers served by the project include Seattle Center, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, University of Washington School of Medicine, Amgen and numerous other traditional and high-tech media companies. New headquarters complexes for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Amazon.com are currently under construction and are contributing to the cost of the project.

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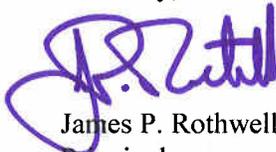
- If the Mercer Corridor Project isn't completed, thousands of jobs may be at risk. Employers will be unlikely to expand their operations without the infrastructure improvements needed to support growth. Delays to freight and commuter mobility will reduce productivity and add to overhead costs.

Jobs

- The Mercer Corridor Project supports the growth of Seattle's Center City, the economic engine of the Pacific Northwest. The project itself creates approximately 600 direct construction jobs that will start up with the award of the grant.

We hope you can support a USDOT grant, which will complete the funding for this critical, economically stimulating piece of urban infrastructure.

Sincerely,



James P. Rothwell, AIA
Principal

cc: Senator Patty Murray
Representative Jim McDermott
Mayor Greg Nickels

Senator Maria Cantwell
Governor Christine Gregoire
Council President Richard Conlin