

August 27, 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:

As one of Downtown Seattle's largest privately-owned employers, we offer our earnest support to the Mercer Corridor Project TIGER grant application.

It's unusual for a project to hold the potential for benefits this significant and to be attainable at a reasonable cost.

Our reasons for supporting this initiative include:

- **Multiple fixes at once.** The Mercer Corridor Project is about more than one street. It eliminates the dangerous westbound weave to Valley Street, and the eastbound weave from Valley to Mercer. It reduces pressure on perpetually-jammed Denny Way, a common alternate route. It simplifies northbound routes and, for eastbound Mercer, it includes the basic repaving that has been needed for several years.
- **Walking and bicycling.** This project is crucial to public safety. Both Mercer and Valley are dangerous to walk along or cross. They are even worse for bicyclists. This project will provide safe sidewalks on both streets, and an important new safety median on Mercer. With Mercer taking the traffic load, Valley will become a much-needed safe bike route through this neighborhood.
- **Sustainability and concentrating jobs.** Sustainability is a big focus in this region, and for our company. Part of sustainability is concentrating jobs around public transit and close to workers' homes, rather than pushing jobs to the edges of town and spending even more to build new roads there. The area around the Mercer Corridor is beginning to realize this ideal and will take a significant step forward with the completion of this project.

Lewis is a 123-year-old Northwest general contractor (of buildings, not roads) that is headquartered in Downtown Seattle. We build projects in the neighborhood for clients such as the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Vulcan, Amazon, and the Seattle Opera. Many of our employees use or cross the Mercer Corridor every day, on the job as commuters, and in their private lives.

Please approve this grant application.

Thank you,



Gary Smith
General Manager

cc: Senator Patty Murray
Representative Jim McDermott
Mayor Greg Nickels

Senator Maria Cantwell
Governor Christine Gregoire
Council President Richard Conlin