Edward B. Murray
Mayor

Tim Burgess
President, Seattle City Council

April 21, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: City of Seattle Northgate Link Light Rail Station Non-motorized Access Improvements TIGER application

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The City of Seattle, along with its partners at King County Metro and Sound Transit hereby submit the accompanying request for a FY 2014 US DOT TIGER grant in the amount of $15 million to fund construction of the Northgate Link Light Rail Station Non-motorized Access Project, which includes a bicycle and pedestrian bridge crossing Interstate 5 (I-5) and other safety improvements at the Northgate Transit Center and Sound Transit's Link Light Rail Northgate Extension project.

This project is a direct result of our region's participation in the joint DOT/ HUD/EPA Sustainable Communities program. Under that program, the Puget Sound region received a HUD Regional Planning Grant for its Growing Transit Communities planning effort which, in part, funded a broad community engagement identifying several priorities for transforming this regional employment and residential growth center into sustainable, transit-oriented community anchored by a major redevelopment of the King County Northgate Transit Center and interim end point for Sound Transit's extension of light rail from the University of Washington north to Snohomish County. TIGER funding would extend the reach of the light rail station for pedestrians and bicycles, giving more people access to the Sound Transit system and regional bus connections. Sound Transit's non-motorized access study shows that over 3,000 people per day would use this package of improvements to access the station.

Today, the Northgate area is one of the Puget Sound region's major residential and employment centers with 3,600 households and over 11,000 jobs. It is one of Seattle's most affordable communities and has attracted a higher proportion of economically disadvantaged populations than the city as a whole. Ten lanes of I-5 bisect the neighborhood creating barriers between homes, jobs, schools, transit stops and vital community services. There are only two crossings of I-5 within the urban center, making it difficult to impossible for many people within the standard light rail station area walkshed/bikeshed to reach without a car or bus transfer. The two existing crossings of I-5 are a distant walk from the light rail station site and one of those existing crossings is bisected by freeway entrances. While slated for significant growth as part of both Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040 plan, growth in Northgate has lagged behind most other designated growth centers due to this auto-oriented built environment.

Non-motorized access is an important rung on the ladder of opportunity, providing a low cost, healthy means of transportation that also builds a sustainable community. The centerpiece of this project – the proposed pedestrian and bicycle bridge - greatly expands access to the North Seattle College, which is home to Washington State's Opportunity Center for Employment and Education, an innovative pilot, combining various state human services, including employment and social services as well as educational services at one location. The bridge is an essential link for people accessing these services using the existing King County Northgate Transit Center, in addition to the 14,000 students and over 400 staff at North Seattle College.

Seattle, Sound Transit and the community are committed to completing this package of improvements. This TIGER FY 2014 grant would provide the remaining funds needed, leveraging significant amounts of public and private investment in the regional transit system, workforce development and sustainable infrastructure. It will make it safer and easier for residents, employees and students to get between community assets on both sides of I-5, including the college, medical facilities, a community center, library, shopping, parks and open space. We hope the US Department of Transportation will consider this request in light of the opportunities these improvements would provide in allowing the community and the region to meet its vision for a transit-oriented sustainable community.

Sincerely,

Edward B. Murray
Mayor

Tim Burgess
President, Seattle City Council

Sally Bagshaw
Seattle City Councilmember

Sally J. Clark
Seattle City Councilmember

Jean Godden
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Kshama Sawant
Seattle City Councilmember

CC: Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Congressman Jim McDermott
Governor Jay Inslee