

April 22, 2016

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx  
Secretary of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: FY2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant  
I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector Project

Dear Secretary Foxx,

CRG Services Management is pleased to submit its support for the FY2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant application that The Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (SEA) is submitting in request of TIGER VIII funds to help pay for the construction of the I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector Project (I-579 "Cap"). The "Cap" structure will span over the Interstate 579 Crosstown Boulevard highway creating a new urban public connector that will simplify pedestrian movement and will create an inviting, accessible route for walking and biking between the Hill District and Downtown.

The Hill District is one of Pittsburgh's oldest residential neighborhoods, but since the 1950s the neighborhood has lost more than 80% of its population. The Greater Hill District remains a distressed neighborhood with 17.2% unemployment and 39.2% of residents living below the poverty line. As part of urban renewal in the 1950s, the Hill District, then a predominantly African American community was declared blighted; 95 acres were demolished and 8,000 people and 413 businesses were displaced. Additionally during the 1950s, the I-579 Crosstown Boulevard highway was constructed between the Hill District and Downtown, further severing the link between the two neighborhoods creating a physical and psychological barrier that remains to this day. This project seeks to reconnect the underserved and disadvantaged Hill District with downtown Pittsburgh, and it's a critical piece to support the new, mixed-use redevelopment of the 28-acre site of the former civic arena.

The I-570 "Cap" will be an independent, standalone structure with surface improvements consisting of ADA pedestrian and bicycle pathways, stormwater management and other sustainable strategies, landscaping and other fixed site components that will create a public urban open space of approximately three acres. The I-579 "Cap" will use green infrastructure strategies, including capturing the majority of stormwater on the site, using plants and trees will be native or adapted, and generating an open space adding to the city's urban forest cover. This new greenspace will contribute to the reduction of urban heat island effects while mitigating excess noise.

The "Cap" project will be an important part in a cohesive corridor between Downtown and Oakland, two large centers of employment, education and essential services. The project strongly aligns with US DOT's priorities and "ladders of opportunity" by creating new and safe connections needed to reconnect people from a historically distressed neighborhood (Hill District) to centers of employment, education and essential services (downtown central business district). Additionally, the project will aid in promoting workforce development in the area and will contribute to community revitalization.

Important redevelopment is already taking place in the vicinity –Energy Innovation Center, and others. It is expected that there will be an additional \$379 million in private investment for adjacent development as the "Cap" and the other infrastructure improvements are in place. The "Cap" project will help keep that momentum going and increase its impact in the City and the Hill District. The project will open a new avenue for the community to grow and prosper by establishing a connector between the downtown area's high economic generation and the disadvantaged neighborhood of the Hill District.

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CRG Services Management is proud to be involved in the major redevelopment of the area with its relationships with the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh. This group sees great potential in growth and revitalization of the neighborhoods surrounding the City of Pittsburgh through the various redevelopment projects that will only be enhanced by the I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector Project.

Sincerely,

CRG Services Management, LLC



Christopher P. McKee  
President