

MCCORMACK
BARON
SALAZAR

April 14, 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,

I write this letter in support of the Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (SEA) FY2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant to pay for a portion of the construction costs of the I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector. It is our understanding that the "Cap" will span Interstate 579 Crosstown Boulevard, creating a new urban public connector that will simplify pedestrian movement and will create a safe, accessible connection for walking and biking between the Hill District and Downtown.

McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc. is a leading national for-profit affordable housing developer. We have been actively working in the Hill District for over 30 years, working to improve housing and economic outcomes for this historically marginalized and impoverished neighborhood. Once a thriving neighborhood known for its jazz clubs and ethnic diversity, the area deteriorated in the 1950s, endured enormous damage from rioting in the late 1960s, and was further devastated by initial urban renewal efforts that displaced approximately 5,000 lower Hill District residents to make way for construction of the city's Civic Arena.

Our investment in the community began with the development of Crawford Square in the early 1990s, a mixed-income community with rental and homeownership opportunities for families with a broad range of incomes. This work was followed by the HOPE VI redevelopment of the Bedford Homes blighted public housing projects. Through these efforts, McCormack Baron Salazar has brought together over \$122 million in public and private resources to rejuvenate this important Pittsburgh community without further displacement and gentrification.

The once blighted and distressed Hill District now houses a stable community of more than a thousand mixed-income renters, first time homeowners, working families, young professionals, and elderly residents. McCormack Baron Salazar is now partnering with the Pittsburgh Penguins to redevelop the lower Hill District/Civic Arena site into a dynamic, sustainable, mixed-use, mixed-income community with 1,200 new homes.

The residents of the Hill District, existing and projected with the Civic Arena development, will directly benefit from the Cap improving connectivity from this predominantly residential area to the

McCORMACK
BARON
SALAZAR

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx
FY2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant

Page 2
April 15, 2016

jobs and commercial activity of Downtown Pittsburgh. The lower-income residents of the Hill are dependent on transit, biking and walking for transportation and the Cap will provide a safe, accessible, and convenient route to economic activity, creating a “ladder of opportunity” connecting economically distressed residents to jobs, education and services in the Central Business District and increased transit access to regional transit options. For the higher-income residents of the Hill, the Cap will provide transportation alternatives and create an amenity that will attract residents with choices to live in the City, reducing demand for sprawl and decreasing commuting times. All residents will benefit from recreational opportunities and the indirect benefits of the sustainable components of the project (like Stormwater management) and increased community revitalization.

The Cap will be transformative for the underserved Hill District community and downtown. We strongly support the TIGER Application and encourages the DOT to fund this project.

Sincerely,



Vincent R. Bennett
President
McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc.