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April 25, 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,

Pittsburgh Green Innovators fully supports the FY2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant ("FY2016 TIGER") application for the I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector Project submitted by the Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County ("SEA").

This grant will enable the SEA to eliminate the historic physical barrier that exists with the I-579 Crosstown Boulevard separating the Hill District from downtown. The "Cap" is critical to literally bridging the connections between the Hill District community, the 28-acre site redevelopment site and the resources of Pittsburgh's Downtown. The "Cap" will provide green stormwater infrastructure, urban open space, opportunities for development, and pedestrian and bike-friendly access to the City's central business district. It promises to create an inviting public urban open space approximately 3 acres for Pittsburgh residents and visitors alike.

The FY2016 TIGER Grant additionally would augment the new urban street grid and associated infrastructure for the 28-acre site; building on the improvements to surrounding roads of Centre Avenue, Bedford Avenue, Crawford Street and Washington Place.

We understand that this project strongly aligns with US DOT's priorities and "ladders of opportunity" in at least three ways. First, it reconnects the residents of the historically distressed Hill District neighborhood by providing new and safe connections to employment and education in Pittsburgh's "Golden Triangle" downtown district. Second, it significantly enhances a variety of local workforce development efforts. And lastly, it is a strategic and keystone component that will complement and contribute to the Hill District's revitalization.

This project promises to be a model urban development plan. It will complement the neighboring investments in the LEED Gold certified CONSOL Energy Center as well as the LEED Platinum certificated \$45M Energy Innovation Center (EIC) recently opened last year. The latter will soon house over 500 employees and host thousands of visitors each month.

We urge your approval of the I-579 "Cap" FY2016 Tiger Discretionary Grant application, to spur further development next to downtown, create jobs, leverage significant investment for the City of Pittsburgh and extend economic opportunities to the Hill District community.

Sincerely,



Thomas Bartnik, AICP LEED AP
Executive Director

cc: Deno De Ciantis, Ed.D., Board President