

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: FY 2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant
I-579 “Cap” Urban Connector Project**

Dear Secretary Foxx,

It is my pleasure to submit this letter in support of the Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County’s FY 2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant application, which has been submitted for the I-579 “Cap” Urban Connector project. The “Cap” project is a critical part of the overall Lower Hill Redevelopment project, which will reconnect Downtown Pittsburgh and the Hill District, which will unlock the next wave of reinvestment, redevelopment and revitalization of the city.

We understand the project has been steadily progressing in the past year. The project has finished preliminary engineering and is now in final design. The SEA has also commenced with community meetings to gather public input on design and programming of surface improvements. In that regard, we highly urge favorable consideration of a TIGER award so the project can seamlessly move into construction.

As Port Authority continues to seek ways to improve passenger amenities throughout the downtown region, the “Cap” project is one of many initiatives that will certainly help us meet various objectives within a collaborative manner. Most importantly, this project creates an efficient and safe access to and from major bus stops that directly connects residents and business owners to the Hill District and throughout Allegheny County.

Specific to the “Cap” project, we are committed to the placement of a new bus stop at the “Cap” site along Centre Avenue. There is internal support for this new bus stop since the current bus stops are 1,763 feet apart. Per our standard, the existing spacing is too far apart. The preferred location is just west of the easterly start of the Centre Avenue Bridge over I-579 Crosstown Boulevard, adjacent to the “Cap” development site. That would put it just above the northbound lanes of I-579 Crosstown Boulevard. The existing 81 (Oak Hill), 82 (Lincoln) and 83 (Bedford Hill) routes would utilize this new bus stop.

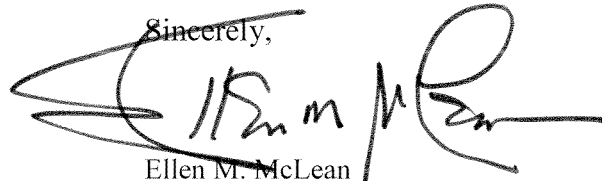
This new bus stop will be in addition to the bus rerouting that will take place in the new road grid currently being constructed to the east in the 28-acre site. It was agreed, as shown on the Lower Hill Preliminary Land Development Plan, that the bus service would be provided by rerouting bus routes 81, 82 and 83 which currently operate in the area. These routes would operate along (new) Wylie Avenue within the site between Crawford Street and the most westerly new street parallel to Washington Place. Eastbound buses would operate from Bedford to Wylie on this street, and downtown bound buses between Wylie and Centre along this street. Buses would operate both directions on Wylie Avenue. Several bus stop locations were also discussed.

The new "Cap" bus stop, as well as the bus rerouting plan, would have two major benefits. It would bring transit service to the heart of the new Lower Hill community ensuring equal distance access to bus stops from most new buildings and it would remove buses from part of Centre Avenue near the CONSOL Energy Center which would reduce event associated schedule delays and improve on-time performance.

Interestingly, the routing plan is very similar to what existed in the Lower Hill prior to its demolition in 1956.

Once again, Port Authority fully supports this project and the efforts of the Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County's FY 2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant application. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Ellen M. McLean
Chief Executive Officer

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