



April 21, 2016

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

RE: FY 2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant
I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector Project, Pittsburgh, PA

Dear Secretary Foxx:

Riverlife, a non-profit public interest organization which promotes, restores, and reclaims Pittsburgh's riverfronts, writes in strong support of the FY 2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant application submitted by The Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (SEA) for the I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector. This project includes a "Cap" structure to be constructed over the Interstate 579 Crosstown Boulevard highway, creating a safe, much-needed urban connector linking people from the economically-distressed neighborhood of the Hill District to employment and service centers in Downtown Pittsburgh.

The proposed I-579 "Cap" project includes surface improvements linking the underserved Hill District community to Pittsburgh's Downtown through ADA-accessible pathways, and will incorporate innovative "green" stormwater management techniques. When completed, the project will create a three-acre public urban open space in a neighborhood which currently lacks usable open spaces. The project will also provide safe connections for pedestrians and bicyclists to connect with a free Downtown/North Shore transit system of light rail transit and bus network.

Last month, Riverlife participated in a public meeting attended by local residents, small business owners, community leaders, and elected officials to identify priority elements of the proposed new public open spaces. It was clear from the many comments made that residents and community leaders view the I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector project as a much-welcomed transit-oriented and open space amenity to help in the revitalization of the neighborhood. Two additional community meetings are planned in the next sixty days to further solicit comments and to refine elements of the project.

We at Riverlife believe that the I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector Project will provide important public amenities which will improve the quality of life for a historically distressed neighborhood while also contributing to community revitalization through better access to public transit and to Pittsburgh's downtown employment opportunities. Thank you for your consideration of this vital project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Li', with a horizontal line underneath.

Vivien Li
President and CEO

