



307 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1500 · Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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,

On behalf of Sustainable Pittsburgh, I am pleased to urge your support for the above referenced grant application submitted by The Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (SEA).

The SEA is requesting TIGER VIII funds to help pay for construction costs of I-579 “Cap” Urban Connector. 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.

We understand the project has progressed since last year, 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. We are excited the project has been steadily progressing towards completion of design and ready for construction. In that regard, we highly urge favorable consideration of a TIGER award for the project.

As you are likely aware, this project is part of a concerted effort to undo mistakes of the past whereby as part of urban renewal in the 1950s, the Hill District, then a predominantly African American community was declared blighted and subsequently 95 acres were demolished and 8,000 people and 413 businesses were displaced. Further disconnecting the community, also during the 1950s, the I-579 Crosstown Boulevard highway was constructed between the Lower Hill District and Downtown. It remains a physical and psychological barrier to this day.

This SEA led project will reconnect the underserved and disadvantaged Lower 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. We expect \$379 million in private investment in adjacent development as the “Cap” and the other infrastructure is in place. The “Cap” project will help keep that momentum going and increase its impact in the City and the Hill District.

This project will be transformative for the underserved Hill District community and downtown. The I-579 “Cap” will extend the economic strengths of downtown to the east. 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), promote workforce development, and contribute to community revitalization.

The I-579 “Cap” will utilize green infrastructure strategies, including capturing the majority of stormwater on the site. Plants and trees will be native or adapted, and this new open space will add to the city’s urban forest cover. This new greenspace will contribute to the reduction of urban heat island effects, and will mitigate 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.

Together these material benefits of the "Cap" align with Sustainable Pittsburgh mission to accelerate the policy and practice of sustainable development for our region. This project has strong, integrated social equity, environmental, and economic wins for the city and region.

If additional information would be helpful, please feel free to reach me at (412) 258-6643 or [cgould@sustainablepittsburgh.org](mailto:cgould@sustainablepittsburgh.org).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Court Gould". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and 'G'.

Court Gould  
Executive Director