

April 9, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 7th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: FY2014 TIGER Discretionary Grant
Lower Hill Urban Redevelopment Infrastructure Project**

Dear Secretary Foxx,

Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) wishes to convey to you our highest level of support for – and urge your approval of – the FY2014 TIGER Discretionary Grant for the Lower Hill Urban Redevelopment Infrastructure Project submitted by the Sports & Exhibition Authority of the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (SEA).

Our legacy in the Lower Hill extends back many decades to 1955 when my predecessors at URA undertook a massive project that entailed eminent domain, relocation, and widespread demolition of homes and businesses. I am pleased to say that our endeavors today come full-circle and our team is undertaking a comprehensive strategy of reconnecting the Hill District community to Downtown and the broader opportunities that our central business district represents.

The infrastructure proposed in the application are improvements that strongly align with OST's priorities and President Obama's "ladders of opportunity" initiative by creating multi-modal choices (i.e. new pedestrian connections, enhanced bus routes, shared and dedicated bike paths, connections to light-rail transit station and possible future BRT) needed to connect people from a historically distressed neighborhood to centers of employment, education and essential services.

The SEA's request would help to fund construction of new urban streets (including roads, sidewalks, street lighting, stormwater planters, and storm, sewage and water lines) for the 28-acre project site, improvements to surrounding roads, and the final design of a "cap" over I-579 Crosstown Boulevard.

That last element is especially exciting and I hope that it resonates with you and the TIGER team as it promises to finally provide a robust connection for the community over I-579 Crosstown Boulevard. The highway has been a physical barrier between the Hill District and Downtown for over 50 years. The "cap" will provide urban open space, opportunities for development, and pedestrian and bike-friendly access to the Pittsburgh's central business district.

Finally, as the economy in Pittsburgh continues to improve, URA has remained aggressive in making key investments that have positive impacts on job growth and this project is one of the most significant in the region. It is anticipated that the development will create approximately 4,000 jobs during construction and approximately 3,000 permanent jobs when fully built-out. It is anticipated to attract private investment of over \$379 million, and provide 606,000 sq ft of Class A office space, over 254,000 sq ft of commercial space, a 150 room hotel, 2.8 acres of urban open space, and 1,191 residential units. We regard this investment as building critical infrastructure that will leverage further development, create jobs and provide added investment in the Greater Hill District.

Sincerely,



Robert Rubinstein
Acting Executive Director