



Bellevue
Downtown
Association

October 11, 2017

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

On behalf of the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), I write to communicate support of the joint application from King County and the City of Kirkland for the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2017 Transportation Investment Generating Economy Recovery (TIGER) grant to help fund the "New Connections for Eastside Innovation Centers."

The Puget Sound Region is growing rapidly, and the State, County and surrounding Cities have been working together to accommodate this ongoing growth. In east King County, there has been a collaborative effort to transform the unused historic 42-mile-long Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) into a functional pedestrian and bike pathway. The corridor will open up a new mobility option that will serve tens of thousands of people, connecting communities and providing access to new areas.

A TIGER grant investment will allow the region to complete vital segments of the ERC. The two major projects identified in "New Connections for Eastside Innovation Centers" are expected to be the most heavily used portions of the corridor.

- **Wilburton Center Segment** – Located in the City of Bellevue, an area expecting 110,000 jobs and 21,500 housing units by 2035.
- **Totem Lake Connector** – Located in the City of Kirkland, an area with 3,500 new homes and 550,000 square feet of new development under construction or in permitting process.

Funding from the grant will improve aging infrastructure and address safety issues in two urban centers that are experiencing robust economic redevelopment. Additionally, the finished projects will help complete the 42-mile-long network, establishing a reliable mobility option that'll connect urban, suburban and rural communities.

The BDA is a nonprofit organization that represents downtown stakeholders committed to the continued development and success of its urban center. As an organization, we see the need to improve mobility options in our region, and we acknowledge the completion of the ERC as a step in the right direction. I encourage you to review this application favorably and consider the "New Connections for Eastside Innovation Centers" as an appropriate recipient for the TIGER grant.

Sincerely,

Patrick Bannon
Bellevue Downtown Association, President