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Fostering Independence and Community - It's All Right Here

September 8, 2009

Ray LaHood
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Downtown Crossing, New Haven, CT

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing in strong support of Downtown Crossing and the City of New Haven's TIGER grant application. Downtown Crossing includes the proposed conversion of the Route 34 East highway to an urban boulevard and the associated economic development of "Parcel D".

The Towers, (Tower One and Tower East), are located on a 5 acre parcel of land adjacent to the Route 34 East Highway. Home to almost four hundred elderly residents, the Towers offers affordable apartments with assisted living services. Tower One is a 21 story high-rise building with 196 apartments that opened for occupancy in 1971. Originally designed by renowned architect Charles Moore, over the past six years ten floors of the building have been rebuilt to accommodate residents requiring assisted living services. Tower East, a building with 150 apartments, is totally subsidized by the HUD Section 8 rental program. Tower East began accepting elderly residents in 1982. The Towers are non-profit and non-sectarian.

Currently the Towers campus is severed from the downtown area by the Route 34 East Highway. Once completed the plan detailed by this proposal would serve to connect the residents of the Towers with the rest of the city. The Mayor and City of New Haven officials have met with members of the Towers Board of Directors and management, all of whom support the concepts as presented and are in favor of the proposed changes.

We believe the proposed improvements are highly consistent with our mission as well as the objectives of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The City and private development team are ready to proceed with a 400,000 square foot commercial laboratory building in the heart of the New Haven health sciences community. This new development complements over \$2 billion in recent and planned investment as New Haven emerges from the recession as an international center of influence in biotechnology and health sciences.

Route 34 East is a grade-separated highway and there is no land in the immediate area to develop more much-needed lab space. TIGER program support is therefore essential for us to reclaim land and rebuild our economic base. Construction activities will create 2,000 jobs immediately and contribute \$184 million in direct and indirect spending over the next three years. Over the long-term, the new building will create nearly 1,000 jobs supporting cutting-edge medical research. These employees will generate \$114 million in annual economic activity from wage earnings of nearly \$80 million.

In no uncertain terms, these infrastructure improvements support our community's efforts to compete effectively in the global marketplace which is the very essence of the city's economic development strategy.

The resulting community and neighborhood stabilization will enhance the safety and security of the Towers frail elderly residents and the staff. It will also improve the economic viability of the Towers property helping us to maintain our commitments both to our mission and to the City of New Haven.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this essential project.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Giannini-Meyers, President/CEO