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May 28, 2015

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

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I write in strong support of Buffalo's application for the U.S. Department of Transportation's TIGER FY 2015 Discretionary Grant Program for the Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project. This project aligns with the goals of TIGER FY 2015 by advancing the City's highest priority capital project: the rebuilding of Main Street in downtown Buffalo.

The project re-introduces vehicular traffic to lower Main Street and rebuilds the Lower Main Street segment of Metro Rail. Obsolete transit and pedestrian facilities, well past their useful life, will be replaced. Much needed vehicular access to Main Street buildings and future development sites will be provided, improving downtown traffic circulation to these hard to reach blocks. Also, proposed project improvements will support ongoing development of Canalside, a growing regional entertainment and employment district, as well as re-development of One Seneca Tower, a recently vacated 856,000 sq. ft. mixed-use complex located at the project's northern terminus.

Both New York State and the US Congress have recently awarded funding to the Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project, in recognition of the importance of the project to the City of Buffalo. The 700 Block of Main Street reopened in 2009 and the 600 Block of Main Street reopened in January 2015. In 2011, the City of Buffalo was awarded a \$15 million TIGER Grant for the 500 Block of Main Street. The 500 Block re-development is under construction and will be completed this fall. A TIGER FY 2015 Discretionary Grant Program grant will allow the City to continue the development momentum generated by these investments.

Automobiles were removed from Main Street 33 years ago when the light rail Metro Rail system was built. Metro Rail certainly benefits Buffalo; however, closing the premier downtown street to automobiles has resulted in vacancy, lost property and tax value, and has harmed the image of Western New York just as we work to attract new businesses and employers to our region. As we can see from the work currently in progress, the Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project is reversing these effects, generating significant economic benefit and transforming Buffalo's Main Street into a "beautiful and complete street."

PAGE 2 – City of Buffalo Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project

As a former Mayor, you know better than most that any region is only as strong as its urban core. Buffalo's Main Street remains the center of Western New York's government, finance and health care community as well as a thriving waterfront destination but must maintain and enhance the infrastructure investment in our central business district to realize the long-term returns for our residents, visitors and tax base.

It is my firm belief the federal government must remain an active partner in this collaborative effort to restore Main Street as I'm confident this project will produce the economic, social and sustainable results mandated by the TIGER program.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this very worthy submission. Your leadership and service to our country at this critical time is greatly needed and deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,


BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress