



October 26, 2011

Peter McLaughlin, Chair
Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority
A2400 Government Center
300 South 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0241

Dear Commissioner McLaughlin:

2020 Partners wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supports the TIGER Grant application for the Interchange project. The stated mission of 2020 Partners is to lay the foundation and attract investment for future development by knitting together communities and leverage the assets of Target Field, Minneapolis Farmer's Market, transit and energy. We are excited about the future development and real estate opportunities that will be supported by the Tiger Interchange project. The execution of the Interchange project is one of 2020 Partners' highest priorities.

Members of 2020 Partners agree that we need to start immediately to improve the accessibility and flow of pedestrians, workers, and fans in and around the transit facilities serving Target Field. We have been proponents of public transit since our inception as 2010 Partners, and will continue to support the Interchange as a vital component.

We understand that LRT improvements are on an extremely tight deadline, and need to proceed this year. We are in support of the TIGER Grant funds being sought by Hennepin County and the City of St. Paul along with the cooperation of the Corridors of Opportunity regional partners: \$35.8 million to complete the \$80.5 million funding package needed to develop a multimodal transportation hub and livability catalyst in downtown Minneapolis and to greatly improve a freeway overcrossing and key bicycle and pedestrian linkage in an economically distressed area of St. Paul. These projects are linked by their critical role in the success of the Twin Cities emerging transitway system and the Central Corridor LRT line in particular.

The Interchange will connect the Corridors of Opportunity. The Corridors of Opportunity (CoO) partnership seeks to make the Twin Cities current and future transitways better places to live, work, and play for all. With a focus on seven of the region's planned and existing transitway corridors, CoO partners aim to guide the region's growth, vitality and competitiveness.

These two projects are key investments in the future economic competitiveness of the region. Completing them soon – prior to the opening of the Central Corridor LRT – is critical to capturing the maximum benefits of (and minimizing costs from) those other investments. The TIGER investments will create employment and connect captive markets with job opportunities. Together, the projects will directly inject dollars in to the local and regional economy, in addition to billions related to increases in development opportunities, property values, and this. Improved operations will also diminish system inefficiencies and increase productivity.

Again, we support the application and wish you well in obtaining all the necessary funding sources for this great project.

Sincerely,

Chuck Leer
Chair, 2020 Partners