

PRESIDENT

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October 26, 2011

The Honorable Raymond LaHood, Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: City of Rochester Inner Loop East Reconstruction Project

Dear Secretary LaHood:

On behalf of the University of Rochester, please allow me to express my support for the City of Rochester's Inner Loop East Reconstruction project TIGER application. With funding, the City will revitalize this section of Downtown Rochester in a way that will allow for continued growth, not only for the University community, but for the City and the entire region.

The University of Rochester is one of the top research and higher education institutions in the world today. We are the largest employer in the region, the sixth largest private employer in the state, the major health care provider for the region, and generator of an increasing number of jobs and new businesses. The University has approximately 10,000 students and more than 20,000 employees spread over a number of campuses and facilities. Two of these locations, the Eastman School of Music and the Memorial Art Gallery, are located a half-mile apart in downtown Rochester. Despite their proximity, it is extremely challenging to travel between these campuses due to the Inner Loop, a sunken expressway which separates these facilities.

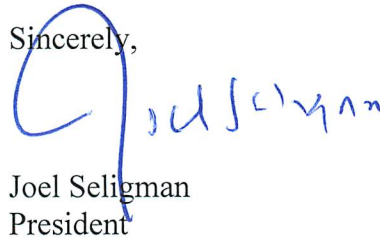
The Eastman School of Music is widely regarded as our nation's premier music school, boasting world-class faculty and teaching facilities right in the heart of downtown Rochester. Its Eastman Theatre attracts more than 300,000 annual visitors to historic Kodak Hall. The Eastman Theatre is also the epicenter of the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival, an acclaimed nine-day event, which draws nearly 200,000 visitors each year. The Memorial Art Gallery, a University-affiliated art gallery which also serves as a public art museum, hosts nearly 300,000 visitors annually. The presence and condition of the Inner Loop detracts from the area's vibrancy and gives the wrong first impression to visitors of these and other nearby attractions.

The Honorable Raymond LaHood, Secretary  
October 26, 2011  
Page Two

The University continues to make major investments in these regionally significant locations. A \$47 million renovation and expansion of the Eastman Theatre was completed in December 2010. Plans are currently under way for a University-led, mixed-use redevelopment of a surface parking lot adjacent to Eastman. A redesign of the Memorial Art Gallery grounds will result in Centennial Sculpture Park, a public sculpture garden featuring works by both national and local artists. Work on the park also coincides with the latest phase of ARTWalk, a public initiative to transform the neighborhood into an interactive outdoor museum that is sure to bring even more visitors to the area. The City's proposed Inner Loop East project will redefine this section of downtown Rochester and facilitate continued growth, not only for the University community, but for the City and region as a whole.

For these reasons, I fully support the Inner Loop East Reconstruction project and this request for funding through the TIGER program. Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact me or our Office of Government and Community Relations if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Joel Seligman  
President

JS/km