Office of the Chief Financial Officer

March 19, 2012

Secretary Ray LaHood,
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood,

The UniversityCity Prosperity Project is a high priority strategic initiative for Florida International University under our 2010-2015 strategic plan objective “Engage with the Community in Collaborative Problem Solving.” We are committed to making the project a successful national and international model for advanced mobility, economic prosperity, sustainable communities, and innovative university-community partnerships.

Accordingly, FIU pledges to invest significant resources in combination with our various private and public project partners. Along with our entire Congressional Delegation, we urge the US Department of Transportation to invest with us in the form of a TIGER Discretionary Grant in the amount of $20,000,000.

FIU’s matching contributions to the UniversityCity Prosperity Project will be approximately $35.44 million and will include several elements:

- Design, construction and operation of a new “Smart Parking Garage” that will also house the Advanced Transit Multimodal Station (ATMS). The new “Smart Parking Garage” will facilitate timely delivery of transit customers as part of the Sustainable Informed Traveler Program (SITP), provide parking spaces for visitors of FIU who also use the ATMS, provide bicycle storage facilities, and host a number of vehicles for FIU’s car sharing service. Expected new parking garage costs are $34.54 million;

- Creation of “Smart Parking Garages” – $200,000 of TIGER funds will be used to retrofit the current Red Parking Garage. Following a successful implementation of the first “Smart Parking Garage” and establishment of sufficient revenue flow from reserved parking component of the “Smart Parking Garage,” FIU plans to outfit the four remaining parking structures on campus as “Smart Parking Garages.” Expected deployment of “Smart Parking” technologies in the four existing FIU parking garages would carry a total cost of $800,000 to be funded from incremental reserved parking fees;

- Sustainable UniversityCity Sub-Area Mobility Study (SAMS) at a cost of $408,000 in partnership with the City of Sweetwater (Sweetwater) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 6. FIU’s cost contribution to this effort will be $102,000. The Sustainable UniversityCity SAMS will identify strategies and conceptualize projects that can be undertaken that would improve mobility within UniversityCity (defined as the lands within Sweetwater, the FIU Modesto A. Maidique Campus, the FIU Engineering Center, and the adjoining properties).
Further, FIU will identify how it might:

- Create and operate a Transit Rider orientation program for FIU students, faculty and staff to encourage a culture of transit use;
- Undertake annual project evaluations including surveys of students, staff, and Sweetwater residents to assess progress and provide information for operational adjustments;
- Create and operate a web site in conjunction with the UniversityCity Alliance to inform the public and FIU students about: i) UniversityCity Prosperity Project construction and activities; ii) local FIU and Sweetwater shuttle and community transit; iii) ITP subscriptions and services; iv) monthly transit passes; and, v) related events;
- Address additional maintenance costs for pedestrian-oriented public spaces on campus associated with all or part of the Parabola Bridge, the ATMS, and pedestrian linkages to other FIU facilities.

As a part of our Master Plan, we also expect to construct or facilitate construction of several buildings over the next ten years in close proximity to the new “Smart Parking Garage.” These structures will contribute significantly to increased transit ridership and will help to further establish safe and appealing pedestrian pathways, internal site trip capture, and job attraction and creation. We expect the total investment in buildings to exceed $200 million and suggest that while it does not constitute an additional match commitment, such future construction is the type of facility and related economic growth that is expected once the TIGER funding and related match funding is undertaken.

The UniversityCity Project will uniquely and innovatively help accomplish the goals of the TIGER grant program to enhance national economic competitiveness, provide immediate and long term job creation, enhance the surface transportation system, and create equitable and sustainable communities.

We look forward to having USDOT as our partner in the creation of a new international model of economic prosperity: UniversityCity.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Jessell, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President and CFO

Cc: Mayor Manuel Maroño
    Mayor Carlos Gimenez
    Javier Rodriguez
    Jose Abreu
    Gus Pego
    Ysella Llort