Rebecca Sosa  
Chairwoman  
Board of County Commissioners  

May 31, 2013  

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:  

As the Chairwoman of the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, I am writing in strong support of University City. This project is an innovative interconnected vision for Western Miami-Dade County that would be propelled by the collaboration between Florida International University (FIU) and Miami-Dade County, Florida, in partnership with the City of Sweetwater, Florida and the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) under the fifth round of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant Program.  

Florida International University has become a leader throughout South Florida in terms of engagement, development, and a vision to create a vibrant and diverse community. As the sixth largest public employer in Miami-Dade County, FIU seeks to continue this vision through the University City project. The efforts to develop the University City improvements have now been underway for more than 6 years. This application is a critical step for the region to realize a vision that links FIU’s Maidique Campus to the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) and to Miami Beach at the Lincoln Road Mall.  

It is my hope that the Department will give the strongest consideration to this innovative project which will include the implementation of an Advanced Transit Multimodal Station (ATMS) on the FIU campus and a high-tech predictive Informed Traveler program of national significance. Additionally, the project will provide innovative transportation improvements to the City of Sweetwater to support a robust Express Bus Rapid Transit line along SR-836 in Miami-Dade County, a pedestrian-oriented bridge across US 41, all allowing for the aggregation of ridership for express bus services to the MIC, Metrorail and Miami Beach.
Following the principles of sustainable and livable communities, community improvements will be implemented to create better bike and walking pathways for pedestrians, as well as innovative components such as mixed-mode corridors for additional other small community transit vehicles. Mixed-use pathways will not only connect the ATMS on FIU’s main campus with a traffic-calmed Main Street in Sweetwater but also spur economic development and attractive, affordable housing options in the City.

As the Department of Transportation works to make investments in our nation's infrastructure that make communities more livable and sustainable, I urge support of UniversityCity, which will make significant impact in the region and be a model for the nation. I urge the support of this application as an example for the nation in terms of innovation, and meaningful community solutions.

Sincerely,

Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa
Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners