June 3, 2013

Secretary Ray LaHood

U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: 2013 TIGER/UniversityCity submittal by FIU

Dear Secretary LaHood:

Florida International University (FIU) in regards to their submittal for FY2013 TIGER Discretionary Grant funds for the very-well developed UniversityCity Project.

The University City Project TIGER Proposal describes how FIU would:

- Research and develop technology for a robust Informed Traveler Program and Applications (ITPA) improvement to be deployed initially for 20,000 users who are: FIU students, faculty, employees and visitors; Sweetwater residents, employers, employees and visitors; and, the most frequent users of the Dolphin Expressway (SR-836) and Airport Expressway (SR-112).
- Develop pedestrian-oriented and multimodal infrastructural improvements including:
  - an Advanced Intermodal and Multimodal Station (AIMS);
  - an ATMS terminal and related mixed-use pedestrian-oriented areas;
  - an pedestrian-oriented complete streets improvements on SW109th Avenue and related streets to better link FIU Maidique Campus and Sweetwater consisting of: traffic-calmed streets; pedestrian plazas, corridors and boardwalks; pedestrian-oriented parking structures, mixed-use development, transit greenways (linear parks with transit running through it), and mixed-mode streets (without access for automotive traffic); and,
  - an initial transit greenway system spanning the Modesto Campus and Sweetwater.

MDX has already expended $182,306 with FIU Lehman Center for Transportation Research to develop a SR-836 Express Bus Service Study last December 2010 and that with other research and planning efforts, was a basis for proposals within the 2013 TIGER UniversityCity submittals (and earlier TIGER submittal efforts in 2010 by MDX and Sweetwater and by FIU 2011 and 2012). MDX is continuing its partnership with FIU by committing $265,000 so the research personnel and
others at the National Science Foundation’s Industry-University Cooperative Research Center for Advanced Knowledge Enablement at FIU and the FIU’s Integrated Intelligent Transportation System Laboratory at the Lehman Center for Transportation Research can develop a very thoughtful and near term work plan for ITPA development; such work immediately begins upon the announcement of the 2013 TIGER/UniversityCity award.

FIU will be undertaking these efforts so that it can better define the way ahead for research and technology development that would:

- Meet all local, state, and federal requirements by June 30, 2014 in order for US DOT to obligate all ITPA-related TIGER funds by September 30, 2013
- Establish a proof of concept for ITPA on or about early 2015
- Identify the steps needed to be undertaken for the deployment of a robust pilot SITP project by or about December 2016

This initial work using $265,000 of MDX funds could begin in November 2013 immediately after the FIU receives the announcement of a TIGER award and before the federal funding becomes available from FY2013 TIGER Discretionary Grant proceeds. This initial MDX funded work would continue for about one year or less in order to facilitate the implementation of the ITPA such it also supports near and long term ITS interests of MDX related to the deployment of the SR-836 Express Enhanced Bus Service.

MDX understands that, after it authorizes FIU to commence this initial $265,000 of work, that FIU will also be expending approximately $8 million in FY2013 TIGER funds that have been requested by FIU. With the $8 million in TIGER funds, FIU will undertake ITPA research and technology development efforts as necessary to develop with IBM, MDX, and others the ITPA technology that represents an adequate proof of concept that ITPA can be effectively deployed for approximately another $10 million.

In the year or more preceding the proof of concept presentations, MDX and FIU will jointly, with other interested parties, identify the estimated $10 million in funding sources, including available MDX funds or governmental grants, as necessary to deploy the robust ITPA project that focuses on the providing for the multimodal transportation information needs of people:

- Traveling to or from UniversityCity (at FIU and the City of Sweetwater) especially including those who travel on the Dolphin Expressway (SR836), the Airport Expressway (SR112), I-195 and via the Miami Intermodal Center
- Wishing to use the 836 Express Enhanced Bus Service between UniversityCity, the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC), and other related destinations and those wishing to use the Miami Beach Airport Flyer between the MIC and Miami Beach’s Lincoln Road Mall
Who get to University City or the Miami Intermodal Center by whatever means
Who get to any Metro-Rail Station, any Tri-Rail Station, any Amtrak Station, or any express bus stop in Southeast Florida region or in counties immediate adjacent thereto that, via mass transit or passenger rail transportation systems, links directly or nearly directly (via short pedestrian movements) to the University City or Miami Intermodal Center

Finally, once the robust ITPA is deployed and validated as an effective tool to manage transportation needs of and optimize the use of the existing transportation system and to help plan for system improvements, then FIU and MDX (with expected help from others) agree to seek further funding to develop and deploy a fully regional version of ITPA.

These ITPA and other 2013 TIGER/University City submittal improvements would be undertaken upon the award of the FIU requested FY 2013 TIGER Discretionary Grant funds in coordination with the Miami-Dade County proposed SR-836 Express Enhanced Bus Service to be operated by Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) on US 41, on SW 107th Avenue, and on the Dolphin Expressway/SR836.

The SR-836 Express Enhanced Bus Service TIGER Proposal has been separately developed by MDT who is also pursuing its own FY 2013 TIGER Discretionary Grant submittal.

In the event US DOT agrees to award a FY 2013 TIGER Discretionary Grant to FIU, there will exist a robust, frequent, and very smart BRT-like transit system operating between multiple east and west Miami-Dade destinations with superior customer acceptance and high use. The 836 Express Enhanced Bus Service is already programed to be operational in 2016 per http://www.miamidade.gov/citt/library/5_year_plan/rapid_transit_improvements.pdf.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this important project. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at 305 637-3277 ext. 2201 or email jrodriguez@mdxway.com

Sincerely,

Javier Rodriguez, P.E.
Executive Director