June 3, 2013

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 University City Prosperity Project is a high priority strategic initiative for Florida International University and the Southeast Florida Region. Under our 2010-2015 strategic plan objective “Engage with the Community in Collaborative Problem Solving”, FIU has taken an active role in the development of the Seven50 SE Florida Prosperity Plan. As we conclude the Seven50 work, it is appropriate we expand the UniversityCity project with the available TIGER funding. We are committed to making the UniversityCity project a successful national and international model for advanced mobility, economic prosperity, sustainable and resilient 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 U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to invest with us in the form of a TIGER Discretionary Grant in the amount of $20,980,273.

FIU’s matching contributions to the UniversityCity Prosperity Project will be approximately $36 million and include several elements:

- Design, construct and operate a new “Smart Parking Garage” that will also house the Advanced Intermodal & Multimodal Station (AIMS). The new “Smart Parking Garage” will facilitate timely delivery of transit customers as part of the Informed Traveler Program and Applications (ITPA), provide parking spaces for visitors of FIU who also use the AIMS, provide bicycle storage facilities, and host a number of vehicles for FIU’s car sharing service. Projected new parking garage costs are $35.4 million and they are expected to include the costs to outfit the new parking garage with “Smart Parking” technology from anticipated revenues derived from new ITPA reserved parking fees. ITPA users who are not FIU students, faculty, employees or visitors will be directed to the City Hall Intelligent Plaza and Parking and Area (CHIPPA) facilities.
• The proposed retrofit of the Red Parking Garage as a “Smart Parking Garage” linked with the ITPA will use approximately $204,000 of TIGER funds. After establishing the revenue flow from reserved parking component of the “Smart Parking Garage” and determining the financial viability, FIU anticipates adding smart parking to the new Parking Garage (PG6) and continuing this initiative for the four other existing FIU parking structures as “Smart Parking Garages.” Expected deployment of “Smart Parking” technologies in the four existing FIU parking garages is expected to cost approximately $500,000 when such revenues are derived from and supported by new ITPA reserved parking fees.

• Undertake a Sustainable University City Sub-Area Mobility Study (SAMS) that will cost $408,000 in partnership with the City of Sweetwater (Sweetwater) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 6 with the understanding that FDOT District 6 will reimburse for 50% of costs incurred (approximately $204,000) and Sweetwater will be paying for 25% of the costs incurred (approximately $102,000) and the total FIU cost contribution to this effort will be $102,000. This Sustainable University City SAMS will identify strategies and conceptualize projects that can be undertaken that would improve mobility within University City (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 freshman at the beginning of each semester that will encourage a culture of transit use;

• Seek to undertake annual project evaluations including a formal survey of students, staff, and Sweetwater residents to assess progress and provide information for operational adjustments after the first three years when the TIGER financed surveys are undertaken;

• Create and operate, in conjunction with the University City Alliance, a web site designed to inform the public and FIU students about: i) University City Prosperity Project construction and activities; ii) local FIU and Sweetwater shuttle and community transit; iii) ITPA 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 single pylon, cable-stayed, shared-use bridge, the AIMS, and pedestrian linkages to the other FIU facilities.

These expenses, while not being counted as match funding, are likely to be absorbed as ongoing FIU or Sweetwater activities in the future especially if a funding source can be found. When funding is identified, we expect costs to be collectively about $70,000 per year.

FIU also expects to construct or facilitate construction of several additional mixed-use buildings that will be aligned and located adjacent to the new “Smart Parking Garage,” the Red Parking
Garage and the Market Station mixed-use facility and parking garage on the Modesto A. Maidique Campus as quickly as funding is identified. 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 this total liner buildings investment to be substantial. While it does not constitute an additional match commitment, such future construction is the type of 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 Discretionary 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. It will have a measurable and significant impact on the Nation, the region and the metropolitan area and will set an example for others to follow.

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

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (305) 348-2101 or email kjessell@fiu.edu.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Jessell, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President for Finance and Chief Fiscal Officer

Cc: Manuel Maroño, Mayor, City of Sweetwater
Carlos Gimenez, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
Javier Rodriguez, Executive Director, Miami-Dade Expressway Authority
Emilio T. Gonzalez, Ph.D., Director, Miami-Dade Airport Authority
Gustavo “Gus” Pego, Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation, District 6
Ysella Llort, Director, Miami-Dade Transit