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October 28, 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:

We are pleased to submit this letter in support of the City of Rochester's application for financial assistance for engineering, design, and related work on its Inner Loop East Reconstruction Project.

The Strong—a world-class educational institution that is home to the National Museum of Play, National Toy Hall of Fame, and International Center for the History of Electronic Games—is the largest stakeholder in this section of the Inner Loop corridor, occupying more than 280,000 square feet of building space and more than a quarter-mile of frontage along the Inner Loop corridor.

As the biggest cultural attraction in Western New York, we welcome nearly 600,000 visitors—many from out of state—to downtown Rochester each year, and almost all park in our lots bordering on the corridor and exit via it. In its current condition, the corridor reflects negatively upon The Strong and upon the city itself and projects an image that is harmful to repeat business. Further, the Inner Loop, with its dozen lanes of traffic and deteriorating infrastructure inhibits pedestrian traffic in the vicinity, both in terms of safety concerns and in terms of aesthetics. In short, this segment of the Inner Loop is ugly and unsafe, and it is an impediment to both our potential future expansion and to the growth of this sector of downtown in general.

The Strong is unique in the world and serves a variety of popular and scholarly audiences nationally. We are the only collections-based museum anywhere solely devoted to the study of play and the ways in which play is essential to learning and human development. Since opening on this site in 1982, we have expanded twice—most recently in 2006 at an investment of \$37 million—and we have been exploring expanding a third time. To do so will require our attracting investment from outside the region and the state, and every time we bring a potential supporter here from out of town, we cringe when we have to traverse the Inner Loop corridor and park and exit our vehicles alongside it.

The Strong Play Partners

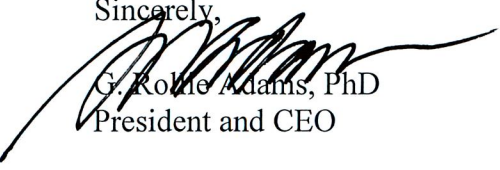


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Removing this segment of the Inner Loop, bringing the corridor to grade, and creating a more functional and more visually appealing streetscape will not only solve the problems described above, it will also spur economic investment in downtown Rochester in general, thereby not only providing construction jobs, but providing long-term jobs through neighborhood enhancements such as new and appealing residential stock as well as hotel, office, and retail opportunities.

In summary, we enthusiastically support and urge funding for the City of Rochester's Inner Loop Reconstruction Project.

Sincerely,



G. Rolfe Adams, PhD
President and CEO