



April 15, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: TIGER VI Discretionary Grant for Paseo Puerta de Tierra, a multi-modal transportation infrastructure improvement project in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I write to express the Puerto Rico Tourism Company's support for the Puerto Rico Infrastructure Financing Authority's TIGER VI Discretionary Grant Application for Paseo Puerta de Tierra. Paseo Puerta de Tierra will implement an innovative multimodal transportation network in the Islet of San Juan consisting of a state-of-the-art continuous pedestrian walkway, dedicated cycling path, and centrally located mass-transit bus service. This much-needed infrastructure will seamlessly connect the economically distressed Puerta de Tierra district to the highly visited areas of Old San Juan and Condado, Puerto Rico's premier hotel district.

Tourism is one of Puerto Rico's main economic engines. And the San Juan Metropolitan Region, which includes the districts of Old San Juan and Condado, is the island's premier urban-oriented tourism destination. For instance, Old San Juan's National Historic Site hosts 1.3M yearly visitors. And the Port of San Juan receives over 1M cruise-ship passengers annually.

Providing safe, reliable, and low-cost transportation alternatives for tourists, residents, commuters, and goods is among the biggest transportation challenges we face in the San Juan Metropolitan Region, particularly in the Islet of San Juan. This challenge is compounded by the Islet's geography, which connects Old San Juan to Condado and to the rest of the island via a single land connection through the Puerta de Tierra district.

Puerta de Tierra's transportation infrastructure is outdated, in poor state of repair, and ill suited to adequately serve the residents, commuters, and tourists that depend on it. The district's transportation system is based on a motor-vehicle-oriented model. Sidewalks are disjointed, dilapidated, or non-existent. There are no cycling paths despite high user demand. The district's mass-transit bus service is scattered, with many stops lacking shelters and sidewalk connections to the rest of the district. Puerta de Tierra also lacks sufficient, adequate, and welcoming public spaces.

Paseo Puerta de Tierra's infrastructure improvements will pave the way to address this challenge. The project's proposed continuous pedestrian walkway and dedicated cycling path will safely connect residents, commuters, and tourists of this economically distressed area to the prominent districts of

Old San Juan and Condado. Paseo Puerta de Tierra will also boost the Islet of San Juan's mass-transit bus service by consolidating bus routes into a central mass-transit artery with strategically placed, state of the art bus stops. The project will restore and add sidewalks that connect the bus corridor to the district's neighborhoods. Paseo Puerta de Tierra's improvements will provide reliable, safe, and low-cost transportation choices for pedestrians and cyclists, residents and commuters, and tourists from near and afar.

Paseo Puerta de Tierra will usher in ample opportunities for the successful operation of artisan markets and small business concessions in the district. In Old San Juan and Condado, artisans use public spaces to sell their handcrafted goods to our tourists. The project's multi-modal transportation infrastructure will generate non-motorized traffic flow that will provide opportunities for small and micro businesses to flourish throughout the Islet.

Once the project's pedestrian walkway and cycling path are inaugurated, the Puerto Rico Tourism Company will partner with several entities—including the Puerto Rico Economic Development Company, the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, and the Autonomous Municipality of San Juan—to facilitate the training of artisans and small business owners from low-income communities, particularly residents of Puerta de Tierra. Our goal is to promote training and economic activities that take advantage of Paseo Puerta de Tierra's multi-modal transportation infrastructure, location, and tourist traffic to help create self-sustaining, long-term jobs in the area.

Paseo Puerta de Tierra is part of a broader effort to improve general livability standards in the economically distressed area of Puerta de Tierra and to position Puerto Rico's capital city of San Juan as the premier world-class city in the Caribbean. The Puerto Rico Tourism Company has long advocated for a multi-modal transportation system for San Juan's hotel corridor to mitigate the existing traffic gridlock, which hampers tourism development. Paseo Puerta de Tierra is an excellent beginning toward implementing a sustainable and environmentally responsible multi-modal transportation solution to San Juan's transportation woes.

The Puerto Rico Tourism Company, a public corporation whose mission is to strengthen and develop Puerto Rico's tourism sector, is excited about Paseo Puerta de Tierra and the positive effects that it will have on San Juan's economy and tourism industry. We enthusiastically support the Puerto Rico Infrastructure Financing Authority's vision for Paseo Puerta de Tierra and the renovation of the Puerta de Tierra district. Contact our office if we can be of further assistance concerning the TIGER VI Grant Application for Paseo Puerta de Tierra. Our Planning and Development Director, Edgardo M. Afanador-García, is the point of contact for all matters related to Paseo Puerta de Tierra. You may reach him at (787) 721-2400, extension 2067 or 2063.

Cordially,



Ingrid I. Rivera Rocafort
Executive Director