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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0301

June 1, 2015

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The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

As the U.S. Representative for Arizona's Congressional District One, I would like to offer my support for the TIGER VII grant application for the Interstate-10/Kortsen Road Traffic Interchange Project in Casa Grande, Arizona.

Casa Grande, founded in 1879, was once a rural, agricultural area that has grown to become the largest city in Pinal County with a vibrant community of more than 51,000 residents. Many of those folks moved here because of the dynamic, involved rural community and the availability of affordable housing. This trend has contributed to growth in the service industry with many new businesses, including a regional mall, restaurants, gas stations and retail outlets opening primarily on the east side of Interstate 10 (I-10).

Another major growth element under construction in this community, also located on the east side of I-10, is the creation of PhoenixMart, the largest trade center in North America. PhoenixMart is a 1.75 million square foot business-to-business sourcing center for manufacturers and distributors to showcase their products to the world by providing a gateway for promoting American business to domestic and international markets. The complex will have a major impact on jobs in the region and will feature more than 2,000 manufacturers.

While I-10 is a key highway in the region, limited crossings and access to the freeway are stunting growth in the area. The heart of Casa Grande's business potential is located between the existing Florence Boulevard and McCartney Road traffic interchanges (TIs), which are four miles apart and are quickly reaching their capacities. The Florence Blvd TI in particular, with access to the existing Promenade Mall, new retail businesses and the entrance to PhoenixMart, is also the main access to the historic downtown and Casa Grande's main street west of I-10. It will likely be overwhelmed in a few years.

Just two miles north on the alignment of Kortsen Road, new housing subdivisions, an expansion of the mall with car dealerships and department stores, a regional Park-N-Ride and other commercial businesses are moving forward, but with no current access to the freeway. And as Casa Grande and Coolidge grow to the east, the only high-capacity east-west corridor available to link with ADOT's new north-south freeway and high-speed rail corridor in eastern Pinal County is Kortsen Road, which currently has no bridge over the freeway nor on and off ramps to access travel lanes.

A new interchange at Kortsen Road over I-10 has been proposed by state and regional traffic planning studies for nearly 20 years. The City of Casa Grande has advanced preliminary design and environmental studies to make this project constructible in the spring of 2017. Adjacent property owners have stepped up to provide the needed rights of way for these improvements. Casa Grande has worked with the developers

to help fund approximately \$20,000,000 or two-thirds of the cost of this project and is asking for TIGER to support the minimum urban participation amount of \$10,000,000 to make this project a reality.

The USDOT is striving to find ways to fund projects needed by communities like Casa Grande throughout the nation. Building the Kortsen TI achieves this goal and all of the objectives of the 2015 TIGER Ladders of Opportunity. Additional access and an opportunity to cross the I-10 are needed to maintain growth and economic expansion in this region. The planned commercial, retail and residential improvements will allow residents of Casa Grande and the immediate outlying cities of Maricopa, Coolidge, Eloy and Florence to shop locally and find work locally, improving their quality of life. It will be built and maintained as part of ADOT's and FHWA's Interstate Freeway System, ensuring safety and operational efficiency for generations to benefit.

I enthusiastically endorse the City of Casa Grande's project proposal and ask that the U.S. Department of Transportation give it all due consideration.

Sincerely,


The Honorable Ann Kirkpatrick
U.S. Representative, Arizona District One