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

Re: University of Washington Burke-Gilman Multi-Modal Connector TIGER V Application

May 22, 2013

Dear Secretary LaHood:

On behalf of the Cascade Bicycle Club and our over 15,000 members, I am writing in support of the University of Washington’s application for a TIGER grant to make critical improvements to the Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector.

The Burke-Gilman Trail is the most heavily-used trail in Washington state. It is a critical route for thousands of Seattle residents and our daily work commutes, including linking people to our office two blocks from the trail. It is also a key driver of recreational cycling in the region and the related economic benefits of bike tourism.

Internally we refer to the trail as Seattle’s “bike highway,” as it knits together so many origins and destinations, from workplaces to neighborhoods. It connects to the Sammamish River Trail, thereby knitting together the region. It is a vital element of the region’s economic infrastructure.

While we love the trail, it was originally built two generations ago, in 1978. The trail is showing signs of age and deterioration, suffering from dangerous root-related bumps that cause bicyclists to swerve and struggle to stay upright. That poses safety risks and decreases comfort, thereby deterring people from riding bicycles.

The trail’s growing popularity, and the growing numbers of Seattleites walking and biking, is resulting in overcrowding and conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Planned additional transit-oriented development will further significantly increase trail usage.

As we work to maintain Seattle’s strong economic growth and accommodate thousands of new residents, it is crucial we have our key trail connector be of the quality and size required to safely move people to and from work and school.

We are thrilled to support the University of Washington’s Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector, and would strongly urge the U.S. Department of Transportation’s support of their application.

Sincerely,
Evan Manvel
Director of Policy, Planning and Government Affairs
Cascade Bicycle Club

CC:
Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Governor Jay Inslee
Congressman Jim McDermott
President Michael K. Young, University of Washington