May 31, 2013

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

RE: University of Washington Burke-Gilman Trail TIGER V Application

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am pleased to write in support of the University of Washington’s application for the U.S. Department of Transportation TIGER grant program. Funding from this grant will be dedicated to the Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector. King County Metro Transit is a planning and funding partner in the Project with in-kind contributions of street furnishings, transit information displays, and related passenger amenities.

The Burke-Gilman Trail is a regional treasure. It is a major recreation, transportation, and nature corridor and the most heavily-used trail in Washington State. However, in recent years, the trail’s growing popularity has led to overcrowding and conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Additional development, including a new light rail station, is anticipated to dramatically increase trail demand.

With the Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector, the University of Washington is planning for the region’s active transportation future. New light rail stations, high-density residential living, and expansions of the bicycle and pedestrian networks continue to transform the region and encourage walking and bicycling. The Connector complements these efforts by creating a world-class transportation, recreation, and nature corridor in the heart of the region.

King County Metro Transit Division (Metro) supports the multi-modal goals of this project and takes particular interest in the improvements proposed for the split-level Lewis Lane Mixing Zone, which is located adjacent to an important Metro bus stop. This stop is significant in Metro’s system, serving 10 routes that connect the University of Washington to destinations throughout the county. Every weekday, nearly 400 buses and over 1000 transit customers use this stop. The Lewis Lane Mixing Zone would provide an accessible connection between this bus stop at street level and the campus core and Burke-Gilman trail above. This improvement would
enable new multimodal opportunities, both for limited mobility transit customers and for bike-bus connections.

I am pleased to support the University of Washington’s Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector, and would strongly urge the U.S. Department of Transportation’s consideration of their application.

Sincerely,

Kevin Desmond
General Manager
Metro Transit Division

cc: The Honorable Jay Inslee, Governor, State of Washington
The Honorable Patty Murray, United States Senate
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, United States Senate
The Honorable Jim McDermott, United States House of Representatives
President Michael K. Young, University of Washington