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 Multi-Modal Connector TIGER V Application

Dear Secretary LaHood:

It is my pleasure to write in support of the University of Washington’s application for a U.S. Department of Transportation TIGER grant on behalf of the Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector. The Rails to Trails Conservancy is supporting this project as a funding partner with an in-kind contribution of permanent bicycle and pedestrian counting technology that will enable the UW and USDOT to monitor the effectiveness of this project, measure the contributions of upcoming light rail and bicycle/pedestrian bridge infrastructure on active trip-making, and establish the Burke-Gilman trail as a research corridor that will enable longitudinal study of active transportation behavior.

Our 150,000+ members and supporters of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy recognize and value these corridors for their historic, recreational, transportation, environmental, and economic benefits. With over 20,000 miles of rail-trails nationwide, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has further recognized the Burke-Gilman Trail as one of only 25 exemplary trails nationwide in our Rail-Trail Hall of Fame.

The Burke-Gilman Trail was among the first rail-trails in the country, preceding the railbanking statute itself. Over this lengthy history, the trail has been extended many times, growing in connections, popularity, and usefulness. This is a “perfect storm” for crowding, modal conflicts, and crossing issues, which jeopardize the safety of the facility. The University of Washington, steward of a segment of the original trail, has created a world-class, innovative vision for the trail to address these safety issues and secure an active transportation future for the campus.

In addition to our in-kind investment of technology, RTC will be partnering with the University to evaluate the impact of investment in this project through field data collection and analysis of performance metrics. I strongly urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to join us in this transformative opportunity.

Sincerely,

Laura Cohen  
Director, Western Region  
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy