May 29, 2013

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

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As the owner and operator of the majority of the Burke-Gilman trail in Seattle, I am writing in strong support of the University of Washington’s application for TIGER funding for the Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector project. We are pleased to support this project as a funding partner with in-kind contributions of right of way access and signalization support at key intersections.

The Burke-Gilman trail is a heavily used, urban, multi-use recreational and commuter trail running through and beyond the boundaries of Seattle, connecting with other regional trails. While the City is the primary custodian, the University of Washington partners with use by owning, operating, and maintaining a critical 1.7 mile portion that runs through their campus. This portion of the trail is highly traveled, not only accommodating their faculty, staff and students, but also facilitating the thousands of users that recreate and commute on the entire trail daily.

As part of our regional planning for light rail, the replacement of SR 520 and the development of the Rainier Vista corridor, the City and University have been engaged with other regional partners on the impact this infrastructure growth will have on the Burke-Gilman trail. The University has agreed to address this through a dramatic and necessary replacement plan for their portion of the Burke-Gilman.

As previous winners of TIGER grants for Mercer Corridor East and Mercer Corridor West, SDOT understands what it takes to have a successful program. This project meets and exceeds all TIGER criteria. It is absolutely essential these changes to the trail are made before light rail opens in 2015 and the University is poised to do just that. Further, the City has made the health of our bicycle and pedestrian trails a policy priority through adoption of our respective Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans.
Successful completion of the Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector will encourage the use of non-motorized transportation options, reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions, and will serve as a world-class active transportation system. We urge your consideration and support for the University of Washington's application for TIGER funding.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Peter Hahn
Director, Seattle Department of Transportation

Cc: Senator Patty Murray
    Senator Maria Cantwell
    Governor Jay Inslee
    Congressman Jim McDermott