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

28 May 2013

Dear Secretary LaHood,

We are writing this letter in support of the University of Washington’s application for the US Department of Transportation TIGER grant program. This grant funding is requested to upgrade and enhance the section of the Burke-Gilman Multi Modal Trail Connector in the immediate vicinity of the University.

Our University Park Community represents the single-family neighborhood north of the University of Washington, between NE 50th Street and Ravenna Park. We have many permanent residents with ties to the University, as well as a large number of student renters.

Our residents have been using the Burke-Gilman trail for as long as we can remember, and it is by far the most popular trail in our part of Seattle. We use the trail to go to work at the University, to get to other areas south of us, such as the Ship Canal or the Arboretum, and when we access the University sports facilities and nearby shopping opportunities such as University Village. Many of us also use it for recreational purposes such as running or bicycling, primarily towards the north, in the direction of Magnuson Park.

Over the years the trail has become very crowded, and as a trail user one has to be very mindful of surrounding pedestrian and bicycle traffic. These two modalities do not mix well on a congested trail, and mode separation has become imperative, in particular in the sections on and close to the University campus.

With projected population density increases, the arrival of the Light Rail line to downtown Seattle, and further expansion of the University, the Burke Gilman trail will become ever more popular. Additionally, the preferred ways of transportation in the University District are walking and bicycling already, and the demand to support these modalities is steadily increasing. There are obvious health benefits to these active transportation modes, and noise, greenhouse gases and air pollution can be reduced, which is important to us. Car transportation can then be confined to uses where motor vehicle transport is most appropriate.
We think it is time to direct some of our tax dollars towards improving the livability of our neighborhood and City, and we enthusiastically support the University of Washington in their efforts to work towards this goal. Please provide funding for this important project through the Department of Transportation’s grant program.

Sincerely,

Ruedi Risler, Secretary

For the Board of the University Park Community Club

5256 19th Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98910

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