May 29, 2013

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is pleased to support the University of Washington’s 2013 TIGER grant application for the Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector project.

The economic strength of Seattle and the state depend on an efficient transportation system. For over a decade, WSDOT has been working closely with the University of Washington, the City of Seattle, King County and Sound Transit to find regional solutions to address congestion challenges impacting our regional transportation system in this area. The University, and this portion of the Burke-Gilman trail in particular, is located on the “corner” of projects of major significance: the replacement of the State Route 520 floating bridge, which includes a new 14-foot regional bicycle/pedestrian path connecting Bellevue to Seattle, the construction of a new Sound Transit light rail station which anticipates 30,000 riders daily with no parking facilities, and the development of a newly designed Rainier Vista project to facilitate connection from the light rail station to the Burke-Gilman trail. In addition, this project runs adjacent to State Route 513 (Montlake Blvd), a highly congested corridor.

With these important State and Sound Transit projects in various states of construction or pre-construction, the University plans to accommodate an anticipated increase in bicycle and pedestrian use on this trail. The Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Corridor project will help further facilitate an increase in bicycle and pedestrian traffic, it will complement the adjacent transportation corridors and provide an evolved and innovating new approach to an urban trail designed to facilitate commuting.

Improving and rebuilding this critical pedestrian and bicycle connection, along with replacing the SR 520 floating bridge, Rainier Vista project, and Sound Transit light rail station, represents a comprehensive and integrated solution to today’s transportation challenges within this area. It is a way to move people, move freight, and move our economy forward. I hope you will give serious consideration to this project.

Sincerely,

Lynn Peterson
Secretary of Transportation