May 16, 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 TIGER V Application

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We are writing to express our support for the University of Washington’s application for funding through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant program. Should this application be successful, the grant will finance construction of the Burke-Gilman Trail Multi-Modal Connector.

Washington State is committed to providing residents and visitors with safe, efficient, and economical forms of multi-modal transportation, especially in the areas surrounding the University of Washington. The central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, Sound Transit, will soon be opening a new station on the University of Washington campus. That project assumed the forthcoming remodel of the Burke-Gilman Trail to ensure an efficient network for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. In addition, the Washington State Department of Transportation is replacing the SR 520 floating bridge which carries more than 115,000 vehicles and 190,000 people across Lake Washington daily adjacent to the UW campus. The finished project will include a new bicycle and pedestrian lane. The bridge is a critical component with statewide significance and a key regional route for consumers and freight.

Once the Sound Transit station is opened and the SR 520 bridge replaced, we expect heavy use of the new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, putting more traffic on the nearby Burke-Gilman Trail. In fact, studies of the Burke-Gilman Trail show that by 2030, bicycle trips are expected to increase by 238%, and pedestrian trips are expected to increase by 92%, due in large part to the completion of these two projects. If left unimproved, the poor condition of the trail will threaten accessibility, mobility, and economic growth in one of the region’s largest residential, business, health care and education districts.

Improvements to the Burke-Gilman Trail will replace the critical yet aging cornerstone of the regional trails network with a modern, world-class connection. The new section will not only meet existing needs but provide enough capacity for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely enjoy the trail well into the future.
We encourage you to approve the application from the University of Washington for a TIGER Discretionary Grant. This is a prime economic development and transportation opportunity for the University of Washington, Puget Sound region, and Washington State. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rep. Frank Chopp
43rd District
Speaker of the House

Sen. Ed Murray
43rd District
Senate Democratic Leader

Rep. Jamie Pedersen
43rd District

Sen. David Frolick
46th District

Rep. Jessyn Farrell
46th District

Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles
36th District

Rep. Reuven Carlyle
36th District

Rep. Gael Tarleton
36th District

Rep. Cindy Ryu
32nd District

Rep. Ruth Kagi
32nd District

Sen. Adam Kline
37th District

Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos
37th District
Rep. Eric Pettigrew
37th District

Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon
34th District

Rep. Derek Stanford
1st District

Rep. Luis Moscoso
1st District

Rep. Ross Hunter
48th District

Rep. Roger Goodman
45th District

Rep. Marcie Maxwell
41st District

Rep. Judy Clibborn
41st District

Senator Rosemary McAuliffe
1st District

Rep. Marko Liias
21st District

Rep. Gerry Pollet
46th District