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Steve Allen, M.D., M.B.A., Chief Executive Officer

February 28, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Support for the Columbus Crossroads INFRA Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

Columbus Crossroads is a \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project to transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71 in Downtown Columbus and improve freight movement across Ohio and Midwest. I write this letter to (1) express our strong support for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Columbus joint INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project; and (2) to urge your support for this catalytic project of national, regional and local importance.

Leveraging this major investment to replace obsolete highway infrastructure, Columbus Crossroads also seeks to reconnect, restore, and revitalize Downtown Columbus and surrounding neighborhoods. ODOT, the City of Columbus, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), and a diverse group of community stakeholders and business entities have collaborated over the last decade to develop and implement this comprehensive vision. A key element of this vision is the Healthy Neighborhoods Healthy Families (HNHF) initiative bordering the Columbus Crossroads project location. The HNHF initiative brings community partners together to strengthen the South Side community through programs designed to improve wellness, safety, safe and affordable housing, and economic opportunities.

Phase 4 focuses on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71. The overlap serves commuter traffic from across Central Ohio, and it serves freight from across the Midwest. The overlap carries 130,000 vehicles per day – including 17,100 commercial vehicles – and exceeds its design capacity by 50,000 vehicles. The overlap's trench creates a physical barrier between Downtown Columbus and the neighborhoods south of the overlap. Phase 4, which costs approximately \$200 million, is essential for improving safety and reducing congestion for commuters and pedestrians; improving access to essential services and more than 100,000 jobs in Downtown Columbus; and reconnecting the southern neighborhoods.

Completion of the Columbus Crossroads project has been identified as a top priority for the City of Columbus, the Central Ohio region, and the State of Ohio. However, this project cannot be completed without leveraging additional funding from the INFRA grants program. We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these improvements to the prosperity of our region and state, and the resiliency of the national interstate highway system; and we respectfully urge your support for the application.

Sincerely,


Steve Allen, MD
CEO

Nationwide Children's Hospital