

February 19, 2020

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:

On behalf of Columbus City Council, I am writing to express our strong support for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project. I respectfully request your thoughtful consideration of this project and the value that it represents for our regional growth and economic development.

Columbus Crossroads is a community-led \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project to transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71 and improves one of the key corridors of the National Primary Highway Freight System. The enhancements will remove a major bottleneck for interstate commerce on these two important commercial arteries, a critical factor in central Ohio's evolution as a smart, regional logistics hub. Phase 4 of the Project, which costs approximately \$265 million, is essential for improving safety for commuters and pedestrians, reducing congestion, and enhancing access to essential services and more than 100,000 jobs in the region.

Phase 4 of this project focuses on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71. This heavily-travelled area has exceeded its design capacity by 50,000 vehicles, an unfortunate consequence of the regional growth that we have experienced. As a result, this area contains three of Ohio's top ten freeway crash locations. Furthermore, the current design acts as a barrier, inhibiting our ability to develop a transition between Downtown Columbus and its adjacent South Side. Leveraging this major investment to replace obsolete highway infrastructure, Columbus Crossroads will reconnect and restore Downtown Columbus with its surrounding 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. Importantly, it resolves major safety, congestion, and capacity issues for the two major interstates in the state. 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. We urge your consideration of the application.

Sincerely,



Shannon Granville Hardin  
President  
Columbus City Council

