

February 11, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
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:

As the CEO of the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC), I strongly support the City of Columbus' grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project. This is a visionary project that creates greater connectivity to and through Downtown Columbus, the region's economic anchor, by improving the I-70/I-71 Innerbelt corridor.

CDDC is proud to have partnered with the City of Columbus on numerous, city-changing, catalytic projects including Columbus Commons, the Scioto Mile and Scioto Greenways. The City of Columbus, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), and a diverse group of community stakeholders and business entities have partnered to develop and execute this plan over the course of the last 10 years. This type of collaboration is the "Columbus Way" and the reason we've experience a strong renaissance in our Downtown.

Currently, the overlap of I-70 and I-71 not only serves commuter and commercial traffic, carrying 130,000 vehicles a day and exceeding its design capacity by 50,000 vehicles, it creates a barrier between downtown and neighborhoods to the south. By rebuilding four bridges (Front, High, 3rd, and 4th streets) across the interstate trench with caps and gateway features, new pedestrian-friendly corridors will be created, connecting German Village and the Brewery District to downtown's greenspaces, cultural amenities and jobs.

As the largest job center in Central Ohio with more than 100,000 workers, Downtown Columbus is a major economic generator with significant growth potential. Phase 4, which costs approximately \$265 million, is essential for improving safety, reducing congestion and increasing access to downtown for commuters and pedestrians.

Completion of the Columbus Crossroads project is a key priority to continue the strong momentum Downtown Columbus is experiencing. 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 downtown, city, state and region, and the resiliency of the national interstate highway system.

Sincerely,



Guy Worley
President & CEO