



February 24, 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 Crew SC, I am writing this letter to (1) express our strong support and to reinforce the strong regional support for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project; and (2) to urge your thoughtful consideration of this catalytic project of national, regional, and community importance.

Columbus Crew SC is the founding member club of Major League Soccer, and last year the Haslam and Edwards families stepped in to become the investor operators of the club to save it from moving to Austin, Texas. The cornerstone of the successful effort to save the club was a public-private commitment to a ground-breaking investment in downtown Columbus, specifically a state of the art soccer-specific stadium in the downtown Arena District, for which construction is currently underway at a current budget of over \$300 million, as well as ancillary mixed use development. Clearly, the Crew is committed to downtown Columbus, and we strongly support the Columbus Crossroads project as a transformative initiative for downtown, the city and the Central Ohio region as a whole. The Columbus Crossroads project would significantly enhance the fan experience for Crew games at the new downtown stadium by improving traffic flow and ingress and egress. Providing a best-in-class fan experience is one of the key pillars of our organization, and the Columbus Crossroads project will help us continue to strive towards this goal.

Columbus Crossroads is a community-led \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project to transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71, and improve one of the key corridors of the National Primary Highway Freight System. These changes not only remove a major bottleneck for interstate commerce on these two important commercial arteries, the ongoing effort to improve the connection brings strong local and state support. 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. The overlap serves commuter traffic from across the state and freight traffic from across the nation. The overlap carries 130,000 vehicles per day – including 17,100 commercial vehicles – and exceeds its design capacity by 50,000 vehicles. As a result, this area contains three of Ohio’s top ten freeway crash locations. The overlap’s trench also creates a physical barrier between Downtown Columbus and the neighborhoods south of the overlap. Leveraging this major investment to replace obsolete highway infrastructure, Columbus Crossroads will also 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.

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; and we urge your consideration of the application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Lyons", is written over the typed name.

Stephen J. H. Lyons
Executive Vice President, Chief Business Officer