



February 21, 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 the Central Ohio Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and our over 800 members in central and southeast Ohio, I express our ardent support for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project. Not only does this project address critical traffic safety issues, the improvements will preserve and improve the vital economic impact of the corridor to both Central Ohio and the entire state and also improve the resiliency of the national interstate highway system.

ASCE was founded in 1852 and represents more than 150,000 members of the civil engineering profession in 177 countries, standing at the forefront of our profession that plans, designs, constructs, operates, and maintains society's economic and social engine - our nation's infrastructure. As engineers we are keenly aware of the tremendous benefits of a safe, reliable transportation infrastructure system.

The \$1.3 billion Columbus Crossroads project improves one of the most significant crossroads of the National Primary Highway Freight System – Interstates 70 and 71. The project has so far been advanced with state funds and decades of collaboration from ODOT, the City of Columbus, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), and regional stakeholders. Completion of the project is a top priority for Columbus, the region, and Ohio. But the Phase 4 project cannot be completed without leveraging additional dollars from the INFRA program.

The Phase 4 project focuses on the physical overlap of these two critical arteries. Carrying 130,000 vehicles per day, including over 17,000 commercial vehicles, the corridor is a major bottleneck as traffic volumes currently exceed capacity by over 60%. It is also home to three of Ohio's top ten freeway crash locations. The section of highway trench is obsolete and creates a physical barrier on the south edge of Downtown Columbus.

This project will improve safety and provide safe and reliable travel for residents to over 100,000 regional jobs. It will reconnect struggling neighborhoods with Downtown Columbus via improved pedestrian and commuter access. National freight and regional commuter traffic will be vastly improved with reduced congestion and enhanced capacity and reliability.

We ask that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of this project to the economic prosperity of the region, state, and our great nation. Our citizens and national commerce will be vastly improved with a safer, more reliable travel corridor, and we respectfully ask for your positive consideration of this application.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brooks M. Vogel". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Brooks M. Vogel, PE, LEED AP, M.ASCE
President, ASCE Central Ohio Section