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March 17, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
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 Buttigieg:

We write to express our strong support for the joint City of Columbus and Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project. We respectfully urge your support for this transformational project of great national, regional, and community importance.

Columbus Crossroads is a \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project that will transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71 in Downtown Columbus and improve freight movement across Ohio and the Midwest. This INFRA grant will replace obsolete highway infrastructure at the Columbus Crossroads and 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. Additionally, current and future phases from this multi-phase project, including Phase 4, are now integrated within ODOT's Downtown Ramp Up construction project.

Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project is a \$230 million phase focused on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71 and the surface streets and bridges immediately surrounding the overlap. The freeway mainline in 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. According to the American Transportation Research Institute's 2021 analysis of the worst truck bottlenecks in the nation, the I-70 and I-71 overlap ranks 67th, with an average speed of only 45.2 MPH during peak hours.

The overlap's trench also creates a physical barrier between Downtown Columbus and the neighborhoods south of the overlap. While this major investment will replace obsolete highway infrastructure, the Columbus Crossroads project will also revitalize the Downtown Columbus area, and provide new opportunities to transform the surrounding communities and restore connections across the interstate to Columbus' Southside neighborhoods. Furthermore, Phase 4 complements the \$28 million the City is investing in Livingston Avenue to build complete streets, improve safety, and provide better access to both Southside neighborhoods and Nationwide Children's Hospital, which is one of the top children's health facilities in the nation.

We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these improvements to the prosperity of the State of Ohio and the resiliency of the national interstate highway system. We thank you for your time and consideration of this meritorious project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nate Zimpher in Representative Balderson's office at Nate.Zimpher@mail.house.gov, Nicholas Semanko in Representative Beatty's office at Nicholas.Semanko@mail.house.gov, or Nick Bush in Representative Stivers's office at Nick.Bush@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Troy Balderson
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Steve Stivers
Member of Congress