

September 18, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) Capital Construction and Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Columbus Partnership, I would like to offer my emphatic support for the Central Ohio Transit Authority's (COTA) funding request from Capital Construction and Regional Partnership Challenge Grants in the USDOT NAE Grant Program. These funds will be used for the construction of the West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor.

The Columbus Partnership is a non-profit, membership-based leadership organization of 80 chairpersons, chief executive officers and senior executives from the Region's leading businesses and institutions. Our mission is to make Central Ohio the most prosperous region in the world. We believe that investing in improved public transportation is crucial for improving economic outcomes for all residents, making the construction of the West Broad Street BRT a strategic investment in the future of our Region.

There is a well-established link between access to public transit and improved economic outcomes for historically underserved populations. As the Columbus Region continues to experience rapid growth, issues of equity and accessibility continue to be critical to sustainable development efforts. The West Broad Street BRT corridor is the first rapid transit corridor that will be constructed as part of LinkUS. LinkUS is Central Ohio's innovative answer, designed to address the transportation needs that come with economic growth, while maintaining affordability, and filling opportunity gaps in our community.

Improved public transit is especially important for connecting Central Ohio's workforce to job opportunities. The corridor is projected to support the addition of 40,000 more residents along the corridor by 2040 and connect workers with nearly 100,000 jobs. It will also provide access to Columbus State Community College, a federally designated anchor institution for the Columbus Workforce Hub and the lead university for the National Information Technology Innovation Center. By promoting access to economic opportunities in our Region, the West Broad Street BRT will act as a catalyst for addressing other regional issues including affordable housing, education, and income inequality.

Funding from the USDOT for the construction of the West Broad Street BRT corridor will support Central Ohio's efforts to create a thriving community for all residents for years to come. Regional partners have already dedicated themselves to ensuring the success of this project because we believe that it is a crucial step toward advancing accessibility and equity in our community and we will continue to work together to make Central Ohio prosper. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of COTA's application.

Very truly yours,



Kenny D. McDonald  
President and CEO  
KM/gb