

September 19, 2023

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

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to support the Central Ohio Transit Authority's (COTA) funding request for Capital Construction and Regional Partnership Challenge Grants within the USDOT NAE Grant Program for the West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor.

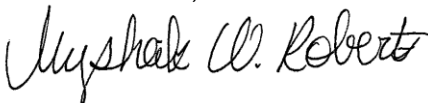
The West Broad Street BRT corridor is the first rapid transit corridor that will be constructed as part of LinkUS, a mobility initiative to address growth, affordability and opportunity gaps. Central Ohio is one of the fastest growing regions in the country and is on track to increase by 726,000 more residents over the next 25 years. The average central Ohio household spends more than \$12,000 on transportation and the median home sale price is up 68% since 2020. More than 40,000 households also lack access to a personal vehicle and one-third of Franklin County residents live in areas of low opportunity.

The West Broad BRT corridor is projected to support the addition of 40,000 more residents and connect nearly 100,000 jobs along the corridor by 2040. The corridor also will provide the regional workforce to Columbus State Community College, a federally designated anchor institution for the Columbus Workforce Hub and the lead institution for the National Information Technology Innovation Center.

LinkUS will use spaces surrounding the BRT stations to invest in trails, bikeways, accessible pedestrian paths and sidewalks, making it safer and more convenient for people to walk, bike and ride public transit. These spaces also will offer an opportunity for equitable transit-oriented development to ensure that everyone benefits from this generational investment. Our community also is seeking a USDOT Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning Grant for the West Broad BRT to help us complete a capacity, economic, and market analysis for transit stops on the corridor.

Overall, the transformational impact that the West Broad BRT will make in our community perfectly aligns with both the Capital Construction and Regional Partnership Challenge Grant components of the NAE Grant. This effort will advance numerous existing initiatives that are working to improve housing, poverty, safety and climate action for a more equitable community for all residents. To that end, I encourage the USDOT to fund this application request.

Best of Health,



Mysheika W. Roberts, MD, MPH
Health Commissioner