



## YAY BIKES!

Yay Bikes! influences the conditions that help people safely and comfortably ride bicycles for transportation.



September 25, 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,

Yay Bikes! supports the Central Ohio Transit Authority's (COTA) request for funding from Capital Construction and Regional Partnership Challenge Grants within the USDOT NAE Grant Program for the West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor. This project supports Yay Bikes! goal to ensure safe mobility for all residents and visitors in central Ohio for recreation and transportation, especially vulnerable road users.

The West Broad Street BRT corridor is the first rapid transit corridor that will be constructed as part of the regional LinkUS partnership of COTA, City of Columbus, Franklin County, and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission. LinkUS is Central Ohio's comprehensive mobility initiative to help address growth, affordability and opportunity gaps in our community. 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 Franklin County households lack access to a personal vehicle and 1/3 of Franklin County residents live in areas of low opportunity. To address these challenges, LinkUS will build faster and more reliable public transportation, create safer and expanded bike and pedestrian paths, and enable truly walkable and bikeable communities with more affordable access to work, meaningful workforce training opportunities, home, and entertainment. By 2050, LinkUS plans to construct: 5 rapid transit corridors; 500 new miles of sidewalks, bikeways, and trails; and \$250 million in complete streets roadway

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improvements. These investments will fundamentally change the way people are able to move around Central Ohio and access opportunity.

Implementing LinkUS will advance numerous federal, state and local existing initiatives that are working to improve housing, mobility, poverty, safety, and climate action in our community. Local initiatives such as Equitable Transit Oriented Development, Vision Zero, and the Columbus Climate Action Plan will make major advancements under this program. LinkUS will move our region forward, together, starting with the West Broad BRT corridor.

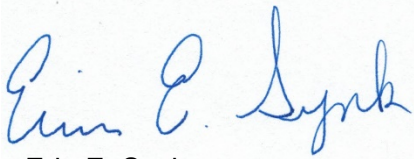
The West Broad Street BRT Corridor will run approximately 9.3 miles along West Broad Street connecting Prairie Township, Franklin Township, Hilltop, and Franklinton to Downtown Columbus.

This investment will greatly improve the opportunity gaps along the corridor, which stem from significant socio-economic disparities: approximately 76% of residents live within an area of persistent poverty; 36% of residents are Black, Indigenous, or persons of color; 30% of residents live below the federal poverty level; and 16% of households lack access to a personal vehicle. The West Broad Street BRT will expand access, increase safety and enhance mobility for corridor residents as well as the thousands of people working within the corridor. The West Broad BRT corridor is projected to support the addition of 40,000 more residents along the corridor by 2040; and connect nearly 100,000 jobs along the corridor by 2040.

LinkUS will use the 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 offer an opportunity for equitable transit-oriented development to ensure that everyone in our communities' benefits from this generational investment. Our community is also 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. In addition, in 2022, COTA was awarded a Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Grant from the Build America Bureau. The West Broad Street BRT Corridor is also in the CIG pipeline in project development.

These milestones were only possible due to the strong partnership and commitment of COTA, the City of Columbus, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, and Franklin County. We believe that 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. Yay Bikes! wholeheartedly encourages USDOT to fund this application and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erin E. Synk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Erin" and last name "Synk" being the most prominent parts.

Erin E. Synk  
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