



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

October 6, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The City of Columbus is proud to partner with the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) on joint applications seeking funding for the West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit Corridor from the USDOT Pilot Program for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Planning Grant for the West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor project in Columbus, OH.

The West Broad Street BRT corridor is part of a comprehensive mobility plan called LinkUS, which is a regional partnership led by the city of Columbus, COTA, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, and Franklin County. 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, resulting in 3.15 million residents by 2050. LinkUS is essential in helping Columbus, Franklin County, and Central Ohio to address growth, affordability and opportunity gaps within our communities. My administration is committed to building an equitable transportation system that combats long-term poverty and uplifts disadvantaged communities, and this project signifies a substantial stride toward realizing this commitment.

The West Broad Street BRT corridor is the first rapid transit corridor that will be constructed as part of LinkUS. It will span approximately 9.3 miles, utilizing a blend of dedicated and mixed traffic. This route will link Prairie Township, Franklin Township, Hilltop, and Franklinton to Downtown Columbus. Additionally, it will provide a vital connection between the workforce and Columbus State Community College, a federally designated anchor institute for the Columbus Workforce Hub.

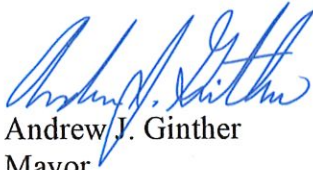
Dedicated lanes for BRT, achieved through conversion of general travel lanes, will provide a quicker, reliable travel experience while limiting the need for right-of-way acquisition and community displacement. This investment will greatly reduce opportunity gaps along the corridor, which stem from significant socio-economic disparities: 76% of residents live within an area of persistent poverty; 36% of residents are Black, Indigenous, or persons of color; 1/3 of residents live below the federal poverty level; and 16% of households lack access to a personal vehicle.

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

In addition to partnering with COTA on these applications and the LinkUS initiative, Columbus is the land use planning authority for 76% of the land within 0.25 miles of the planned West Broad Street BRT corridor. Columbus is committed to minimizing displacement by developing and implementing an equitable transit-oriented development approach for the corridor and the broader LinkUS initiative.

I respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the transportation challenges within Columbus, the need to close opportunity gaps that currently separate residents, and the potential this project has to transform the lives of so many in our region. I urge your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew J. Ginther".

Andrew J. Ginther
Mayor
City of Columbus