

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 Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of the Central Ohio Transit Authority's funding request under the Pilot Program for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) to conduct comprehensive capacity, economic and market analysis and resource and policy recommendations for remaining transit stations along 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 the regional LinkUS partnership, a comprehensive 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 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 residents live in low opportunity areas. 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 communities with more affordable access to work, home and entertainment. LinkUS also will advance numerous existing initiatives to improve housing, poverty, safety and climate action.

The West Broad Street BRT corridor will run 9.3 miles-along West Broad Street connecting Prairie Township, Franklin Township, Hilltop, and Franklinton to downtown Columbus to improve opportunity gaps in our community. One-third of the residents along the corridor live below the poverty level, 16% of households lack access to a personal vehicle, 36% are Black, Indigenous or persons of color, and 76% of residents live within an area of persistent poverty. The West Broad BRT is projected to connect residents to 100,000 jobs while adding 40,000 more residents by 2040. The corridor also will connect the workforce to Columbus State Community College, a federally designated anchor institution for one of the nation's five regional Workforce Hubs announced this year.

The Pilot Program for TOD is essential to implementing the LinkUS Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Action Plan to build connected, walkable, and bikeable communities where existing residents benefit from new residential and commercial development and are not displaced by it. ETOD also will be inclusive in ensuring diversity in housing options and price points, ensuring access to jobs, services and amenities for all residents. As such, I encourage your highest consideration of this funding request.

Best of Health,



Mysheika W. Roberts, MD, MPH  
Health Commissioner