



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215
morpc.org

T. 614. 228.2663
TTY. 1.800.750.0750
info@morpc.org

February 25, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Support for the Columbus Crossroads INFRA Application

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), I write to express our strong support for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Columbus joint INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project. Accordingly, we urge your support for this transformational project of national and regional importance.

Columbus Crossroads is a \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project to transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71 in Downtown Columbus and improve freight movement across Ohio and Midwest. Leveraging this major investment to replace obsolete highway infrastructure, the project also seeks to reconnect, restore, and revitalize Downtown Columbus and surrounding neighborhoods. ODOT, the City of Columbus, MORPC, and a diverse group of community stakeholders and business entities have collaborated over the last decade to develop and implement this comprehensive vision.

Phase 4 focuses on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71. The overlap serves commuter traffic from across Central Ohio, and it serves freight from across the Midwest. The overlap carries 130,000 vehicles per day – including 17,100 commercial vehicles – and exceeds its design capacity by 50,000 vehicles. The overlap's trench creates a physical barrier between Downtown Columbus and the neighborhoods south of the overlap. Phase 4 is essential for improving safety and reducing congestion for commuters and pedestrians; improving access to essential services and more than 100,000 jobs in Downtown Columbus; and reconnecting the southern neighborhoods.

As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Columbus, Ohio urbanized area, MORPC is comprised of more than 60 local governments and regional organizations in the quickly growing Central Ohio region. The Columbus Crossroads project is included in our 2016-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and was identified as a top priority for the region through the Competitive Advantage Projects (CAP) initiative. CAP is an initiative of Columbus 2020 and MORPC that prioritizes and advances strategic infrastructure investments across Central Ohio.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Rory McGuinness
Chair

Karen J. Angelou
Vice Chair

Erik J. Janas
Secretary

Additionally, MORPC has supported the Columbus Crossroads project with a \$20 million commitment of federal attributable funding, specifically Surface Transportation Program (STP) / Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program funds. This commitment includes the MORPC funding outlined in the application for Phase 4 project components.

We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation considers the importance of these improvements to the prosperity of our region and state and the resiliency of the national interstate highway system.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Murdock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission