



April 24, 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

Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Central Ohio Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), I am writing to express our support for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Columbus joint INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project.

In the most recent Infrastructure Report Card issued by ASCE, roads were given a D-. There is no magic wand we can use to improve the state of America's infrastructure. These improvements must be made step-by-step, state-by-state, in projects such as this. 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 the Midwest. It also seeks to reconnect, restore, and revitalize downtown Columbus and surrounding neighborhoods, by connecting the neighborhoods south of the interstate with the downtown area to the north.

Phase 4 of the project focuses on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71 in Downtown Columbus. 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 to the south. Phase 4, which costs approximately \$200 million, is essential for improving safety and reducing congestion for commuters and pedestrians; and reconnecting the southern neighborhoods.

Completion of the Columbus Crossroads project has been identified as a top priority for the City of Columbus, the Central Ohio region, and the State of Ohio. However, this project cannot be completed without leveraging additional funding from the INFRA grants program. We ask that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these improvements to the prosperity of our region and state, and the resiliency of the national interstate highway system; and we respectfully urge your support for the application.

Respectfully,

Peter Narsavage, P.E.
President
Central Ohio Section, American Society of Civil Engineers