

COLUMBUS STATE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

May 8, 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:

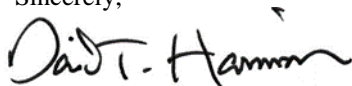
On behalf of Columbus State Community College, I am writing you in support of the Columbus Crossroads, \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project to transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71 in Downtown Columbus and improve freight movement across Ohio and Midwest. With more than 40,000 students, Columbus State is one of the largest and most comprehensive colleges in Ohio, and all of our students commute to our main campus or one of our nine regional learning centers. I write this letter to express our strong support and to reinforce support for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Columbus joint INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project, and to urge your support for this catalytic project of national and regional importance.

Leveraging this significant investment to replace obsolete highway infrastructure, Columbus Crossroads also seeks to reconnect, restore, and revitalize Downtown Columbus and surrounding neighborhoods. ODOT, the City of Columbus, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (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 focusing on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71 serves commuter traffic from across Central Ohio, and it serves freight from across the Midwest. The overlap's trench creates a physical barrier between Downtown Columbus and the neighborhoods south of the overlap. Phase 4, which costs approximately \$200 million, is essential for improving safety and improving access to essential services and more than 100,000 jobs in Downtown Columbus; 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 respectfully request 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.

Sincerely,



David T. Harrison

cc: Mr. Dan DeBono, Chief Infrastructure Funding Officer, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E. Washington, D.C. 20590

DAVID T. HARRISON Ph.D. PRESIDENT