



May 2019

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:

The Human Service Chamber of Franklin County represents 71 nonprofit organizations serving vulnerable and diverse populations in the 14th largest city in the United States. We seek to ensure access to affordable and quality housing, healthcare, social services and legal services to Americans old and new. We also seek systemic changes to make our community and our country more equitable for all, including systemic changes to our transportation system.

This is why we are supporting Columbus Crossroads, a \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project that will transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71 in Downtown Columbus. Part of that transformation will address a problem created when these interstates were built decades ago: These interstates divided neighborhoods—especially black neighborhoods—creating physical barriers for several generations in our community.

Columbus Crossroads seeks to reconnect, restore, and revitalize Downtown Columbus and surrounding neighborhoods. Phase 4 focuses on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71, which creates a massive 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, to be sure; but it is instrumental in ensuring access to essential human and social services and more than 100,000 jobs in Downtown Columbus, reconnecting southern neighborhoods to the central city.

Accordingly, I write this letter (1) to support the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Columbus' joint INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project; and (2) to urge *your* support for this catalytic project of national and regional importance.

Help Columbus show the country how to build infrastructure for the future while bringing our community closer together by addressing the mistakes we have made in our past.

Sincerely,

Michael Corey
Executive Director
Human Service Chamber of Franklin County

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