

April 7, 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:

Columbus Crossroads is a \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project to transform Interstates 70 and 71 in Downtown Columbus. The project will improve the movement of goods and people across Ohio and Midwest, and vastly improve lives of Columbus residents and the success of our business in Downtown Columbus. I write this letter to (1) express our strong support and to reinforce the strong regional 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 (2) to urge your support for this catalytic project of national and regional importance.

Leveraging this major investment to replace obsolete highway infrastructure, Columbus Crossroads will reconnect, restore, and revitalize Downtown Columbus and surrounding neighborhoods through better street design increasing vitality and safety. 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 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, which costs approximately \$200 million, 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.

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. The state recently passed a transportation budget that generates more revenue through higher gas user fees and increased registration fees for local governments and electric vehicles. 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, success of our Downtown and other urban neighborhoods and the resiliency of the our multimodal transportation system; and we respectfully urge your support for the application.

Sincerely,  
Joshua Lapp, Chair  
Transit Columbus

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joshua Lapp".

Transit Columbus is non-profit that advocated for a better-connected Columbus

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