



**Department of
Public Safety**

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Thomas J. Stickrath, Director

March 17, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
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 Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, I am writing this letter to express our strong support and to reinforce the strong regional support for the joint City of Columbus and Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety's primary focus is to save lives, reduce injuries and economic loss, administer Ohio's motor vehicle laws and preserve the safety and wellbeing of all citizens. The Department has six divisions, with one of the largest being the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Currently, the Patrol has 1,539 uniformed troopers and supervisors who spend the vast majority of their time behind the wheel on Ohio's roadways to ensure their safety every day.

Columbus Crossroads is a community-led \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project to transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71. The project improves one of the key corridors of the National Primary Highway Freight System. Phase 4 is a \$230 million sub-phase focused on the freeway mainline in the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71; as well as the surface streets surrounding it, and bridges spanning it. The freeway mainline in the overlap serves commuter traffic from across the state and freight traffic from across the nation. The overlap carries 130,000 vehicles per day – including 17,100 commercial vehicles – and exceeds its design capacity by 50,000 vehicles. As a result, this area contains three of Ohio's top ten freeway crash locations.

For example, during calendar year 2020, there were a total of 21,795 crashes in Franklin County, Ohio. Of the 21,795 crashes, 15 percent of those crashes (or 3,353) occurred when a motorist failed to yield, 11 percent of crashes (or 2,326) involved speed as a factor, and 6 percent of the crashes (or 1,263) involved a commercial vehicle. Making Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project a priority will improve the flow of traffic, which will reduce crashes and make the overlap safer for all who traverse Ohio's roadways.

We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these improvements to the restoration of our communities, the prosperity of our region and state, and the resiliency of the national interstate highway system; and we urge your consideration of the application.

Sincerely,

Thomas Stickrath, Director
Ohio Department of Public Safety