



CORNELL R. ROBERTSON, P.E., P.S.
FRANKLIN COUNTY ENGINEER

February 24, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Support for the Williams Road Multimodal Corridor Planning RAISE Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I, Cornell R. Robertson, Franklin County Engineer am writing to express my strong support for the Williams Road Multimodal Corridor Planning project. This project will develop a consistent corridor concept plan for the entire 6.5 mile Williams Road corridor, from the road's western terminus at the new Great Southern Metro Park, to its eastern terminus at SR 317.

The Franklin County Engineer's Office is determined to better the community and is accountable to our role in that betterment. We build relationships with all surrounding communities and other agencies by understanding the importance of a safe and efficient regional transportation system. This project area involves the coordination of three cities (Columbus, Obetz, and Groveport), two townships (Hamilton and Madison), Franklin County Metro Parks, and Franklin County and other numerous stakeholders. The corridor serves a wide variety of land uses, including regional parkland, residential, commercial, logistics, and two rail yards (CSX and Norfolk Southern). The large scale of the corridor and its required significant multi-jurisdictional, multi-use, and multi-modal improvements are far too difficult for any single, local jurisdiction to implement on its own.

The current roadway is heavily traveled by residents and freight, yet with only two lanes it lacks bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and the existing roadway and intersections are inadequate to safely support the variety of users who currently use the corridor (personal and commercial vehicles) or want to use the corridor (bicyclists and pedestrians). This has contributed to multiple traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Addressing these challenges will significantly improve freight and transportation opportunities along a corridor that includes opportunity zones, areas of persistent poverty, and a historically disadvantaged census tract.

A RAISE planning grant is necessary to help create a unified concept for this very complicated corridor that is in such great need of safety, mobility, congestion, and capacity improvements. I respectfully request the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the challenges of the corridor, the need to create more transportation opportunities within it, and the potential this project has to positively impact our community.

Sincerely,

Cornell R. Robertson, P.E., P.S.
Franklin County Engineer