



February 23, 2023

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 Williams Road Corridor Plan RAISE Application**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Ohio Rail Development Commission (“ORDC”) I am writing this letter to express our support for the joint City of Columbus, Franklin County, and Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (“MORPC”) RAISE planning grant application for the Williams Road Corridor Plan project. This project is seeking to use the RAISE planning grant to develop a consistent corridor concept plan for the entire 6.5 mile Williams Road corridor, from the road’s western terminus near the Scioto River to its eastern terminus at State Route 317 (Hamilton Road). This project was designated a Project of Merit during the FY 2022 RAISE Round.

ORDC is responsible for administering railroad safety projects in the State of Ohio. ORDC’s safety programs use federal highway funds allocated through the Ohio Department of Transportation to improve railroad-highway grade crossings statewide. Ohio has extensive rail infrastructure that includes the densest rail network in the country. Ohio’s freight railroads operate approximately 5,300 miles of active rail, and there are approximately 123,000 miles of roadway. Consequently, there are more than 5,700 public railroad-highway grade crossings statewide.

With its proximity to freight rail yards and the Rickenbacker Global Logistics Park, Williams Road is an important east-west roadway handling significant freight volumes. The corridor’s two at-grade crossings and one separated crossing have a significant impact on traffic moving through the corridor. Additionally, there is a history of blocked crossing complaints along this corridor. As the organization responsible for Ohio’s rail safety efforts, any improvements to the corridor that would result in safer crossings is a positive outcome for the area.

We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the RAISE planning grant for this corridor. Should you have any questions I can be reached directly at (614) 644-0295 or via email at [Matt.Dietrich@dot.ohio.gov](mailto:Matt.Dietrich@dot.ohio.gov).

Sincerely,

Matthew Dietrich  
Executive Director

