



February 26, 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 Multimodal Corridor Planning RAISE Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, I am writing this letter to express our strong support for the joint City of Columbus, Franklin County, and Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) RAISE planning grant application for the Williams Road Multimodal Corridor Planning project. This project is requesting funds to develop a consistent corridor concept plan for the entire 6.5 mile Williams Road corridor, from the road's western terminus at South High Street to its eastern terminus at State Route 317 (Hamilton Road). This project was designated a Project of Merit during the FY 2022 RAISE Round.

We closely partner with our Department of Public Service on region-wide walking and biking projects. When it comes to the thousands of residents along the Williams Road corridor, we note this is a vital east-west roadway and is identified on the Central Ohio Greenway's Plan as a key future corridor for a significant bikeway and pedestrian connection for Columbus' south side. The current roadway is heavily travelled by residents and freight, yet it is only two lanes and lacks any bicycle or pedestrian facilities. Let me point out that this project begins at a park (Great Southern) and ends at a park (Three Creeks Park, one of the regions' largest). We often hear from the people we serve that this roadway is dangerous, and it has contributed to multiple traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Significant investments are required to ensure the roadway can safely support the corridor's projected growth.

This project is bold, and the time has come to address this area's critical needs. 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. We urge your renewed consideration of the application. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like further details.

Sincere regards,

Bernita A. Reese
Director

