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February 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing today to express One Columbus' strong support for the City of Columbus' RAISE Grant Program funding application for the Williams Road Corridor project.

One Columbus is the economic development organization for the 11-county Columbus Region. Working with local and state partners, One Columbus serves as the business location resource for companies across Central Ohio and around the world as they grow, innovate and compete within the global economy. Our experienced team has worked with hundreds of companies and helped to secure over \$10 billion in capital investment, over 50,000 direct jobs and more than \$2 billion of new payroll across the Columbus Region. Transportation infrastructure fuels the economic engine of Columbus by providing for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods across the 11-county Region. Ensuring that this essential infrastructure is safe and equitable for the Region's 2.2 million residents is therefore a top priority for our organization.

Williams Road is an important east-west roadway and is identified on the Central Ohio Greenway's Trail Vision Plan as a future corridor for a significant bikeway and pedestrian connection on Columbus' south side. It also supports projected household and employment growth within the larger south side region and Rickenbacker Airport and Global Logistics Park, including Foreign Trade Zone 138. MORPC identified the need for improving the Williams Road Corridor as part of its 2018 Rickenbacker Area Study, due to the projected population and employment growth along the corridor. The current roadway is heavily travelled by residents and freight, yet it is only two lanes and lacks any bicycle or pedestrian facilities. This has contributed to multiple traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Significant improvements are required to ensure the roadway can safely support the corridor's projected growth.

One Columbus' mission is to lead a comprehensive regional growth strategy that develops and attracts the world's most competitive companies, grows a highly adaptive workforce, prepares our communities for the future and inspires corporate, academic and public innovation throughout the Columbus Region. This mission is impossible to successfully achieve without a strong regional transportation infrastructure system. In metro areas like Columbus that drive the American economy, solid transportation infrastructure is critical to attracting employers, sustaining economic growth and ensuring that all workers can safely access jobs. This project will significantly improve freight and transportation opportunities along a corridor that includes opportunity zones, areas of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged census tracts for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Patton".

Mark Patton
Executive Vice President and General Manager