



Mid-Ohio Regional
Planning Commission

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December 15, 2016

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Expression of Support for the Rickenbacker Inland Port FY 2017 FASTLANE Application

Dear Secretary Foxx,

On behalf of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), I write to express our strong support for the Rickenbacker Inland Port Interstate Connector FASTLANE grant application, which includes adding a third through lane in each direction to the existing stretch of Alum Creek Drive along a 2.6-mile stretch between State Route 317 to the south and Groveport Road to the north. This route provides a critical connection between the Rickenbacker Inland Port area and the Interstate system.

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Columbus, Ohio urbanized area, MORPC is comprised of more than 60 local governments and regional organizations in a 15-county area. We welcome the tremendous economic benefits this project will bring to Central Ohio as we continue to build a world-class, multimodal infrastructure system and freight hub.

The Columbus Regional Airport Authority (CRAA) has partnered with Norfolk Southern Railway, the Franklin County Engineer's Office, and our team to assess critical improvements needed in the Rickenbacker Inland Port area. This application represents a package that addresses the area's transportation network in a comprehensive, multimodal manner.

This critical improvement focuses on increasing capacity along Alum Creek Drive, the north-south connection between Rickenbacker and I-270. A component of USDOT's National Primary Freight Highway System (PHFS) and a state-designated and federally accepted National Highway System (NHS) Intermodal Connector Route, Alum Creek Drive is a critical freight corridor for the region. The widening improvement will alleviate two sources of congestion: the increased traffic generated by the growing number of successful businesses and the increased regional truck traffic generated by increasing volumes at the Rickenbacker Intermodal Facility.

This project directly supports the objectives of the draft National Freight Strategic Plan, including reducing congestion and improving safety on our freight transportation system and facilitating intermodal connectivity. The widening of Alum Creek Drive has been included in a number of local planning documents and study efforts, and will be added into MORPC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) upon funding of the application.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Matt Greeson
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Secretary

December 15, 2016

To stress the importance of the Rickenbacker area, it has consistently been ranked as a regional economic priority by our regional leadership, including Columbus2020, the Mid-Ohio Development Exchange, and the Columbus Region Coalition. Furthermore, MORPC has just embarked with multiple stakeholders on a community driven study to provide a strategy to help position the area as a successful international logistics hub. This study looks into the area's multifaceted existing factors and their growth potential over the next 10 to 20 years.

Central Ohio's location led to our early development as a logistics center. Today, our location is just as critical, but coupled with our planning efforts, public-private partnerships, and strategic investments as a community, our success continues. We believe that FASTLANE funds to address this important interstate connection at Rickenbacker are critical in order to maintain Central Ohio as an international freight center. We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these improvements to the prosperity of one of our region's most important job-creating areas.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,



William Murdock
Executive Director
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission