

May 28, 2024
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 Hilliard Rome Road Grade Separation Project CRISI Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

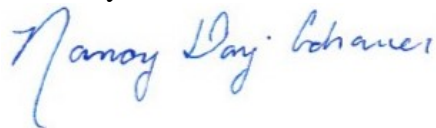
I am writing this letter to express my strong support for the City of Columbus' Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) application for the Hilliard Rome Road Grade Separation Project. The requested CRISI funding (approximately \$26.6 million) will allow Columbus to separate a hazardous at-grade railroad crossing on Hilliard Rome Road, improve transportation insecurity in two census tracts, and extend the impact and benefit of federal and local rapid transit investments.

As someone living nearby, I can personally attest that the at-grade crossing on Hilliard Rome Road is one of the busier and more hazardous at-grade crossings in Ohio. This crossing sees an average of approximately 26,575 motor vehicles and 19 trains per day; and its hazard ranking is currently ranked 384th out of more than 5,600 at-grade crossings statewide. Pedestrians have been observed climbing on, over, or through the train cars during multiple reported incidents; and emergency responders have been observed unable to cross the tracks during one of the reported incidents. Separating the existing crossing and providing dedicated pedestrian and bicycle facilities will significantly improve safety at the crossing and through the entire corridor.

The project will help connect residents and others to the LinkUS West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor, which is less than a mile south of the at-grade crossing on Hilliard Rome Road. USDOT recently awarded a Neighborhood Access and Equity Capital Construction grant to the Central Ohio Transit Authority for the BRT's construction; and the Hilliard Rome Road grade separation project will further extend the federal and local investments in the West Broad BRT Corridor by making it easier and safer to cross the tracks and access the BRT.

A CRISI award will continue the momentum to replace a hazardous at-grade crossing that lacks pedestrian or bicycle facilities with a separated crossing that includes pedestrian and bicycle facilities. We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the transportation challenges created by the current crossing, and the need to separate it.

Sincerely,



Nancy Day-Achauer, Columbus City Councilmember
Chair – Neighborhoods, Recreation, and Parks Committee; Vice Chair – Public Service and Transportation Committee