



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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 of federal and local rapid transit investments.

The at-grade crossing (513244C) on Hilliard Rome Road is one of the most hazardous at-grade crossings in Ohio. This crossing sees an average of approximately 26,575 motor vehicles and 19 trains per day, while its hazard ranking is currently 384th out of more than 5,600 at-grade crossings statewide. The Federal Rail Administration has received multiple reports of stopped trains blocking the crossing for extended periods of time since 2022. Pedestrians have been observed climbing on, over, or through the train cars; and emergency responders have been unable to cross the tracks. This project will significantly improve safety at the crossing and through the entire corridor.

This is particularly important as two of the census tracts in the project area are identified as disadvantaged and having high transportation insecurity by USDOT's Justice40 Rail Explorer: 39049008165 & 39049008171. The project will connect these residents to the LinkUS West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor, which is less than a mile south of the Hilliard Rome Road crossing. 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 project will further extend federal and local investments.

The Ohio Rail Development Commission has awarded this project \$3.3 million from Ohio's Rail Crossing Elimination Program. A CRISI award will continue the momentum to replace a hazardous at-grade crossing with a separated crossing that includes pedestrian and bicycle facilities. I respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Carey".

Mike Carey
Member of Congress