



**Department of
Transportation**
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Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Pamela Boratyn, Director

January 22, 2025

Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Subject: Hamilton County's RAISE Application for Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way

Dear Secretary,

In the early 2000s, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) was an active partner with local government leaders in Cincinnati to rebuild Fort Washington Way, investing state resources alongside local and private funds to rebuild the interstate and invest in foundations that would one day support decks that could reconnect Cincinnati and its riverfront.

This is a complicated project, but one that has long been contemplated in the Cincinnati region. ODOT has a primary focus on safety of our roadway network, and we remain engaged with the local partners on issues related to signage, structural design, and tunnel life safety engineering in the proposed tunnel that the full build-out of this project would create. Because of the strong partnership between our agency and the applicants, we are confident that technical issues will be addressed in the preliminary engineering phase of the project that this grant supports.

Additionally, the local partners and ODOT remain in discussions about the ongoing operations and maintenance of the proposed tunnel. The local partners have committed to ODOT that they expect those responsibilities to be shared, but the details of those plans have not yet been finalized. These outstanding items are important to ODOT, and we believe it is critical that they be addressed in advance of construction, should the applicants be successful.

We recognize the tremendous value for local citizens and those of the region that lies in connecting the Queen City's central business district to the vibrant cultural, business, and entertainment assets that occupy its riverfront. As we have demonstrated in our ongoing collaboration on the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project with Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval, the Hamilton County Commissioners, and the local business community, ODOT has a results-oriented and respectful relationship with the local leaders, who are applying for this grant funding. Thus, ODOT offers its provisional support for their application for preliminary engineering, and detailed design and construction of the first phase of this project from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. The Ohio Department of Transportation will be the direct recipient of a RAISE grant award.

Respectfully,

Pamela Boratyn
Director