



April 11, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Kent's RAISE Grant Application for Reimagining the Gateway East Main Corridor Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Ohio Department of Transportation supports the City of Kent's RAISE grant application, in partnership with Kent State University (KSU) and the Portage Area Regional Transit Authority (PARTA), for its Reimagining the Gateway East Main Corridor Project. This project will make significant multi-modal improvements to a nearly one-mile car-centric section of East Main St. that includes KSU, entrances to nearby neighborhoods and many food/retail destinations.

Kent is Portage County's largest city, with 61 percent of its residents in the low-and moderate-income range. KSU is one of Ohio's leading public universities with more than 25,000 students on its main campus. Traffic from the community, the university, and visitors has resulted in a five-lane car-centric road congested with motorists, which conflicts with the numerous busses, bikes, and pedestrians. The majority of this corridor has been listed as the worst crash corridor in the local MPO region since 2014.

While some short-term measures have been taken to address the congestion, this multi-year project will provide a long-term solution that focuses on multimodal transportation safety and access to a diverse population. When completed, Reimagining the Gateway will significantly improve traffic flow for motorists and transit, while reducing speeds and making crossings safer for pedestrians and cyclists. It will also provide reasonable access and enhanced entrances to adjacent properties and neighborhoods.

Reimagining the Gateway aligns with many key components of the RAISE grant program. A collaboration of local, regional and state entities (including the Ohio Department of Transportation and the regional MPO), this project will improve safety in the area, enhance the quality of life for area neighborhoods, increase mobility and community connectivity for adjacent disadvantaged communities, and advance sustainability.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Jack Marchbanks".

Jack Marchbanks, Ph.D.
Director