February 1st, 2019

Kelley Brookins
Regional Administrator
FTA Region V
200 W. Adams Street Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Brookins:

As a proud recipient of funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s BUILD program, Eastgate is eager to begin utilizing all the great benefits of the program to improve the safety of our downtown infrastructure and enhance the economic competitiveness of our area.

The primary components of our project are geared toward safety-based roadway improvements that fall directly under the umbrella of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). Recognizing the majority of the roadways are already programmed through FHWA and ODOT, Eastgate is formally requesting the lead of our project be changed from the Federal Transit Agency to FHWA to more efficiently and effectively implement the BUILD funds.

Our BUILD project consists largely of improving safety through the implementation of road diets as well as adding complete street design elements on seven downtown streets. Applying a road diet to an urban arterial has proven to result in a 29% reduction in total crashes and the importance is shown through our projects $17.05 million in safety benefits on the project.

Of the seven streets, four are currently programmed through FHWA and ODOT using Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program funding. ODOT will be of great assistance in the implementation of Fifth Avenue, Rayen Avenue, Front Street, and Commerce Street being the four projects that are currently programmed through the STBG program. The included map shows the project area with these four streets identified.
The Fifth Avenue improvements are the backbone of the project. This project was programmed in 2016 with the main intention of improving safety through the use of a road diet. The Fifth Avenue project is the largest contributor to multimodal improvements and is nearly ready for construction with plans already prepared.

Rayen Avenue, Front Street, and Commerce Street intent to follow the blueprint of Fifth Avenue by planning for a road diet to increase overall safety in the downtown area. BUILD funding attached with these projects is almost entirely through complete street design elements. Phelps Street, Federal Street, and Park Avenue are also receiving complete street design components.

Autonomous shuttles are being implemented within the project limits with the assistance and expertise of DriveOhio and the Western Reserve Transit Authority. Supported by the Ohio Department of Transportation, DriveOhio is an integral partner in advancing the technologies in our state and throughout the BUILD project area.

The importance of the project being managed by FHWA is greater exemplified by the ability of Eastgate to receive the BUILD funds through FHWA and distribute them accordingly with the assistance of ODOT. This increased efficiency will keep the various aspects of the project on schedule.

We hope this information is enough to show the importance of having our project administered through FHWA as it primarily consists of safety-based road diets and complete street components. Being managed by FHWA would greatly enhance the project by leveraging the assistance of FHWA and ODOT through the use of STBG funding as well as assure completion dates are met on rapidly approaching deadlines.

If there is anything else from us that would be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to ask.

Respectfully,

James G. Kinnick, P.E.
Executive Director