



April 15, 2022

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
503 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown,

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of the Western Reserve Port Authority (WRPA) for the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments Appropriation request entitled **Youngstown Equitable and Sustainable Streets Initiative (YES!) Connectivity Study**, which would provide funding to support a detailed transportation infrastructure study for the east side of Youngstown, Ohio. Eastgate, the area's regional Metropolitan Planning Organization, has demonstrated leadership in transportation infrastructure planning and implementation since 1973.

The Western Reserve Port Authority recently acquired the former 22.6-acre McGuffey Plaza site on Youngstown's east side. The WRPA's goal is to stabilize this property as part of our neighborhood revitalization initiative. This study will identify current and future routes of access from our property to the city's freeway network, linking a traditionally underserved neighborhood to job opportunities.

Youngstown's East Side was previously the home to numerous factories and businesses, with plenty of employees living within walking distance. For the past several years, this part of the city has been particularly hit by outsourcing of manufacturing jobs, resulting in industry closures, unemployment, and neighborhood blight and abandonment. This area faces challenges of rampant poverty, poor health, high crime, all social determinants.

Though there are some 2,000 acres of vacant land, this area lacks the modern transportation and logistics infrastructure to enable use as a next generation manufacturing or distribution site. Currently, there is no direct highway access to much of this area, limiting economic development potential. The requested funds will provide a comprehensive transportation infrastructure analysis that is critical to pursue economic development, and to design the infrastructure which manufacturers and businesses demand.

Restoration and redevelopment of Youngstown's East Side also aligns closely with President Biden's Justice40 initiative. As such, I strongly support this Appropriations Request for the **Youngstown Equitable and Sustainable Streets Initiative (YES!) Connectivity Study** and on behalf of my organization, look forward helping achieve the outcomes of this study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anthony Trevena", is written over a blue line.

Anthony Trevena
Executive Director