



CITY OF ALLENTOWN PARAMEDICS

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Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: United States Department of Transportation, Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant 2019: Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor Project

Ms. Chao,

I am writing to offer the support of Allentown Emergency Medical Services to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's request for a 2019 BUILD grant. The grant funding is imperative to the implementation of the more than \$50 million Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor project. The collaboration of more than 20 local, public, private and non-profit organizations, Riverside Drive will be a 3.25-mile project that reclaims a vacant rail bed to become a centerpiece of a more than \$300 million brownfields redevelopment project known as the Waterfront, in the City of Allentown.

The two-lane thoroughfare, paired with a 10-foot hiking and biking commuter trail, will provide the connective tissue for a project that will include a Riverwalk, public plazas, floating docks and a Main Street through an office and housing development on the former site of the long-closed Lehigh Structural Steel. The project's ADA accessible design connects Allentown residents, commuters, recreational trail users and tourists from established commercial and mixed-use developments to the new cultural, recreational and smart growth redevelopment projects occurring along Allentown's waterfront.

It will close Pennsylvania's highest priority trail gap, providing a critical commuting link in the 165-mile Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Trail network and offering an alternative travel option to regional trail systems. It improves connectivity between rural and urban areas of the Lehigh Valley and eastern Pennsylvania, providing a new commuting corridor to job centers, while strengthening the spine of the region's recreational trail network. Whether linking workers to their jobs, rural to urban, consumers to the businesses, or goods to the deliverers - this investment transcends social and economic barriers.

As the provider of emergency medical services for Pennsylvania's third largest city, we value any initiative that promotes healthy activities such as biking or hiking. The addition of the thoroughfare also improves our access to the area in the event of emergencies. Finally, the economic benefit to the city is noted by our bureau both in financial stability as well as in morale. Therefore, we offer our support for a project we believe will provide greater access to all residents and continue the rebirth of the Lehigh Valley's urban core.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric C. Gratz".

Eric C. Gratz
Chief of Operations