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June 25, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

This letter is to attest our support of Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's request for a 2019 BUILD grant. The grant funding is imperative to the implementation of the over \$50 million Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor project.

Riverside Drive is a 3.25 mile multi-municipal commuter corridor, made up of a two-lane thoroughfare and paired with a 10-foot bike and walking commuter corridor. This is a collaboration of more than 20 local public, private and non-profit organizations. It is a critical commuting link in the 165-mile Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Trail network and offers an alternative travel option for residents to access regional trail systems and job centers. It also improves connectivity between rural and urban areas of the Lehigh Valley and eastern Pennsylvania.

Riverside Drive is located along a vacated rail corridor adjacent to a redevelopment project, known as The Waterfront, in the City of Allentown. On the large former brownfield that was Lehigh Structural Steel, the project will provide a river walk, floating docks to support public access to the river, two public plazas, and a main street through the adjacent site redevelopment. The project's ADA accessible design connects Allentown residents—including youth—rural and suburban commuters, recreational trail users, and tourists from established commercial and mixed use development to the new cultural, recreational, and economic redevelopment opportunities occurring along Allentown's waterfront.

Whether linking young people to new parts of the region, workers to their jobs, rural to urban, consumers to the businesses, or goods to the deliverers - this investment transcends social and economic barriers, appealing to the Lehigh Valley metropolitan area at large, and therefore encompasses several supportive partners in its planning and vision.

Community Bike Works is a youth bike mentoring organization that teaches life lessons through bicycles to the young people of Allentown and the Lehigh Valley who could benefit most. We are dedicated to providing educational, recreational, and vocational opportunities to the more than 500 students each year that come from families with low incomes, most of whom live in the City of

Allentown. Your support for Riverside Drive will help open up the Lehigh Valley to these students, who will ride the corridor for recreation and to get to places in their home region that were not previously accessible to them. While riding the corridor, our students will reap the benefits of physical activity, will be able to connect with a fuller range of community members and neighborhoods, and will better be able to access afterschool and summer job opportunities. As our student Eric shared, "To me, a bike is freedom. On my bike, I can ride to school, to my job at Community Bike Works, or anywhere else in the Lehigh Valley I want to go."

Thank you for this opportunity to support the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and Riverside Drive as part of the 2019 BUILD application process. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kim Schaffer".

Kim Schaffer
Executive Director