



July 11, 2019

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

RE: US DOT BUILD Grant 2019: Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor Project

Dear Madam Secretary:

For the past five years, the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (D&L) has been part of a determined collaborative of more than 20 local, public, private and non-profit organizations working to build the Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor Project in Allentown, Pennsylvania. This is a 3.25-mile project that will have catalytic impact on the City and well beyond as we reclaim a vacant rail bed and a brownfield to become a centerpiece of a more than \$300 million redevelopment project known as The Waterfront.

On behalf of the D&L's Board of Directors, I am wholeheartedly committing our support for the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's request for a 2019 BUILD grant. This grant funding is a linchpin and to the successful implementation of the Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor project valued at more than \$50 million.

The Riverside Drive project will close a substantial portion of Pennsylvania's highest priority trail gap and it will provide a critical commuting route in the 165-mile D&L Trail network. It will offer alternative travel options that connect the Lehigh Valley's three cities. It will improve connectivity between rural and urban areas of the Lehigh Valley and will serve to help connect 57 miles of continuous trail to the north and 72 continuous trail miles to the south. This exceptional project will create a new and accessible way for residents who do not have cars to reach job centers. It solidifies the spine of the region's burgeoning trail network.

The two-lane thoroughfare, paired with a 10-foot walking and biking commuter trail, will serve to link The Waterfront' riverwalk, public plazas, floating docks and a main street through a multi-use development on the former site of the long-closed Lehigh Structural Steel.

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.

The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor was established by Congress in 1988 to preserve and celebrate the historic pathway that carried anthracite coal and iron from Wilkes-Barre to Bristol Borough. Now 94% complete, we are the prime force working to fully connect the D&L Trail that connects people to nature and the environment, industrial heritage, health and wellness and economic development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elissa M. Garofalo".

Elissa M. Garofalo  
Executive Director

**Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor**

2750 Hugh Moore Park Road • Easton, Pennsylvania • 610.923.3548 • [www.delawareandlehigh.org](http://www.delawareandlehigh.org)