



LEHIGH VALLEY
economic development

July 11, 2019

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) is applying for a 2019 BUILD grant for the Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor Project. With 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, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

It is my understanding, 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.

This project 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.

Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation's (LVEDC) mission is to market our region's economic assets and to create partnerships to lead in the recruitment, growth, and retention of employers. All efforts to promote and encourage the improvement of such assets is essential. We have a strong partnership with the City of Allentown and LVPC and we support their economic development priorities.

On behalf of Lehigh Valley Economic Development we encourage projects like this and I hope you give full consideration to funding this request.

Sincerely,



Jaime Marie Whalen
Vice President of Administration and Investor Relations and Chief of Staff