



July 1, 2019

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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

Dear Ms. Chao:

North Branch Land Trust offers its support for 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.

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.

As a trail partner North Branch Land Trust is working with the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor to complete one of the last sections of the 165-mile D&L trail into Wilkes-Barre PA. and offers its support for a project we believe will not only provide greater access to all residents, but continue the rebirth of the Lehigh Valley's urban core. As per the National Park Service, *Trails provide enjoyable and safe options for transportation, which reduces air pollution. Trails promote safe and livable communities. The recreation, health, transportation and environmental benefits collectively can contribute to an overall enhanced quality of life in communities.*

**Staff**

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Sincerely,

Paul Lumia  
Executive Director

*Preserving Precious Land...Forever*