



COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON

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NORTHAMPTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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LAMONT G. MCCLURE
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 15, 2019

The Honorable 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:

We're writing to offer our 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.

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.

Northampton County vigorously supports the BUILD 2019: Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor Project. As the partner County to Lehigh County of the Lehigh Valley region, the development of the D&L trail is major priority. Northampton County's over 300-miles

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of land and water trails are continuously evolving, allowing for better connections through multi-modal and alternative transportation opportunities. The development of this project will lead to better access to regional economic development opportunities, quantitative health improvements and recreational and tourism contributions.

The Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor Project area will directly connect to the major attractions already established within Northampton County and the Lehigh Valley region. Sites such as the internationally recognized Steel Stacks in the City of Bethlehem, located on the previous site of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation or along the September 11th National Memorial Trail, that runs through the heart of the Lehigh Valley and Northampton County. The development of this project will allow for continuous alternative transportation opportunities to New York City and Philadelphia, through the Lehigh Valley's established trail systems.

We offer our 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.

It is great interest of Northampton County's residents and the Lehigh Valley as a whole, that Northampton County supports the Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lamont G. McClure", followed by a horizontal line.

Lamont G. McClure
County Executive