



**THE RIDER-POOL
FOUNDATION**

July 9, 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:

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

Riverside Drive is designed to be a "complete street," offering bike, pedestrian, transit and automobile connectivity along a 3.25-mile multi-municipal commuter corridor, made up of a two-lane thoroughfare and paired with a ten-foot wide bike and walking commuter passage. The project is a major public-private-non-profit effort composed of more than 20 partnership organizations.

One of the pieces targeted in this request is the addition of a major connector between Hamilton Street and the Route 22 area in Whitehall. It is a critical commuting link in the 165-mile Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Trail network. Completion of this section will:

- Extend access by residents of one of the areas with the lowest equity regionally to other areas, including: major employment centers in Whitehall, Hanover Township (Lehigh County) and for Allentown students reaching schools on either side of the Lehigh River
- Enhance connectivity between rural and urban areas of the Lehigh Valley and eastern Pennsylvania
- Improve air quality and public health by advancing transportation other than automobiles
- Close one of the largest gaps in the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, soon to be designated as the region's first off-road commuter corridor later this Fall

This investment transcends social and economic barriers, appeals to the Lehigh Valley metropolitan area at large, and encompasses several supportive partners in its planning and vision. The project links workers to their jobs, rural and urban areas, consumers to businesses, and goods to the marketplace.

The Rider-Pool Foundation is proud to provide this letter of support for a project that will improve the social, economic and recreational environment, as well as the public health of the Lehigh Valley.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Napolitano, PhD, MPH, RN, CRNP
Program Officer

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Denise M. Gargan, CIMA, MBA
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Executive Director
Edward F. Meehan, MPH

Phone: 610.770.9346

Fax: 610.770.9361

Website: www.pooltrust.org

Email: info@pooltrust.org

TWO CITY CENTER

645 W. Hamilton Street
Suite 202
Allentown, PA 18101