



White Haven Area Community Library & Visitors' Center  
P.O. Box 57, White Haven, PA 18661  
(570) 443-8776

July 5, 2019

Ms. 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:

I am writing to offer our organization's 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 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.

The White Haven Area Community Library is a partner with the D&L in its efforts to develop the communities along the Corridor. The former railroad building that houses the library is part of the Corridor story. Plans to develop the library and surrounding outdoor area dovetails into the D&L management goal to "foster connections and stewardship by promoting deeper connections among communities, neighbors and the land and greater appreciation of the Corridor's history and its cultural and physical assets..."

Total completion of the 165 mile trail will enhance the opportunities for our White Haven community to thrive and discover new economic growth by enabling more visitors to discover our region of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Charlotte M. Carter, Board Member