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By Appointment



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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April 25, 2022

The Honorable David E. Price
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
2108 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
374 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Township of Lakewood NJ
231 Third St
Lakewood, NJ 08701
lakewoodnj.gov

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

I write to respectfully request Community Project Funding for road improvements and related infrastructure for the Township of Lakewood, New Jersey in my Congressional District.

Lakewood is one of the fastest growing cities in New Jersey. From 2000 to 2020, the Township's population grew from approximately 50,000 to 135,000 residents, making it the fifth largest city in the State. With that growth comes many benefits, including becoming an economic engine for the County. An estimated 15,000 new jobs and hundreds of new businesses have been created in Lakewood in recent years.

But growth can also tax aging infrastructure. Paramount in Lakewood is the need to lessen congestion on narrow streets which were designed and built in many cases over 100 years ago. Also urgent is the need for low-cost housing for students, growing families and seniors.

This project has the dual purpose of addressing serious traffic congestion in this densely populated city, as well as helping to alleviate the housing shortage.

The project will construct two roads, sidewalks, street lighting and associated improvements, sanitary sewer mains and infrastructure, drinking water mains and infrastructure, stormwater management and drainage infrastructure, and related landscaping. The new road will

create a thoroughfare that drivers can use to overtake excessively congested local roadway to get to Interstate 195, the Garden State Parkway and other highways.

What makes this project especially unique is the collaboration between the Township and its two nonprofit institutions of higher education, Georgian Court University (GCU) and Beth Medrash Govoha (BMG), which together have approximately 10,000 students.

As part of the collaborative project, GCU recently sold the undeveloped property to BMG. Now, the Township of Lakewood seeks to construct the public roads, water, and sewer infrastructure. After the project is completed, BMG will fund the construction of several hundred units of housing for families of BMG students to alleviate the severe housing shortage present in the Township housing market, ease traffic congestion by taking commuters off the most congested roads, and open a new thoroughfare and exit roads from the College District.

According to HUD Esri mapping of Low- and Moderate-Income (LMI) Area Data, Block Group 3, Census Tract 7154.01 - where the project is located – has an LMI percentage of 59.16. Furthermore, the residential neighborhoods immediately east and south of the project are 81.76% LMI. Lakewood Township overall is 73.95% LMI. The project will facilitate housing intended to serve students and their young families, many of whom are low income. It is intended to address equitable access to housing by constructing necessary roadway and infrastructure to serve, in part, new housing, and by alleviating the housing shortage.

The anticipated start date of this project is March 2023. Per the attached budget, phase one includes design, permitting, planning and engineering, and is budgeted to cost \$1,100,000. Phase two of the project, which consists of construction, renovation site work and related costs, is budgeted to cost \$2,900,000. Total cost is estimated at \$4,000,000. Funds not provided through the Community Project Funding process will be secured by BMG.

This project is widely supported by the local community, including the County of Ocean, State Senator Robert Singer, the Township of Lakewood, The Lakewood Resource and Referral Center, and the New Jersey Housing & Neighborhood Development, inc.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project. I appreciate the Committee's due consideration of this project. Please feel free to reach out to me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress