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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA

CHAIRMAN, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRMAN, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

SENIOR MEMBER, HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

www.chrissmith.house.gov

May 10, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-307, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
H-307, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Womack, and Ranking Member Cartwright,

I write to respectfully request Community Project Funding in fiscal year 2025 for the Wall Township, NJ Bike Path Extension & Overpass Project in my congressional district in New Jersey (NJ-04). The project will span NJ State Route 138—an extension of I-195—adjacent to the Wall High School located at 1630 18th Avenue, Wall Township, NJ 07719.

The Wall Township Bike Path Extension & Overpass is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds as it is in keeping with the goals of the Community Development Block Grant program and has a compelling local need, addressing a critical safety concern by providing a dedicated overpass for pedestrians and cyclists as well as connecting two sides of town to promote economic development through safer streets and a pedestrian friendly transportation option. This project will connect not just the northern and southern ends of this 32-square-mile suburban community, but it will also allow for safe bicycle and pedestrian travel for residents of numerous neighboring communities and alleviate the need to traverse the dangerous Route 138.

State Route 138 is a six-lane highway that runs along the north side of the Wall High School property and bisects the Township. For students trying to get to school as well as residents attempting to get to the opposite ends of the Township on foot or bicycle, crossing Route 138 is a significant obstacle as it has heavy traffic, vehicles traveling at high speeds, and no pedestrian or cyclist access. Limited visibility and driver distractions also contribute to the

danger of crossing Route 138. A dedicated overpass will provide a safe and separate path for bicyclists and pedestrians, ensuring they do not have to interact with vehicular traffic. By providing this easily accessible crossing point, the overpass reduces the inconvenience, danger, and time required to reach a safe crossing location.

In addition to the project ensuring safer commuting routes for north Wall students travelling to the High School by eliminating the need to navigate this dangerous crossing, activities and destinations such as State and local parks, golf courses, area beaches, the local library, and Little League baseball, youth football and youth soccer fields are not reasonably accessible to northern Township residents because of the need to cross this dangerous highway. Similarly, residents in the southern portion of the Township have difficulty reaching by bicycle or foot the historic Camp Evans site and its InfoAge museum and displays, the Brookdale Community College Wall Township campus, and various Township parks, ball fields, and attractions.

Furthermore, this overpass will link with the existing Edgar Felix Bike Path, a 5.4-mile long biking and walking trail that stretches from Manasquan, NJ through Wall Township to Allaire State Park. This connectivity will likely enhance recreational opportunities for tens of thousands of individuals, promote a healthier lifestyle and facilitate access to various amenities within Wall Township for all southern Monmouth County residents.

Finally, the construction of the overpass and associated bike path extension will generate employment opportunities through approximately 30 construction jobs, contributing to the economic vitality of the community. It will also allow teens to be able to safely travel by bicycle to jobs on the opposite end of town or neighboring municipalities.

The total cost of the amount requested for this Community Funding Project is \$4,446,060 to fully address critical safety concerns. The project is strongly supported by the municipality, as well as by county and state elected leaders, the local school system, and the areawide Chamber of Commerce. The project has a federal nexus under Chapter 42 U.S.C. Section 5305(a)(2).

I certify that neither I nor any member of my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of my request for assistance for the Wall Township Bike Path Extension & Overpass Project. I appreciate the Committee's due consideration of the proposal.

Sincerely,


CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress