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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA

CHAIRMAN, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL
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CO-CHAIRMAN, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

SENIOR MEMBER, HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

www.chrissmith.house.gov

March 28, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
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 Tom Cole
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 Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member Quigley,

I write to respectfully request Community Project Funding in fiscal year 2024 for greatly needed critical improvements for the expansion of the **Railroad Avenue Extension** North and South along U.S. Highway Route 9 in the Township of Lacey, whose Town Hall is located at 818 Lacey Road, Forked River, NJ 08731. The expansion of this intersection will help alleviate the flow of traffic and provide an alternative pattern to help mitigate the growing population and increased travelling public in central Ocean County.

This project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it promotes the goals of the Surface Transportation Block Grant program, and meets critical transportation needs of a fast-growing community. Route 9 is the only major highway in several towns in Central Ocean County, included but not limited to Berkeley Township, another town located in my Congressional District. This highway is the epicenter of small business, commuting, and residents, who use this roadway to travel from multiple facets, and has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 23 U.S.C. 133.

The expansion of Railroad Avenue will not only ease the flow of traffic within the Township of Lacey, but it will also improve safety conditions of both drivers, passengers, and

pedestrians alike. During peak travel time, the U.S. Route 9 corridor in the Township of Lacey develops heavily leaving no alternative paths to travel to other parts of the town or its neighboring communities.

Not only will this project benefit the Township of Lacey, but the proposed project, which received approval from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) under their “Plan 2050-People. Transportation. Opportunity,” will also help with the completion of the Barnegat Branch Rail Trail—a joint project with Ocean County—which will consist of a completion of a pedestrian and bikeway trail that will be designed alongside the Route 9 corridor.

This project is estimated to cost \$6,119,345.00. The Township of Lacey has noted that it will receive a reimbursement as a partnership with the County of Ocean for a shared usage of the proposed path in the amount of \$795,000.00.

The proposed plan notes that the alternative route would consist of a new two-lane limited access parallel to Route 9 from Lacey Road South to Station Drive and from Musket Drive North to South Street.

Additionally, the scope of this project would allow the Township of Lacey to promptly respond to facilitating a new construction of drainage swales, stormwater piping, and an infiltration basin. The Township of Lacey was heavily impacted by Superstorm Sandy in October of 2012 and these funds would not only benefit traffic congestion patterns and the creation of new recreational pathways, but also correct flooding during rainstorms, which would make traveling alongside Route 9 in bad weather much more efficient.

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of my request for assistance for the expansion of the Railroad Avenue Extension North and South along U.S. Route 9 in the Township of Lacey.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project. I appreciate the Committee’s due consideration of the proposal.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress