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By Appointment



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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April 20, 2022

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

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

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart :

I write to ask you to provide Community Funding Program support for the **Hamilton Public Library Window Replacement Project**, a critical project to safeguard the literary assets and to modernize a heavily-used public library in New Jersey's eighth largest municipality.

The Hamilton Township Free Public Library is a popular educational hub in this sizable community, especially for students of the town's four high schools, three middle schools and 22 elementary schools. Across its 40 square miles, Hamilton has a mix of urban, rural and suburban areas and is home to more than 92,000 people

The entire Hamilton community is served by *this single public library*, which opened in 1975. The library today is in dire need of all new windows. **The town has identified a cost of \$475,000.**

The library is a 55,000-square foot, standalone, three-level structure. **Built in 1973, a recent structural inspection determined that the seals of the near half-century old windows are failing, compromising the all-important climate control that is necessary to protect the integrity of the building structure, its 181,000-plus volumes and years' of 300 separate periodicals, as well as maintain energy and cost efficiency.** The library contains many delicate pieces of equipment, computers, printers, projectors and communication devices, all of which can be impacted by humidity and temperature swings. The township plans to move to construction in FY2023. It estimates the cost of materials, installation and labor at \$435,000, and the cost of project management and oversight, relocation of offices and relocation and safeguarding of library equipment materials prior to and during the work, is estimated to be \$40,000 (see attached low bid quote received).

In 2019, pre-COVID, the library hosted over 46,500 computer users and 489,898 visits (equal to more than five visits per each resident). Its 2021 Strategic Plan cites that its dedicated staff handled a total of 40,466 reference questions. **Over 52 percent—or 41,311—residents aged 10 and up hold library cards.**

Book and ebook circulation through the Hamilton Library was listed as 171,446, an average of 4.2 books per card holder. More than 39,990 people attended meetings in library rooms in 2019—the equivalent of nearly half of the population came to the library for event meetings. I, myself, and many of my staff, have visited the Hamilton Library for numerous civic functions and events.

The library is a priceless community center—the link for its present, past and its future. This sentiment is clear in the many letters of support (attached) from town leaders such as the Business Administrator, Friends of the Hamilton Library, the Library Board of Trustees, the Hamilton Historical Society and others who show their unified backing of this important project.

The mission of the Hamilton Library is to enhance “the quality of life in our community by providing the resources and services for lifelong learning and enjoyment, the space and opportunities to gather and connect, and by fostering a love of reading.” This Community Project Funding would protect that mission.

I thank you for your consideration of this important project. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

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

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress