

WASHINGTON OFFICE
2334 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-8045
FAX: (202) 225-2772

CHULA VISTA OFFICE
333 F STREET, SUITE A
CHULA VISTA, CA 91910
(619) 422-5963
FAX: (619) 422-7290



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas
52nd District, California

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL MARKETS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL
INSTITUTIONS AND MONETARY POLICY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
ILLICIT FINANCE, AND INTERNATIONAL
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

March 31, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the “Barrio Logan Freeway Lid Parks” project in fiscal year 2024, in the amount of \$1,300,000. The entity to receive the funding is the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), located at 401 B, San Diego, CA 92101.

This project will consist of an existing conditions analysis, extensive public outreach, a feasibility assessment and selection of alternatives, conceptual designs, and preliminary engineering for building freeway lids in Barrio Log. Currently, the I-5 dissects the Barrio Logan/Logan Heights community; and the I-5/SR-75 interchange and Coronado Bridge further dissects Barrio Logan on the west side of I-5. There are few roads that cross I-5 to connect Barrio Logan and Logan Heights.

Many residential streets terminate at frontage roads on either side of I-5, forcing traffic to funnel through the few cross-freeway connectors. The relative scarcity of these connections coupled with freeway on- and off-ramps at key crossing points create a hostile landscape for people walking and biking. There are no bike lanes on any of the roads traversing I-5, despite Barrio Logan being a major destination for active transportation due to its proximity to the bayfront. Transit is also fragmented, lacking important connections across most of the freeway right of way. In order to cross between the two neighborhoods via transit, residents must take a bus or trolley into downtown San Diego and transfer to another route to re-enter the community on the opposite side.

This project is a good use of taxpayer resources because a freeway lid that reconnects the communities of would allow for easy non-motorized connections between the two communities that can only reasonably be achieved today via automobile in a circuitous route. Residents in Barrio Logan needing to access the only local library, post office, health care facilities, and high schools must travel to Logan Heights via automobiles or travel via bus that takes up to three times as long. When coupled with other mobility enhancements, freeway lids would provide safe, direct paths of travel for transit and active transportation to community amenities and additional recreation along the waterfront and within the neighborhood.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(2).

This project has broad support from regional agencies, including Caltrans and the City of San Diego, who both maintain right-of-way in the project area. Other project supporters include Assemblymember David Alvarez, Port of San Diego, Environmental Health Coalition, and Metropolitan Transit System. Additionally, SANDAG will be receiving support and guidance on the study from SD Commons, a consortium of architects, land developers, and former civic professionals whose goal is to revitalize communities through public space and infrastructure. The residents of Barrio Logan have been advocating for a freeway lid since the 1990s. It wasn't until recently that the community's vision was integrated into formal city planning efforts with the inclusion of the two freeway lid parks first in the 2013 Barrio Logan Community Plan and more prominently in the 2021 Community Plan Update. These freeway lids are recommended as part of SANDAG's recently completed South Bay to Sorrento Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan..

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Vargas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Juan" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Vargas".

JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress