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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

May 9, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
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 Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the “Palm Avenue Complete Multimodal Corridor” project in fiscal year 2025, in the amount of \$9,000,000. The entity to receive the funding is the City of Imperial Beach, located at 825 Imperial Beach Blvd; Imperial Beach, CA 91932.

The Palm Avenue Complete Multimodal Corridor project aims to modernize a 1.5-mile stretch of Palm Avenue (State Route 75)—a vital transportation artery within the city—catering to the needs of drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users alike. Palm Avenue is the primary gateway to and through Imperial Beach and is an alternative connection from I-5 to the City of Coronado, to local military facilities, and to local public beaches including Imperial Beach and Silver Strand State Beach. Recognized by the Department of Defense as part of the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET), this section of road is integral to the operations of Naval Base Coronado.

The City of Imperial Beach is a disadvantaged, underserved community that has suffered from a long history of severe pollution impacts from the Tijuana River. The Palm Avenue Corridor, which is the primary commercial spine of the City, is currently characterized by high-speed traffic, poorly designed and marked pedestrian facilities, dilapidated and under-utilized structures and properties, and a high concentration of auto mobile-oriented uses.

Within the City, Palm Avenue serves as the major east-west route providing access to the beachfront commercial areas of Old Palm Avenue and Seacoast Drive. However, the current configuration and design of Palm Avenue effectively separates and isolates the residential neighborhood to the north. The Project would create better pedestrian linkages between the neighborhoods and commercial uses on the north and south sides of the corridor.

The project’s primary objective is to implement streetscape improvements and urban design strategies that align with the overarching goal of developing a lively, safe, and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly commercial corridor along Palm Avenue. Key priorities involve the transformation of the existing six-lane highway into a welcoming “Main Street” environment, enhancing traffic flow while nurturing a new context conducive to mixed-use developments. These developments will not only offer essential amenities and services to the community but also establish connections with surrounding residential areas, reinforcing the area’s intimate, beach-town ambiance.

This project is a good use of taxpayer resources because the implementation of the Palm Avenue Complete Multimodal Corridor project will catalyze redevelopment of adjacent properties creating positive economic and social benefits and more sustainable land uses. The project will also implement streetscape improvements and urban design strategies that align with the overarching goal of developing a lively, safe, and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly commercial corridor along Palm Avenue.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 23 U.S.C. 133(b)(2).

This project has received support from local businesses and organizations, including the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, the South Bay Union School District, the Sweetwater Union High School District, the Boys and Girls Clubs of South County, and the Imperial Beach Community Clinic.

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 written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress