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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas
51st District, California

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTOR PROTECTION,
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CAPITAL MARKETS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING,
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INSURANCE
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WESTERN HEMISPHERE, CIVILIAN SECURITY,
AND TRADE
MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA,
AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

April 30, 2021

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

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

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

I am requesting funding for the “24th Street Trolley Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study” project in fiscal year 2022, in the amount of \$294,700. The entity to receive funding for this project is the City of National City, located at 1243 National City Boulevard, National City, CA 91950.

The \$294,700 requested will fund a feasibility study that will evaluate the potential for constructing a pedestrian bridge over Interstate 5. When Interstate 5 was constructed, it bisected this already economically disadvantaged community. Now is the time to invest in communities that were adversely affected by the construction of the interstate highway system.

The local National City government affirms that residents utilize non-motorized transportation alternatives at a much higher rate than other communities within San Diego County. The residential areas in National City lie to the east of Interstate 5, and there are several destinations on the west side of Interstate 5 that are difficult to reach for non-motorized mobility users. Thus, Interstate 5 acts as a barrier for National City residents to essential population centers and other pedestrian and biking paths. These include the Bayshore Bikeway, Naval Base San Diego, National City's Marina District, and industrial and maritime employment centers. Above all, the bridge could facilitate safe pedestrian access to the 24th Street Trolley—a key mode of transportation for this community. The feasibility study could be an essential step towards allowing the proposed project to overcome this existing challenge for National City residents.

The City of National City Homefront to Waterfront (HW) Plan, IntraConnect Plan, and the 24th Street Transit Oriented Development Overlay (TODO) Plan incorporated extensive community outreach efforts to develop community-identified transportation needs. As part of the HW effort, 56% of the community members stated that separated bike lanes that are protected from adjacent travel lane with a physical barrier would make them more likely to bike in the project area. As part of the IntraConnect Plan, over 50% of the residents are deterred from biking due to traffic safety, and nearly 33% stated the need to have less cars on the street and enhanced safety for bicycle facilities. And as part of the TODO effort, 50% of the respondents identified the need for improved walking and bicycling connections to the 24th Street Trolley Station, parks, the Bayshore Bikeway, and the Sweetwater Bikeway.

Moreover, the project is part of the City of National City's proposed Health and Opportunity through Partnerships for Equity (HOPE) Improvements Projects. This is a collection of projects that have been vetted with public input and have been approved or accepted by National City's City Council. As described

by the City Council, these projects will provide safe and accessible active and alternative transportation facilities for users of all ages and abilities. The proposed improvements will promote clean mobility alternatives as a viable travel choice, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and promoting a healthier, more active lifestyle, as well as enhance the quality of life for disadvantaged residents in National City. The projects also have written support from National City Mayor Alejandra Sotelo-Solis.

This project has received written support from the following stakeholders: Danielle Berger, Director of Planning, Circulate San Diego; Ted A. Godshalk, Director of Paradise Creek; Danny Serrano, Campaign Director, the Environmental Health Coalition.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Vargas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Juan" and the last name "Vargas" clearly distinguishable.

JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress