

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1501

May 8, 2024

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing & Urban Development,
& Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing & Urban Development,
& Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Womack and Ranking Member Quigley:

As you craft the fiscal year 2025 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I respectfully request the inclusion of \$2,000,000 in community project funding for the City of Ely Urban Renewal Initiative. The entity receiving the funding for this project is the City of Ely, located at 1570 Rowley Street, Ely, Iowa 52227.

This project aims to support the City of Ely, Iowa, in Phase 2 of its redevelopment of the Old Town District, representing a vital initiative to revitalize and reimagine the heart of the community. This investment would fund the necessary reconstruction and infrastructure improvements in the district, including stormwater, sewer water, and road improvements. These investments will aid the city in attracting new businesses downtown while supporting existing ones.

Ely – like many small towns across the country – has seen its downtown area grapple with various challenges over the years, ranging from economic shifts to changing consumer behaviors. This has been especially detrimental to Ely's local economy and workforce due to the downtown area's failing, outdated infrastructure. Improving the infrastructure in this area and creating connectivity and ease of access with neighboring cities will help promote businesses in the downtown area and a sense of regionalism with the surrounding communities.

The city has identified the original platted area of Ely and has a goal to focus on not only preserving the history specific to the city but also bringing it alive by improving older structures and making needed infrastructure updates. This project would directly benefit the community by providing amenities for residents and creating economic development opportunities to attract new workers to the city. This is especially needed since commercial businesses are unable to operate in the city, given the outdated infrastructure systems. By making these improvements,

commercial businesses would be able to operate in the city, providing needed job opportunities and bringing a new workforce into the city.

The primary outcomes of this project include economic development growth, improvements to stormwater management, and enhanced fire protection. Investing in infrastructure improvements for a safer, more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly downtown, along with beautification efforts and new wayfinding, will enhance the appeal of the community for current businesses, prospective residents, and visitors, thus boosting the overall economic vibrancy of the area. Investing in downtowns is crucial to keep a community thriving.

I strongly urge the Committee to include this community project funding request in the FY25 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ashley Hinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ashley Hinson
Member of Congress
Committee on Appropriations