

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

April 26, 2021

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

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, & Related
Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

As you craft the fiscal year 2022 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you include \$615,000 in community project funding for the Chaplain Schmitt Island Trail Connection in Dubuque, Iowa, the recipient of which is the City of Dubuque, located at 50 W 13th Street, Dubuque, IA 52001.

Volunteers within the City of Dubuque have come together over the last five years to create a "Chaplain Schmitt Island Task Force" for the purpose of upgrading a small landfill located in the Mississippi River to build a Veterans Memorial Plaza in honor of a local hero, connected by a continuous trail system. The memorial itself is already constructed, but residents and visiting veterans do not have a way to access it.

Chaplain Aloysius Schmitt was a Roman Catholic priest and son of Iowa who served in the Archdiocese of Dubuque. In addition to serving his local community through faith, he served his country as a chaplain in the United States Navy during World War II. On December 7, 1941, Father Schmitt lost his life at Pearl Harbor while lifting sailors out of a porthole on the sinking USS Oklahoma. He saved 12 lives that day, but sacrificed his own in the process, becoming the first American chaplain to die in the war.

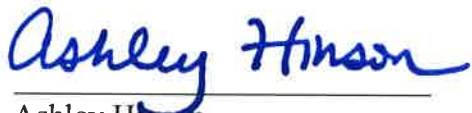
The community did not have adequate funding to finalize the project in Chaplain Schmitt's memory, and the construction of the trail and trailhead was left incomplete. This community project funding award would enable the City of Dubuque to finally finish the trails that have been a top priority for the community, connecting local means of transportation, as well as memorializing a fallen hero of national and local interest.

The completion of this trail system provides a plethora of opportunities for the city and surrounding rural areas, connecting the low-income communities that have the highest concentration of youth, elderly, and car-free households with a continuous thirty-mile trail

system for pedestrian and bicycle use. The project will provide safe, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant trail access, removing a key barrier for individuals with mobility challenges. Additionally, it has been reported that a lack of trails is within the top 10 percent of what community members and tourists alike believe Dubuque is lacking, negatively impacting its place as a tourism destination along the Mississippi River. The completion of this project will improve quality of life and help with talent retention and economic growth for the city.

I strongly urge the Committee to include this Community Project Funding request in the FY 22 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill. I believe it would be a reasonable use of taxpayer dollars to increase accessibility for the entire community and provide Dubuquers with a memorial capable of supporting local economic growth, environmentally friendly recreation, and greater mobility as they pay respects to Chaplain Schmitt while travelling along the scenic Chaplain Schmitt Island Trails.

Sincerely,



Ashley Hinson

Member of Congress

Committee on Appropriations