

To: Congressman Palazzo
From: City of Diamondhead, MS
Re: Community Project Funding Request

**Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
HUD EDI**

Project Name: Diamondhead Commercial District Transformation Project (Diamondhead, MS)

General description of the project and why it is needed:

Based on the City's adopted Town Center District Masterplan, the Commercial District Transformation Project will connect two distinct parts of the city and provide access to a new technology park, enhance internal traffic flows, reduce regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and spur economic/commercial development. Using a complete street approach, Diamondhead envisions a boulevard style roadway that will accommodate multiple modes of travel including bicycles and pedestrians, electric vehicles, charging stations, and mixed-use commercial and residential development. The project will include a multi-modal lane, green space including pocket parks, decorative street lighting, and a thematic design suitable to the Gulf Coast.

This project is scalable and the City will implement the overall Commercial District Transformation Project in Phases which have independent utility and value.

What are the benefits of this project and why is it a priority? NOTE: Benefits could include safety, environmental, economic, equity, mobility, etc. This description will not appear in the House report.

The benefits of this project include:

- Economic Development
- Increased property values and property tax revenue
- Enhanced access to goods & services
- Reduced regional Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Improved traffic operations & safety
- Significant travel time cost savings
- Allows for Senior Citizens to "age-in-place"

This project will directly address the regional sustainability goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled, as identified in the Regional sustainability plan for the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

EXAMPLE: These improvements will improve the health and safety of more than 350 seniors that rely on services provided through the center for supplemental meals and health services, as well as to meet requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result of a closure of a nearby community services facility within the County, improvements are necessary to address a recent increase in demand for elderly services and the need to expand the services available at this elderly services facility, which is in close proximity to County's largest elderly housing development.

Amount requested for the community project and the total project cost:

\$1,000,000 (Scalable based on available funding)

Can the project obligate all appropriated funds within 12 months after enactment? If not, what would be the expected date of obligation?

Yes, the City of Diamondhead has already completed the commercial district transformation project masterplan and has started the pre-construction phase (engineering and permitting).

Estimated start and completion dates:

As previously noted, the project is scalable and pre-construction phase services (engineering and permitting) are underway. Construction of the project would be completed within 12 months of approval of a grant agreement with HUD.

Has the request been submitted to another Subcommittee or Committee this fiscal year? If yes, which one(s)?

Components of the project may qualify for THUD – DOT Local Transportation Priorities (e.g. roadway construction, sidewalks, etc). A complementary Community Project Funding Request can be submitted under Local Transportation Priorities.

Does the project have other public (federal, state, local) and/or private funds committed to meet match or cost-share requirements for costs related to construction, operations, and maintenance? If so, what is the source and amount of those funds? NOTE: The match requirements are defined in statute. While EDI projects do not have a match requirement, other projects associated with a larger development effort may.

The City has committed local funding and state funding has been allocated by the Mississippi State Legislature through the Mississippi Development Authority.

- Local funds committed to date: \$700,000.00
- State funds committed to date: \$1,500,000

Does the project require an environmental review? If so, what is the status and/or outcome of the environmental review and NEPA category of action (if applicable)?

The project would require environmental reviews. A wetland delineation has been completed and the permitting process is underway.

Is the project primarily a service, new construction, rehabilitation, land or site acquisition, planning, or economic development project?

The project is primarily an economic development project with community quality of life benefits.

Does the project primarily benefit persons of low-income or tribal communities?

N/A

Does the project impact beneficiaries of HUD's rental assistance programs (owners, public housing agencies, service providers, or tenants)?

N/A

Who are the community partners participating in this project?

Design charrettes will take place with the Community Associations within Diamondhead and local organizations such as the Chambers of Commerce, the Gulf Coast Business Council, and Partners for Stennis. The project will be developed to meet the needs of incoming residents and to enhance community interests.

If the project includes new construction or land or site acquisition activities, does it comply with local zoning requirements?

Yes

Is the project included or supported by an identified priority area within the community's HUD Consolidated Plan? If yes, please provide a link to the plan.

N/A

Is the project intended to address issues related to climate change or resiliency, civil unrest, or inequities?

Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency

This project will directly address the regional sustainability goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled, as identified in the Regional sustainability plan for the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As noted on page 57 of the Plan, the recommendations called for enhancing the Quality of Life by providing more transportation choices so that the number of

commuters who can choose to walk, bike or bus, would improve the quality of life for residents of the region by:

- Reduced demand for energy by reducing need for fossil fuels
- Reducing the number of cars on the road and mobile emissions resulting from vehicles
- Alleviating congesting and decreasing commute times
- Promoting healthy, active alternatives to driving
- Supporting access to and interaction with communities and neighborhoods

This project will preserve the environment by lowering the number of pollutants emitted into the air and by reducing the number of daily VMT per capita. Diamondhead completed a benefit cost analysis (BCA) and the results show that this project will have an environmental benefit of over \$2.4M. This amount includes significant reductions in nitrix oxide, particular matter, and carbon dioxide. This project decreases the negative effects on air quality created by high VMT amounts. Improved air quality can also reduce respiratory issues and promote better public health.

Equity

Designing communities and transportation systems for cars excludes citizens that do not have regular access to personal vehicles. Vulnerable populations, such as low-income households, minorities, children, persons with disabilities, and older adults typically own fewer vehicles and have longer commutes. Transportation options such as walking and biking, are sometimes the only available and affordable transportation choice. Without adequate facilities, they are more likely to be exposed to unsafe routes for pedestrians and bicycles because they have no other choice.