April 23, 2021

Honorable Trent Kelly
United States House of Representatives
2243 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: FY22-DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION-COMMUNITY FUNDING REQUEST

Dear Congressman Kelly:

On behalf of the City of Oxford, please accept our sincere appreciation for your support of our community needs and Mississippi’s interests. As noted in our previous communications and visits to Washington, the LOU Partnership (consisting of the entities of Lafayette County, City of Oxford and University of Mississippi) works continuously as a united community to develop opportunities and solutions for challenges.

While great strides are being made by local collaborative efforts, it is unfortunate that the City, County and University have not been selected for Federal funding in past application cycles. However, based on a positive debrief with the U.S. Department of Transportation of the City’s previous applications, the LOU Partnership will continue pursuing competitive funding opportunities, understanding that a more consistent and programmatic approach is required to address our transportation needs. We desire a collaborative approach between local, state, private and federal resourcing, including a possible congressionally designated assistance program, especially given that the LOU Community has limited accessibility to federal assistance, as we are not located within the boundaries of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

To this end, we respectfully submit this request for $5,000,000 to reconfigure one of Oxford’s busiest and most dangerous intersections--State Highway 7 and University Avenue. The Mississippi Department of Transportation is in the field review process of design, but the project was put on hold because the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) is “fiscally restrained” as a part of policy. Due to the importance of the SR7/University Avenue project, the City of Oxford pursued funding from the Mississippi Legislature, and in 2020, received $4,000,000 in appropriations in Mississippi House Bill 1730. Still, more funding is needed to push the project to construction. $5,000,000 in federal funding, combined with the State and City’s commitments will allow construction to begin almost immediately, as the design process is nearly completed. This project is pivotal in serving our community, providing a gateway to Oxford, and reducing dangerous accidents

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and your very responsive assistance. We look forward to working with you and your staff to address these critical infrastructure needs of our unique community.

Sincerely,

Robyn Tannehill, Mayor
City of Oxford, Mississippi
The City of Oxford has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade. Nearly 65,000 individuals fill our city daily during peak hours. The University Avenue and Highway 7 intersection is a major crossroads allowing our citizens, visitors, and workforce to enter the East side of town. The City of Oxford is requesting a bond allocation of $3,000,000 a year for three years to help complete this project, which will enhance safety for motorists.