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**Diane
Gutierrez-Scaccetti**

Last year I announced an initiative called **“Commitment to Communities”** that highlighted the New Jersey Department of Transportation’s pledge to ensure local governments succeeded in delivering transportation projects that improve safety and quality of life in our communities without unduly burdening local property taxpayers. I am reaching out to you as valued stakeholders to tell you that we

indeed are succeeding, and this success is an important element in providing superior multi-modal mobility to millions of New Jerseyans every day.

In 2016, the NJ Transportation Trust Fund was reauthorized and funded through a **23-cent per gallon** fuel tax that greatly expanded New Jersey’s infrastructure spending from **\$1.6 billion annually to \$2 billion annually**.

What still may not be widely understood is that more than half of the **\$400 million increase (\$240 million)** was statutorily dedicated to the programs that support transportation infrastructure improvements on the county and municipal roadway systems. The New Jersey Department of Transportation and its partner agency, NJ TRANSIT, received a far lesser sum to apply to its annual capital programs. Those amounts were \$49.5 million and \$93.5 million respectively. So when you hear people ask: **“Where is my 23 cents going?”** they do not have to look much farther than the repairs underway to the streets and bridges in their towns. I have more to say about this in articles below.

(Attached to this email in a separate file is a chart that shows how the \$400 million increase was allocated.)

The “Commitment to Communities” initiative also embodies the diversity of work performed by NJDOT day-in and day-out for the benefit of the State’s



NEW MISSION STATEMENT

NJDOT will provide a world class transportation system that:

- Enhances the **quality of life** for residents and traveling public
- Achieves consistent progress through focused investments in keeping infrastructure in a **State of Good Repair**
- Stimulates and sustains smart development and **economic growth**
- Employs the latest **technologies** to adapt to changing conditions and environments
- Respects and protects the distinctive and delicate character of the State’s **natural resources**
- Eagerly embraces its role as a **customer service** organization

taxpayers. To better exemplify our pledge, I have revamped the NJDOT’s Mission Statement to more fully reflect agency tenets, the varied work we do, and the many external constituencies that we serve.

The Department will be inclusive of all the various communities it serves by fostering good relationships, listening and being responsive, and by embracing the concept that NJDOT is a customer-service agency and that you, our external stakeholders, are our customers. To accomplish this, I have articulated five key **“values”** that guide the Department’s mission. They are **“Inform,” “Innovate,” “Collaborate,” “Empower,” and “Evolve.”** In every facet of our mission these values come into play.

Whether it is working with environmental advocates and associated governmental agencies to reclaim land for recreational use as part of a larger infrastructure repair project, or helping direct disadvantaged school kids towards careers in engineering and technology, or fashioning a pilot program to help parolees re-enter society by providing transportation-related work experience, the NJDOT serves many constituencies not traditionally associated with transportation.

NJDOT awards Municipal Aid to 95 percent of New Jersey's towns and cities

Fundamental to the "Commitment to Communities" initiative is the focus on local government agencies and their success in spending the increased transportation aid to municipalities and counties through the Transportation Trust Fund. Recently, the NJDOT announced [Municipal Aid awards](#) for Fiscal Year 2019 to 537 municipalities, representing 95 percent of towns and cities across the state, for road, bridge, safety, and quality of life improvements on the local roadway system. County roads and local streets account for 90 percent of New Jersey's entire roadway network.

(A three-year Municipal Aid funding summary by county is attached as a separate file in this email.)

As I mentioned above, the TTF reauthorization doubled Municipal Aid and County Aid from \$78.75 million to \$161.25 million per year per program. Under the Municipal Aid grant program, each county is apportioned a share of the total funding based on population and the number of local centerline miles. Municipalities compete for portions of their county's share. NJDOT provides 75 percent of the grant amount

when a town awards a contract and the remaining 25 percent upon completion of the project. Of the \$161.25 million, there is \$10 million allotted for municipalities qualifying for Urban Aid under state law, with the amounts determined by the Department of Community Affairs.

Applicants for Municipal Aid grants this year were submitted to NJDOT by October 2018 and have been judiciously reviewed. There are seven project categories within the Municipal Aid program eligible for funding: Roadway Preservation, Roadway Safety, Quality of Life, Mobility, Bikeway, Pedestrian Safety, and Bridge Preservation. Past performance in connection with timely award of projects and construction close-out factor were part of the evaluation of the proposals. When evaluating applications, NJDOT also considers if the municipality has adopted Complete Streets policies. Complete Streets policies establish guidelines that require consideration be given to pedestrians and bicyclists when local transportation projects are being planned, designed, and built.



NJ Transportation Infrastructure Bank beginning to bear fruits by awarding first loans to local governments

New Jersey's first transportation loan program, the NJ Transportation Infrastructure Bank is a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank. It opened for business in May 2018 to provide low interest loans for municipal and county transportation projects. The Transportation I-Bank is funded through a \$22.6 million annual appropriation from the state gas tax, which is then leveraged through private funds.

The creation of the Transportation I-Bank is significant because loans it awards reduce the total cost of local transportation infrastructure by lowering the cost of financing thereby enabling our local governments to address real problems on their systems. The program will provide unprecedented opportunities for the design

and construction of high-cost local projects that cannot be fully funded through Local Aid grants.

I am particularly proud of the Transportation I-Bank's achievements during its first year of operations. The first loan was issued last December to Camden County for a resurfacing project in Pennsauken, just eight months after the Transportation I-Bank's doors opened. To date, loans totaling almost \$15 million have been issued to three borrowers, including Camden County, as well as the City of Orange and Essex County for a variety of infrastructure repairs. An additional \$27 million has been allocated to six other projects in Burlington County, Cape May County, Somerdale, Wildwood and Pennington. Those loans are scheduled to close soon.

Conclusion

Maintaining and improving our local roads, and providing funding mechanisms that hold down taxes, is an important piece of solving the transportation puzzle in New Jersey. The pieces to this puzzle all have to fit together for all the transportation agencies in the state to be able to deliver the kinds of services that the taxpayers and residents of this great state deserve. If one of the pieces is missing then the picture is obfuscated and not complete. Governor Murphy recognizes this, as do I, and his administration's promise to make New Jersey's transportation system one that is world class is unwavering. In the coming months, I will be reaching

out to you again to provide additional information and to tell other stories about what the New Jersey Department of Transportation is doing to fulfill its "Commitment to Communities."

Thank you for taking the time to read this and please feel free to share it with your colleagues. If you have any questions about any of the information in this newsletter please feel free to contact NJDOT's Office of Constituent Relations at 609-963-1982.

Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti
Commissioner

