

(Washington DC) This morning, Congressman Charlie Gonzalez, City Councilman Richard Perez, Tim Tuggey, Chair of the VIA Board Trustees, VIA President and CEO John Milam and Port Authority of San Antonio President and CEO Bruce Miller announced funding for vital city projects that has cleared the first hurdle in the appropriations process. Last week, the House Appropriations Committee approved \$700,000 for Main Plaza, the 36th Street Extension and VIA buses and bus facility on June 6th.

"San Antonio has reached the first step in appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for these projects, each of which will lead to a higher quality of life for our community," said Congressman Charlie Gonzalez. "At the end of the process, it is my hope that these investments will be made so that our city will be able to honor its rich past and prepare for a bright future. Federal dollars should be wisely used and the renovation of Main Plaza, the Extension of 36th Street and upgrade of the VIA facility and buses qualify as prudent and farsighted investments that will yield dividends for our community for years to come.

I want to thank Mayor Hardberger, the City Council, VIA and the Port Authority of San Antonio for their assistance and their vision of what the San Antonio of tomorrow will look like. These funds will be a great start."

"I want to thank Congressman Gonzalez for his efforts on behalf of our city," said Mayor Phil Hardberger. "He is a great advocate for San Antonio, and we appreciate his hard work to help secure this funding."

Later this month, the full House will consider and vote on the legislation-the Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill (TTHUD)-that will make these funds available. After the House approves this must-pass funding bill, the Senate will consider, possibly amend, and vote on it. Next, the House and Senate will go to conference committee to reconcile any differences in the two chambers' bills before sending it to the President to be signed into law.

As currently written, TTHUD provides \$100,000 in funding from Housing and Urban Development agency budget for renovating and improving Main Plaza so that it will become an important tourist attraction west of the River Walk.

VIA will receive \$400,000 from the Department of Transportation budget to upgrade its buses and bus maintenance facilities. Because VIA is enjoying a surge in ridership, a trend expected to accelerate in San Antonio, additional resources are needed to keep pace with the demand for service.

The 36th Street Extension project will receive \$200,000 to complete the final phase of major arterial improvements at Kelly USA. This funding is critical to the \$364 million development project for the Port Authority of San Antonio.

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