



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy Secures Funding to Rebuild South Park Avenue and Ridge Road

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY August 27, 2014

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*Kennedy delivers \$2.5 million state investment that will repair crumbling South Park Avenue & Ridge Road.*

*Critical routes through Lackawanna connect residents and visitors to Botanical Gardens, Our Lady of Victory Basilica, waterfront and other important destinations.*

LACKAWANNA, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy has secured critical new funding to rebuild South Park Avenue and Ridge Road, which are now crumbling after falling into a severe state of disrepair. Senator Kennedy delivered \$2.5 million to the City of Lackawanna to

revive these two important roadways, which thousands of Western New Yorkers travel daily to go to work or to visit vital local landmarks, such as Our Lady of Victory Basilica, the Botanical Gardens and our waterfront. With funding now in place, Lackawanna plans to start construction in Spring 2015.

“When Lackawanna residents told me the deteriorating conditions of South Park Avenue and Ridge Road were not just frustrating them, but also costing them money in vehicle maintenance, I took their fight to Albany,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. “With these roads literally crumbling, we fought hard to secure this state funding, which will now deliver long-overdue repairs to South Park Avenue and Ridge Road. This \$2.5 million state investment will help revitalize South Park and Ridge, alleviate a financial burden facing the city and relieve frustrations that Lackawanna residents have long endured. I’m proud Albany has heeded our call and will now invest in critical road reconstruction to help us build a stronger Lackawanna and Western New York.”

For years, Lackawanna has faced financial challenges resulting from a strained tax base and rising costs. This has severely limited the local resources available for the rehabilitation of roads. An unfortunate consequence has been the deteriorating conditions on South Park Avenue and Ridge Road, which transport large volumes of commercial and residential traffic every day.

In May, Senator Kennedy called on New York State to share the responsibility for the restoration and repair of South Park Avenue and Ridge Road. He was joined in that call by Lackawanna Mayor Geoffrey Szymanski and the City Council. After months of work, Kennedy has successfully secured the funds needed to repair these crumbling roads. Road reconstruction is a critical facet of Kennedy and the Lackawanna leaders’ efforts to revitalize South Park Avenue and Ridge Road.

**Mayor Geoffrey Szymanski** said, “We have wanted to repair and improve South Park Avenue and Ridge Road for a long time, and now, thanks to Senator Kennedy, we’ll finally be able to rebuild these roads that so many Western New Yorkers rely on. Senator Kennedy understood the critical need we faced, and he went to work for us, fighting to secure this important state investment. The repair of these roads is vital to the future strength of Lackawanna, and we’re thrilled to now have the funding we need to move this project forward.”

**David Swarts, president and CEO of Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens**, said, “The Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens attracts thousands every year, and a revitalized South Park Avenue will enhance the pathway for our visitors and encourage them to stay in our community to check out all that Lackawanna and Buffalo have to offer after they visit the gardens. Senator Kennedy has been tenacious in his pursuit of this much-needed investment from New York State, and we thank him and the City of Lackawanna for making revitalization of South Park Avenue and Ridge Road a priority.”

With this \$2.5 million project – scheduled to start in Spring 2015 – South Park Avenue, from Lackawanna’s north city limit to the south city limit, will be completely repaved, and Ridge Road will be refurbished from South Park Avenue to Abbott Road. The project will also include pavement striping, replacement of some concrete curbing and sidewalks, and the installation of ADA-compliant access ramps. Kennedy and city leaders also remain in pursuit of additional funding through the state’s Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which will further expand the scope of the project. With TAP funding, South Park Avenue will additionally undergo major sidewalk and curb replacements to make the road more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, while also making it easier for businesses to draw in customers. The funding that Kennedy delivered today is expected to help leverage the additional funds through TAP.

Every day, residents and out-of-town visitors travel these critical routes to reach important destinations like the Botanical Gardens, Our Lady of Victory Basilica and our waterfront, and commercial traffic often relies on South Park Avenue and Ridge Road to connect to Route 5 or Interstate-90 and to deliver materials to area companies. About 11,300 vehicles travel South Park Avenue in Lackawanna daily, according to the most recent counts for average annual daily traffic (AADT), while Ridge Road sees daily traffic above 12,200 vehicles.

Lackawanna residents have long been frustrated by the deteriorating conditions of South Park Avenue and Ridge Road. In fact, over the course of this year's harsh winter, South Park Avenue became a type of poster child for the pothole problems facing the entire the region. It received high levels of public attention through several media reports detailing its worsening conditions. Municipal leaders, who have been grappling with a financially-strapped budget, have been searching for answers, and Senator Kennedy has found them a solution them with this state investment.

"Lackawanna is a proud city that has seen some hard times, and they have desperately needed this relief from the state," Kennedy said. "This funding will help us advance a vision for a revitalized South Park Avenue that will connect Western New Yorkers to their waterfront and welcome them to important cultural assets like Our Lady of Victory Basilica and the Botanical Gardens."

As a county legislator, Kennedy helped spearhead the South Park Avenue Revitalization Project, which led to the redevelopment of South Park Avenue in the City of Buffalo. The project, which had key city and federal support from Mayor Byron Brown and Congressman Brian Higgins, reconstructed South Park Avenue and instilled a new energy along this critical corridor through South Buffalo. Kennedy has long desired to extend this revitalization of South Park Avenue from Buffalo into the City of Lackawanna.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the town of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*