



CHAUTAUQUA WATERSHED CONSERVANCY

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Preserve and enhance the quality, scenic beauty and ecological health of the Chautauqua region's lands and waters for our community.

October 14th, 2024

Ms. Karen Utz, Regional Director
Regional Economic Development Council
95 Perry St., Ste. 500
Buffalo, NY 14203

RE: VILLAGE OF SHERMAN - NY FORWARD GRANT APPLICATION ROUND 3

Dear Ms. Utz,

I write today in strong support of the Village of Sherman's NY Forward Grant Program application for the multiple transformational complementing projects under one master project for trail development along French Creek in concert with the revitalization of downtown businesses and organizations in efforts to grow the community and attract visitors to the region.

The Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy was established "to preserve and enhance the quality, scenic beauty, and ecological health of lands and waters of the Chautauqua region for our community". The inviting green spaces around French Creek require management in balancing bank and habitat preservation while encouraging outdoor recreation. The Village's streetscape improvements will aid in managing the localized flooding and improving the quality of run-off discharging to French Creek. Watershed stewardship is critical to our mission in preserving the health of unique waterways like French Creek which is nationally recognized as the most biologically diverse stream in the northeastern United States and is a home and refuge to 98 rare or endangered species of plants and animals.

The Village has received support from local stakeholders, businesses, and community organizations while updating the Village of Sherman's Climate Smart Comprehensive Plan, performing a Downtown Market Analysis, preparing the Comprehensive Stormwater Improvement Plan, and through the recent Complete Streets Initiative. The new sidewalk pavement, stormwater infiltration trees, and trailhead improvements complement the Village's Complete Streets Initiative. This project sits at the trailhead of Chautauqua Rails to Trails (CR2T), a priority of the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth (CCPEG) and their established group representing multiple trail systems, known as the Friends of the Chautauqua County Greenways (FCCG). Trail system connectivity is essential to the County's economic development strategy.

The Village of Sherman's NY Forward Grant Award will bring transformative projects to Main Street and surrounding area, which is presently undergoing the replacement and right-sizing of the 'grey' stormwater infrastructure in preparation of the next phase of improvements.

The Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy fully supports this important grant application and the community's commitment to improving the lives of people who live and work there through quality programs. I look forward to seeing this project receive favorable consideration.

Should you require any further information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address listed below.

Sincerely,



Dr. Twan Leenders
Director of Conservation, Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy
&
Co-Chair, Friends of the Chautauqua County Greenways (FCCG)

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