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February 27, 2004

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To Replace Unsafe Pedestrian Tunnel Beneath Railroad Tracks
Will Keep Nearby Middle School Students Safe,
Spare Local Taxpayers From Construction Costs

Teaneck, NJ - Answering the concerns of Teaneck residents about an old, unsafe, and rundown pedestrian tunnel underneath railroad tracks that local middle school students have been forced to use daily, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) today announced that he has secured \$500,000 in federal funds to construct a pedestrian overpass to replace the tunnel. Rothman said that according to the Township's preliminary estimates, the funds cover the full cost of the overpass, which residents will be able to use instead of the old pedestrian tunnel located near the intersection of Palisade Avenue and West Englewood Avenue.

"These federal dollars will provide Teaneck residents of all ages with a safe and clean overpass to cross the railroad tracks and put an end to the days when they have to use a dark, dirty, and unsafe tunnel in order to get from one side to the other," said Rothman, who used his position on the House Appropriations Committee to secure the funds. "As a parent of two Bergen County public schoolchildren, I recognize the importance of ensuring that students have safe, clean, and reliable ways to get to and from school. The new pedestrian overpass assures this safe passage and improves the quality of life for Teaneck residents, which is why I am so pleased that I was able to get this done for them."

The federal funds for the overpass, which will be accessible to people with disabilities, will replace the more than 50 year-old tunnel that students of nearby Benjamin Franklin Middle School as well as many other residents, including shoppers in the nearby business district, currently use to get from one side of the tracks to the other. Residents have long sought ways to replace the tunnel, which has leaks, odor problems, and broken steps which create an obstacle for those with strollers and bikes. Until recently, there were major concerns about residents, especially students, crossing the tracks, which at many times have idling trains, to avoid the tunnel. In order to avert an accident on the tracks, Teaneck officials recently put up fencing to prevent people from crossing the tracks.

"I am absolutely delighted and very grateful to Congressman Rothman for his support of this project to construct a pedestrian overpass to replace this tunnel that has been a problem for us for a very long time," Teaneck Mayor

Jacqueline Kates said. "Congressman Rothman took an interest in getting this project done from the first time I brought it to his attention. This new pedestrian overpass is going to make a big difference in the quality of life for all the people of Teaneck."

Rothman added, "In addition to providing a safer crossing for Teaneck residents and improving their quality of life, these federal funds will save Teaneck taxpayers from the cost of the new pedestrian overpass, which otherwise would have been constructed by using only local taxpayer money, or simply not built at all."

Rothman secured the funds as part of the Transportation Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2004. As a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Treasury, Rothman was able to persuade his colleagues on the panel to include the money for the Teaneck overpass project.

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