

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) has successfully secured final congressional approval that will enable the City of Sarasota to use \$1.6 million in federal funds for improvements to 17th Street. The House of Representatives has given final approval to H.R. 1195, which amends the federal highway bill enacted in 2005 and includes language introduced by Buchanan on behalf of Sarasota.

“Everyone has agreed that 17th Street in Sarasota is in need of improvements,” said Buchanan. “But not everyone has agreed on how to address those needs. Today’s action by Congress will allow the City of Sarasota to use \$1.6 million in federal funding to enhance capacity, while addressing the concerns of area residents. Without this correction, the city is at risk of losing the federal funds. ”

The “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” (SAFETEA-LU) enacted in 2005 included federal funding to connect 17th Street from US 41 (Tamiami Trail) to Orange Avenue, making it a through street. As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Buchanan successfully amended the bill to allow the City of Sarasota to use the funds for a revised project to provide improvements to 17th Street at US 301.

“We are pleased that the funds will still be allocated. We plan to use the money for much needed road enhancements at the intersection of 17th Street and U.S. 301,” said City Manager Robert Bartolotta. “We are extremely appreciative and grateful for the work Congressman Buchanan has done to make this possible.”

H.R. 1195 was approved last week by the Senate and goes now to the president for his signature into law.