

Red Bank Mayor Hollie Berry Only Tennessee Leader Selected for Champions Institute

RED BANK, TN (September 12, 2022) – In support of the Active People, Healthy NationSM Initiative, Smart Growth America (SGA) announced that the City of Red Bank's Mayor Hollie Berry will be part of the third class of the Champions Institute. The Champions Institute is a program created to help motivated local elected officials equitably define, design, build, and evaluate Complete Streets in their communities. Mayor Berry was selected as one of only 15 local elected officials from across the United States to serve as a member of the Champions Institute for 2022-23.

"We are pleased to welcome Mayor Berry to the third class of the Champions Institute," said John Robert Smith, Senior Policy Advisor at Smart Growth America, and the former 16-year mayor of Meridian, Mississippi. "As we emerge from the confines of the pandemic, Mayor Berry's commitment to a healthier and more connected hometown was compelling. From Berry's position as Mayor of Red Bank, envisioning a more accessible, equitable, and economically viable community for all residents is a winning strategy."

"It's an honor to represent Red Bank as well as Tennessee in this year's Active People, Healthy NationSM Champions Institute, as the only leader selected from our state," said Mayor Berry.

For over a year Mayor Berry has been representing Red Bank as a member of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). In that role, she felt she had to hit the ground running in learning about the transportation issues that face the local region. The most concerning was the rising rates of traffic fatalities involving pedestrians which motivated Mayor Berry to explore solutions.

"That's when I became aware of the Vision Zero movement, whose goal is to create safer transportation for ALL users regardless of how you get around," added Mayor Berry.

She discovered that the "zero" does not represent the elimination of all crashes, but rather the eventual goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries in a given transportation network. The emphasis this concept puts on the responsibility of designers and policy-makers rather than transportation users alone compelled Mayor Berry to bring this to the attention of her fellow TPO board members.

As a result, the TPO reconvened a long-dormant Safety Committee even before the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act and Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant made

millions of dollars available to regions for safety improvement projects. Mayor Berry shared that the TPO is now applying for this funding with Red Bank as a joint applicant.

"My research also led me to the National Complete Streets Coalition and the Champions Institute," said Mayor Berry. "I look forward to learning from experts everything I can about bringing safer and more complete streets not only to our city of Red Bank, but to our entire region."

"This is exciting news for the City of Red Bank and our Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization (CHCNGA TPO)," said Melissa Taylor, Director of Strategic Long Range Planning with TPO. "From the start of Mayor Berry's service with the TPO, she has been eager to improve safety for all citizens, especially those most vulnerable."

Taylor stated that Mayor Berry was the catalyst for a recent restart of the TPO's Safety Committee and she has been instrumental in recruiting sign-on partners for the TPO's Comprehensive Safety Action Plan application to the US DOT's Safe Streets for All Discretionary Grant due September 15th.

"Our community is lucky to have her out there pounding the pavement for such an important issue. I know she will utilize the knowledge she acquires through this leadership program to enact change here at home," added Taylor.

Red Bank City Manager Martin Granum indicated that Mayor Berry was formally appointed as Red Bank's designated member of the TPO Executive Committee by the Red Bank Commission last fall. Since then, Mayor Berry has invested considerable time serving in that capacity.

"Mayor Berry brings great energy and commitment to the TPO, and her voice is a welcome addition to the region's transportation conversation," stated Granum. "And particularly regarding the goal of Vision Zero... it will take leadership from folks like Mayor Berry if we are ever going to reach that life-saving goal."

###

Attached: Photo Mayor Hollie Berry