Shirley, NY: Councilwoman Connie Kepert and Congressman Tim Bishop announced $1.35 million in federal funding to create a multi-use path on the east side of Southaven County Park along River Road. Once completed, the project will connect existing bike paths on the north and south shores.

"Since my days as a civic leader and now as a councilwoman, I have advocated for better access and safety for cyclists. This funding will create a 2.7 mile multi-use path through Yaphank that will link the Rocky Point State Natural Resource Area, Southaven County Park, Robert Cushman Murphy County Park and Smith Point County Park," stated Councilwoman Kepert.

"This will create an exciting new recreational opportunity for residents near Southaven Park and improve quality of life," Congressman Bishop said. "Safe, accessible bike paths should be available for all Brookhaven families. The 'River Road Path' will serve as a crucial link, which will allow bikers to travel safely from Rocky Point to Smith Point Park, hopefully discovering many of our hidden gems along the way."

The project will be funded using $1.35 million in federal funds secured by Congressman Bishop and $337,500 in Town matching funds. The funds come from a federal grant which dates back to 1998 for a road project which has been abandoned. When Congressman Bishop and Town officials realized those funds would be rescinded if they were not committed to another project, they worked to move the River Road Path forward. Councilwoman Kepert passed a resolution at the July 9 Town Board meeting for the Town to move forward on this project.

Kepert continued, "The 'River Road Path' will help to increase bicycle safety, reduce the number of trips by automobiles and enhance bicycles as a viable alternative transportation mode to local commercial and recreational destinations. And because it is multi-use, walkers, joggers and roller-bladers can exercise without fear of getting struck by passing automobiles."

Congressman Bishop recently worked to use the remainder of the decade old funds to deploy a GPS Opticom preemption system throughout the Town of Brookhaven. This program will allow first responders to respond to emergencies more quickly and safely.