



LIESEL DREISBACH
Chair

STEPHEN REPASCH
Vice Chair

JOHN DIACOYANNIS
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

December 18, 2017

Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects Get \$1.3 million

Pedestrian hazards will be eliminated in Hellertown and Bethlehem, thousands of children will learn how to stay safe on their bicycles and a historic bridge will be restored in North Whitehall Township.

The Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) issued \$1.32 million in Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) program grants Monday, after whittling more than \$10 million worth of applications to five projects designed to make communities safer.

The grants are issued every two years for bicycle, pedestrian and transit-related projects not covered in the region's four-year \$458 million program that maintains the region's road, bridge and transit networks.

"Ninety percent of people right now drive to work every day alone in their cars," said Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Executive Director and LVTS Secretary Becky Bradley. "This money is designed to offset some of that by promoting bicycle and pedestrian programs. These projects help improve air quality and public health, plus they support our economy."

LVTS received applications for 15 projects, some of them alone costing more than the \$1.32 million available to Lehigh Valley projects. Those that didn't make the cut will be forwarded to Harrisburg to compete for a statewide TASA pot of \$55 million. Decisions on those grants won't be made until late January, said Michael Donchez, Senior Transportation Planner for the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

"Money-wise, this is the most we've ever been asked for," Donchez said. "It wasn't easy narrowing the field because so many of the projects are worthy. Hopefully, they'll get money in the statewide round."

Grants approved for projects include:

- **\$500,000 for Bethlehem's Corridor Connection Project** -- The project in South Bethlehem calls for improving crosswalks at three intersections, adding handicap ramps on four streets and increasing lighting in areas frequented by pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **\$325,900 to rehabilitate the Geiger Covered Bridge in North Whitehall Township** -- The project is part of a \$1.2 million project to restore the structural integrity and look of the 157-year-old covered bridge, which is eligible for the National Register of Historic

places. Deterioration has rendered the bridge unable to handle the weight of some vehicles.

- **\$200,000 for Hellertown’s Main Street Pedestrian Safety Initiative** -- The project is part of a \$1.1 million plan that will include crosswalks, LED lighting and handicap ramps at some of the downtown’s busiest intersections.
- **\$160,000 to Community Bike Works of Allentown** – The project help fund the organization’s bicycle education program, which is targeted at low-income youths, including its earn-a-bike program.
- **\$136,100 for the Coalition for Alternative Transportation’s bicycle safety program** – The Bethlehem-based organization plans to use the money for bicycle education and promotions for 6,000 youths from kindergarten through eighth grade. The money will help fund 84 events that will include at least 30 school assemblies focusing on bicycle and helmet safety.