

State awards \$4.3 million for Burlington County projects

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Twenty-two Burlington County municipalities will share more than \$4.3 million in grants from the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

The grants are among 386, worth a total \$81.75 million, awarded statewide last week.

"Most of the municipal aid grants will support road resurfacing or preservation projects, and will help towns make much-needed repairs after a brutal winter," said Jamie Fox, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation. "These grants promote motorist, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, mobility and quality-of-life projects."

Burlington County's 22 grants ranged from \$182,000 for Edgewater Park to \$208,749 for Mount Holly to help fund road projects, along with a \$176,000 Safe Streets to Transit grant to Delran for sidewalk improvements along Route 130.

Given the state of finances for many towns, local officials were pleased to be selected.

"To receive that funding was huge, especially considering how competitive these grant programs have become and the financial state of the Transportation Trust Fund," said Palmyra Borough Administrator John Gural, whose community will use its money to reconstruct South Broad Street from Park Avenue to Public Road.

"These folks have been waiting a long time for this project, so it's a real windfall," Gural said.

Evesham Township Manager Thomas Czerniecki credited Councilman Steve Zeuli for advocating for the proposed improvements to Greentree Road.

"This segment of Greentree is located between the Route 73 and the Cherry Hill border and gets lots of traffic," Czerniecki said. "The road also runs through the neighborhoods surrounding the (J. Harold) Van Zant School and the Woodstream Swim Club, and a number of homes front onto the road, so there is pedestrian activity in the area."

Traffic likely played a role in Delran being awarded funding for its sidewalk project.

"It's really needed, with the increase in traffic and pedestrians along Route 130," Mayor Ken Paris said. "It's very critical for us to put in sidewalks where we can."

With the state funding over two phases, Paris said his municipality should be able to install sidewalks along most of the busy stretch of highway that runs through town.

For the last five years, Route 130 through Burlington County has been designated as the state's deadliest road for pedestrians by the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a nonprofit group that advocates for transportation improvements in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut.

In addition to the Safe Streets to Transit grant, the following Burlington County communities were awarded municipal aid grants: Beverly, Bordentown Township, Burlington City, Edgewater Park, Evesham, Florence, Mansfield, Maple Shade, Medford, Moorestown, Mount Holly, North Hanover, Palmyra, Riverton, Shamong, Springfield, Tabernacle, Westampton, Willingboro, Woodland and Wrightstown.

This year, the competitive municipal aid grant program attracted several hundred cities and towns seeking funding for more than a quarter billion dollars in work.

Under the program, each county is apportioned a share of the total funding based on population and the number of local roadway miles. Municipalities compete for a portion of their county's share.

For approved projects, the DOT provides 75 percent of the grant when a municipality awards a contract for work and the remaining 25 percent when the project is completed.

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