

\$1,000,000 Boonton Main Street Grant

BOONTON - Efforts by local officials and a volunteer committee helped secure a \$1 million federal grant to fund various improvements to the historic Main Street district.

Sen. Anthony Bucco, R-25, will present a ceremonial check at the town Board of Alderman meeting on Monday to represent the \$1 million phase 1 grant that will be used to help increase pedestrian safety, improve lighting and enhance the overall economy in the Main Street area.

Final approvals for specific plans, including those that must account for historic preservation issues, are expected by August 2019, although there is a possibility some work may begin before that date, according to Mayor Matthew DiLauri.

"I think we all agree that the opportunity for Boonton to improve the safety of our citizens and invest in our local economy, all while spending as little of our own tax dollars as possible, benefits us all." DiLauri said. "The inadequate Main Street lighting, coupled with other needed improvements, are the kinds of expensive capital projects we might never see without this amount of grant funding. Besides, other Morris County municipalities are already in second and third phases of this grant, so we're glad Boonton is finally getting the dollars its residents and business community deserve."

The grant comes through the federally funded Transportation Alternative Program, which is administered by the New Jersey Department of Transportation in partnership with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization.

The TAP program provides funding for non-traditional transportation projects developed at the local level to expand travel choice, strengthen local economies and improve quality of life.

Jim Lynch, Ward 4 Alderman and Economic Development Chairman, simultaneously has been working with the NJTPA on a Boonton Transit Village study that he helped secure funding.

"Beginning with my first NJTransit contact back in 2014, I've been convinced that transit village designation would be beneficial and lucrative for the town," Lynch said. "Since then, we've been the recipient of three different planning awards, providing thousands of dollars of professional services to map out Boonton's future, and now \$1 million for physical improvements to our Main Street corridor, none of which would have been possible without the support of NJTransit and the NJTPA."

Support for Boonton's grant came not only from the state but also from a committee of volunteers that helped with conceptual development of the grant, Boonton emergency services, Town boards and commissions, more than 500 petition signatures and letters of support from businesses, the county, and representatives from the federal house and senate.

According to state Department of Transportation Commissioner Richard Hammer, TAP has received 133 applications in the last year, totaling more than \$100 million in requested funds. Boonton was one of only 37 projects awarded money and received the highest amount, second only to Paterson, which received \$1.2 million, according to the DOT's TAP website.

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