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Shapiro Administration Invests Nearly $300,000 in Seven Pennsylvania Communities to Improve Walking and Biking Networks, Boost Physical Activity

Harrisburg, PA – Pennsylvanians in seven communities will benefit from the Shapiro Administration's investment of nearly $300,000 to help develop active transportation plans that connect local destinations with improved pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center today announced grants totaling $290,000 through the WalkWorks program. Over the next year, local transportation and community planners will collect data, assess current conditions and aspirations, and incorporate public input to craft Active Transportation Plans.

"The WalkWorks program is a win-win for people and communities. Living in, working in, or visiting communities with safe, beautiful, functional, and accessible public spaces and streets not only increases opportunities for physical activity, but it also promotes economic development," said **Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen**. "From a health perspective, making it easy and safe for people to walk, roll, and bike between destinations increases physical activity — which is proven to reduce chronic disease, improve overall health and wellness, and reduce health care costs."

The WalkWorks program leverages partnership with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and its co-funding of two of the grant recipients through the Community Conservations Partnership Program and its Mini-Grant Program.

"Planning for better walking and bicycling routes helps communities address real challenges, from cleaner air to reduced traffic congestion and improved health," said **DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn**. "DCNR is proud to partner with the Department of Health and local leaders to create trails and connections that link neighborhoods, get people outside and active, and strengthen local economies."

This year's grant recipients are:

Columbia County

Berwick Borough: $40,000

Erie County

Millcreek Township: $50,000

Luzerne County

Freeland Borough: $30,000

White Haven Borough: $30,000

Mercer County

Mercer County Regional Planning Commission: $50,000

City of Sharon: $50,000

Westmoreland County

City of Jeannette: $40,000

These WalkWorks grants help to make connections between transportation policy and public health.

“Active Transportation is about both epic adventures and trips to the playground or the grocery store, work or the doctor’s office. Communities across the Commonwealth need safe, accessible, and inviting networks connecting everyday destinations to enhance public health, improve quality of life, increase economic vitality, bolster social cohesion and civic engagement, and support environmental health,” said **Samantha Pearson, Healthy Communities Program Manager at the Pennsylvania Downtown Center and coordinator of the WalkWorks Program**. “We see that developing Active Transportation Plans sets communities up for success with future infrastructure grant applications, road safety-enhancing policy refinement, and vital mobility-related education programs.”

Grant recipients were selected with assistance from a multi-disciplinary review team that included representatives from DOH, the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, DCNR, and the Department of Community and Economic Development.

The WalkWorks program is committed to expanding walkability, bikeability, accessibility, and connectivity to transit across Pennsylvania and encourages residents to incorporate activity-friendly routes into daily routines.

Funding for the grants is provided by DOH through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant program and A Strategic Approach to Advancing Health Equity for Priority Populations with or at Risk for Diabetes Cooperative Agreement, as well as from DCNR’s Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, through the Environmental Stewardship Fund and the Community Conservation Partnership Program.

For more information about WalkWorks, visit the PA WalkWorks website.

Visit the Explore PA Trails and Get Outdoors PA website for information on recreational resources.