



Town of Bethlehem Receives Safe Routes to School Funding Grant will be used to lay sidewalk near Hamagrael, BCMS

The Town of Bethlehem has been awarded \$500,000 in federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding for sidewalks, ADA ramps and crosswalk markings along Delmar Place, Fernbank Avenue, and a portion of Adams Street near the Bethlehem Middle School, Hamagrael Elementary School, and St. Thomas the Apostle School.

The funding is part of the \$26.5 million Safe Routes to School grants announced by New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Joan McDonald last week. Within the Capital Region, 8 municipalities were awarded funding, totaling \$2.39 million.

The Bethlehem Middle School, Hamagrael Elementary School, and St. Thomas the Apostle School are all neighborhood schools yet travel conditions for students walking to these schools are poor. Specifically, the funding will provide pedestrian improvements along Delmar Place between Kenwood Avenue and Fernbank Avenue, Fernbank Avenue between Delmar Place and Elsmere Avenue, and a portion of Adams Street, which totals a distance of +/-5,600 feet.

Support for the project was provided by the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, Bethlehem Central School District Superintendent, Middle School and Hamagrael Elementary School principals, St. Thomas the Apostle School principal, and Parent Teacher Organizations.

The Town's completed application can be found on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee webpage at <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/pages/AdvisoryComs/advPaTHs.asp>

"The project will provide a safe, accessible and convenient path for hundreds of students to walk to school," said Supervisor John Clarkson. "Our residents want sidewalks, particularly where safety is involved, and this project fills a link on the Town's pedestrian plans and advances our Complete Streets goals."

The intent of Safe Routes to School is to enable and encourage children to walk or bicycle to school; help children adopt a more healthy and active lifestyle by making bicycling and walking a safer and more appealing transportation alternative; and facilitate the planning, development and implementation of transportation projects that will improve safety while reducing traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. Federal funding was made available to NYSDOT, which administers the SRTS program and will reimburse 100 percent of eligible project costs for these successful programs.

"The health and safety of our students is our utmost priority," said Bethlehem Central Schools Superintendent Dr. Thomas J. Douglas, "and we are delighted to partner with the town on a project that benefits the district's children and the community as a whole."

Eligible projects must be located within two miles of a primary or middle school, be located on public right-of-way, benefit the public interest and address at least one of the five SRTS categories. Categories include engineering (infrastructure) efforts, as well as education, enforcement, encouragement and evaluation of program impact (non-infrastructure) efforts. The Town expects to complete the engineering design of the sidewalk this year, and construction to begin in the Spring of 2014.

Read more: "BCSD teams with Town of Bethlehem for Safe Routes to School Grant"

at <http://bethlehemschools.org/News/201213/120928saferoutes.htm>