

Funding for area transportation projects advances in U.S. House

David Singleton, The Times-Tribune, Scranton, Pa.

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Jun. 9—A \$5 million appropriation for a new headquarters for the County of Lackawanna Transit System is part of almost \$20 million under consideration in Washington for area transportation-related projects requested by U.S. Rep Matt Cartwright.

Cartwright, D-8, Moosic, announced Tuesday that all 11 requests he submitted to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for what are known as Member Designated Projects made the cut and are included in the INVEST in America Act.

The bill, a \$547 billion surface transportation reauthorization package, will be reviewed by the committee in a markup today. If approved, it will advance to the floor for a vote by the full House.

This year, the committee accepted funding requests from House members for projects in their districts. Cartwright worked with local officials to identify the 11 projects he submitted in April.

The \$5 million for COLTS will go toward the construction of a new headquarters building on land behind its current facility on North South Road in Scranton, Executive Director Robert Fiume said Tuesday.

Like the existing building, which will be demolished, the new structure will house the agency's administrative offices and a maintenance facility, he said. It will be large enough for COLTS to bring all of its vehicles under cover.

"It solves a lot of our issues — storage issues, parking issues, maintenance," Fiume said. "This facility is going to be state-of-the-art."

COLTS is currently working with the state Department of Transportation on the design for the project, which carries a preliminary price tag of approximately \$30 million.

"It's moving pretty fast as far as the design," Fiume said.

The bill includes just under \$1.5 million for the Blakely Borough Main Street Corridor Improvement Project.

The project will encompass the area from the anchor at West Lackawanna Avenue to Decker's Bridge in the Peckville section, borough Manager Christopher R. Paone said.

It will entail full restoration of about a half-mile of the Lackawanna County-owned road where the underlying original brick provides inadequate subsurface support and causes the road to deform, plus the milling and paving of another mile.

"Blakely is in the process of putting in brand new sidewalks along the entire corridor of Main Street in the borough and having the road repaired will be great not only for the town but for the thousands of drivers who go up and down it every day," Paone said.

Other requested projects that would be funded under the legislation:
Luzerne County

Crestwood Drive resurfacing project, Wright Twp.: \$1.2 million to resurface 1.72 miles of Crestwood Drive from state Route 309 to state Route 437, along with new signing and pavement markings.

Hazleton bus and bus infrastructure, Hazleton: \$1.5 million for replacement of two diesel buses with two compressed natural gas buses and to purchase land and create a park-and-ride lot.

Lower Demunds Road resurfacing project, Dallas Twp.: \$1.2 million to resurface 1.96 miles of Lower Demunds Road from Route 1014 to Route 1044, plus new signs and pavement markings.

Sleepy Hollow Road bridge replacement, Butler Twp.: \$1.2 million to replace a single-span bridge over Nescopeck Creek that is currently posted for 10 tons. With no load postings and two lanes of traffic, the new bridge will promote connectivity between state Route 309 and St. John's Road.

Monroe County

State Route 115 corridor improvements, Chestnuthill Twp.: \$4 million for safety improvements along Route 115 in the vicinity of Astolat Road to Sugar Hollow Road, including widening shoulders, adding left turn lanes and improving sight distance.

Pike County

State Route 590 resurfacing project, Lackawaxen Twp.: \$2.4 million to resurface a section of Route 590 connecting the northern area of the county to Hawley and neighboring Wayne County.

Wayne County

Bridge replacement on State Route 590 over Ariel Creek, Salem Twp.: \$560,000 to replace a deteriorating bridge constructed in 1932.

Bridge replacement on State Route 590 over Inlet to Finn Swamp, Paupack Twp.: \$432,000 to replace a deteriorating bridge constructed in 1963.

State Route 652 resurfacing project, Berlin Twp.: \$1 million to resurface more than 10 miles of Route 652.

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