

# CITY OF BETHLEHEM

## Department of Community and Economic Development

### Interoffice Memo

**SUBJECT:** Greenway Acquisition

**TO:** Dr. Wandalyn J Enix, Chairwoman, Finance Committee

**FROM:** Tiffany Wismer-DCED Business Manager

**DATE:** 6/26/2023

The City of Bethlehem received a federal grant in the amount of \$2,700,000 for the acquisition of 9/10 of a mile of Norfolk Southern abandoned rail line. This acquisition will allow for the closure of a priority regional trail gap in the Lehigh Valley. A portion of the funds may also be used for the construction of the trail following acquisition. This project will facilitate a major trail connection between the South Bethlehem Greenway and the Saucon Rail Trail. The closure of this gap allows a connection between regional population centers (Bethlehem, Hellertown, Coopersburg, Quakertown), which is about 13.7 miles. This project creates an opportunity for the ultimate connection between Wilkes Barre to Philadelphia via the D & L Trail, Perkiomen Trail and Schuylkill River Trail. Although the trail gap is only 9/10 of a mile, its impact is significant. Creating a regional network of trails promotes healthy living, recreation, tourism, economic development opportunities and options for alternative transportation. This gap closure allows the trail to become a commuter trail where people of all incomes can utilize the trail to get to/from work on a daily basis. The closure of this trail gap is noted as the top priority project in Bethlehem's "BethConnects: A Trail Feasibility Study". The gap closure is listed as one of the top 10 trail gaps by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. Projected revenue and expense associated with this grant were not included in the 2023 budget. The adjustment will amend the total non-utility capital budget from \$14,888,066 to \$17,588,066.

#### REVENUE

<u>Account #</u>	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Change</u>
006A-35134	Community Project Greenway	\$0	\$2,700,000	\$2,700,000

#### APPROPRIATION

<u>Account #</u>	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Change</u>
69999-662043	Greenway Rail Line	\$0	\$2,700,000	\$2,700,000

Thank you for your consideration.