

# 2025 Livable Landscapes Grant Awards

By Contact Jessica Berger

[Northampton County, PA] – County Executive Lamont G. McClure and the Parks and Recreation Division are pleased to announce that Northampton County Council voted unanimously to approve the 2025 Livable Landscape Grant Award recommendations at the Wednesday, June 18th meeting. County Council approved all grant projects presented for a total grant award of \$600,000.

The County's Livable Landscapes Grant Program priorities include land conservation, ecological restoration, education and outreach, municipal park development and rehabilitation, and regional trails. All potential applicants participated in a grant workshop and mandatory individualized pre-application meetings.

Five (5) eligible projects were recommended for grant award approval from a review committee in the Division of Parks and Recreation, the Parks, Recreation, Open Space Advisory Board, County Council Energy, Environment, and Land Use Committee, and County Council.

"Through initiatives like the Northampton County Livable Landscapes Grant Program, we are able to empower our municipalities to protect the County's important natural features, conduct ecological restoration, and provide outdoor recreation for future generations," says County Executive McClure. "Our natural resources, green spaces, and recreational opportunities provides an economic value in terms of savings and earned costs, as a return on our investment in our communities".

"Our grant recipients submitted high-quality, ready to go projects," remarks Sherry Acevedo, Conservation Coordinator and Livable Landscapes Grant Administrator. "We are very pleased to be a funding partner in the construction of a Top 10 State Trail Gap recognized by PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, in the City of Bethlehem. In 2024, a Livable Landscapes Grant Award supplemented this trail gap acquisition, and now we are helping to support the trail construction to connect the South Bethlehem Greenway to the Saucon Rail Trail."

The grant projects were consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Livable Landscapes – An Open Space Plan for Northampton County and other local, regional, and statewide plans. Cumulatively, since 2006, Northampton County has invested \$21.7 million of Livable Landscapes grant awards for land conservation, ecological restoration, streambank stabilization, regional trails, parks, recreation, open space plans, and municipal park development and rehabilitation.

## 2025 Northampton County Livable Landscapes Grant Program Awards

Borough of Hellertown — Tumminello Park Improvements (\$75,000) Municipal Park Development & Rehabilitation

Borough of Northampton — 4th Street Playground Refurbishment (\$100,000) Municipal Park Development & Rehabilitation

Palmer Township — Fox Run Park & Open Space Schoeneck Creek Restoration (\$50,000) Municipal Park Rehabilitation & Ecological Restoration

Upper Mount Bethel Township — UMBT Preserve Phase I Construction (\$75,000) Municipal Park Development & Ecological Restoration

City of Bethlehem — Greenway Trail Gap Construction (\$300,000) Regional Trail Development

TOTAL 2025 County Grant Award: \$600,000



## Happy 4th of July Weekend to You!

By Senator Lisa Boscola

Fourth of July is this weekend and with it comes fireworks displays, community events, and lots of patriotic cheer!

But first, let's reflect on the day 249 years ago that revolutionized democracy and freedom sending waves throughout the world. America was born and brought to life when our Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence.

As Americans are coming together across the commonwealth and country with friends and family to enjoy barbecues and fireworks, we need to remember the call to action that sparked our American revolution - the right to freedom, democracy, equal rights and the pursuit of happiness.



## Drive Safe During Summer Travel

By Senator Lisa Boscola

This summer, two new laws are in effect to support a safe transportation system for all Pennsylvanians, and for those who travel through the Commonwealth.

Signed into law by Governor Josh Shapiro last summer, "Paul Miller's Law" prohibits the use of handheld devices while driving, even when stopped temporarily due to traffic, a red light, or other momentary delay. Pennsylvania already enforces a texting-while-driving ban that prohibits drivers from using mobile devices to send, read, or write text-based communications while their vehicle is in motion. Law enforcement will issue written warnings for violations of Paul Miller's Law through June 5, 2026, when summary citations will begin to be issued to violators.

Governor Shapiro also signed Act 150 of 2024 (75 Pa.C.S. § 3724) into law last November banning devices that flip vehicle license plates to bypass tolls, engage in reckless driving, and facilitate more serious crimes without detection. Drivers caught with these devices commit a summary offense and shall, upon conviction, pay a fine of \$2,000. This is in addition to 75 Pa.C.S. § 1332 which makes it unlawful to display a license plate that is illegible, obscured, covered or otherwise obstructed in any manner which inhibits the proper operation of an automated enforcement or electronic toll collection system.

This summer, distraction-free driving on the PA Turnpike is essential. As open road tolling (ORT) conversion continues, new traffic patterns will be in effect throughout the system. In the east, where ORT is live, toll plaza removal at interchange locations is underway to enhance safety and allow for more natural, free-flowing traffic patterns. While each demolition is unique to its physical location, timing, and traffic, customer safety remains paramount.

Pennsylvania law requires any occupant younger than 18 to buckle up when riding in a vehicle, as well as drivers and front-seat passengers. Children under age 2 must be secured in a rear-facing car seat, and children under age 4 must be restrained in an approved child safety seat. Children must ride in a booster seat until their eighth birthday.

Motorists planning a road trip with a recreational vehicle (RV) should know that motorized RVs are not recommended for the transport of children in child passenger safety seats. Car seats are designed for bench and motor vehicle seats in passenger vehicles. While RVs may meet federal safety standards, they are only required to comply with seat belt standards for front passengers, not for any rear occupants.