

DRJTBC

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The commission informed 27 municipalities that contain commission bridges about the \$40 million fund, he said.

"We have heard from almost all of them," McCartney said.

Mugavero said the commission will fund infrastructure projects, not economic-development projects. When the bridge commission approved toll increases in 2002, critics complained the commission wanted to spend money on economic development.

In 2003, Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell and former New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey pressured the commission to scale back the toll increases and approve other measures, including the elimination of a \$248 million self-insurance fund and an agreement that spending on local projects outside commission property won't exceed \$40 million.

Frenchtown has requested \$795,000 for a variety of improvements near its free bridge to Bucks County, including \$25,000 for directional and welcome signs and \$30,000 to widen and pave pedestrian paths to the bridge.

Mayor Ron Sworen has requested \$95,000 to hire a landscape professional to review the bike path along the river and propose a plan to make the riverfront more visible. The area from the bike path to the river has plant and tree overgrowth, Sworen said.

Frenchtown also has requested \$215,000 to buy two properties for a Victorian-style park with benches and a nature path, \$380,000 to pave a gravel parking lot and \$150,000 for historic lighting at the bridge entrance, the parking lot and the new park.

Pohatcong Township Councilman Sal Vangelli said the township is requesting \$300,000 for "old-time lights" at the New Jersey

entrance to the Riegelsville bridge and for traffic-control, sidewalk and road improvements.

"Hopefully, the bridge commission will be receptive and help dress up the area and beautify the area," Vangelli said.

Millford Mayor James Gallos said his borough has requested \$750,000 for several projects, including a study of how to improve the operation of the traffic light by the Upper Black Eddy-Millford bridge. The borough also wants new sidewalks and curbs along Bridge Street and wants to remove unused railroad tracks and create a path along the river.

Belvidere Mayor Charles Liegel said his borough wants funding to repave Water Street by the free bridge to Lower Mount Bethel Township. The cost of the proposal hasn't been determined, Liegel said.

The State Belt Council of Governments has proposed projects for Upper Mount Bethel Township and Portland, officials said. Information about those projects could not be obtained.

Phillipsburg's projects include improved traffic signals to ease congestion at Union Square, sidewalk improvements, a 300-car

parking deck north of Union Square along the railroad tracks and a \$3 million proposal to realign the Route 22 west exit ramp.

Easton and Phillipsburg officials have proposed encouraging pedestrian traffic between Centre Square and Union Square by using a trolley. Easton's projects include a bike path over the free bridge to Phillipsburg, a new boat launch on the Lehigh River, trolley stops throughout the city, improvements to Scott and Riverside parks, and more on-street parking on Larry Holmes Drive along Scott and Riverside parks.

Easton officials are seeking \$2 million in bridge commission funds for an inter-modal parking deck behind the Gov. Wolf building. The city has already earmarked \$2 million from the state in addition to \$3.5 million in federal dollars through the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority.

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