

LI VILLAGE WINS TRAFFIC SAFETY GRANT

Hempstead gets \$586,000 award for studies, plan

BY PETER GILL

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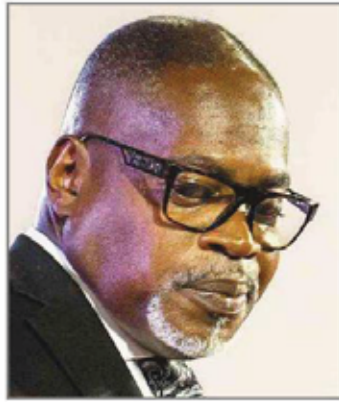
The state's most populous village, which also is one of Long Island's most dangerous areas for pedestrians and cyclists, has won a federal traffic safety grant worth nearly \$600,000.

Hempstead Village's award, to conduct studies and produce a "safety action plan," comes from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads For All program. A completed action plan makes municipalities eligible for additional grants up to \$25 million under the program, though further funding is not guaranteed.

Mayor Waylyn Hobbs Jr. told Newsday the new funding complements an ongoing downtown revitalization initiative, supported by a state grant and other investments.

"We're excited and grateful to have received this grant," he said. "As we're doing our downtown revitalization, we're also designing part of our downtown to make it more foot-traffic-friendly."

Safe Streets and Roads for



Mayor Waylyn Hobbs Jr.

HOWARD SIMMONS



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All is funded through the five-year Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that then-President Joe Biden signed in late 2021.

Hempstead's grant of \$586,018 is part of at least \$3.7 million the program has awarded on Long Island to date.

Hobbs said the village is plan-

ning to use "streetscaping," including strategically planted shrubs along medians and sidewalks to deter jaywalking and to encourage drivers to slow down.

Officials also are considering closing off some downtown streets to automobiles and the village's police department is increasing enforcement of speeding and other violations, as well as community outreach, Hobbs said. "Some of our residents . . . need education on how important it is to make sure that they cross at the crosswalk," he said.

Newsday crash data analysis from 2019 through 2023 identified Hempstead Village as one of the most dangerous areas on Long Island for pedestrians and cyclists. Among other reasons, experts attributed the high crash rates to arterial roads designed for high speeds that go through the downtown center.

There has been a roughly 20% reduction in crashes in the village this year, compared with 2024, Hobbs said.

Rep. Laura Gillen (D-Rockville Centre), who represents the area, said she had encouraged Hempstead to apply for the grant and spoke to Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy about it.

The grant "will help Hempstead develop a comprehensive road safety plan to prevent future tragedies and

make our streets safer for everyone," she said.

A complete list of this year's grantees through the Safe Streets and Roads For All program has not yet been published.

Previous grantees include Brookhaven Town, which published a Vision Zero Action plan in June using a \$380,000 award from the program. Suffolk County is planning to use its \$568,000 grant, awarded in federal fiscal year 2023, for traffic calming, pedestrian enhancements, buffered bike lanes and other projects along county roads such as Lakeland Avenue, Straight Path, Suffolk Avenue and Fifth Avenue, county spokesman Mike Martino said.

Officials from Stony Brook, which received a \$1 million award in 2022, and Huntington Town, which received \$160,000 in 2024, said they are in the procurement phase of their projects. Officials from the City of Long Beach, which received around \$240,000 in 2023, said they aim to complete their safety action plan in the first half of 2026.

Nassau County spokesman Chris Boyle did not respond to inquiries about the county's \$480,000 grant, given in 2022 to create an action plan. Sea Cliff and Upper Brookville Villages also have received grants.