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## Philadelphia and Camden win stimulus funds for bike trails

by Athena D. Merritt Staff Writer

A \$23 million award of stimulus funds Wednesday will make commuting by bike easier in Philadelphia and getting from Cooper River Park in Camden to the City of Brotherly Love by foot or bike a reality in 2012.

The grants — \$17.2 million for Philadelphia and \$5.8 million for Camden — are part of \$1.5 billion awarded from the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program on Wednesday.

The U.S. Department of Transportation said it was flooded with more than 1,400 applications from all 50 states, territories and the District of Columbia, seeking 40 times the amount made available through the program. Philadelphia submitted a regional application with Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Schuylkill counties, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Coopers Ferry Development Cooperation seeking \$36 million, which the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council helped prepare. As of now projects in the other counties have not been funded, but Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter said the city remains committed to the completion of a regional trail network.

"I pledged that the city will support Delaware County, Montgomery County, Chester County and Schuylkill County as they pursue state and federal funding to complete the regional trail network," Nutter said.

The funding in Philadelphia will "fill in critical gaps in the city's bike trail network," Deputy Mayor for Transportation and Utilities Rina Cutler said. Camden's slice will support a greenways initiative to connect Camden County with downtown Philadelphia through active transportation —walking and biking, Camden County Freeholder Jeffrey Nash said.

"By the completion of this greenways path in 2012, residents will be able to walk or bike from Cooper River Park through Camden and across the Ben Franklin Bridge into Philadelphia," Nash said.

Also awarded was a \$98 million TIGER grant, which the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Maryland will share in. The funding will be used for rail infrastructure and intermodal terminal projects.