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MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PO Box 311  
NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311

610-278-3029  
[WWW.MONTCOPA.ORG](http://WWW.MONTCOPA.ORG)

TOM BONNER  
DIRECTOR

## West Valley Green Road Bridge Update

Montgomery County awarded a contract to Loftus Construction Co., Inc. of Blue Bell for \$960,000 to perform the work needed to reopen West Valley Green Road Bridge to weight restricted traffic until construction on a permanent replacement of the bridge can begin.

The work is expected to be completed by late Winter 2020, depending on weather conditions, and the bridge reopened to most passenger vehicles and emergency vehicles that weigh less than 3 tons and are below a height of 7 feet. The bridge will continue to be inspected by PennDOT every six months to insure its structural integrity.

Access by emergency vehicles is especially important during severe weather events that may require emergency medical or emergency management response.

Replacement of the bridge has been under review by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (AChP) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), a process that typically takes years.

Under the terms of the agreement the County reached with PennDOT to move the project forward, the County will eventually relocate the historic steel truss bridge, built in 1884 over the Wissahickon Creek in Whitemarsh Township, to another County-owned property.

The relocation and reuse of the historic structure has two significant benefits. It will reduce by at least a year the federal review process to replace a bridge deemed historic. It also means improvements made to the bridge to reopen it to traffic will likely be useful for years to come, possibly as a trail bridge at another location.

Replacing the structure entirely will allow the county to design a new bridge with wider lanes for vehicle traffic and sidewalks for pedestrians. It will also be designed to reduce the impact of flooding on the bridge and surrounding areas during storm events.

The federal government is funding 80 percent of the cost for the bridge relocation and new bridge replacement. The state is providing 15 percent of the funds and Montgomery County is providing 5 percent.

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