

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building & Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Resolution in support of a Montco 2040: Implementation Grant application to install new signalized pedestrian crossing on Montgomery Avenue at the Union Fire House.

Prepared by: Eric Persson, Economic Development Specialist

Date: February 3, 2017

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Approval of a resolution supporting the request for grant funds from Montgomery County Montco 2040 Program to construct a pedestrian crossing and agreeing that the Township will match the grant by at least 20% of the total project amount.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

The Montco 2040: Implementation Grant Program is an opportunity for Montgomery County to support sustainability efforts in local municipalities and to support downtowns by increasing walkability. This municipal grant program implements the “Montco 2040: A Shared Vision” comprehensive plan targeting physical improvements in local centers such as Merion-Cynwyd.

A resolution by the Board of Commissioners is a requirement for submission acknowledging approval of the grant application.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

The Board of Commissioners has approved the submission of grant applications to Montgomery County in prior years under the former Montgomery County Revitalization Program.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

The Montco 2040: A Shared Vision is the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2015. Three major interrelated themes were established: Connected Communities; Sustainable Places; and Vibrant Economy. For 2017, Montgomery County has proposed to fund implementation programs that focus on two categories within those themes: Walk Montco-Trails, Paths, Sidewalk Connections; and Support Downtowns and Community Destinations.

The proposed signalization at this location was first proposed in the Merion-Cynwyd Streetscape Plan (2006) as a mechanism not only to provide additional pedestrian safety to cross Montgomery Avenue nearer the eastern edge of the commercial area,

but also provide an additional safety warning for the Union Fire House. This concept has been supported by the President of the Union Fire Association, who has noted that a traffic control device at this location would improve the safety of drivers, pedestrians, and emergency responders.

Further discussions with community and business representatives during 2015 and 2016 indicated a continued interest in adding other pedestrian crossings. The Montgomery Avenue Road Diet Analysis (2016) conducted by Pennoni Associates also indicated a need for pedestrian safety improvements. The crossing project at this location has been preliminarily reviewed by PennDOT and they have indicated they could support a project of this kind.

This project was initially proposed to be part of overall intersection improvements in conjunction with the Montgomery Avenue/Levering Mill Road/Old Lancaster Road intersection. However, the County grant opportunity allows this project to meet grant eligibility requirements, and to proceed independently, without impacting future plans for the other intersection improvements.

V. Impact on Township Finances:

The project cost is estimated to be \$85,000. The minimum required local match is 20% of the total grant amount (\$70,800), or approximately \$14,200. The proposed funds needed for the match would come from the CIP 4024 (Merion/Cynwyd Streetscape Improvements) which has funding allocated in the current year. The project construction must be completed within two years to comply with the grant requirements.

VI. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board of Commissioners adopt a Resolution in support of an application to Montgomery County for grant funding for the Signalized Pedestrian Crossing on Montgomery Avenue in the Merion-Cynwyd Commercial area.