

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Public Works Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: PennDOT Agreement/Traffic Signals along I-76 Corridor

Prepared By: Donald K. Cannon, Director of Public Works

Date: January 11, 2018

- I. **Action To Be Considered By The Board:** The Board of Commissioners is being asked to approve a Resolution authorizing execution of an agreement with PennDOT to allow for the transfer of ownership and management of 22 traffic signals along the corridor that parallels I-76 to PennDOT.
- II. **Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:** The transfer of ownership and management authority to PennDOT requires the Township entering into an agreement with PennDOT.
- III. **Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):** N/A
- IV. **Other Relevant Background Information:** This program is part of Act 101 of 2016, Title 72, Chapter 92, which permits PennDOT to consider a pilot project to take ownership and maintenance functions of traffic signals on identified corridors. PennDOT will assume full responsibility for the traffic signals and right-of-way on which the signals are located. PennDOT will also establish connectivity with the signals and the traffic unit located in District 6, and monitor and adjust the signals as needed to address traffic issues along the corridor.

PennDOT seeks to assume ownership and responsibility for traffic signals on both sides of the Schuylkill River for routes that parallel I-76. The purpose of this initiative is to allow PennDOT to control these alternate routes to I-76, the Schuylkill Expressway, particularly in times of major disasters or events impacting traffic flow on the expressway. This proposal includes 22 traffic signals owned fully or partially by Lower Merion Township on all of Conshohocken State Road, seven intersections along City Avenue, all of Belmont Avenue, Hollow Road and the Bala/Montgomery intersection. These 22 would be part of over 160 intersections PennDOT is proposing to assume ownership, with the rest in other municipalities on the other side of the

river along Ridge Avenue and other parallel roads to I-76. The attached map shows the signals for which they want to assume ownership marked in blue numbered circles. (While 29 are shown on the map, 7 along City Avenue are owned by the City of Philadelphia.)

PennDOT intends to assume ownership of the signals and become responsible for all maintenance, upgrades, electric and repair costs. They will hire a dedicated traffic signal maintenance contractor to respond to repair issues. Additionally, they intend to upgrade all signals so that they are fully adaptive signals with communication ability so the entire system can be monitored from their signal control center in King of Prussia. As they upgrade the signals, the Township will be entitled to any components we want returned.

PennDOT is requesting that the Township and other municipalities involved execute agreements to participate by the end of this January 2018. The agreement would anticipate a closing on the signals ownership within 18 months, during which time a full inventory and signal upgrades would have been completed. After that closing, PennDOT would assume ownership and operation of the signals, but all municipalities involved would have a seat on an advisory committee overseeing corridor operations, plus there would be an adopted signal maintenance and operations plan. This proposal, if approved, will certainly save the Township electric and maintenance expenses for these 22 intersections plus avoid costs for future upgrades to any of these signals.

- V. **Impact On Township Finances:** The cost for utility and maintenance to these signals will be transferred to PennDOT. The operating and capital budgets for these intersections will be reduced. The actual transfer of the assets and cost will occur throughout 2018 and will be accounted for in the 2019 budgets.
- VI. **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends authorization for the Township Manager to execute the agreement with PennDOT subject to Township Solicitor review.