

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building & Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Authorization of application and grant match to the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) 2025 Cycling Activation Mini-Grant Program.

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Date: September 5, 2025

- I. Action To Be Considered by The Board:** Adopt a resolution authorizing submission of a Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) 2025 Cycling Activation Mini-Grant application, including commitment for required matching funds in the amount of \$35,000.
- II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:** A resolution must be passed by the Board of Commissioners to commit a funding match should the grant be awarded.
- III. Current Policy or Practice (If Applicable):** The Board of Commissioners approved the preliminary concept for the Main Line Greenway (MLG) bike route on October 4, 2023 (<https://www.lowermerion.org/MainLineGreenway>).

In addition, the Board received the Township's first Sustainability Plan on June 7, 2023 (www.lowermerion.org/SustainPlan). Strategy MO4 of the Sustainability Plan, "Increase Multimodal Access," recommends that the Township systematically evaluate opportunities to increase multimodal access to essential goods and services in the Township.

The 2025 Capital Improvement Plan includes \$35,000 to fund cycling mobility wayfinding improvements throughout the Township.

- IV. Other Relevant Background Information:** The 2025 Cycling Activation Mini-Grant Program provides grants for projects that activate existing cycling assets. Applicants can request \$1,000-\$15,000 with a minimum 1:1 match. Upon authorization from the Board of Commissioners, Staff intends to apply for the maximum award of \$15,000.

Main Line Greenway

The Main Line Greenway was developed to serve as a safe, easy, and accessible bike route connecting residents from Lower Merion Township, Haverford Township, and Narberth Borough to local economic hubs and community gathering places. Though available virtually, there is no physical signage directing residents along the bike route itself. The estimated cost to fabricate and install signage along the Southeast portion of the Main Line Greenway route is approximately \$75,000. Staff have developed a plan to complete the

project in phases, allowing the Township to strategically utilize smaller funding sources such as the 2025 Cycling Activation Program.

Sign Design and Pricing

Exit Design, a design consultant based in Philadelphia, provided conceptual designs for the signage with six distinct sign types. These types vary in size, amount of information, and use of existing vs. new poles. Exit worked with a signage fabricator/installation firm to estimate the cost of fabrication and installation for each unique sign type.

It is expected that these estimates will fluctuate based on changing material and labor costs. Staff believes that some costs could be reduced if different materials and installation methods are considered assuming these materials can be modified to conform with the design and color standards established with Exit's conceptual sign plan.

Sign Location Mapping and Prioritization

Township Staff and the Township Engineer have formulated a sign location plan based on the needs for marking certain turning points within the "Southeast" section of the approved Main Line Greenway route, connecting Haverford College on the west end with the Cynwyd Heritage Trail on the northeast end. The portion of the MLG through Narberth Borough are being funded and installed by the Borough. The current proposal includes directional signage to allow users to navigate the Southeast portion of the MLG. Additional trailhead signage (showing the entire network) and wayfinding signage (directing users to specific locations such as Philadelphia or commercial districts) can be added as funds become available.

Among the conceptual sign types are signs that include panels with the names of specific wayfinding locations in addition to the standard Greenway logo and directional arrow. Some signs of this type are likely to be prioritized where the Greenway splits in Merion Station, where different spurs of the Greenway can be followed to Overbrook train station, the Cynwyd Heritage Trail, St. Joseph's University, and the City Avenue District.

A set of trailhead signs are planned at ends of the route and significant stops throughout. These signs, the largest and most costly in the program, are intended as introductory elements to the Greenway and will include a map and other general information. Though five trailhead signs have been included in this phase, staff anticipates that these signs will be funded by means other than this grant.

- V. Impact On Township Finances:** Should the Township be awarded the \$15,000 mini-grant, a minimum 1:1 match would be required. The 2025 Capital Improvement Plan includes \$35,000 to fund mobility wayfinding improvements throughout the Township, to be directed towards this match.
- VI. Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommend adopting a resolution, authorizing submission of a Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) 2025 Cycling Activation Mini-Grant application, including commitment for required matching funds in the amount of \$35,000.