

Implementation

Plan of Action Summary

The following is a general “Plan of Action” to advance this plan once it is completed and approved by the Township. It is generally listed in priority order. However, many of the recommended actions should occur concurrently. For example, continued and aggressive coordination with Limerick Township for needed interchange roadway improvements should continue and be advanced as expeditiously as possible.

1. Adopt The Sanatoga Interchange Study as an amendment to the Township Comprehensive Plan.
2. Seek funding / allocate funding for the preparation of a Specific Plan for the Gateway – Mixed Use Zoning District of the study area.
 - A. Develop specific architectural and site development guidelines as a part of the Specific Plan.
 - B. Complete the Specific Plan and seek plan approval from the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission
3. Refine, through engineering and survey study, to the extent necessary, the proposed reservations for roads, utilities, etc. for the Official Map.
 - A. Adopt the Official Map through the normal review and adoption process.
4. Prepare revisions, as appropriate, to the Township Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinances. Review and adopt changes.
5. Pro-active cooperation with Limerick Township on all aspects of the planning, especially for roadway improvements.
 - A. Lower Pottsgrove should seek funding for engineering design for eastbound off ramp.
 - B. Limerick should seek funding for engineering design for west bound on-ramp.
6. Seek funding for landscape improvements at the Interchange. Work closely with Limerick Township and PennDOT.
 - A. Design and implement identity-creating landscape enhancements
7. Seek funding for infrastructure improvements that must be funded by the public sector. These may include some local roads in the study area. Work with Limerick Township in this regard to seek state and federal funding as appropriate.
8. Seek funding for pedestrian facilities that can be designed and implemented in the study area. First priorities should be linkages to existing parks and to planned regional trails.

Road Infrastructure Implementation

It is anticipated that the grid road network, Park Road extensions and the High Street signalization and turning lane improvements will primarily be completed incrementally by land developers through the Township land development approval and the PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) processes. However, additional funds may be needed for High Street improvements and the additional ramps at the Sanatoga Interchange.

PennDOT Twelve Year Program and Transportation Improvement Program

Typically, projects are funded with 80 percent Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds and 20 percent other funds. Traditionally, PennDOT provides the entire 20 percent of other funds. Priority is generally given to projects that are presented for inclusion in the Twelve Year Program and TIP if the 20 percent other funds are provided by local sources. These projects are known as Local Match Projects. Typically, the greater the local match, the more likely the project will be added to, and given its priority on the Twelve Year Program and TIP.

Providing the local match is accomplished in a number of ways. Right-of-way can be acquired as development occurs along the corridor. This available right-of-way can be credited toward the 20 percent local match. Also, certain developers might be willing to contribute toward the design of the project, realizing their responsibility to mitigate impact and the importance of maintaining traffic flow and good access. Other possible sources of the 20 percent local match are utility clearances, environmental clearances and design. Typically, the more work provided by the

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municipality to advance the project through the design process, the higher the priority it will receive from PennDOT for construction. Typically, PennDOT prefers and gives the highest priority to municipalities that can fund and manage all pre-construction phases of a project. The local match can be provided by funding sources other than the municipalities' general fund such as public/private partnerships developed during the land development approval process and the adoption of a transportation impact fee ordinance which generates funds for the completion of off-site roadway improvements that cannot be legally required as part of a developer's land development approval.

Transportation Impact Fees

Transportation impact fees are one of the least used implementation techniques but, it is probably one of the most important funding tools offered in the MPC for transportation improvements. It has the potential to be extraordinarily effective in providing the means to schedule and construct adequate transportation infrastructure within designated growth areas and areas of regional significance. The MPC enables municipalities to charge impact fees for new development in a designated transportation service area. Impact fees can be used for costs incurred for capacity improvements designated in a municipality's transportation capital improvement program which includes acquisitions of land and rights-of-way, engineering, legal and planning costs and other costs directly related to road improvements within the service area.

The major asset of the transportation capital improvement programming is the development of a sustainable funding mechanism to offset the cost of needed transportation improvements in rapidly developing areas. The impact fee is calculated based on the total cost of the identified road improvements within a given transportation service area attributable to new development within that service area.

Municipalities across the state are determining that an impact fee ordinance's value outweighs the barriers, particularly due to rising project costs, limited state and federal funding and higher levels of competition for those funds. As a result, they are gradually gaining in popularity as an alternative funding source.

Potential Funding Sources

Applicable public funding mechanisms for the Public Sector Improvements at the Sanatoga Interchange will be predominantly from the Commonwealth of PA, as the state has many programs to assist communities, districts, and even specific properties. In some instances, locally initiated funding sources will be applicable. Less likely (except for highways) would the federal government provide applicable assistance unless a special designation or earmark has been granted, however, some programs do exist.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a financing tool used by municipalities throughout the country to fund redevelopment and community improvement projects. TIF allows future tax income from development to finance the current improvements that will eventually create those tax gains. More specifically, development or redevelopment increases the value of a site or district, creating more taxable property and tax revenues, or the tax increment. TIF then dedicates the increased revenue to the specific project to finance the debt issued to pay for the project. TIF is often geared toward distressed or underdeveloped areas where development is not otherwise occurring, and also creates funding for public projects that may not otherwise be affordable to municipalities. State enabling legislation provides local governments the authority to designate TIF districts. This arrangement usually lasts a finite number of years, but at least enough time to pay back the bonds issued to finance the development. Often the TIF is administered by the municipality.

State

DCED Community Revitalization Funds:

The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Community Revitalization Fund is a state program that supports local initiatives to improve the stability of communities and enhance local economies. This agency has four application periods throughout the year. Applications are submitted online. The grant program covers a wide range of eligible uses including: acquisition of land, buildings, and right-of-ways; recreation projects; programs and developments that build capacity of the local community and relevant local organizations to better serve the needs of the community, and other reasonable and necessary expenses related to community-based activities. Active support of the district's state senator and / or state representative is critical in a successful grant application.

More information: <http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=72>

PA Department of Recreation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2):

A bond issue approved in a statewide referendum initially funded this program. Perennial funding is through a dedicated percentage of the statewide real estate transfer tax. Funding from the program is dedicated toward recreation, environmental and cultural heritage resources throughout the state. Trails are eligible. Roadway projects are generally not eligible. Several agencies distribute funds through competitive grants, including: the PA Fish and Boat Commission, PA Historic and Museum Commission, and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). Most development grant applications are due in April. Consult with the DCNR Regional Advisor. State funds can be used for discrete projects or as a match to federal funds. DCNR requires a 50-50 match (cash or in kind) to its grant awards for trails.

More information <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/>

PA Business in Our Sites Program

The Business in Our Sites program is a \$300 million grant and loan pool that enables municipalities, public authorities, and private developers to prepare sites for speculative development. \$10 million in funding is reserved for predevelopment grants of up to \$250,000 that are intended to assist communities determine the feasibility of a project and to obtain technical information necessary for a project's completion. \$100 million in grant funds and \$190 million in loan funds are available to acquire land, conduct environmental assessments and remediation, and perform demolition. Funds may also be used for site preparation activities and installation of infrastructure (sewer, water, storm water, utilities, telecommunications, etc.) both on site and as needed to bring service to the site. They may also be used for access roads or other necessary on-site and off-site transportation improvements. Grant funds are only available to publicly-sponsored projects that cannot support repayment of a loan in the full amount of the project and will be provided only in combination with a loan and to support certain activities, such as environmental remediation. Loan repayment terms vary based on the end use/ownership structure. Projects that can demonstrate a substantial likelihood of reuse if made ready and that focus on generating economic growth and reusing underutilized sites will be given priority.

More information: <http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=39>

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PA Community Revitalization Program

The Community Revitalization Program (CRP) grant funds may be used for projects that aid in revitalization of Pennsylvania communities. Eligible applicants include municipal governments and authorities and non-profit corporations. Eligible projects must demonstrate that they will improve the stability of their community, promote economic development, improve existing or develop new civic, cultural, recreational, industrial or other facilities, promote the creation of jobs or enhance the health and welfare of Pennsylvania citizens. CRP grant awards are made in three funding cycles each fiscal year.

More information: <http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=72>

DEP PA Growing Greener:

The Growing Greener Program signed into law in 1999 invested millions to preserve farmland and protect open space; eliminate the maintenance backlog in State Parks; clean up abandoned mines; restore watersheds; and provide new and upgraded water and sewer systems.

In 2002, the state legislature added additional monies to the program due to its great popularity. Four different agencies are involved in helping communities "grow greener" under the Environmental Stewardship & Watershed Protection Act: Departments of Environmental Protection, Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and PENNVEST. Of these four agencies, projects that may be applicable to the redevelopment master plan will most likely be funded by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources or Department of Environmental Protection. In 2007, the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administered a large portion of the Growing Greener funds – with target programs for stormwater treatment and clean water demonstration projects.

The Act authorizes grants through DEP for acid mine drainage abatement, mine cleanup efforts, abandoned oil and gas well plugging and local watershed-based conservation projects. These projects can include: watershed assessments and development of watershed restoration or protection plans, implementation of watershed restoration or protection projects, storm water management wetlands, riparian buffer fencing and planting, stream bank restoration and agricultural best management practices (BMPs). Grants are available to a variety of eligible applicants, including: counties, authorities and other municipalities; county conservation districts; watershed organizations; and other organizations involved in the restoration and protection of Pennsylvania's environment. These grants support local projects to clean up "non-point" sources of pollution throughout Pennsylvania. It may be possible to blend Growing Greener grants with other grants for trail construction along riparian corridors.

More information: <http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/growinggreener/site/default.asp>

PA Infrastructure and Facilities Improvement Program

The Infrastructure and Facilities Improvement Program provides grant funds to issuers of debt, such as municipalities or municipal authorities, to help them finance the infrastructure component of a project. Applicable types of projects covered by the grant include infrastructure and/or environmental remediation for the construction of retail establishments (totaling more than 200 jobs and 200,000 SF of retail space); and infrastructure, land and building, and environmental remediation for the construction of hospitals, convention centers (perhaps in this case the expo center), and hotels associated with convention centers. The amount of grant funding is calculated on the basis of the amount of taxes generated by the project, including state sales tax, hotel occupancy tax, and employer withholding of personal income tax. Therefore, awards will be made in varying amounts.

More information: <http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=40>

PA Infrastructure Development Program

The Infrastructure Development Program provides grants and low-interest loan funds for various types of projects. Eligible entities include municipalities, municipal authorities, and real estate developers. Applicable types of projects covered by the grant include clearing and preparation of land and environmental remediation; water and sewer systems; storm sewers; parking facilities; and at former industrial sites, land and building acquisition, construction and renovation by private developers, and telecommunications infrastructure. Loans and grants are provided for up to \$1.25 million, however, no more than 20% of the annual appropriation can go to a single municipality.

More information: <http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=26>

Opportunity Grant Program

The Opportunity Grant Program provides grants to firms or municipalities representing firms to create significant jobs in the applicable fields of research and development, and export services, as well as firms establishing a regional or national headquarters. Applicable types of projects covered by the grant include machinery and equipment; working capital; job training; infrastructure; land and building improvements; environmental assessment and remediation; acquisition of land, buildings, and right-of-ways; and site preparation, demolition, and clearance. While the state has not indicated any grant maximum or minimum amounts, eligible projects must create a significant economic impact to the state, region, or municipality in which the company will locate or expand. In addition, there is a 4:1 match required from private sources.

More information: <http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=41>

TIF Guarantee Program

The TIF Guarantee Program promotes economic development throughout PA by improving credit for TIF projects through guarantees to lower capital costs and improve market access. Municipalities that issue TIF bonds to fund economic development projects are eligible. The program covers environmental and infrastructure projects for retail establishments; infrastructure, environmental, and building projects for hospitals, convention centers and associated hotels; utilization of abandoned or underutilized industrial or commercial buildings; and undeveloped sites planned and zoned for development in accordance with the municipality's comprehensive plan. The program will fund a total of \$100 million in loan guarantees for TIF projects, providing up to \$5 million per individual project. Any interest earned on fund investments will be kept in the fund for future guarantees and costs.

More information: <http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=45>

Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP)

Grant funds providing for the acquisition and construction of regional economic, cultural, civic, and historical improvement projects. Preference is given to projects that display significant potential for improving economic growth and the creation of jobs and new opportunities to a diverse group of communities throughout Pennsylvania. Uses include property acquisition, site preparation, construction/building renovation; construction period interest; and permits and approvals. Grant amounts vary and disbursements occur on a reimbursement basis only. The minimum individual project cost is \$1 million.

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Public Works and Economic Development Program

The objective of this grant, administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, is to promote economic development and job growth. Investments through this grant are meant to help improve and expand infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage expansion, and generate long-term private sector employment. Applicable eligible uses include industrial access roads, industrial and business parks, business incubator facilities, redevelopment of brownfields, and telecommunication infrastructure improvements necessary for business retention and expansion. Eligible activities to support these uses include the development of publicly-owned land and facilities (including engineering, construction, and rehabilitation).

More information: <http://www.eda.gov/AboutEDA/Programs.xml>

Brownfield Tax Incentive Program

Former industrial or commercial properties that have been environmentally contaminated, such as the Commodore property, are eligible for this tax incentive, overseen by the Environmental Protection Agency. Under this program, certain environmental cleanup costs may be fully deducted by eligible taxpayers in the year in which they are incurred, rather than having to be capitalized over time. Properties that have released or have the threat of releasing hazardous substances (lead-based paint, asbestos, fuel from leaking tanks, etc.) may be eligible. The program will expire on December 31, 2007; however, Congress may extend this provision.

More information: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/bftaxinc.htm>

Surface Transportation Program (STP):

Eligible projects include the construction of bicycle transportation facilities; construction of pedestrian walkways; bicycle safety brochures, maps and public service announcements. Any bicycle project must be primarily a transportation project and STP projects should encourage desirable traffic patterns. Additionally, STP projects should sensitize people to environmental and social concerns. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers this program.

Ten percent of STP funds are set aside for Transportation Enhancements (TE). STP projects are not required to demonstrate impacts on traffic or transit.

TEA-21 Enhancements (SAFETEA-LU):

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) is a federal program that funds transportation related projects and is a direct successor to the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). The bill allocated approximately \$217 billion nationwide over six years and includes funding for recreational trails and parks. In Pennsylvania, the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) administers several TEA-21 bicycle and pedestrian related programs. Grant awards in excess of \$1 million are not unreasonable for trail projects.

Typically, a non-federal match is required to be 20% of the grant award. A strategy preferred by PennDOT is to require the local partner to prepare construction documents and obtain necessary environmental clearances, property control documents and utility relocations plans as the local match for these "pre-construction" tasks - so that the project is ready for construction using the TE funding. The costs to prepare these documents can be the non-federal match to the TEA-21 funds, and does not necessarily need to be exactly 20% if all needed documentation can be completed for less.

More information: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/summary.htm>