



2018 Edition

MONTCO 2040: IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROGRAM

As part of the implementation of the county's new comprehensive plan, Montco 2040: A Shared Vision, the county has established a grant program for municipalities to make targeted physical improvements that achieve real progress toward the goals of the plan. The program offers the opportunity to move general themes and issues at the countywide level into specific improvements at the local level that transforms planning into action. Specific Focus Categories that reflect recent county planning initiatives are highlighted and emphasized each year.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Maximum grant award is \$200,000, but average award will be closer to \$100,000
- Minimum local match is 20% of the grant amount—other funding sources and greater matches are encouraged
- Projects must specifically address a stated goal within the three themes of the comprehensive plan: Connected Communities, Sustainable Places, and Vibrant Economy
- Projects that fall under a Focus Category will receive greater consideration during the application review
- Grant award may only be applied to physical improvements, i.e. construction, infrastructure/site work, materials, land acquisition
- Grants will be disbursed as reimbursements for eligible costs
- Project length is limited to 24 months from the date a grant is awarded

PROCESS

- Funding for 2018 will commence with an application deadline of March 1, 2018. A second round is not anticipated, but an announcement will be made if this changes
- A committee consisting of Planning Commission Board Members, Planning Commission Staff, and Interdepartmental County Staff will score and review applications on a competitive basis
- Recommendations of funding will be forwarded to the County Commissioners for action
- Funding agreements to be issued to municipalities upon Commissioner approval
- Agreements will be administered by the County's Department of Housing and Community Development

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Applications must be submitted and administered by municipalities, but they may join with non-profit or private entities to achieve a public benefit
- One application may be submitted at a time

PROJECT REVIEW CRITERIA

- **Impact of Project**—Extent of the project's benefit, transformative ability, longevity, visibility, and educational component
- **County Planning Consistency**—Includes bonus for municipalities with recent county planning assistance contracts, and projects that connect to county owned assets.
- **Local Planning Consistency**—Consistency with current local plans
- **Project Readiness**—Design or engineering work completed, permits obtained, other agency coordination
- **Funding**—Percent and type of matching funds, commitment of local contribution, other funding sources

FOCUS CATEGORIES—2018

Focus Categories will be announced each year by the county's Planning Commission in order to encourage specific project types that address current initiatives and issues in Montgomery County. Categories will be chosen with appropriate guidance as to the types of projects that will qualify. The categories may be extended into more than one annual cycle if the need and effectiveness of potential projects warrants further grant awards in that category.

In 2018, two of the prior focus categories will remain—Walk / Bike Montco and Support Downtowns and Community Destinations—with Road Diets added as a potential project example. A new focus category, Adaptation and Resiliency, is being added for 2018 to help communities address increasing concerns with environmental impacts caused by development and climate change.

ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCY

Continued growth and development in the county coupled with climate change and extreme weather events accelerates the decline of natural systems and ultimately threatens public health and quality of life. Communities must adapt to these changes and become more resilient to better sustain their futures.

This category intends to support the most needed projects that help protect against or recover from negative environmental changes. Applicants should be prepared

to demonstrate the extent of the problem being addressed and the success of its proposed actions. Municipalities may need to reference their MS4, TMDL, PRP, Stormwater Management Plan or Hazard Mitigation Plan for competitive projects. Potential projects include:

- Floodplain Mitigation – Reduce the impact of flooding through an emergency services flood warning system, removal or retrofit of structures in the floodplain, installation of flood control structures, and natural resources protection
- Streambank Restoration – Rapid erosion and changing courses can impact floodplains, increase pollution, and damage ecosystems. Identify the cause of streambank degradation and implement appropriate naturalization techniques
- Retrofit Municipal or School District Property with Stormwater BMPs – Address critical flooding or erosion issues with naturalized basins, vegetated swales, rain gardens, porous pavement, stormwater extended detention ponds, and constructed wetlands
- Green Streets – Incorporate landscaped areas and tree canopy designed as stormwater BMPs to promote runoff infiltration and filtering of pollutants. Other components include stormwater curb extensions, planters, vegetated swales, rain gardens, and street tree planting
- Community Gardens – Utilizing vacant lots or excess land for gardening can promote localized food production, encourage healthy eating habits, reduce pesticide and fossil fuel use, and connect residents to where their food comes from

Note: Alternative energy elements, such as solar panels or LED lights, are considered eligible for Montco 2040 grant funding as part of a larger project. However, the Montco 2040 Grant Program is not supporting projects solely based on the implementation of alternative energy equipment at this time. While these are very worthy endeavors that address the long-term goals of the Montco 2040 vision, they can often pay for themselves over time and are better suited for municipal investment or other infrastructure grant or loan programs.





WALK AND BIKE MONTCO—TRAILS, PATHS, SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS AND BIKE FACILITIES

Walkability is more than a buzzword and making our communities more walkable is a winning proposition. It provides transportation choices, improves health, creates better community connections, makes the county more appealing for young workers, and improves the

environment. Biking also provides a healthy alternative to getting around, but all too often the effort is made difficult by streets designed solely for the automobile.

This category targets planned improvements in areas that currently impede the ability to walk or bike through insufficient design, lack of facilities, or dangerous conditions. Potential projects include:

- Improvements that create safer conditions in and around popular school routes, downtown business areas, suburban commercial areas, or public transit facilities
 - New trails, paths, or sidewalks that opens access to other trail or park connections from a neighborhood or employment area
 - Road diets incorporating some combination of bicycle lanes, landscaped medians, rain gardens, on-street parking, crosswalks, sidewalks, other BMPs, and traffic calming elements
 - Other street improvement projects that facilitate bike lanes
 - Bike facilities such as bike racks or bike sharing opportunities
 - Pedestrian-oriented wayfinding signage
 - Trailheads with parking and signage
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Mixed use areas with thriving businesses, cultural venues, libraries, green infrastructure, and urban parks provide places for people to gather and make connections with their community while improving the quality of life for surrounding neighborhoods. This category enables communities to facilitate the development of their downtowns and community destinations in a manner that supports a central business district while emphasizing physical activity and social connections. There are many creative ways to approach this goal, including but not limited to, these potential ideas:

- Create or improve public gathering spaces, such as plazas, within the business district
- Connect or improve downtown pocket-parks or urban parks in the vicinity of a downtown
- Improve the identity of a downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods with unique public improvements, such as public art, wayfinding signage, or other place-making installations
- Urban greening improvements such as green roofs, living walls, rain gardens, and plantings
- Enhance the function or prominence of a cultural venue through exterior physical improvements
- Library improvement projects that enhance physical connectivity through improved public facilities, such as community spaces, outdoor plazas, or other locational improvements



SUPPORT DOWNTOWNS AND COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS



GENERAL PROJECT CATEGORIES

Eligible projects need to address a stated goal in the county comprehensive plan. This provides a wide range of potential projects, but they must result in physical improvements or acquisitions that further both local and county goals. The greater the reach and impact of a project will result in a higher likelihood of funding. Opposite is a generalized list of potential projects as they connect to the comprehensive plans themes and goals. They represent the most obvious connections between goals and improvements, but the list should not be considered finite. Creative and effective projects that still address the goals are welcome for consideration.



For more information, program guidelines, and to apply online, go to: www.montcopa.org/Montco2040

Connected Communities

- Sidewalks / pedestrian connections
- Bicycle improvements and/or facilities
- Local trail connections to county trails or natural areas (or connect to high profile areas, such as employment, shopping, downtown, transit centers, etc.)
- Local greenway preservation
- Specific downtown revitalization initiatives
- Arts and culture facility improvements
- Library improvements

Sustainable Places

- Improving existing roadway connections
- Road diets
- Traffic calming
- Green streets
- Energy conservation or reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Stormwater management improvements
- Limiting the impact of flooding
- Natural resource protection
- Make communities more walkable
- Increase the supply of local, fresh food
- Local park improvements
- Preservation of historic properties
- Reinvigorate tree canopy in communities
- Sustainable green parking lot retrofits

Vibrant Economy

- Improve access to employment centers
- Expand or improve transit options in employment centers
- Assist in the redevelopment of underutilized or vacant industrial land
- Modernizing older office and business parks through access, amenity, or infrastructure improvements
- Assist in the creation of walkable, mixed use, transit-friendly, and entertainment-supportive employment centers, towns, and destinations
- Meet the needs of an aging population through improvements or connections
- Signage and wayfinding systems to promote destinations and help visitors get around



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