



2017 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.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- \$1 Million annually over the next five years
- Maximum grant award is \$200,000, but average award will be closer to \$100,000
- The application deadline for the first round of funding for 2017 will be March 1.

## PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- 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

- The first round of funding for 2017 will commence with an application deadline of March 1, 2017. A second round will be scheduled for July 1, provided that funds are still available after the first round
- 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
- No more than two grant awards may go to a single municipality in one program year

## 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—2017

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 2017, three exciting project types will be highlighted. The Planning Commission has been actively promoting these issues with resources that are available on their website, including the **Walk Montco** study and the **Turnpike Corridor Reinvestment Project** study.

## 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
  - 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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## SUPPORT DOWNTOWNS AND COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

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

## REVITALIZING OFFICE AND BUSINESS PARKS

Montgomery County leads the region in jobs outside of Philadelphia, but people are working differently and have different expectations than they did a generation ago. They look for more activity, expanded transit access, better walkability, more amenities, and focused green space improvements, as well as a greater mixes of uses that allow for more non-business activity.

Major employment centers in the county, such as King of Prussia, Fort Washington, City Avenue, and Horsham are already addressing changes to make their business areas more competitive in the future.

This category supports projects that improve the viability of existing office and business parks. Improvements could address:

- Walkability—trails, right-of-way enhancements, pedestrian safety
- Transit function—bus shelters, station connections, transit facilities
- Traffic circulation enhancement—roundabouts, landscaped medians, road diets
- Other public amenities—gathering and event spaces, bicycle facilities, public art, placemaking initiatives



# 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](http://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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