

Chairperson: Commissioner Matthew J. Comisky  
Vice Chairperson: Commissioner Lewis F. Gould, Jr.

**ADDENDUM**

**1. ROCK HILL ROAD/BELMONT AVENUE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Consider for adoption the findings and recommendations contained in the Rock Hill Road/Belmont Avenue Transportation Capital Improvement Plan. Total improvement costs are estimated to be approximately \$11 million and the improvements include, but are not limited to widening Belmont Avenue and the railroad bridge underpass to accommodate 5 traffic lanes and improvements to Rock Hill Road's intersections with Belmont Avenue and Conshohocken State Road. Funding sources are proposed to include \$7 million from state and federal sources and \$4 million from local public and private funds.

Brian Keaveney, from Pennoni Associates, will discuss the improvement plans and total costs. A representative from the TSAAC will discuss the recommended cost breakdown, including a cost/trip and it's equivalent cost/square foot of development.

(Exhibit "A")

**PUBLIC COMMENT**



**TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION**  
*Building and Planning Department*

**TO:** Bob Duncan, Director  
**FROM:** Elizabeth Rogan, AICP, Special Projects Coordinator  
**SUBJECT:** Rock Hill Road/Belmont Avenue Transportation Improvement Plan  
**DATE:** December 8, 2003

The Transportation Services Area Advisory Council (TSAAC), with the assistance of Brian Keaveney, a Transportation Engineer with Pennoni Engineers' office, has prepared the third and final planning study, a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), for the Rock Hill Road/Belmont Avenue corridor.

The TIP estimates the cost of roadway improvements needed to ensure future development within the corridor does not reduce the Levels Of Service (LOS) below that of the *preferred* LOS. The preferred LOS was established in the Roadway Sufficiency Analysis (RSA) adopted by the Board of Commissioners in September 2003. The RSA indicated that some minor roadway improvements were necessary to achieve and maintain the preferred LOS for existing and pass through traffic. However, any new development within the corridor triggers the need for major road improvements if the preferred LOS is to be retained. The total cost of these improvements, including widening Belmont Avenue under the railroad overpass, was estimated to be approximately \$12 million.

The TIP breaks costs down into five individual components (engineering, right of way acquisition, utilities, construction and inspection) for three primary improvement areas, the Belmont and Schuylkill Expressway, the intersection of Rock Hill Road at Belmont Avenue and the intersection of Rock Hill Road at Conshohocken State Road. The costs are then allocated between each funding source, including the federal, state and local governments. The local costs are then allocated between the Township and the private developers. The following table is a rounded off, summarized version of information provided by the Township Engineer

| Location                                 | Current and pass thru cost | Total future cost | Total Cost   | Federal     | State       | Local       |             |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|  |                            |                   |              |             |             | Township    | Developer   |
| Belmont Avenue & Schuylkill Expressway   | \$0                        | \$8,906,400       | \$8,906,400  | \$5,054,500 | \$ 777,600  | \$1,471,100 | \$1,603,100 |
| Belmont Avenue & Rock Hill Road          | \$0                        | \$1,901,400       | \$1,901,400  | \$1,115,800 | \$ 171,700  | \$ 271,700  | \$ 342,200  |
| Conshohocken State Road & Rock Hill Road | \$529,000                  | \$ 512,100        | \$1,041,000  | \$576,000   | \$ 88,600   | \$ 284,200  | \$ 92,200   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | \$529,000                  | \$11,320,000      | \$11,849,000 | \$6,746,300 | \$1,037,900 | \$2,027,000 | \$2,037,600 |

Both the RSA and the TIP reiterate the enabling legislation's limitation that impact fees can be used to pay for no more than 50% of the total improvement costs on State Highways. All the roads in the Rock Hill Road/Belmont Avenue corridor are State roads. The impact fee, assessed when a property in the Transportation Services Area (TSA) is (re)developed, is calculated by using the number of

vehicular trips generated by the new development. Therefore, developers could be required to pay for up to \$4,064,600, breaking down to more than \$6,200/trip or approximately \$10/square foot of non-residential development.

The TSAAC discussed the effect of imposing this fee on a limited development group and voiced concerns that the expense would be a substantial burden and act as a disincentive to any future revitalization of the corridor. During the TSAAC's public hearing, held in October, the Township Engineer's office and TSAAC members discussed the draft TIP and solicited feedback from the community on the costs and cost allocation options. Comments from residents focused on their concern that the Township not begin promoting development in the corridor until the bulk of the project's funding was secured. TSAAC members noted the status of the Rock Hill Road/Belmont Avenue corridor project on the PaDOT capital improvement program and told those in attendance that improvements would only occur if the project costs were shared with federal and state agencies.

After the public hearing TSAAC members met and spoke with other local developers, realtors and property owners. Based on these discussions the TSAAC believes that if the Township is committed to facilitating the revitalization of the Rock Hill Road/Belmont Avenue corridor, the development community cannot be expected to pay for the total future improvement costs. TSAAC members believe the Township must step up to the plate and participate in funding the project. They recommend the cost of necessary improvements be split between the Township and the development community. By reducing impact fee to approximately \$5/square foot for non-residential development it is feasible for a developer to incorporate the expense into the long term financing for their project.

Provided the Board of Commissioners accepts the TSAAC's findings and recommendations as detailed in the TIP, a resolution must be adopted. A draft is attached for the Commissioners to consider during the December 10<sup>th</sup> Building and Planning Committee meeting. Please let me know if you need any further information.

