As part of the implementation of the county’s 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.

2024 Edition

MONTCO 2040:
IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROGRAM

Funding for 2024 will commence with an application deadline of March 1, 2024.
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 Office 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.
Municipalities may submit two applications, but are eligible to receive only one grant award unless part of a multi-municipal project.

Project Requirements
- Maximum grant award is $250,000, but average award may be closer to $100,000. Multi-municipal projects, in which each municipality has a financial stake, may apply for up to a $350,000 grant award.
- Municipalities with a median household income below 80% of the county’s median income qualify for a reduced minimum local match of 10%. See the program guidelines for more information. All other municipalities are required to provide a minimum local match of 20% of the grant amount. Other funding sources and greater matches are encouraged. Open Space Preservation projects require a 50% minimum local match.
- 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 36 months from the date a grant is awarded.

Process
Funding for 2024 will commence with an application deadline of March 1, 2024.
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 Office of Housing and Community Development.

New for 2024:
- Increased project budget of $250,000 and for a multi-municipal application, $350,000.
- Extended project timeframe of 36 months.
- Lower match requirement for municipalities with median household incomes below 80% of the county’s median household income.
- The narrative summary requires a statement on how critical the project is to the future of the municipality.

For further details and requirements, see the full Program Guidelines available at montgomerycountypa.gov/Montco2040.
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. In 2024, all three of the prior focus categories will remain.

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

- **Heat Island Impacts** – Heat islands are areas with higher average temperatures than their surroundings due to structures such as buildings and roads which absorb, retain, and generate heat. Address heat-related impacts of higher daytime temperatures, reduced nighttime cooling, and elevated air pollution levels

- **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

- **Open Space Preservation** – Conserving natural resources and environmentally-sensitive areas can help maintain ecosystems, improve water quality, reduce flooding, provide needed buffers to developing areas, or provide recreation opportunities. Desirable projects may protect critical conservation areas, promote active tourism, increase opportunities to exercise, or green the county’s towns. Open Space Preservation projects are required to have a minimum 50% local match, which may come from any combination of municipal or outside funding sources.
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 is connected to the county's adopted Walk Montco and Bike Montco plans. Areas that currently impede the ability to walk or bike through insufficient design, lack of facilities, or dangerous conditions should be targeted. Potential projects include:

- Improvements that create safer conditions in and around popular school routes, downtown business areas, suburban commercial areas, or public transit facilities
- Trails, paths, or sidewalks that opens or improves 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
- On-road bicycle facilities such as sharrows, standard bicycle lanes, or protected bicycle lanes – either on or near Bike Montco's planned bicycle network
- Off-road bicycle facilities such as bike racks or bike sharing systems
- Pedestrian-oriented wayfinding signage
- Trailheads with parking and signage

When applicable, projects should include the principles of the county's recent adopted policies: Complete Streets and Health in All Policies, available on the web at montgomerycountypa.gov/completestreetspolicy.

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
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.

**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

For more information, full program guidelines, and to apply online, go to: [www.montgomerycountypa.gov/Montco2040](http://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/Montco2040)

For questions or more information, contact Anne Leavitt-Gruberger at 610-278-3727 or anne.leavitt-gruberger@montgomerycountypa.gov

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