

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Partnership Between Kennett Square Borough and Kennett Township Results in Grant Funding for Key Segments of Kennett Greenway

Kennett Square – On April 21, 2021, the Commonwealth Financing Authority announced \$400,000 in grant funding through the Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF) program for the Kennett Greenway Connectors – Birch Street and Magnolia Underpass.

The inter-municipal Kennett Greenway Connectors – Birch Street and Magnolia Underpass (Project) is aimed at addressing two significant and complementary segments of the Kennett Greenway (Greenway) through the creation of a “complete street” along Birch Street in the Borough of Kennett Square, and the construction of a railroad underpass, to be known as the Magnolia Underpass, in Kennett Township.

Representative Craig Williams stated, “I worked tirelessly in Harrisburg, along with Senator Kane, to ensure that this funding made it back to the 160th. I am proud of the work we have done, and that we were able to secure \$400,000 to see this project come off the drawing board and become a reality for the entire Kennett community. This is such a wonderful project with grassroots support and advocacy focused on making Kennett more accessible and pedestrian-friendly.”

Similarly, Senator Kane offered his thoughts on the Kennett Greenway stating, “I am proud to support Kennett Square in this initiative. This funding is going to provide much-needed resources for this important project: providing an inclusive greenway and promoting health, safety, and respect for the environment. I’m honored to have been a part of this effort to provide this new green space for Chester County residents.”

The Greenway is a planned, 14+ mile pedestrian and bicycle loop carefully designed to connect the greater Kennett community to everyday destinations, the area’s natural beauty, and various points of interest. This network of trails linking Kennett’s preserved open spaces, recreational facilities, and other community assets has been advanced through a phased approach, with strong community support and local government cooperation.

The Birch Street Streetscape is a documented component of the overall complete streets plan for the Kennett Square community. The Project will address stormwater issues along Birch Street including the implementation of stormwater best management practices and roadway reconstruction, and will promote alternatives to traditional vehicular travel through the installation of new sidewalks, ADA curbs and ramps, crosswalks and appropriate signage.

Borough Mayor Matt Fetick expressed his appreciation for the support received for the project stating, “The Borough is most appreciative to our strong state elected officials. Without their dedicated support, projects like this one would not be realized.” The Kennett Greenway runs through the 9th Senate District and 158th and 160th House Districts.

Multi-municipal, the MTF project also contemplates the construction of the Magnolia Underpass in Kennett Township, which represents a critical rail crossing for the Greenway. The proposed culvert underpass will cross beneath the East Penn Railway, along the west branch of the Red Clay Creek, providing a long-awaited bike and pedestrian connection between the Township and Borough trails.

Eden Ratliff, Kennett Township’s manager commented “The underpass will eliminate the physical barrier that prevents trail users from easily and safely accessing both sides of the rail tracks, connecting people to neighborhoods, community restaurants, parks, businesses, workplaces, and recreation. The Township is grateful for the support received from our state elected officials to secure the grant funding that will help move this project forward. This award is the direct result of Senator Kane and Representative Williams’ unrelenting advocacy on behalf of our community. Representative Sappey, who understands the benefit to the community at large, also provided written support for the project.”

Community support for the project was widespread. Written support was provided by Senator John Kane, Representative Craig Williams, Representative Christina Sappey, Chester County Board of Commissioners, Kennett Consolidated School District, Kennett Area Park and Recreation Board, Kennett Township Trails and Sidewalks Committee, Kennett Trails Alliance, New Garden Township, YMCA of Greater Brandywine, Friends of the New Garden Trails, Historic Kennett Square, Bike Kennett, The Commonwealth Group, West Branch Distilling Co., Kennett Square Realty, Square Roots Collective, The Creamery of Kennett Square, and The workS.

Executive Director of the Kennett Trails Alliance, Christina Norland commented “The Kennett Greenway is a wonderful project that will beneficially contribute to the thriving of all members of our community.”

A decade-long initiative, portions of the Greenway stretch throughout Kennett Township, Kennett Square Borough, East Marlborough Township, New Garden Township, and across the state border into Delaware. The Greenway is slated to connect more than 1,500 acres of open space - nearly 1,100 of which have already been reserved for preservation.

The MTF Program is funded through revenue from the 2013 Transportation Bill (Act 89-2013) and is highly competitive. The project was one of 116 transportation projects awarded statewide. More than 350 applications were submitted to the MTF program. Due to the partial grant award, the Borough and Township are poised to re-apply to the MTF program in an effort to fill the remaining funding gap for this project.

Please send any questions or comments to Christina Norland at cnorland@ksqroots.com
