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Municipal Newsletter

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Green Light-Go Program

In 2013, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (“PennDOT”) established the Municipal Signal Partnership Program, which is also known as the Green Light-Go Program. This Program allows certain municipalities and metropolitans to request financial assistance for particular traffic signal operation and maintenance along critical and designated corridors on state highways. This Program is covered by 74 Pa. C.S. Chapter 92 (relating to traffic signals) and 75 Pa. C.S. Section 9511(e.1) (relating to allocation of proceeds).

On September 19, 2016, new legislation became effective that enhanced the Program by making more types of municipalities eligible for funding to improve the traffic signals they own and sustain through the expansion of the definition of “municipality” (“New Legislation”). Previously, the definition of municipality consisted of cities, boroughs, towns and townships. Now, counties, incorporated towns and home rule municipalities are also included.

A critical corridor had previously been restricted to either a “*State* highway segment intersecting with a with a limited access ramp identified by the Secretary of Transportation [or] a *State* highway segment with bidirectional average annual daily traffic greater than 10,000 vehicles as determined by [PennDOT’s] Roadway Management Systems.” (Emphasis added.) With the New Legislation, municipal highways are now included as well. Likewise, a designated traffic corridor had previously been limited to a “*State* highway segment, other than a critical corridor, determined by the Secretary of transportation to be subject to the provisions of [Chapter 92 of Title 74].” (Emphasis added.)

For those municipalities who were unaware of this Program’s application to them and for those who are now eligible, it may be beneficial for them to know:

A municipality may enter into an agreement with [PennDOT] to replace, synchronize and time traffic signals located within a (critical or) designated traffic corridor. The terms of the agreement may specify that the municipality provide services to [PennDOT]. The agreement shall not exceed the time period of the

useful life of the traffic signals. The municipality shall, during the duration of the agreement, properly maintain and time the traffic signals in accordance with the agreement. 74 Pa. C.S.A. Section 9202(a).

Prior to September 19, 2016, the provision cited above was restricted to only a “designated traffic corridor”; a critical corridor was added by the New Legislation.

Originally, 74 Pa. C.S.A. Section 9202 consisted of subsections (a) through (g). Other than what has already been stated for subsection (a), subsection (a) through (g) have not been changed. Subsections (h), (i) and (j) are new. Subsection (h) pertains to first and second class cities and is not relevant here. Section (i), concerning signals managed by PennDOT, states:

- (1) In accordance with subsection (c) [pertaining to PennDOT prioritizing critical and designated traffic corridors where proper signalization provides the most benefit, PennDOT] may own, install, replace, synchronize, time, operate or maintain a traffic signal and all associated signs and markings included on a . . . traffic signal plan [approved by PennDOT] within a municipality if [PennDOT] publishes the location of the signal or the critical corridor as a notice in the Pennsylvania Bulletin [and]
- (2) A municipality shall enact any ordinances and enter into any agreements necessary to complete the transfer of all rights and duties to . . . signals [managed by PennDOT] under this subsection.

Section (j), related to special pilot programs for signals managed by PennDot, adds:

- (1) The department shall develop a pilot program for . . . signals [managed by PennDOT] to implement on one or more critical corridors at [PennDOT’s] discretion as specified under this subsection [and]
- (2) After implementation and evaluation of the pilot

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program, but no later than January 1, 2022, the secretary shall certify in the Pennsylvania Bulletin that the pilot program is ended and indicate whether or not the pilot program has been successful. If successful, [PennDOT] may maintain and expand [PennDOT's] management of signals. This subsection shall expire January 1, 2022.

As stipulated in 75 Pa. C.S. Section 9511(e.1), funds for fiscal year 2016-2017 and each year thereafter will be in the amount of up to \$40,000,000.00, which "is appropriated out of the Motor License Fund to replace, synchronize, time, operate and maintain traffic signals within traffic corridors consistent with [Chapter 92 of Title 74 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes (referenced above)]. The funds shall be used for municipal [signals] and [signals managed by PennDOT]."

Formerly, financial assistance was to be matched by municipal or private cash funding in an amount less than 50% of the amount of the financial assistance being provided. Under the New Legislation:

Financial assistance . . . shall be matched by funding in an amount not less than 20% of the amount of the

financial assistance being provided. Except for transportation improvement program funds, the match may consist of any combination of Federal, State, regional, local and private funds, including in-kind contributions such as an exchange of services between [PennDOT] and municipality. Any grant made under this subsection shall be allocated for two consecutive fiscal years and shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year when the grant was awarded. 75 Pa. C.S. Section 9511(e.1)(4).

Pursuant to 75 Pa. C.S. Section 9511(e.1)(5), PennDOT has established the guidelines for applications from municipalities, metropolitans and rural planning organizations for this financial assistance. "Applicants must enter into agreements provided for under 74 Pa.C.S. Chapter 92. Priority will be given to multimunicipal improvements."

Despite the amendments which permitted more parties to participate in this Program, became effective September 19, 2016, the current application period was from August 8, 2016 to September 30, 2016. The applications period for the fiscal year of 2017-2018 will be announced in the Pennsylvania Bulletin in January 2017.
