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Funding secured for South Union road project

By Amy Karpinsky, Herald-Standard
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More than \$2 million has been secured to build an intersection and upgrade the road surface in the area of Route 40 at the Fayette County Business Park.

The project, being handled jointly by the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority and the state Department of Transportation, will include the installation of an intersection, traffic light and turning lanes and upgrading of the road in the business park vicinity, located across the highway from the Uniontown Holiday Inn.

In addition to \$1.5 million in funds secured earlier by the state Department of Transportation, state Sen. Richard Kasunic (D-Dunbar) announced Friday the availability of another \$600,000 in state funds for road construction at the site.

Fayette County Redevelopment Authority Executive Director Raymond C. Polaski said the authority has a memorandum of understanding with PennDOT regarding the project. He said the authority will pay for the traffic light, poles and engineering costs, and PennDOT will pay for the intersection and curbing, lines and related work.

"We always had the idea we would do the intersection," Polaski said. "I'm thankful that Senator Kasunic and PennDOT assisted. It takes the burden off the redevelopment authority."

The project includes a significant amount of work, Polaski said.

"We created an intersection where there was not one," he

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said.

He estimated that the traffic light and poles will cost the authority \$50,000 to \$100,000 to install.

Bill Beaumariage, PennDOT project manager, said PennDOT received \$1.5 million to resurface Route 40 from Fan Hollow Road to Route 119. After receiving that allocation, Beaumariage said, PennDOT learned that the redevelopment authority needed to widen the road to put in a traffic signal. Because PennDOT didn't want to put new pavement down and then turn around and rip it up shortly after, the projects were combined.

"Senator Kasunic secured additional funds so we will include the work the redevelopment authority needs to do and now do everything at one time," Beaumariage said. "It's the best way to go."

The project will begin next spring and should be completed by next fall, Beaumariage said.

"Complementing the installation of a traffic light at this key intersection between Wayland Smith Drive and Route 40, these funds will be used to widen the roadway and construct a left-hand turn lane," Kasunic said. "Ultimately, this important infrastructure work will mean greater business interest and more jobs for Fayette County families."

The road project will help ease traffic congestion, make the business park more attractive to prospective businesses, accommodate a higher volume of traffic and lay the groundwork for easy access to the planned Uniontown-to-Brownsville link of the Mon/Fayette Expressway, Kasunic said. Construction of that section could begin in late 2005.

Kasunic said that additional state money is being appropriated for other needed highway improvements on the Route 40 corridor, including reconstruction of the Route 40 intersections with New Salem Road and both Route 119 off-ramps. In addition, PennDOT will resurface Route 40 from Fan Hollow Road to Route 21.

The 277-acre business park in South Union Township, which has a motel, engineering firm and will soon have a new Careerlink office and the county Mental Health/Mental Retardation building, offers huge economic potential for the county, Kasunic said.

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