

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025
8:00 PM (Approximately)**

Chairperson: Andrew Gavrin

Vice Chairperson: Todd Sinai, Louis Rossman

AGENDA

1. **AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH THE NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION (AMTRAK)**



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Economic Development

ITEM: **AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH THE&NBSP; NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION (AMTRAK)**

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners authorizing the Township to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Amtrak to jointly market and pursue the development of properties at the Ardmore Station through a Master Developer process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Issue Briefing - Amtrak MOU 10-03-25 2025.docx](#)

[MOU with Amtrak 10-03-2025.docx](#)

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Economic Development Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and Lower Merion Township for a Potential Ardmore Station Transit-Oriented Development Project.

Prepared by: Brandon J. Ford, Assistant Township Manager

Date: October 3, 2025

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Consider authorization for the Township to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Amtrak to jointly market and pursue the development of properties at the Ardmore Station through a Master Developer process.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

Execution of the MOU will commit the Township to a collaborative process with Amtrak to market properties owned by both parties for potential redevelopment. Any sale or lease of Township property requires Board approval under Township policy and Pennsylvania law.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

The Township has long supported transit-oriented development and revitalization of Ardmore's commercial core. Township zoning currently permits multifamily, office, hotel, medical, and retail uses at the Ardmore Train Station site and adjacent properties.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

Amtrak and Lower Merion Township have an opportunity to pursue a joint venture to support transit-oriented development at Ardmore Station. The draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines a collaborative process to market and redevelop several contiguous parcels owned by Amtrak and the Township, with the goal of delivering significant public benefits. Central to the project is the construction of at least 500 new public parking spaces to serve commuters, local businesses, Township facilities, and future commercial tenants. In addition to addressing parking needs, the development is expected to support the Ardmore community, expand the Township's tax base, and increase rail and transit ridership.

The MOU sets a target for the parking facility to be operational by 2030 and places responsibility on a yet-to-be-selected Master Developer to secure financing, obtain necessary entitlements, and manage design and construction. Amtrak and the Township will jointly manage the developer selection process, while SEPTA will participate as a non-voting advisor to the evaluation committee. This partnership represents an opportunity to align local, regional, and national interests in advancing Ardmore's economic vitality and enhancing its role as a transit hub.

The MOU only obligates the Township to participate with the Amtrak led process to identify potential private developers who might submit a proposal that could result in a parking facility and commercial development on the site. It is certain that to develop a parking facility at the Ardmore Train Station site it will require cooperation between Amtrak and the Township the property owners. After six years of effort to obtain grant funding to help construct a parking facility on the site it is also evident that financing for the project is more likely with a private sector development.

V. Impact on Township Finances:

There is no direct financial impact on the Township if the MOU is authorized. The Master Developer selected would be responsible for project financing. Potential long-term benefits include increased tax and parking revenues and economic activity.

VI. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Board authorize execution of the MOU with Amtrak.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

This Memorandum of Understanding (this "MOU") dated as of the _____ day of _____, 2025 ("Effective Date"), between the NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION, a corporation organized under the Rail Passenger Service Act and the laws of the District of Columbia, with its principal place of business located at 1 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20001 ("Amtrak") and LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP, a municipal corporation of the State of Pennsylvania, having an office at Township Administration Building, 75 East Lancaster Avenue, Ardmore, PA 19003 (the "Township" and, together with Amtrak, the "Parties").

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to describe a joint venture between Amtrak and Lower Merion Township, who desire to develop their properties at Ardmore Station with public parking and commercial buildings ("Development"). These actions are taken in order to support the Ardmore community, expand the Township and State tax base, and increase passenger rail and transit ridership.

2. Property Scope & Marketing Approach

Amtrak and the Township will collectively make the properties identified in Exhibit 1 ("Properties") available for Development. These properties consist of single contiguous areas ("Site") and will be advertised and marketed by Amtrak in a single commercial offering to select a Master Developer that can acquire, assemble, entitle, finance, construct, operate, and maintain the Development project. Amtrak will issue a commercial offering memorandum directly to developers and brokers active in the Greater Philadelphia Metro Region. The Township will also publish an announcement about the offer with Amtrak's contact information where interested parties can request a copy of the memorandum. Amtrak or the Master Developer may also seek to assemble other private and publicly owned parcels as part of the project if needed to make the Development feasible or marketable to investors and lenders. Amtrak and the Township each reserve all rights to approve or reject proposals in their respective sole discretion.

3. Development Scope

The Parties aspire, by and through the Master Developer, to construct a minimum, but not limited to, five hundred (500) public parking spaces ("Parking") on the Properties for use by transit and rail commuters, retail customers, owners, and employees at the Ardmore Town center, Lower Merion Police Department (LMPD), and tenants of the commercial uses. The Township does not have any use preferences for the commercial buildings, and the current zoning allows multifamily residential, office, medical, hotel, and retail. However, the Master Developer may need to seek adjustment of building maximum height or density allowances for the Development project to be feasible. The parking spaces are preferred to be in one structure on the properties adjacent to the Ardmore train station headhouse, but alternative configurations or solutions can be proposed by the Developers if needed to make the Development feasible or marketable to investors and

DRAFT OUTLINE

lenders. Amtrak and the Township each reserve all rights to approve or reject proposals in their respective sole discretion.

4. Development Timeline

The Township and Amtrak desire for the public parking to be open for operations by 2030.

5. Entitlements

The Master Developer will be responsible for obtaining all entitlements and providing all the planning and design inputs. The Township will be responsible for considering possible zoning and land development requirement relief requested by the Master Developer, as reasonably necessary. The Master Developer will be responsible for submitting all permit applications and payment of any related fees.

6. Financing Sources

The Master Developer will be responsible for raising all capital sources required to construct, operate, and maintain the project. However, to support the project's feasibility the Township will consider where legally permissible (1) applying Amtrak's exemption to local taxes and/or zoning to the Development project, (2) possible sharing of future Township parking fees, (3) discounting or deferring compensation for leasing or selling property, and/or (5) some combination thereof to support the project's feasibility. Amtrak will also coordinate with the Master Developer, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Railroads Administration (FRA), and Build America Bureau (BAB0 to pursue a Railroad Rehabilitation and Infrastructure Financing (RRIF) Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) loan borrowed by a specific purpose company (SPC) created for the project.

7. Lower Merion Township Disposition Requirements

Any sale or lease of Township Property must be explicitly authorized by the Board of Commissioners ("BOC") in its sole discretion subject to all applicable Codes, Ordinances, statutes, and Pennsylvania law when the final contract is negotiated. Township Staff must obtain at least one independent, MAI-designated appraisal no older than six months prior to the BOC meeting to establish the property's fair market value ("FMV") and minimum acceptable price (for sale) or rental rate (for lease). However, the BOC can waive the FMV requirement if the project includes demonstrated public benefit, has a bona fide economic development plan, and state law provides authorization for the conveyance. Amtrak anticipates the most likely transaction format proposed by developers will be a 99-year lease on net percentage rent terms with caps on project development costs, operating expenses, debt service, and equity preferred returns.

8. Developer Competition and Negotiation Approach

The Commercial Offering Memorandum to be issued will provide a high-level summary of the Site(s) and the Development opportunity and include the proposal requirements and selection criteria. Prospective bidders will be given a chance to discuss the site(s) with Amtrak, Township, and SEPTA staff independently prior to submitting their proposal. All prospective bidders will be given the same opportunity and information. Amtrak, the Township, and SEPTA staff may

DRAFT OUTLINE

interview bidders after proposals are received and request as many revisions as needed to secure the best and final offer. Amtrak and the Township, as the property owners, each reserve all their rights to conduct the bid evaluations, select the ultimate developer, and negotiate the master development agreement and sale or lease terms, all of which may only be approved by mutual agreement of the Parties. However, SEPTA will be invited as non-voting member on the bid evaluation committee.

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EXHIBIT 1. PROPERTIES AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT AT ARDMORE STATION

