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Flowers to be planted along Route 924 in spring

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The entrance to Hazleton along Route 924 will be a colorful array of flowers and plants, at least in the medial of the road, sometime next spring.

And other communities that are a member of the Mountain Council of Governments (COG) can have a similar project in their community, if they ask for it soon.

COG members discussed the final design of the project, which will consist of a total of 11 planting beds, 10 between Interstate 81 and the traffic

signal at South Broad Street, and one between that signal and the signal at West Broad Street/Diamond Avenue.

Bob Skulsky, executive director of COG, said Barbara Franzosa and Elaine Judd have been working with architect Art Sweeney, who designed the project.

"The plants they (Franzosa and Judd) have selected are not all flowers," Skulsky said. "Barbara and Elaine are people who know plants that will add color. We are trying to get the person's attention away from wanting to look at the strippings."

Now that the project is designed, Skulsky said it will be put out for bid soon, and the contract awarded during the winter in time for spring planting.

Skulsky said raised planting beds were discussed, but there were some concerns.

"The state's (PENNDOT'S) initial concern was that the water (from the raised beds) would pool and freeze on the berm of the road," Skulsky said. "We have to look at the drainage on the medial. If the drainage is good, we can do the raised beds."

The Route 924 entrance had been improved a few years ago, but what was planted grew in, because it was not maintained. After this planting, it will be maintained.

Similar work has been done on Route 309, near its intersection with Route 424 – the new South Beltway – in Hazle Village.

Skulsky also said COG member municipalities had until last Wednesday to submit a potential project.