



Erie Area Council of Governments

ECGRA, Erie Area Council of Governments Invest \$75,000 to Launch Countywide Trail Network

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—June 20, 2016—Erie, PA—Soon, parks and recreational trails across Erie County will be physically and virtually connected. At a 10:00 a.m. press conference today, hosted by Harborcreek Township at beautiful Six Mile Creek Park, the Erie Area Council of Governments announced phase-one plans to launch the Erie Area Trail Network. The Network of more than 25 walking and hiking trails will be jointly marketed through a website and a navigation app and interconnected through a series of branded guideway signs.

Erie Area Council of Governments Executive Director Jessica Horan-Kunco said, “Erie County is home to many great recreational trails that are generally known only to the residents of their host municipality. The goal of the Erie Area Trail Network is to make it easier for countywide residents and visitors to locate, explore, and enjoy these hidden treasures.”

The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority is helping to get the project off the ground. The Erie Area Trail Network is funded using a \$37,500 ECGRA Multi-Municipal Collaboration Grant, plus matching funds from the EACOG and participating parks.

ECGRA Executive Director Perry Wood said, “Erie County is stunning. This partnership not only helps educate residents about our collective outdoor assets, but will encourage visitors to stay longer, enjoy more, and eat and shop in boroughs and towns they may not have visited otherwise.”

Launched in 2012, ECGRA’s MMC Grants program was the first of its kind and called “Erie County’s pioneering government cooperation fund” by Keystone Edge. To be considered for funding, MMC Grants applications must include a minimum of two collaborating municipal entities. To date, ECGRA has invested more than \$679,000 in collaborative municipal projects representing a total of 34 municipalities, authorities, nonprofits, and intergovernmental agencies.

Horan-Kunco added, “We are so grateful to ECGRA. This MMC grant enables us to begin moving forward on a project that will strengthen municipal collaboration, increase awareness and use of our natural resources, and improve the health of the residents of Erie County.”

The EACOG, in conjunction with Emerge 2040, VisitErie, and the Erie County Department of Planning, hosted a trail summit in March to identify parks and recreational trails throughout Erie County and brainstorm possible connections and collaborative opportunities. The EACOG is also working with the Let's Move Outside coalition, the Erie County Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

The project is set to be completed in June 2017. Municipal leaders who wish to connect a park to the Network can contact EACOG Executive Director Jessica Horan-Kunco at jhkunco@erieareacog.org.

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ABOUT ECGRA

An impact investor, ECGRA's mission is to galvanize the nonprofit sector toward economic and community development and to elevate Erie County, Pa. Since February 2008, ECGRA has invested more than \$40 million in Erie County thanks to the innovative leadership of members of the ECGRA board of directors and staff and Erie County Council. Learn how ECGRA Grant Money Works when you visit ECGRA.org or call 814-897-2690.

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ABOUT EACOG

The Erie Area Council of Governments was founded in 1993 as a voluntary association of Erie County municipalities. The EACOG works to improve the lives of Erie County residents through multi-municipal projects, programs, and services that enhance operations, reduce duplication, decrease costs, improve efficiency, and leverage resources for all Erie County municipalities. Current member governments include: County of Erie, City of Erie, boroughs of Girard and Wesleyville, and townships of Franklin, Harborcreek, Lawrence Park, Millcreek, and Summit.

For more information, contact Executive Director Jessica Horan-Kunco at jhkunco@erieareacog.org