



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF CONSERVATION AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

January 5, 2012

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary LaHood:

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is pleased to support the Transportation, Community and System Preservation Program (TCSP) grant application for the Ohio River Trail Council (ORTC).

This 2.5-mile bike/ped segment of the Ohio River Trail will be a “major link” to the existing trail systems of The Great Allegheny Passage and C&O Canal Towpath, which currently spans 335 miles from Washington D.C. to Pittsburgh PA. DCNR is committed to extending this major greenway system and has partnered with ORTC by funding two feasibility studies along the entire span of the 41-mile Ohio River corridor (Pittsburgh to the Ohio State border). This 41-mile study area has shown great local support by bringing together 27 municipalities and 2 county governments. The focus of this application is to capitalize on the momentum of the study through the implementation of the South Shore Trail.

DCNR has also been very active in a Tri-State-Trail Committee whose members include the states of Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The Ohio River Corridor is a “vital link” to connecting the Northwest to the “Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway” in Columbiana County Ohio, forming a major greenway and trail from the great lakes region to our nation’s capital.

At the local level, this trail will also connect two planned recreational amenities. First, Allegheny County is making a large investment in a state of the art “Allegheny County Sports and Athletic Complex” at Montour Junction. Currently DCNR is entertaining a grant application for the development of this 75-acre Brownfield site. Additionally, Moon Township is working on the “Moon Township Waterfront Park”. DCNR has supported their effort through a Master Site Development Plan of this 17-acre waterfront park.

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DCNR has committed substantial funding over the years to Pennsylvania's major greenway corridors and is committed to closing these gaps. A key recommendation of Pennsylvania's national award winning Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (2009-2013) is to promote green and walkable communities. The plan identified walking as the most popular outdoor recreation activity and bike lanes as the most requested facility. These corridors are currently hampered by critical gaps that limit their utility and deter their use by a greater number of people. Closing this gap on one of Pennsylvania's priority greenway corridors will:

- Strengthen the connections between 27 communities throughout the Ohio River corridor.
- Provide alternative transportation options to residents and visitors alike to access communities, workplaces, natural & recreational resources, as well as cultural & historic sites.
- Improve safety by providing an alternate route off of state routes and narrow township roads for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Increase economic opportunities for entrepreneurs by creating a continuous long distance trail "spine" to capture and retain visitors.

Finally, if funded, this project will support livability components by providing a multi-modal opportunity in Pennsylvania that will "expand transportation choices and foster connections to places people work, play, and live." Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Cindy Adams Dunn
Deputy Secretary
for Conservation and Technical Services