



**Feasibility Study
for
Community Trails Initiative
Multi-municipal Trails & Greenways
Development Partnership
September 2011**



Prepared By:



McTish, Kunkel & Associates

Engineers • Planners • Surveyors

Prepared For:



*Township of O'Hara,
Allegheny County*

In Association With:



Community Trails Initiative Feasibility Study - Draft Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.0	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
2.0	PROJECT OVERVIEW	1
	Background	1
	Description	2
	Purpose	3
	Regional Trail/Greenways	3
	Preferred/Practical Alignment & Community Connections	4
3.0	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	6
	List of Stakeholders	6
	Public and Project Stakeholder Meetings	7
	Property Owners	8
4.0	DEMAND FOR AND POTENTIAL USE OF TRAIL	9
	Market Analysis	9
	Trail linkages/Connections to Existing Trails	10
	Trail Survey and Results	10
5.0	CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR CORRIDOR	10
	Trail Corridor Typical Sections	10
	Trail Corridor Description	11
	Trail Corridor Definitions	17
6.0	TRAIL OPERATION, MAINTENANCE, AND SECURITY	18
7.0	FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY	18
	Cost Estimates	18
	Phase Implementation Plan	21
8.0	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	22
Appendices		
A	Location Map	
B	Regional Trail Map	
C	Public and Project Stakeholder Meeting Minutes	
D	Trail Survey Form and Results	
E	Trail Concept Plan	
F	Legal Feasibility – List of Affected Properties	
G	Physical Inventory and Assessment of the ROW –Trail Corridor Descriptions	
H	Sample Municipal Ordinances for Riverfront Development	

1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is partially funded by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnership Program administered by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (Bureau). This project has received donations from Allegheny River Towns Enterprise Zone (ARTEZ), Allegheny County, Aspinwall Borough, Blawnox Borough, Borough of Etna, Fox Chapel Borough, Fox Chapel District Association, Friends of the Riverfront, and Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

This study would never have been possible without the guidance and assistance of Tom Baxter (Friends of the Riverfront), Hannah Hardy (Pennsylvania Environmental Council), Darla Cravotta (Allegheny County), Julie Jakubec (Township of O'Hara), John Stephen (ARTEZ), Susan Crookston (Fox Chapel District Assoc.), Sherry Kordas (Blawnox Borough), Gary Koehler (Fox Chapel), Jim Seagriff (Freeport Borough), Edward Warchol & Nancy Simons (Aspinwall Borough), Ronald Borczyk (Sharpsburg Borough), Donna Diehm & Phil Hans (Springdale Twp.), April Winkelman (Springdale Borough), Andrew Bock (Cheswick Borough), Annette Dietz (Harmar Twp.), Virginia Pucci (Millvale Borough), Tim Rogers & Joseph McLaughlin (Shaler), Mary Ramage & Dave Becki (Etna Borough), Pat Hassett & Steve Patchan (City of Pittsburgh), Bill Rossey (Tarentum Borough), Bettina Leeson & Anthony Taliani (East Deer Twp.), Faith Payne (Harrison Twp.), Denise Tocco (Brackenridge Borough), Bill Godfrey (Natrona Heights), Pat Walters (Natrona Comes Together), Gayle Fuher, Anita Driscoll, Brian Shema, Randy Vulakovich, Jeffrey Schaeffer, Jim Burn, Karl King, Patty Brunner, Trish Klatt, Laura Hawkins, Jeff Mulert, Herman Tomer, Scott Fronkowski, Troy Pritts, John Haven, Monica Hoffman, Kathy Day, Dan Tabacheck, Curt Shaw, Scott Creveling, David Cohen, Gene Slevinski, Robin Kamin, Curt Shaw, Jessica Mooney, Bob Steinhaus, Joseph Warren, Stephanie Flom, and Michael Kenney.

GIS data was provided by the Allegheny and Armstrong County GIS and Mapping Departments.

This project was also greatly assisted by the many individuals who participated at the general public and stakeholder meetings.

This project was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, Keystone Recreation Park and Conservation Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

2.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Background

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail is a trail system that begins within the City of Pittsburgh and follows the banks along the Monongahela, Allegheny and Ohio Rivers. The trail

along the Allegheny River now ends in Millvale Borough and at that point municipalities have been working to connect to this trail system. Much work has been done to date:

- In 2001 Millvale Borough completed their portion of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail including the development of several riverfront amenities like a boat access point, picnic shelter and restrooms.
- In 2005, the Township of O'Hara completed a Trail Feasibility and Planning Study. Phase I implementation of this study included the completion of the Squaw Valley Riverfront Trail, which is almost five miles in length.
- In 2006 Sharpsburg Borough began work on a trail and boat ramp as a segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.
- In 2007 Natrona begins planning for riverfront connections and a park.
- November 2006, Chief Executive Dan Onorato signed into law the creation of a county wide greenway system. This legislation supports the creation of trails and greenways along both sides of the rivers within Allegheny County.
- 2010 marked the connection of the City of Pittsburgh and Millvale Borough and Park with the completion of a boardwalk built by PennDOT.

There are currently gaps in trail development between the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and the Armstrong Trail, which begins in Schenley, north of Freeport in Armstrong County. Both the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and the Armstrong Trail are a part of the Erie to Pittsburgh Greenway and the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal Greenway. Regional connections to the Pennsylvania Greenway system provide opportunities for economic and recreational development. In 2009 the Community Trails Feasibility Study was initiated.

Description

The Community Trails Initiative is a public/private multi-municipal project to complete a trail feasibility study encompassing 17 municipalities (City of Pittsburgh, Millvale, Shaler, Etna, Sharpsburg, Aspinwall, Township of O'Hara, Blawnox, Harmar, Cheswick, Springdale Borough, Springdale Township, Tarentum, Brackenridge and Harrison Township, Freeport Borough, Allegheny Township) along the North Shore of the Allegheny River for the purpose of connecting the existing Three Rivers Heritage Trail with the Armstrong Trail.

The opportunity to complete regional trail connections is one of the most promising attributes of the Community Trails Initiative. The Southern terminus would link with the completed Millvale Riverfront Park and Three Rivers Heritage Trail which affords the opportunity of access the many segments of trail on both sides of the Allegheny, Ohio and Monongahela Rivers. The Northern trail will connect to Schenley and the Armstrong Trail in Armstrong County where plans are underway to continue development as part of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alignment.

What makes the trail unique is that each section of the trail purposefully links to the municipality allowing for the Community Trails connections.

Purpose

A Preliminary Trail Location Study was conducted to identify engineering and environmental constraints for a pedestrian/bicycle trail through the study corridor and provide recommendations for further studies. A practical and preferred alignment was developed to evaluate property impacts and constructability issues.

The practical alignment is defined as the alignment that may be most feasible in the immediate future. This route may be on road more often and away from the river. The preferred alignment provides close proximity to the riverfront. Both alignments overlap in areas.

The practical alignment is approximately 29 miles long, passing through 17 municipalities and 3 counties (Allegheny, Armstrong, and Westmoreland). The practical alignment traverses thru 4.0 miles of active Railroad property, 7.0 miles thru private property, 15.0 miles thru public rights-of-way and 3 miles on existing trails. Proceeding from south the practical alignment extends 0.8 miles in Millvale, 1.0 miles in Shaler, 0.7 miles in Etna, 1.8 miles in Sharpsburg, 0.6 miles in Aspinwall, 0.7 miles in City of Pittsburgh, 2.5 miles in Township of O'Hara, 0.8 miles in Blawnox, 2.2 miles in Harmar, 0.8 miles in Cheswick, 1.9 miles in Springdale Borough, 1.3 miles in Springdale Township, 2.2 miles in East Deer, 1.5 miles in Tarentum, 0.6 miles in Brackenridge, 4.6 miles in Harrison, 0.5 miles Freeport (Armstrong County) and 2.0 miles in Allegheny Township, Westmoreland County.

The preferred alignment traverses thru 12 miles of active Railroad property, 12.0 miles thru private property, 2.0 miles thru public rights-of-way and 3 miles on existing trails. Proceeding from south the preferred alignment extends 0.8 miles in Millvale, 1.0 miles in Shaler, 0.7 miles in Etna, 1.3 miles in Sharpsburg, 0.4 miles in Aspinwall, 0.7 miles in City of Pittsburgh, 3.6 miles in Township of O'Hara, 1.0 miles in Blawnox, 3.0 miles in Harmar, 0.7 miles in Cheswick, 1.5 miles in Springdale Borough, 1.3 miles in Springdale Township, 3.1 miles in East Deer, 1.5 miles in Tarentum, 0.6 miles in Brackenridge, 5.6 miles in Harrison, 0.5 miles Freeport (Armstrong County) and 2.0 miles in Allegheny Township, Westmoreland County.

The Trail Concept Plans showing the preferred and practical alignments are attached in appendix E.

Regional Trail / Greenways

It is important to understand the role that this project plays in the local, regional and statewide trail and greenway system. The PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) has identified 34 major or mega greenway corridors in Pennsylvania that are at least 50 miles, pass through two or more counties, and are recognized in an official planning document. Five of these mega greenways have been targeted by DCNR for increased funding and staff assistance. Two of the five pass through Allegheny County: the Great Allegheny Passage and the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal.

The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail also has a good chance of being included in this group due to its strategic location and the number of residents and communities it can join together.

Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™

The Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™, is a 320-mile long corridor that follows the path of the historic Pennsylvania Mainline Canal. The section of the greenway in Allegheny County runs from Pittsburgh to Freeport, along the Allegheny River. This greenway has been designated Pennsylvania's Millennium Legacy Trail – one of 52 state significant trails that link heritage, culture and recreation. The Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ will encompass both land and river trails to complete the corridor connections.

www.alleghenyridge.org

Erie to Pittsburgh Mega Greenway

DCNR's second priority for greenways funding in western Pennsylvania is the Erie to Pittsburgh Greenway, a recently designated greenway in the PA Greenways Program. The Erie to Pittsburgh Greenway incorporates trail systems both built and planned along the Allegheny River, and overlaps the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ within Allegheny County's borders. Trail organizations from Pittsburgh to Erie are working to connect a number of land trails to it.

The concept for the Erie to Pittsburgh Greenway emerged from local communities and trail organizations. The success of other community and regional trails built in the western part of the Commonwealth over the years provided good models for the Erie to Pittsburgh Greenway. With trails such as the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, Armstrong Trail, Allegheny River Trail, McClintock Trail, Oil Creek Gorge Trail, Ernst Trail, Pymatuning Spillway Trail, and many others, the Erie to Pittsburgh Greenway can unify the Western Pennsylvania Trail Network. This potential mega greenway will enhance the existing trail system, give it a regional identity, make additional connections, raise the visibility of individual trail projects in the region and elevate the value of recreational resources in local communities. Once the Erie to Pittsburgh regional trail system is completed, it can then connect to The Great Allegheny Passage, linking Erie to Washington, DC.

www.eriepittsburghtrail.org

Please refer to Appendix B for a map and more information about the regional trail system.

Preferred / Practical Alignment & Community Connections

For riverfront trail projects the most desirable or preferred location is to be as close to the river as possible. This reduces the amount of road crossings, provides a very scenic and enjoyable trail experience and allows public access to our riverfronts. Riverfront property is also typically at a level grade making the trail accessible to a variety of users.

Due to private property, active railroads or other industrial property it is not always possible to provide a trail directly on the riverfront and frequently riverfront trails need to veer away from the riverfront and utilize either roads or property that may be available for trail development. Thus projects take on a more practical alignment due to specific circumstances.

In this case we must deal with private property, railroads and industry. The active, mainline railroad, Norfolk & Southern follows the entire stretch of this alignment and serves several industries along the Allegheny River. This presents a challenge to developing a consistent trail along the riverfront. In some areas along this alignment, due to the railroad tracks and railroad property, there is very little space for a trail let alone available property to develop the trail right along the river.

In order to be successful, this project must address the realities of private property and active railroads along the Allegheny River. We have developed both a practical and preferred alignment for the trail to address these concerns. Following is a description of these alignments as related to this project.

Preferred Alignment: The goal of this project is to, where possible; develop the trail along the Allegheny River with strong connections from the river into communities at key trailheads. This is defined as the preferred alignment and we will strive to achieve this goal. A good example is the existing trail in Millvale Borough or the trail along the Riverfront Park in Tarentum. Much of this alignment is right at the top of the slope directly overlooking the river. A typical preferred alignment is shown below:



(Typical preferred alignment)

Practical Alignment: The practical alignment will take into account private property along the riverfront, industrial property uses and active railroads. To accommodate all of these issues, a practical alignment has been identified. This alignment is more likely to be developed in a shorter timeframe and can be used until other uses along the river change. The practical alignment will typically veer away from the riverfront and into communities sometimes using on street facilities (share the road) or other property that can be acquired for separated trail property. Please refer to the conceptual designs for the corridor for more information about what potential on street facilities (share the road)

could look like in (Section 5.0). A typical practical alignment option of a share the road facility is shown below:



(Photo of typical share the road facility)

Community Connections: One of the benefits of trails is the potential for economic development in communities that are along the alignment. Benefits come both from visitors to communities who spent money while they are using the trail and also an increase in property values as a result of the trail development. The Great Allegheny Passage, for example, has an estimated 700,000 trips annually. This equates to an estimated \$40 million impact in direct spending and \$7.5 million in wages every year (Source: Trail Town Program ® www.trailtowns.org).

One of the keys to enhancing the economic development potential of trails is to have strong connections from the trail into communities. This will also make it easier for residents along the trail alignment to use the trail. We have identified several connections from the river into the heart of communities along the trail. These connections are identified on the maps in Appendix E and discussed in the Trail Corridor Descriptions.

3.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

List of Stakeholders

Members of the Allegheny Valley Trails Community Trail Initiative include: Allegheny County, Friends of the Riverfront, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Allegheny River Towns Enterprise Zone, Township of O'Hara Parks and Recreation Committee, Fox Chapel District Association, Natrona Comes Together, Springdale Team of Active Residents(STAR), Alli-Kiski Historical Society, Boyd Center, Audubon Society of Western PA, Allegheny Ridge Corporation, Pittsburgh to Harrisburg to Mainline Canal Greenway, Rachel Carson Trail and the City of Pittsburgh, Millvale Borough, Shaler Township, Borough of Etna, Sharpsburg Borough, Aspinwall Borough, Fox Chapel Borough, Township of O'Hara, Blawnox

Borough, Harmar Township, Cheswick Borough, Springdale Borough, Springdale Township, Frazer Township, Tarentum Borough, Brackenridge Borough, Harrison Township, Freeport Borough, and Allegheny Township.

Public and Project Stakeholder Meetings

An extensive public involvement program was maintained throughout the feasibility study process that included stakeholder, municipality, and general public meetings. The involvement extended to meetings and regular correspondence with community leaders. Local municipalities were grouped and steering committee members and the consultant met with municipal representatives to gain local knowledge within the study area. This was a critical step in the feasibility study as it allowed municipal representatives and volunteer organizations to develop the alignment by showing the best placement of the trail route.

In all, twelve (12) informational presentations were made before various municipalities and community leaders as well as (3) advertised public meetings during the study process.

At each meeting the public was given the opportunity to discuss sections of the proposed trail that would pass through their municipalities and indicate an alignment. These alignments were analyzed for right-of-way impacts, physical restraints, flood plain and environmental impacts and accessibility. The results of the analysis were then presented to the municipalities and an agreed upon practical alignment was established that is described in this feasibility study.

The following is a list of the correspondence with community leaders, municipality and public meetings with participants:

Municipal Meetings & Correspondence with Community Leaders

- March 10, 2009
 - Tarentum
 - Brackenridge
 - East Deer
 - Natrona
- April 20, 2009
 - Etna
 - Shaler
 - Millvale
- May 5, 2009
 - Aspinwall
 - Fox Chapel
 - Freeport
- May 12, 2009
 - Springdale Twp.

- Cheswick
- May 18, 2009
 - Phone interview Harmar.
- May 20, 2009
 - Phone interview with Springdale Borough.
- June 10, 2009
 - Freeport
- June 23, 2009
 - Allegheny Valley Land Trust
- June 25, 2009
 - Sharpsburg
- July 10, 2009
 - City of Pittsburgh - Department of Public Works
- July 20, 2009
 - Blawnox

Public Meetings

March 2, 2010 Millvale Community Center

March 3, 2010 Alle-Kiski Museum, Tarentum

March 6, 2010 Boyd Community Center, O'Hara Township

The Public and Project Stakeholder Meeting Minutes are attached in appendix B.

Property Owners

In the past, traditional trail development normally consisted of dealing with one property owner: Railroads. Securing and purchasing the rights to abandoned railroad lines would sometimes provide 10, 20 or 50 miles of a trail alignment.

However, within Allegheny County, the riverfronts are alive and well with activity – commercial, industrial, residential, railroads and recreational uses. These uses are located near the riverfront because the area provides easy access to barge transportation and a flat area for construction.

As recreational use of the riverfronts grow, working with private property owners has become more critical. This study area presents some challenges and opportunities with the significant number of private property owners.

Railroad Property

Private property owners and the Norfolk & Southern Railroad Company are important partners to the Allegheny Valley Community Trails Study.

The study area has identified several miles of railroad property that would be necessary to traverse in order to develop a trail near the riverfront. This is a challenging proposition due to safety concerns identified by the railroad. Property owned by the railroad is used by railroad personnel to monitor and repair track activity and is part of the track infrastructure. Safety is of paramount concern to the railroad and a distance of eighty (80) feet from the tracks is necessary for any type of trail development.

Safety is an important part of trail development and this study recommends a continued relationship with Norfolk & Southern to determine if and when trail development may occur.

Private Property

Along the Allegheny River there are industrial, commercial and privately owned homes, condominiums or apartment complexes. Each type of ownership presents opportunities to work on identifying trail alignments that owners are comfortable with and provide safe and secure trails for the users.

Public Property

Several municipalities own property along the riverfront. These segments of land become important connections for the Allegheny Valley Community Trails Initiative. Developing riverfront parks and trails is a common use of municipal owned property and there are several communities that have trails and parks in place along the study area. We work to connect these segments to complete the entire trail.

4.0 DEMAND FOR AND POTENTIAL USE OF TRAIL

Market Analysis

As stated, one of the benefits of trails is the potential for economic development in communities that are along the alignment. Benefits come both from visitors to communities who spent money while they are using the trail. An increase in property values as a result of the trail development and creation of new businesses that cater specifically to trail users. Over the past 10 years, the Great Allegheny Passage economic impact has increased as the trail alignment grew and people began to use the trail for day trips and overnight trips. There is now an estimated 700,000 trips annually. This equates to an estimated \$40 million impact in direct spending and \$7.5 million in wages every year (Source: Trail Town Program @ www.trailtowns.org).

Friends of the Riverfront is currently conducting a Trail usage survey of the existing segment so the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and plans to provide the data to the public, municipal leaders and local planning agencies in October of 2011. The information will also be provided to the Rails to Trails Conservancy which in 2014 plans conduct a comprehensive economic impact report for the entire system including currently build but not yet fully connected segments. Once both studies are complete a clear understanding of usage and economic benefits will be available and utilized for further development of

the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. Potential demand for the proposed trail will be estimated once this information is made available.

Trail Linkages/Connections to Existing Trails

A comprehensive description of the proposed practical and preferred alignments for the trail and where they connect to existing trails is shown on the Trail Concept Plan (Appendix E).

Trail Survey and Results

A trail user survey form was developed to help determine any possible economic impact that the proposed trail would have on the associated local communities. The target group for the surveys was focused on stakeholders who would use the trail and also adjacent property owners / businesses that provide products and services for trail users.

The trail survey form was given to every individual who attended the public meetings. The survey was made available online at the Friends of the Riverfront webpage for individuals to print, complete and mail the completed survey to the Friends of the Riverfront. The results of the completed surveys were recorded and compiled.

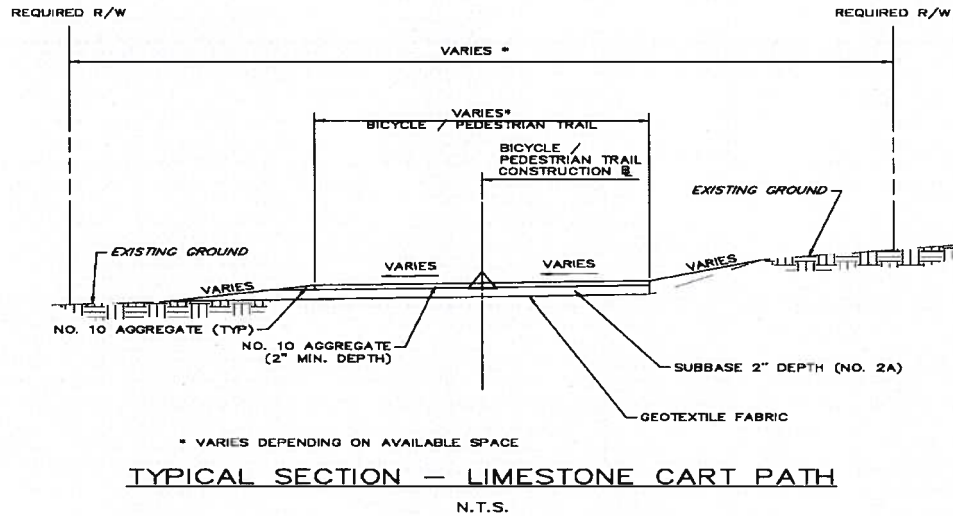
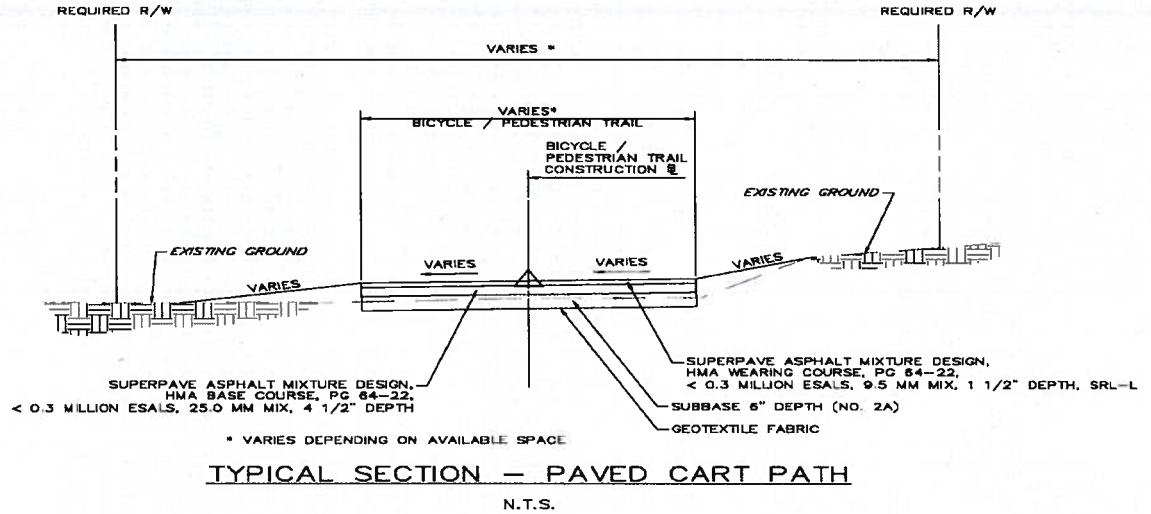
The completed surveys showed that a predominant number of people that took the survey were over 46 years of age, without children. The primary use of the trail would be walking or biking. Users indicated that in the past year they spent money on average of \$100 for trail use which includes purchases of accessories, clothing, bikes or footwear. Looking at potential needs identified by the survey; ice cream and beverages ranked the highest in potential purchases of trail users. A total of 146 completed survey forms were collected as a result of the public meetings. The answers to the completed surveys are attached in Appendix D.

5.0 CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR CORRIDOR

Trail Corridor Typical Sections

The majority of the multi-use trail will follow a newly constructed paved cart path with a varied width depending on available space. The paved cart path will consist of a 1.5” asphalt wearing course, 4.5” asphalt base course, 6” Subbase (No. 2A), and geotextile fabric. An alternate crushed limestone cart path of consisting of 2” of AASHTO #10 crushed limestone, 2” of AASHTO #2A Modified, and geotextile fabric can be used where desirable. An easement, right-of-way or agreement must be obtained from all affected property owners for the trail. Fencing or concrete barrier will be considered in the final design along any sections of the trail adjacent to an active rail line and will be determined following discussions with the Norfolk & Southern Railroad Company. In other areas, it may be necessary to “share the road” with motor vehicles by using designated and restricted bike lanes or using signs to mark a ‘bike route’. The areas where the trail will utilize the “share the road” facilities shall be in accordance with the MUTCD 2009 Edition standards. The proposed trail and amenity development /

construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990. The typical sections for the newly constructed paved and crushed limestone cart paths are shown below:



Trail Corridor Description

In the following section, a description of the current land use for the total length of the proposed Three Rivers Heritage Trail Corridor is described. There are many small segments that are necessary to complete the entire alignment from Millvale to Schenley. This section includes specific descriptions of each segment of trail, typically separated by

municipality. Other aspects of the segment that is important for development like property ownership, topography, description, preliminary cost estimates, etc. are included in Appendix G (Physical Inventory and Assessment of the ROW). This information should be used to pursue development opportunities.

The following are brief descriptions of each segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail corridor:

Millvale Segment ≈ 0.8 miles

The proposed practical and preferred alignment through Millvale exists and it is in use. The alignment will begin at Millvale Riverfront Park and follow the existing bike trail that currently extends from the park to the Shaler Twp. boundary line. The Millvale Riverfront Park currently serves as a trailhead.

Shaler / Etna Segment ≈ 1.7 miles

The proposed preferred and practical alignment through Shaler/Etna will follow along an existing railroad service road that parallels the railroad tracks. The service road is along the river side of the railroad tracks and extends to Bridge Street under the 62nd Street Bridge along the Etna / Sharpsburg borough boundary. This alignment intersects with private property and property owned by the Borough of Etna. There are limited opportunities for a trail connection through Shaler that is not along the riverfront due to the existing railroad tracks, SR 28 and a steep grade. Much of Shaler and other public roads are at the top of the steep hill. For much of this section of riverfront there are not other roads that we can take advantage of to make this connection. This presents a major challenge to completing this section of trail. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Sharpsburg Segment ≈ varies from 1.3 to 1.8 miles

The proposed preferred alignment through Sharpsburg will follow the existing railroad service road that parallels the railroad tracks from Bridge Street under 62nd St. Bridge and ends just before the Sharpsburg Riverfront Park. The alignment will connect to the Sharpsburg Riverfront Park and then run along an existing dirt road along the river that extends from the park to the Sharpsburg water plant and Silky's Crow's Nest Restaurant. The proposed practical alignment in Sharpsburg will take advantage of Main Street and improving biking connections through the Sharpsburg business district. Access to Main Street is available as soon as under the 62nd Street Bridge if needed. Trail users will be able to cross back to the riverfront at 19th Street to connect to Aspinwall through private property. It is also recommended that Freeport Road be upgraded for share the road opportunities. The Sharpsburg Riverfront Park will serve as a proposed trailhead. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Township of O'Hara Section No. 1 Segment ≈ varies from 0.4 miles to "to be determined"

The proposed preferred alignment through the Township of O'hara section 1 will begin along private property along the riverfront and cross under the Highland Park Bridge to

the Aspinwall Borough boundary. It is recommended that the practical alignment include improvements to Freeport Road for share the road opportunities. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Aspinwall Segment ≈ varies from 0.4 miles to “to be determined”

The proposed preferred alignment through Aspinwall will begin along private property along the riverfront and connect to the Aspinwall Marina. The alignment will then share the road for the marina entrance to utilize the public railroad crossing to cross the railroad tracks and connect to the existing railroad service road that parallels Freeport Road. The Aspinwall Marina will serve as a proposed trailhead. The practical alignment will use share the road along Freeport Road and utilize neighborhood streets. The Aspinwall Marina will serve as a proposed trailhead. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

City of Pittsburgh Segment ≈ 0.7 miles

The proposed preferred & practical alignment through the City of Pittsburgh will follow the existing railroad service road on Norfolk & Southern property adjacent to Freeport Road and continue to the railroad crossing for the City of Pittsburgh water treatment plant (PWSA) entrance. This crossing is owned by the City of Pittsburgh. The alignment will utilize the existing crossing and maintain along the PWSA employee access road to the Chapel Harbor Development (O’hara Twp. section 2 boundary line). The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Township of O’Hara Section No. 2 Segment ≈ 1.4 miles

The proposed preferred alignment through Township of O’hara section 2 will begin along the PWSA entrance road that parallels the railroad (adjacent to Chapel Harbor) and cross the Chapel Harbor retirement home property to connect to the existing walking trail located along Chapel Harbor Drive. The existing trail along Chapel Harbor Drive consists of an approximately 5 ft wide sidewalk used for pedestrians. The existing sidewalk will be used for pedestrian use and Chapel Harbor Drive will be a share the road facility used for bicycles. The alignment will continue along Chapel Harbor Drive and then along Zaenger Drive to Riverfront Drive. The alignment will then cross Zaenger Drive and Riverfront Drive and run along Papercraft Park Road, which extends to the Blawnox Borough boundary line. The trail adjacent to Papercraft Park Road will consist of an 8 ft wide paved surface. The trail in Township of O’hara Section No. 2 can be directly accessed along Chapel Harbor Road. An existing connection to the Squaw Valley Trail is in-place and will connect to the proposed alignment at the Chapel Harbor entrance. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Blawnox Segment ≈ varies from 0.8 miles to 1.0 miles

The proposed practical alignment through Blawnox will begin adjacent to 4th Street and continue adjacent to Centre Avenue. The alignment will use the Centre Avenue public railroad crossing to cross the railroad tracks and follow along the existing railroad service

road closest to Freeport Road. The Blawnox Borough Community Park will serve as a proposed trailhead. The alignment will continue along the existing railroad service road that extends to the Township of O'hara section 3 boundary line. The proposed preferred alignment will begin along 4th Street and follow along the municipal boundary to the riverfront. The alignment will follow along the riverfront through private property to the Township of O'hara section 3 boundary line. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Township of O'Hara Section No. 3 Segment ≈ varies from 1.8 miles to “to be determined”

The proposed preferred alignment through Township of O'hara section 3 will begin along the riverfront through private property and continue to River Road. The alignment will continue along River Road to the public railroad crossing just before Freeport Road. The alignment will then continue along the existing railroad service road that parallels the railroad tracks / Freeport Road and extends to the Harmar Township boundary line. No improvements are anticipated for the public railroad crossings. It is suggested for the practical alignment that improvements to Freeport Road be made for Share the Road opportunities. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Harmar Segment ≈ varies from 3.0 miles to “to be determined”

The proposed preferred alignment through Harmar will follow the existing railroad service road that parallels the railroad tracks / Freeport Road and extends to the Cheswick boundary line. The public boat launch properties owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the PA Fish and Boat Commission will serve as proposed trailheads. This trail alignment presents major challenges because of a steep hillside, Route 28, Freeport Road and the railroad tracks. Options for the alignment are limited. It is recommended that a practical alignment include biking improvements along Freeport Road and utilize neighborhood streets. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Cheswick Segment ≈ varies from 0.7 miles to 0.8 miles

The proposed preferred alignment through Cheswick will follow along the existing railroad service road that parallels the railroad tracks and extends to the Springdale Township boundary line. The proposed practical alignment through Cheswick will use the public railroad crossing along Blockdale Street to cross the railroad tracks and onto private property. The alignment will then continue through various private properties along the riverfront and extend to the Rachael Carson Park along S. Duquesne Ave. The Rachael Carson Park along S. Duquesne Ave will serve as a proposed trail head for the practical & preferred alignments. There is public parking available at the Rachael Carson Park. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Springdale Borough Segment ≈ varies from 1.5 miles to 1.9 miles

The proposed practical alignment through Springdale Borough will begin at the public railroad crossing along S. Duquesne Ave. and become a share the road facility along S. Duquesne Ave., Freeport Rd., Colfax St., Railroad St., Keane St., and Butler St to the Springdale Borough boundary line. The Veterans Memorial Ballfields, Springdale Township VFW, and the public boat launch owned by Springdale Borough along Colfax St. will serve as proposed trail heads. An existing connection to the Rachael Carson Trail is in-place at the Springdale Township VFW, which will serve as a proposed trail head. The proposed preferred alignment through Springdale Borough will follow along the existing railroad service road that parallels the railroad tracks / Freeport Road and extends to the Springdale Township boundary line. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Springdale Township Segment ≈ 1.3 miles

The proposed preferred alignment through Springdale Township will follow along the existing railroad service road that parallels the railroad tracks / Freeport Road and extends to the East Deer boundary line. An existing connection to the Rachael Carson Trail is in-place at the Springdale Township VFW, which will serve as a proposed trail head for the proposed trail alignment. It is recommended that the practical alignment include improvements to Freeport Road for share the road opportunities. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

East Deer Segment ≈ varies from 2.2 miles to 3.1 miles

The proposed practical alignment through East Deer will begin along Freeport Road via a share the road facility and extend to the public railroad crossing at the East Deer Park. The alignment will run through the East Deer Park and private property (PPG Industries) to Ferry Street. The alignment will then continue along Ferry Street and cut through private property (PPG Industries) adjacent to railroad property to a point where the trail can cross the private property to make its way back along the riverfront. The alignment will then follow along the riverfront through private property (1000 Treadway Trust & Holcim Inc.) to the Tarentum Borough boundary line. The proposed preferred alignment through East Deer will begin along the existing railroad service road that parallels the railroad tracks / Freeport Road and extend to the Air Products entrance. The alignment will utilize the entrance to follow along the riverfront through private property and into the East Deer Park. The alignment will run through the East Deer Park and private property (PPG Industries) to Ferry Street. The alignment will then continue along Ferry Street and cut through private property (PPG Industries) adjacent to railroad property to a point where the trail can cross the private property to make its way back along the riverfront. The alignment will then follow along the riverfront through private property (1000 Treadway Trust & Holcim Inc.) to the Tarentum Borough boundary line. (1000 Treadway Trust & Holcim Inc.) to the Tarentum Borough boundary line. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Tarentum Segment ≈ 1.5 miles

The proposed practical alignment through Tarentum will begin along private property along the riverfront and then become a share the road facility along Grantham Street to W. 6th Avenue to 4th Avenue to 1st Avenue to the Tarentum Riverfront Park. The alignment will then run through the Tarentum Riverfront Park to the Brackenridge Memorial Park. The proposed preferred alignment will begin along private property along the riverfront and extend to 4th Avenue and then to 1st Avenue to the Tarentum Riverfront Park. The alignment will then run through the Tarentum Riverfront Park to the Brackenridge Memorial Park. The Tarentum Public Boat Launch & Riverfront Park will serve as proposed trailheads. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Brackenridge Segment ≈ 0.6 miles

The proposed practical and preferred alignment through Brackenridge will begin at the Brackenridge Memorial Park and follow the existing walking trail that extends through the park. The alignment will then continue as a share the road facility along 1st Avenue to Brackenridge Borough line. The Brackenridge Memorial Park will serve as a proposed trailhead. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Harrison Township Segment ≈ varies from 4.6 miles to 5.6 miles

The proposed practical and preferred alignment through Harrison Township will be a share the road facility beginning along River Avenue and continue to Veteran's Way. The alignment will then follow Veteran's Way along the river that extends to the U.S. Army Corps (USACE) property for the Allegheny River Lock Station. The alignment may then either continue along U.S. Army Corps (USACE) property back along River Avenue to Federal Street or stop at the U.S. Army Corps (USACE) property and bear left through private property. The practical alignment will then continue along Federal Street to N. Canal Street, where as the preferred alignment will follow the riverfront through private property and connect the existing railroad service road and extend to the proposed onramp to the SR 356 Bridge over the Allegheny River. The practical alignment will then continue along N. Canal Street and onto Karns Road. The practical alignment will follow Karns Road till the road turns into Oak Manor Drive. The practical alignment will then cross private property (Mount Airy Cemetery) and may continue on railroad property along the existing railroad service road to the proposed onramp to the SR 356 Bridge over the Allegheny River. The Harrison Ballpark off of Karns Rd. will serve as a proposed trailhead. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Freeport Borough / Allegheny Township Segment ≈ 2.5 miles

The proposed practical alignment will begin along the proposed onramp to the SR 356 Bridge over the Allegheny River. The alignment will run adjacent to the proposed onramp and across the SR 356 Bridge over the Allegheny River. Bridge reconstruction includes a bike lane. The alignment will use this bike lane to cross the SR 356 Bridge over the Allegheny River and onto River Landing Drive (share the road facility), which is

adjacent to the River Forest Golf Club. The alignment will continue along River Landing Drive and connect to the abandoned railroad bed along the Allegheny River. The abandoned railroad bed is private property and has recently been sold. The new owners of the property have publicly discussed working with Allegheny Township to provide a 1.5 mile transfer of the abandoned railroad bed to the Butler/Freeport trail. The proposed practical alignment will provide a connection to the Butler/Freeport Trail via the old abandoned railroad bed under the north side of the SR 356 Bridge over the Allegheny River and the proposed bike lane across the SR 356 Bridge over the Allegheny River. The proposed trail and amenity development / construction shall be in accordance with the 2010 Standards of the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

Trail Corridor Definitions

The following are definitions for the various items that are described in the trail corridor descriptions and cost estimates in Appendix F.

Description – Brief description of trail segment and location

Legal Feasibility – Brief description regarding the feasibility of trail segment.

Property Owners – Identify all segment property owners impacted by the trail alignment.

Topography – Is the area flat? Are there any significant obstacles like creeks, dams, etc.

Land Use – Identify and address potential impacts on adjacent land uses (agricultural lands, industrial properties, school facilities, businesses, residences, etc.)

Erosion/Drainage Problems – noticeable problems with erosion and water

Significant Natural Features – the adjacent or intersecting streams; significant natural features (lakes, ponds, rock outcroppings, wetlands, floodplains, etc.); and, existing vegetation and wildlife analysis (identify any species of concern or sensitive habitat areas in the project area and/or the existence of aggressive, weedy species/major invasive plants)

Structures in Corridor – Provide a general assessment of existing bridges, canals, culverts, and/or tunnels. Provide a general assessment of existing trail buildings (train stations, etc.). Identify potential and/or obvious trail encroachments.

Utilities – Identify and map the location of utilities in relationship to trail and alternative trail locations (water, sanitary sewers, electrical and gas lines, telephone, etc.).

Access the capacity of these utilities to serve trail development.

Determine instances where the physical location of utilities may be an impediment to trail development.

Property Owner Required Right-of-Way – Identify property owners impacted by the trail alignment right-of-way.

Environmental Hazards – Based on preliminary assessments, determine the need for environmental assessment studies relative to toxic waste disposal or other environmental hazards.

Intersections and Access Points – Identify and map existing road crossings, active rail lines, driveways, etc. Inventory access points located within the corridor for possible vehicular and pedestrian access to and through the corridor.

Trail Linkages/Connections to Existing Trails – Possible connections to neighboring developments for both recreational and commuter use by residents and employees; and, Possible connections with other existing or proposed trails. Possible motorized/non-motorized public access points to the riverfronts.

User Demand & Market Analysis – Estimate initial usage levels, project future usage levels and estimate seasonal demand versus year-round demand based on surveying and information about the location.

ROW Costs – Costs to acquire necessary pieces of property if known.

Preliminary Construction Cost Estimate – Cost estimate of what it would cost to construct this segment of trail based on conceptual designs.

6.0 TRAIL OPERATION, MAINTENANCE, AND SECURITY

Typically Friends of the Riverfront aids in the development of new sections of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. As part of this process there is a high probability that the municipality will own and maintain the trail and adjacent amenities. If however the municipality is unable or unwilling to do so Friends of the Riverfront is set up as a land trust to hold properties or in some cases Allegheny County may assume the role of ownership. In all instances Friends of the Riverfront will offer aid in maintaining the trail corridor through a license and maintenance agreement.

7.0 FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

Cost Estimates

Right-of-way or Easement Acquisition

The proposed practical trail alignment occupies 15 miles of existing public right-of-way and 3 miles of existing trails which does not need to be acquired. This anticipates that right-of-way for the remaining 11 miles of proposed trail will need to be acquired. The proposed preferred trail alignment occupies 2 miles of existing public right-of-way and 3 miles of existing trails which does not need to be acquired. This anticipates that right-of-way for the remaining 24 miles of proposed trail will need to be acquired.

The proposed trail template varies due to limited construction opportunities, so a conservative estimate of the required right-of-way width is 20 feet. This defines a linear corridor that covers approximately 70 acres for the entire corridor. In addition, 14 trailheads are proposed that will utilize existing facilities.

Right-of-way for the proposed trail can be acquired through a variety of instruments including fee simple, easement or lease agreement. Purchase of the right-of-way in fee simple is generally preferred, but may not be feasible along much of the alignment because it could interfere with the economic interests of the current owners. Fee simple acquisition of the proposed trail right-of-way across large undivided tracts of land would require subdivision, which can be costly and time consuming. However, not having a fee simple interest in the trail right-of-way will make it difficult to secure public funding, since many government agencies require a fee simple interest, or at least a legal instrument that is guaranteed for the design life of the improvements.

Easement or lease agreements do not necessarily need to be described in the metes and bounds, but can simply identify logical termini and reserve corridor improved to set specifications necessary for the defined use and maintenance of the trail. This provides the property owners with the flexibility to relocate the trail if they have a compelling financial interest to do so. Because it does not completely encumber the owner's future use of the land, a flexible easement or lease agreement could significantly reduce the cost of the right-of-way acquisition.

Right-of-way acquisition can cost what the market will bear. A uniform fair appraisal valuation will be defined using the county property assessments. The range of values for a 20 foot tract of land is estimated at \$20,000 to \$100,000 per acre. This results in a total estimate for right-of-way cost that ranges from \$540,000 to \$2,700,000 for the practical alignment and \$1,180,000 to \$5,900,000 for the preferred alignment. The right-of-way acquisition cost for each segment of the corridor is listed in Appendix G.

The scope of engineering services varies widely with the legal instrument used for right-of-way acquisition. If the right-of-way is acquired in fee simple, the need to perform deed research, survey, subdivide, and monument miles of primary trail right-of-way will have a significant cost. However, if most of the right-of-way is acquired as a flexible easement or a lease agreement, most of the boundary surveying and subdivision cost are eliminated. Conservatively estimating that 20% of the primary trail right-of-way will require deed research, survey and monumentation puts the minimum cost for design services for right-of-way acquisition at \$50,000 and \$150,000.

Design and Environment Clearance

The cost for engineering and environmental services to design and obtain environmental clearance for construction of the proposed trail will vary greatly due to the diverse land types along the riverfront. However, it is conceivable that all design and environmental clearance for the proposed trail could be attained for between \$150,000 and \$300,000.

Construction Costs

The proposed practical alignment occupies a variety of existing conditions ranging from raw undeveloped land to existing state highway. The proposed practical alignment traverses approximately 18.0 miles of existing paved roadway, and 11.0 miles of off-road alignment, of which will require asphalt pavement. The proposed preferred alignment traverses approximately 5.0 miles of existing paved roadway, and 24.0 miles of off-road alignment, of which will require asphalt pavement. Recent experience with similar trail projects has shown that contractor bids are so variable and escalating so quickly, that a detailed breakdown by construction cost items is not likely to yield reliable information. However, experience has shown that the most reliable ball park estimate for average trail construction costs remains at approximately \$20,000 to \$50,000 per mile for trail along existing roadways and \$250,000 to \$300,000 for trail requiring new asphalt pavement. The 14 trailhead facilities are not expected to be very expensive since they are existing parking areas, parks, etc. and will only require signage. There are no expected structural items anticipated at this time for construction of the practical alignment.

The total cost for construction of the entire proposed practical alignment is anticipated to be within the range of \$2,880,000 to \$3,950,000. The total cost for construction of the entire proposed preferred alignment is anticipated to be within the range of \$6,330,000 to \$7,700,000. The construction cost for each segment of the corridor is listed in Appendix G.

Maintenance Costs

An excellent overview of operation and maintenance cost is provided by the Rails to Trails Conservancy Northeast Regional Office in their July 2005 publication Rail-Trail Maintenance & Operation. This publication compares the maintenance and operation costs of 100 rail-trails in the Northeast and Mid-west. The maintenance & operation costs reported ranged from a low of \$500 to a high of \$800,000 per year; with an average M & O cost of \$50,000. The average trail surveyed was 23 miles long, and reported maintenance & operation costs of just under \$1,500 per mile, regardless of whether it had a paved or unpaved surface. Much of this cost can be covered by volunteers and trail-tender groups.

The Importance of Local Support

When preparing and considering an estimate of costs it is very important to consider how support from within the community can reduce costs enormously. For example, a high level of support from land owners could reduce estimated right-of-way acquisition costs significantly. Similarly, if construction is funded locally, state and Federal requirements and standards can be relaxed and some eliminated altogether. Costs for maintenance of the trail where it occupies utility right-of-way could be shared between the entity responsible for maintenance of the trail and the municipal authority. The more the community takes ownership and is involved in maintenance and operation of the trail, the less there is likely to be vandalism and incidents of illegal activity along the trail corridor.

Phased Implementation Plan

The development of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail is a long-term proposition that will likely be developed in segments. The following sections have the highest potential for being dedicated as a trail with minimal costs and right-of-way conflicts:

City of Pittsburgh/Township of O'Hara Sec. 2/Blawnox

The trail will begin at the City of Pittsburgh water treatment plant (PWSA) entrance and maintain along the employee access road. The trail will then cross the Chapel Harbor retirement home property to connect to the existing walking trail located along Chapel Harbor Drive. The existing trail along Chapel Harbor Drive consists of an approximately 5 ft wide sidewalk used for pedestrians. The existing sidewalk will be used for pedestrian use and Chapel Harbor Drive will be a share the road facility used for bicycles. The alignment will continue along Chapel Harbor Drive and then along Zaenger Drive to Riverfront Drive. The alignment will then cross Zaenger Drive and Riverfront Drive and run along Papercraft Park Road and 4th Street to Centre Avenue. The trail adjacent to Papercraft Park Road and 4th Street will consist of an 8 ft wide paved surface. The trail in can be directly accessed along Chapel Harbor Road. An existing connection to the Squaw Valley Trail is in-place and will connect to the proposed alignment at the Chapel Harbor entrance.

Trail length – 1.8 miles

Estimated Construction Cost - \$145,000 to \$200,000

East Deer/Tarentum/Brackenridge

The trail will begin at the East Deer Park located along Freeport Road. The trail will run through the East Deer Park and private property (PPG Industries) to Ferry Street. The trail will then continue along Ferry Street and cut through private property (PPG Industries) adjacent to railroad property to a point where the trail can cross the private property to make its way back along the riverfront. The trail will then follow along the riverfront through private property (1000 Treadway Trust & Holcim Inc.) to Grantham Street. The trail will then follow along Grantham Street, W. 6th Avenue, 4th Avenue, and 1st Avenue sharing the roadway to the Tarentum Riverfront Park. The trail will then run through the Tarentum Riverfront Park and Brackenridge Memorial Park to East 1st Avenue.

Trail length – 3.4 miles

Estimated Construction Cost - \$666,000 to \$820,000

Harrison Township

The trail will begin as a share the road facility along River Avenue and continue to the intersection with Linden Street. At the intersection, the trail will turn onto and follow Veteran's Way along the river that extends to the U.S. Army Corps (USACE) property for the Allegheny River Lock Station. The alignment may then either continue along U.S. Army Corps (USACE) property back along River Avenue to Federal Street or stop at the U.S. Army Corps (USACE) property and bear left through private property. The alignment will then continue along Federal Street to N. Canal Street. Then alignment

will then continue along N. Canal Street and onto Karns Road. The alignment will follow Karns Road to where the road turns into Oak Manor Drive.

Trail length – 3.8 miles

Estimated Construction Cost - \$76,000 to \$190,000

8.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study reviews the various alignment alternatives available, identifies a practical and preferred alignments based on feasibility and user demand, identifies and documents the affected properties and their owners, documents and extensive public involvement process, and projects the costs associated for implementation of the proposed trail project.

This project has the potential to be a great asset for the 17 municipalities involved along this corridor. It will provide recreational as well as educational value to the entire region. It will also connect to major trail systems.

Much work has been done to date:

- ❖ In 2001, Millvale Borough completed their portion of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail including the development of several riverfront amenities like a boat access point, picnic shelter and restrooms.
- ❖ In 2005, O'Hara Township completed a Trail Feasibility and Planning Study. Phase I implementation of this study included the completion of the Squaw Valley Riverfront Trail, which provided a connection from Squaw Valley Park to Chapel Harbor with spurs north along the river to the Fox Chapel Yaught Club.
- ❖ In 2006 Sharpsburg Borough began work on a trail and boat ramp as a segment of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.
- ❖ The connection between the City of Pittsburgh and the Borough of Millvale was completed in the Fall of 2010 creating a safe connection to the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.
- ❖ In 2009 the Community Trails Feasibility Study was initiated encompassing 17 municipalities (City of Pittsburgh, Millvale, Shaler, Etna, Sharpsburg, Aspinwall, Fox Chapel, O'Hara Township, Blawnox, Harmar, Cheswick, Springdale, Springdale Township, Frazer, Tarentum, Brackenridge and Harrison).

Successes of the Community Trails Feasibility Study to date:

- ❖ 17 municipalities have signed on are supportive including three counties (Allegheny, Westmoreland & Armstrong). We have support letters and have held face-to-face meetings with every municipality.
- ❖ In addition to stakeholder meetings we have held one round of public meetings. Over 70 people attended each one of three meetings along the alignment. There is strong public interest in this project.
- ❖ Both the Freeport & Hulton Bridges are undergoing renovation or rebuilding. In both cases there will be bike/pedestrian accommodations on the new or renovated structure in part because of the trail efforts in this area.

- ❖ This trail project is part of two larger mega-greenway projects endorsed and supported by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the Harrisburg to Pittsburgh Mainline Canal Greenway. Both projects bring interest and momentum to this important segment.
- ❖ This trail is viewed as part of the quality of life for the local communities, but more importantly it is also seen as an economic driver.

Challenges:

- ❖ 13 of the 29 miles needed to complete the trail are within Norfolk & Southern Railroad property. This is a high speed line and Norfolk & Southern is looking for expansion opportunities. They are not currently open to negotiations.
- ❖ Specific communities have limited opportunity for a practical alignment and community connection (Etna and Township of O'Hara/Harmer are particularly difficult).

Opportunities

- ❖ There are several existing riverfront parks that are owned by municipalities that can be connected as part of the larger trail system (Millvale, Sharpsburg, O'Hara-trail through private development, Cheswick, Springdale, East Deer, Tarentum, Brackenridge, and Harrison).
- ❖ Key riverfront acquisitions will be important to completing this project. There is currently an opportunity at the Aspinwall Marina and 0.5 acres of riverfront property in Etna Borough adjacent to the 62nd Street Bridge.
- ❖ Explore community connections and combination of road and trail connections.
- ❖ Allegheny County has developed "ActiveAllegheny" which focuses on connectivity to our existing transportation system using walking, biking and other modes of transportation. It provides an opportunity to plan and prioritize bike routes and walking facilities. The goal is to connect people to communities, work places, schools, transit sites, attractions and residences. ActiveAllegheny looks at the following components: Bike Allegheny, Walk and Roll Allegheny (ADA accessibility), Complete Streets, Active Transportation opportunities and Actions. Each component provides resources, identifies potential opportunities, deficiencies and system improvements and looks at both successful policies and programs. This action plan provides municipalities' opportunities to develop safe walking routes to schools, on road biking opportunities and ideas to develop safe and sustainable active transportation.
<http://www.activeallegheny.com/>

In order to build on successes and to meet the challenges that we have identified several pilot projects and next steps. The following are recommendations as a result of the feasibility study:

- Easement agreements with Norfolk & Southern must be negotiated for use of any railroad property to allow for construction of the trail. In some instances, the condition of the service roads along the property right-of-way may provide

enough property to ensure safety. Additionally, minimal costs would be involved to provide a surface for walking or biking.

- Request local municipalities to amend their existing zoning ordinances in order to specify and require a setback from the river edge on all new development. There is a model riverfront development ordinance in the Improving Local Development Regulations handbook that would help municipalities amend their zoning ordinances. Allegheny County has a similar subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) to require a minimum setback for watercourses of 50 feet. This ordinance would provide an opportunity for a possible location for the trail along the riverfront within the municipality. The City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Code has another similar ordinance for riverfront overlay district. These examples are attached in Appendix H.
- Conduct a title search for all the impacted and adjacent railroad property to clarify any leasing or easement agreements.

Support from the host municipalities is very important, because it is the local communities that will most likely be responsible for maintenance and operation of the trail once it has been constructed. The local communities will also derive the most economic benefit. The costs associated with right-of-way acquisition, engineering and environmental services, construction, operation and maintenance may appear formidable, but accomplished in carefully planned phases this is a very affordable project. Once the most attractive segments are constructed, revenue realized from heritage and recreational tourism will provide the compelling force that drives this project through to completion.