

Press Release
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Erie-Pittsburgh Trail Alliance Meets in Millvale

Twenty members of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance (EPTA) met at the Three Rivers Rowing Association, Millvale Training Facility on Thursday April 16. The Alliance is a group of 12 trail groups along with state and national advocacy groups who are working toward connecting the non-motorized trails which currently exist between downtown Pittsburgh and Erie, Pennsylvania.

They were welcomed to Millvale by Mayor Vince Cinski, who talked about the efforts that Millvale is making to become a better community for biking and thereby reap some of the economic development that comes with the trail.



Millvale Mayor Vince Cinski welcomes the EPTA meeting to town.

With visions of becoming the next Great Allegheny Passage, the group came together in Millvale last week to view a presentation by McTish, Kunkel and Associates of their work to date for the Community Trails Feasibility Study. The study encompasses the southern end of the Erie-Pittsburgh trail region and includes 17 municipalities in three counties and three PennDOT Districts between Pittsburgh and Freeport, in Allegheny County. “The fact that we can pull together so many municipalities plus the Department of Transportation District offices says a lot about how much people want to see this trail built” says Darla Cravotta of Allegheny County.

Tom Baxter, Director of Friends of the Riverfront, has taken the lead for coordination of the trail development along the north shore at the Route 28 expansion project. Mr. Baxter presented the engineers’ drawings for a bike/ped pathway which has been designed by PennDOT and will be built by them during the first phase of the Route 28 project just south of the Millvale town center. “This is the crucial link for getting the trail routed [north] out of the city”, said Mr. Baxter. “We are thrilled that PennDOT and our funding partners have been able to support our vision of a non-motorized route from Pittsburgh north to Erie.”



The EPTA group met outside to view the Rt 28 bike/ped project site.

Ron Steffey, Director of the Allegheny Valley Land Trust believes the next big challenge is finding a way to make a connection to the Armstrong Trail across the river from Freeport. The Armstrong Trail has 16 miles of trail completed between Schenley and East Brady, PA, with another 45 miles of trail under development.

Both the Friends of the Riverfront and the Armstrong Rails to Trails Association are supported largely by volunteers and membership donations. If you would like to get involved in the work of the Erie-Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, consider volunteering for a trail cleanup or participating in a trail group activity with them. Find them at www.friendsoftheriverfront.org/ and www.armstrongtrail.org/ To keep up on the latest, you can also join their yahoogroups listserv, and/or the Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail listserv at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EtPTA/>.

The EPTA receives technical assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program, as well as Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

After the meeting, a group of 5 went bike riding on the trails along the Allegheny, Ohio, and Monongahela Rivers.



Mike Steimer (Armstrong Rails to Trails Association), Barney Scholl (Mercer County Trails Association), Peggy Pings (NPS-Rivers & Trails Program), Roy Weil and Mary Shaw (authors of FreeWheeling Easy in Western Pennsylvania) pose at the old penitentiary at the far end of the North Shore of the Ohio Trail.