

The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail is approaching difficult times. Our success also creates questions and possible problems.

The easier sections of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail have been completed. Some of the tougher sections have also been completed and will continue to be completed. Examples are the successes of Kim Harris and Tom Baxter working with railroads to have trails next to active rail lines. The toughest sections remain. This will take lots of planning, some acquisition, funding and lots of dedication.

The degrees of difficulties are not unique to trail corridors and improving those corridors. We are entering into more cooperation with municipalities, businesses, and planners as we develop a sustainable economic environment. As a result, we are pulled in different directions as multiple opportunities arise.

Funders also inquire about the “big picture” and how connections can be made.

As we move forward we do not have to answer all the questions, but as we develop a strategic plan we can have an outline that will assist us in making decisions and solve problems.

A year ago or so it was asked at one of our meetings, “What is more important the Association or the Trail?” My answer is THE ASSOCIATION! The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail has numerous problems, but the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Association are the current problem solvers. The trail will be more important once the trail is more contiguous, problems are solved, and more are involved. The trail needs to grow and mature with the help of EPTA and others. How we are able to engage others in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail concept is crucial to elevating the Trail above the Association.

I am very optimistic about the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. Daily views from the trenches of trail improvements and maintenance can become very frustrating. It may seem as if everything takes forever to do, but as we gain 1000 feet of trail here and 400 feet of trail there we are solving problems and then moving onto the next 10 problems.

We have come a long way in 10 years and I am confident that within the next 10 years I will be convinced that the Trail is more important than our great Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance.

Ron Steffey