

**Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance – Strategic Planning Committee
Report to EPTA Board – July 17, 2019 meeting**

The committee met by conference call on July 9, 2019.

On the call: Barney Scholl, Leah Carter, Deb Frawley, Kim Harris

The EPTA Strategic Plan, adopted January 17, 2019, focuses on four Key Issues. The committee reviewed progress on implementation of Key Issue #1 plans discussed during the first call and continued discussion of Key Issue #2 and #3 during this call.

Key Issue #1 is “Organizational and Financial Sustainability and Success - Building sufficient capacity to fulfill the EPTA’s Vision”.

The committee discussed key Board Director(s) in each area to be the point person for EPT information. A role and responsibility document and talking points need to be developed. Committee to follow up on this.

A census of the skills and expertise that currently exists on the Board needs to be taken. A survey type form will be developed that will assist in doing this now and for potential new Board Directors.

The EPTA newsletter and other outreach methods such as the 90 by 90 campaign have been implemented as well as a very active social media presence with the Instagram account having 249 followers in just a few months.

The various terms used for Board, partner and public engagement are being further defined. According to the EPTA by-laws, we are not a “member organization” meaning that the Board Directors are elected by the currently seated Board and not members.

Key Issue #2 – Partner Organization Support

Some of the strategies listed in the adopted Strategic Plan are being implemented while others still need work.

Providing technical assistance

The new EPTA website will have a resources page. Ron S. is providing assistance to certain projects through his new consulting business through contracts with several organizations as well as an in-kind service. The Trail Development Committee (formerly the gap committee) is conducting research and provide advice or contact information to appropriate resources as they can.

Linking members to state agencies

Board Member should be encouraged to interact with representatives that are present during events and other engagements. This includes introducing fellow Board Directors and partners when the opportunity arises.

When a partner group has an event/ribbon cutting/etc. they should make sure that EPTA Board Directors are invited to show support and a presence of the corridor as a whole.

Sharing successes and failures

Kim and Courtney will work on setting up an email address to go with the new website that will be used by Directors to interact and share information and questions with each other.

Other strategies that need input and Board Director implementation include networking, development and education about design, maintenance and operation standards, supporting each trail segment as part of the bigger corridor whole and providing for each other's needs.

Key Issue #3 – Looking Beyond the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail

Of course, the majority of time and effort is and should be focused on the needs of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, the plan considers it important to consider the impact of connector trails and larger regional projects as well.

The new website will have a place for blog posts and social media accounts account will feature connector trails and how they relate to and connect to the EPT. This will also include water trails and hiking trails such as the North Country Trail.

The EPT is a significant part of the PA statewide trail system and support must be solicited from the Commonwealth agencies. PEC as Project Support Team liaison for the IHTC has met with PA DCNR and other agencies to discuss progress of the trail corridors, assessment of the gaps in the systems, needs, etc.

Work needs to continue to enhance the use of the trail, filling gaps and promoting local and regional trail connections.