

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Strategic Plan Implementation Committee
September 18, 2020

The EPTA Strategic Plan was adopted on January 17, 2019, focusing on four key issues.

- **Key Issue #1 - Organizational and Financial Sustainability and Success Building sufficient capacity to fulfill the EPTA's Vision**
- **Key Issue #2 - Partner Organization Support**
- **Key Issue #3 - Looking Beyond the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail (EPT)**
- **Key Issue #4 - Advocate, Educate, Promote**

The committee reviewed the Key Issues identified in the Strategic Plan, and accomplishments made to date.

Key Issue #1

- **Strategy A**
 - Board Roles and Responsibilities
 - The Committee is in the process of creating a draft Board Director Role Responsibility description
 - Board Size and Alternates
 - In accordance with recommendations in the strategic plan a change in the bylaws is being proposed that would eliminate alternates for any director. Please see the proposed change for discussion at the end of this report along with a few other proposed changes.

Strategy B

Although EPTA has not assembled a staffing team we have moved toward a support team through partnerships

- DCNR C2P2 Partnership grant with ORA
 - ARC grant with PEC for development of trail projects on the EPT
 - Seeking a Communications Intern through the ORA to work on EPTA items with the Communication/marketing pieces
- **Strategy C**
 - Develop and Maintain a Strong, Realistic Budget
 - Discussed the need for the yearly budget, and the potential need of a bookkeeper to assist the EPTA. If there were a bookkeeper could provide a check and balances. B. Scholl will convene the finance to establish a 2021 organizational budget. K. Harris to send B. Scholl information on the DCNR C2P2 Funding request and the budget. K. Harris will issue an email requesting Committee Chairs and others submit budget figures and or request immediately. It is the goal that a budget for 2021 should be approved at the October meeting (the last meeting before 2021).

- Strategy E – Assigned to Outreach/Marketing Committee
 - Annual Report has been created,
 - Achievements are being tracked in the annual reports, but perhaps need to track in a more formal way.
 - Reporting success stories are included in the Annual Report – The Marketing Committee is requesting that trail groups and board members provide successes in the form of a blog to add to the EPT website and share out on social media. Those involved should be recognized for their good work!
 - There was discussion about possibly visiting project sites and interviewing Trail Managers or others involved about projects, or their trail specifically to show case their trail and projects and help to educate supporters on what is happening. This would be especially good during the winter months when folks are not out on the trails so much.
- Strategy F – Assigned to Connections Committee
 - Establish a System-Wide Priorities
 - Although “priorities projects” are not set for the corridor most trail owners have shared the status of their trails and potential projects and their status.
- Strategy G – Establish Strategic Agreements
 - Agreements are being established – see Strategy B
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Key Issue #2

Provide support for all partner trail organizations. These groups rely heavily on promotion assistance and encouragement from the EPTA. EPTA has been providing some support and services through the -

- 2020 Summit
- Updated website as resource tool
- Ongoing workshops? Consider more in the future – end of quarterly meeting discussions on a variety of topics at end of meetings.
- Promoted trail segments via social media and on the website

Key Issue #3

Beyond the EPT and the impact EPT has on other trail networks. Some progress has been made on this issue by -

- Working with the Wilds, PEC, IHTC on the ARC study
- Letters of Support – EPTA provide letters of support
- Directors attend IHTC meetings

Key Issues #4

- The Outreach/Marketing Committee and Connection Committee has been providing advocacy, education and promotion through a number of ways including the website,

social media, the 2020 Summit, advocating to legislators, local and state level funders, Communities, other non-profits, on site trail building workshops, etc.

The Strategic Plan Committee has listed the following goals for 2021

- Develop and host a member event for volunteers and general members, Directors as a celebration. A committee should be created to develop this event
- Establish Director Responsibility Job Description
- Establish a yearly budget process that includes a check and balance process
- Deep review of bylaws – Committee should be established for this process.

In an attempt to involve Board Members in the active tasks of the EPTA a list of Committees will be developed and passed around for Board Members to choose ones that they would be interested in chairing and/or serve on. Committee chairs should (or may) solicit committee members from the general membership of EPTA. Committee members do not need to be on the board of directors. It is the goal that Directors have an active role in the organization to feel and realize their worth.

Proposed change in Bylaws for discussion changes would not be voted on until the January 2021 meeting.

- Since Board Members are able to call in for meeting, and many trail organizations do not even have alternates at this time it is recommend that Article 2 Section 2 the final sentence in that section be deleted: thus eliminating alternates. At Large Directors are not authorized to have alternates, so this proposed change will only effect trail organizations.

The proposed change eliminates the following sentence.

“Each Trail Organization Member which is seated on the Board may also name an alternate to their primary contact who may vote in the primary contact’s absence.”

- Currently, the EPTA has no policy or statement regarding equal opportunity for all. It is important that organizations have a statement that has been adopted that reflects our commitment to diversity and inclusion. B. Scholl will work on a draft piece of language that we can consider including in the organizational bylaws.