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## Two Trail Projects in Allegheny County Will Receive \$1.8M in Funding to Support Expansion and Improvement Efforts

*Funding is being awarded to the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County and South Fayette Township*

Pittsburgh, PA—The [Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission \(SPC\)](#) is awarding \$1,802,060 in grant funding to support two trail projects in Allegheny County. The [Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County \(RAAC\)](#) will receive \$1 million to support the expansion of the Panhandle Trail Extension and [South Fayette Township](#) will receive \$802,060 in funding to make improvements along the Fairview Park Trail Network.

“We are thankful to the SPC for its commitment to trail building throughout our region,” said County Executive Sara Innamorato. “We look forward to working on securing the expansion of the Panhandle trail so that residents and visitors have access to trail systems that contribute to our economy and quality of life.”

SPC recently completed the selection process for its discretionary competitive grant program which selects certain projects in the region to receive federal funding. The organization has a selection committee that reviews grant applications submitted from counties and municipalities within its coverage area. The grant applications are then competitively reviewed and scored to ensure that these projects adhere to federal standards.

“A lot of thoughtful planning and development went into making South Fayette Township the thriving community that it is today but there is still work we have to do,” Chuck Lazzini, President of the Board of Commissioners for South Fayette Township. “We are thankful to SPC for recognizing and valuing the merits of our grant application and awarding us with this funding. This grant nicely complements our Active Transportation Plan and will go far to improve outdoor recreational opportunities for our residents.”

As the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Local Development District (LDD), and Economic Development District (EDD), SPC receives an allotment of federal funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation that it can award to entities that have improvement projects which qualify under three areas: Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program (CMAQ), Carbon Reduction program (CRP), and the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) program.

The CMAQ and CRP programs accept applications from counties and municipalities that have projects which will help to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion. Eligible initiatives under these two programs can include pedestrian and bicycle facility projects, transit improvement programs, electric vehicles and charging stations, congestion reduction and traffic flow improvements, and diesel engine retrofitting/replacements. The TASA program accepts applications from counties and municipalities for projects that support transportation alternatives, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, improving access to public transportation, enhanced mobility, recreational trails, safe routes to schools, and environmental mitigation.

“We are fortunate to have trails like the Panhandle and Fairview Park Network that provide not only wonderful recreational opportunities for residents, but serve as anchors for economic growth,” said Rich Fitzgerald, Executive Director of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. “Fostering this area of economic development is how we holistically support our local communities while also ensuring that we protect and preserve our environment.”

Outdoor recreation is a critical sector in the state’s economy. In 2021, [according](#) to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), outdoor recreation added \$14 billion to the state’s economy

which included nearly \$1.3 billion that was spent on trips, trailside businesses, lodging, and hospitality establishments.

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**About Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission:**

The [Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission \(SPC\)](#) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO), local development district (LDD), and economic development district (EDD) serving 10 counties. The organization's coverage area includes Allegheny including the City of Pittsburgh, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and Westmoreland counties. It is responsible for planning and prioritizing the use of state and federal transportation funding and establishing economic/workforce development priorities for the region.