



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PennDOT, DCNR Secretaries Ride Proposed Pike2Bike Trail in Breezewood

Harrisburg – Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Secretary Leslie S. Richards, along with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Dunn, today jointly rode the proposed Pike2Bike trail in Bedford and Fulton counties, which uses the former right of way of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Their ride promoted bicycling in Pennsylvania and allowed the secretaries to see firsthand the potential for adding this route to the state's growing network of bicycle routes and trails.

"Today's ride reflects the truly collaborative spirit of state and local partners to breathe new life into our infrastructure," Richards said. "We are interested in working with Bedford and Fulton counties on moving this concept forward. Adding this route has the potential to build tourism and the region's economy."

"PennDOT and DCNR are building a solid track record of working together on projects that have the safety and enjoyment of bicycling, hiking and other outdoors enthusiasts in mind, and the proposed Pike2Bike trail is no exception," said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "How exciting that a trail that includes a section of former turnpike could lead bicyclists and others to new adventures in our Buchanan State Forest and beyond."

The Pike2Bike trail is an 8.5-mile section of abandoned Pennsylvania Turnpike right of way that includes two tunnels, Rays Hill and Sidling Hill. Rays Hill is 0.7 miles long and Sidling Hill is 1.3 miles long. A potential first phase would entail repairing drainage structures and concrete in the tunnels, improving the trail surface and building ADA compliant trailheads including parking just east of Breezewood off of U.S. 30 and near the Sidling Hill Travel Plaza on the Turnpike. Bedford and Fulton counties are planning an update to an existing master plan, which will address the issues of ownership, operation, phasing of the project and funding.

Bedford County Planning Commission Director, Donald Schwartz stated “Development of the Pike2Bike trail would represent an investment in preserving Pennsylvania’s transportation history, provide a unique recreational experience for residents and visitors and have a significant impact on the local economy.”

John Carlin, Bedford County Pike2Bike Steering Committee Chairman added, “Volunteers and local business workers are absolutely devoted to this project. We’re looking forward to having many visitors take advantage of this truly unique trail experience.”

Once completed, the Pike2Bike trail will become part of a realigned BicyclePa Route S and connect to regional trails, including the Great Allegheny PassageTrail, the East Coast Greenway and the 911 Memorial Trail. It also will eventually be incorporated into the US Bike Route system, which includes bike routes in Ohio, Maryland, New York and Delaware.

“The Pike2Bike has the potential to be one of the most unique recreation trails in the Northeast,” said Brandon W. Carson Director of Planning & Community Development for the Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission. “We’re confident that its completion would create new economic opportunities within the Southern Alleghenies Region.”

The abandoned section of roadway was part of the original Pennsylvania Turnpike, which opened in 1940. Over time, the two-lane tunnels on the Turnpike proved to be traffic bottlenecks and the Turnpike Commission either expanded the tunnels to two, two-lane tubes or bypassed tunnels. The bypass of this section opened in 1968.

In 2001, the Turnpike Commission transferred ownership of the 8.5-stretch to the Southern Alleghenies Conservancy with the intention of having that entity rehabilitate the roadway and tunnels to create a multi-use trail corridor linking the hiking trails of the James Buchanan State Forest and the remnants of the historic railway adjacent to the highway, while providing an improved alignment for BicyclePa Route S.

“With our ride today, we are signaling that the Commonwealth is interested in restarting this plan for a new bicycling destination in Bedford and Fulton counties,” Richards said. “We look forward to working with the region as we explore details on how to make this a reality.”

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