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Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation Meets and Approves MOUs to Improve Maintenance and Services on Buffalo's Outer Harbor

The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) Board of Directors met today and approved items that demonstrate cross-agency cooperation on Buffalo's Outer Harbor, including an Memorandum (MOU) of Understanding with the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) for the extension of the Greenbelt public pathway and a MOU with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (State Parks) for the operation and maintenance of land associated with ECHDC-owned property on the Outer Harbor.

"ECHDC continues to make incremental improvements to public access on the Outer Harbor," said ECHDC Chairman Robert Gioia. "The extension of the Greenbelt paved pathway and guard rail will be another major enhancement for public, recreational access to Buffalo's waterfront and partnering with State Parks on operations and maintenance at the Outer Harbor will be a cost-cutting measure."

The MOU with DOT is for the design and construction of the improvements in not to exceed \$145,000. DOT will construct a 12-foot wide, multi-use path with 10 feet of grass egress on each side and repave the overlook area connecting the existing Greenbelt Pathway from its termination at the former Pier Restaurant to Fuhrmann Boulevard. The extension of the pathway to Fuhrmann Boulevard allows for continual public access to other often used points to the north, such as Wilkeson Pointe, Time Beach Nature Preserve and the Buffalo Lighthouse. The pathway will continue the design and feel of the current Greenbelt Pathway that has been utilized by thousands of residents and visitors for picturesque waterfront views along Buffalo's Outer Harbor. Additionally, DOT will modify and reconstruct an existing guardrail to further define the overlook space and add another public vantage point into Lake Erie.

New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Joan McDonald said, "Extending this multi-use pathway will encourage more bicyclists and pedestrians to use it as a scenic alternative for accessing the Outer Harbor waterfront. Under Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's leadership, we are happy to work with ESDC and ECHDC to make improvements that enhance quality of life and expand sustainable transportation options."

The MOU with State Parks for the operation and maintenance of land on the Outer Harbor includes a funding amount not to exceed \$105,277. As State Parks has maintenance responsibilities for the Buffalo Harbor State Park, ECHDC and State Parks have developed a maintenance plan to allow State Parks and ECHDC to share services in order to realize cost savings. These services, which will be provided by State Parks on ECHDC-owned property, include lawn mowing, trash collection and litter pickup.

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner Rose Harvey said, "State Parks is thrilled to be partnering with ECHDC as we all work together to provide a clean, accessible waterfront for all of Western New York to enjoy."

The funding source for both MOUs is from the New York Power Authority (NYPA) re-licensing agreement.

About Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation

The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) is governed by a nine-member board consisting of seven voting directors and two non-voting, ex-officio directors. The seven voting directors are recommended by the New York State Governor and are appointed by the New York State Urban Development Corporation d/b/a Empire State Development as sole shareholder of ECHDC. The two nonvoting, ex-officio director positions are held by the Erie County Executive and the City of Buffalo Mayor.

As a subsidiary of Empire State Development, the state's chief economic development agency, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation supports and promotes the creation of infrastructure and public activities at Canalside, the Ohio Street corridor and the Outer Harbor that is attracting critical mass, private investment and enhance the enjoyment of the waterfront for residents and tourists in Western New York. Its vision is to revitalize Western New York's waterfront and restore economic growth to Buffalo based on the region's legacy of pride, urban significance and natural beauty. For more information on ECHDC, visit www.eriecanalharbor.com.

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