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11.6-mile Corridor Purchased for Future Westside Trail in Toledo

CSX sale through The Trust for Public Land puts rail corridor in public hands

TOLEDO, OHIO: Creation of an 11.6-mile trail along CSX railroad land in Toledo, Ohio has cleared a big hurdle. The land now belongs to the public. The majority of the funding for the \$6.5 million purchase came from federal transportation funds allocated with the support of Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (D-9) in the last highway reauthorization bill (SAFETEA-LU), which passed Congress in 2005. The federal money was leveraged with local funds from Metroparks of the Toledo Area and other trail partners.

“Securing the Westside Trail as a community asset will create jobs and connect neighborhoods—and what could be more important?” said Congresswoman Kaptur. “Trails enhance recreation and advance the cause of wellness, both are important attributes to quality of life in a vibrant community. I’m thrilled to know that generations from now, families will look back and thank The Trust for Public Land and all our local partners for building our community forward.”

In a series of deals completed today, CSX Transportation, Inc. has sold the entire 11.6-mile rail corridor. The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national conservation organization, arranged the sale of the corridor. New owners of the corridor include Metroparks of the Toledo Area, the Wood County Port Authority, the City of Toledo, the University of Toledo and the Wood County Park District. TPL also facilitated the sale of the Maumee River bridge directly from CSX to Wood County Port Authority.

“We are grateful to CSX and all of our remarkable partners for their endurance and commitment to these complex transactions,” said Bill Carroll, TPL director for Ohio. “Without their thoughtful engagement, and without Congresswoman Kaptur’s foresight, this never would have happened.”

“The popular vision for a new 11-mile trail in Toledo has reached a significant milestone,” said Warren Henry, Vice President of Transportation, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments. “We now have an exceptional opportunity to develop a major north-south urban trail connecting homes, parks, schools, and workplaces using a clean, green, active, and safe travel option.”

Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) has organized the partners

on the Westside Rail to Trail project, which is at the core of their transportation plan for Toledo. The trail now needs to be planned and developed and will eventually connect college campuses, community parks, other local trail systems, and numerous schools and neighborhoods. Tens of thousands of people within the City of Toledo and Lucas and Wood Counties will have access to Westside Trail.

Wood County Port Authority will retain the half-mile Maumee River bridge portion of the property. One of the first steps in the trail development process will be the demolition of the bridge. The longest portion of the property, 4.1 miles, was transferred to The University of Toledo. The City of Toledo owns 3.5 miles of the trail, Metroparks of the Toledo Area will retain 1.75 miles, and Wood County Park District received 1.5 miles.

“Great universities are interconnected with great cities,” said UT President Lloyd Jacobs. “Toledo is a great University City, and an educational center. Creation of the Westside Trail is an important step toward enhancing this identity by increasing recreational accessibility to our campuses for students, families and all members of the northwest Ohio community.”

Since it was founded in 1972, The Trust for Public Land has helped protect 3 million acres of land in 47 states. In Ohio, TPL has protected more than 12,300 acres valued at more than \$130 million. TPL depends on the support and generosity of individuals, foundations, and businesses to achieve its mission to preserve land for people. Visit tpl.org/ohio.

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