

# RAISE Cleveland Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning



Submitted by: Cleveland Metroparks

Urban/Rural: Urban

Location: City of Cleveland

Project Type: Planning – Bicycle & Pedestrian

Total Project Cost: \$1,500,000

RAISE Request: \$1,300,000

Date: July 12, 2021

Project Webpage: [www.clevelandmetroparks.com/RAISEPlanning](http://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/RAISEPlanning)



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## Executive Summary

The Cleveland Metroparks' RAISE Cleveland Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning ("RAISE Planning") application seeks to position four priority active transportation projects from the countywide *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* for implementation by developing full construction documents for two projects and moving the remaining two through the preliminary engineering/feasibility stage. This planning application is a direct result of efforts of the City of Cleveland, Cleveland Metroparks, and Cuyahoga County to advance identified priorities from the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* through the Cuyahoga Greenway Partners (CGP), an innovative consortium of regional stakeholders committed to active transportation. The total length of the four projects is  $\pm 5.7$  miles.



Figure 1: Project Location

The project builds on planning of many agencies and represents an unprecedented opportunity to advance projects that are a shared priority across many partners. The requested \$1.3 million in RAISE Discretionary funds are needed to advance these projects and to develop a pipeline of shovel-ready trails and routes that will directly benefit neighborhoods that have long been impacted by persistent poverty.

The RAISE Planning project will build on the following major trail projects recently completed or being undertaken throughout Cleveland, including the Opportunity Corridor, Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 1, Morgana Run Trail, Towpath Trail, and

Cleveland Lakefront Bikeway and Lakefront Connections.

The RAISE Planning project meets all RAISE program primary and secondary selection criteria, as summarized below:

- **Safety** – Significant bicycle and pedestrian crash rates in the project area will be improved by creating safe, dedicated facilities separated from vehicular traffic.
- **Environmental Sustainability** – The project supports initiatives from the Cuyahoga County Climate Action Plan that will result in a more resilient community with greater options for mobility and positive transportation investment impacts.
- **Quality of Life** – The planning application lays the groundwork to develop new multimodal connections to some of the most underserved neighborhoods in the city of

Cleveland that will provide increased access to opportunity, transportation, and recreation.

- **Economic Competitiveness** – Making strategic infrastructure investments in established communities strengthen the local and regional economies and provide an opportunity for additional investment.
- **State of Good Repair** – Adding to modal choice allows for more equitable access to destinations and can transition trips and the resulting wear and tear off roadways, lessening emissions.
- **Partnership** – The efforts of the CGP to develop the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan and its continuous work on behalf of member entities to advance the projects contained therein demonstrate high levels of collaboration.
- **Innovation** – The CGP’s decision-making process to advance key projects that most contribute to the greater good is truly a unique case study that will prove to be a model moving forward.

Cleveland Metroparks has gained valuable experience in delivering complex federal transportation projects through its TIGER VIII Re-Connecting Cleveland award of \$7.950 million for a total project cost of nearly \$17 million. The same team of highly qualified engineers, real estate professionals, lawyers, and planners that delivered the bundle of TIGER trail projects will work on the RAISE Planning project.

The RAISE Planning project is highly supported by legislators, businesses, cities, and other stakeholders, as evidenced by the more than 55 letters of support received (see Appendix A).

## I. Project Description

### Project Background

The RAISE Cleveland Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning (“RAISE Planning”) project is a direct result of collaboration of the Cuyahoga Greenway Partners (CGP). The CGP is a partnership of key executives and staff from agencies and organizations across the county that convened to establish a regional vision for a network of trails and bike lanes serving the transportation, recreation, and mobility needs of all citizens. Formed in 2014, the CGP includes Cleveland Metroparks, Bike Cleveland, Cleveland City Planning Commission, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and The Trust for Public Land. Each partner brings vested interests in trails, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and transportation planning, and has been tasked with helping to collect and manage trail data across the county and align project opportunities with resources for funding.

### *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*

In 2016, with funding from the NOACA, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, and others, CGP members led a trail and bikeway planning effort which resulted in a countywide plan for a network of both on-road and off-road connections called the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*. The vision of the CGP is a completed, county-wide network of off-road trails and on-road low-stress bike facilities which is accessible to all for transportation, recreation, and enjoyment.

The *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* is the culmination of regional collaboration, route identification, technical evaluation, and community engagement. The resulting Priority Projects Map (see Figure 2) took 800 miles of candidate routes identified in the overall framework and distilled it into 69 projects, (242.5 miles) divided into three categories:

- Critical Gaps: 12 projects totaling 13.5 miles
- Regional Links: 27 projects totaling 122 miles
- Key Supporting Routes: 30 projects totaling 107 miles

These high impact projects were determined based a combination of technical input and stakeholder feedback. The projects were prioritized due to their functional role within the network, the potential benefits they afford to the county, community needs that are addressed, and local support for implementation. Equity an access factors were a prominent part of the analysis and prioritization of these routes.

A detailed, interactive map of all the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* priorities is available at [www.cuyahogagreenways.com](http://www.cuyahogagreenways.com).



- GREENWAY PROJECTS**
- Critical Regional Gap
  - Important Regional Link
  - Key Supporting Route
  - Regional Bikeway/Trail: Future
  - Regional Bikeway/Trail: Existing
  - Off-Street: Existing
  - - - Off-Street: Supporting Route
  - - - On-Street: Supporting Route

- KEY SUPPORTING ROUTES**
- KS.1 AULF ROAD
  - KS.2 HAYDEN/DODD/VC
  - KS.3 DUNBAR ROAD
  - KS.4 JOHN ROAD
  - KS.5 COLUMBIA ROAD - LEBER ROAD
  - KS.6 ARLINGDALE GREENWAY
  - KS.7 SHERWOOD GREENWAY
  - KS.8 BELLAIR ROAD/TURTLE ROAD
  - KS.9 BRIDGEMAN ROAD WEST
  - KS.10 BRIDGEMAN ROAD EAST
  - KS.11 FULTON ROAD/DEL SCHAYELLE
  - KS.12 TOWN ROAD SOUTH
  - KS.13 WEST FREE RESERVATION - KENNEDY ROAD
  - KS.14 WEST FREE RESERVATION - HUNTER/175 STREET
  - KS.15 KINGS ROAD/BEVERLY ROAD
  - KS.16 HUNTERTON ROAD/CATERBURY
  - KS.17 HUNTERTON ROAD - CENTRAL
  - KS.18 TRENDSVILLE ROAD
  - KS.19 ANKERBERG
  - KS.20 E LIND STREET
  - KS.21 HAYWARD AVENUE/CLINTON
  - KS.22 HAYWARD AVENUE/BATE
  - KS.23 E 10TH STREET
  - KS.24 DUNBAR/100TH STREET
  - KS.25 HIGHLAND ROAD
  - KS.26 FULFORD ROAD/DEER HAVEN
  - KS.27 HUNTER CONNECTOR
  - KS.28 FARMINGTON BOULEVARD
  - KS.29 TIMBERS TREE TRAIL - NORTH
  - KS.30 NETWORKS

- REGIONAL LINKS**
- RL.1 LAKESHORE GREENWAY WEST TO NORTH CLEVELAND NORTH
  - RL.2 NORTH CLEVELAND NORTH TO MILLSTREAM TUNNILL RESERVATION
  - RL.3 BRADLEY ROAD CONNECTOR
  - RL.4 LAKESHORE GREENWAY (EAST)
  - RL.5 LAKESHORE GREENWAY (WEST)
  - RL.6 BETTS PARKWAY
  - RL.7 LAKESHORE GREENWAY (EAST) FROM TOWN SQUARE TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.8 LAKESHORE GREENWAY (WEST) FROM TOWN SQUARE TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.9 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.10 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.11 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.12 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.13 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.14 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.15 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.16 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - RL.17 LAKESHORE GREENWAY (EAST)
  - RL.18 LAKESHORE GREENWAY (WEST)
  - RL.19 LAKESHORE GREENWAY (EAST)
  - RL.20 CLEVELAND
  - RL.21 E. 10TH BOULEVARD
  - RL.22 NORTH FEDERAL PARKWAY/CLINTON
  - RL.23 HUNTERTON ROAD/CLINTON
  - RL.24 HUNTERTON ROAD/CLINTON
  - RL.25 HUNTERTON ROAD/CLINTON
  - RL.26 HUNTERTON ROAD/CLINTON
  - RL.27 HUNTERTON ROAD/CLINTON
  - RL.28 HUNTERTON ROAD/CLINTON
  - RL.29 HUNTERTON ROAD/CLINTON
  - RL.30 HUNTERTON ROAD/CLINTON

- CRITICAL GAPS**
- CG.1 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.2 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.3 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.4 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.5 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.6 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.7 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.8 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.9 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.10 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.11 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK
  - CG.12 FEDERAL PARKWAY TO FEDERAL PARK

Figure 2: Cuyahoga Greenways Plan Framework & Priority Projects

**Selected Projects**

The RAISE Planning project seeks to advance four projects – two Critical Gaps and two Regional Links – from the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* through various levels of design to ready these projects for future implementation. Project elements are listed below and covered in the Detailed Statement of Work section. A map of the projects is provided in the Project Location section.

- **Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North**
  - Cuyahoga Greenways Plan: Regional Link 13B
  - 100% Design/Construction Documents
- **Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Extension**
  - Cuyahoga Greenways Plan: Critical Gap 7
  - 100% Design/Construction Documents
- **Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector**
  - Cuyahoga Greenways Plan: Regional Link 14

- Preliminary Engineering/Feasibility
- **Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North**
  - Cuyahoga Greenways Plan: Critical Gap 11
  - Preliminary Engineering/Feasibility

### Transportation Challenges to be Addressed

The ability to fund design and engineering on trail and bikeway projects is limited, creating a chicken-and-egg scenario that is often a barrier to completing these projects. Anticipating the potential for planning funds availability, leadership of the CGP looked at the Critical Gaps and Regional Links in the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* and identified the projects most in need for advancement and most responsive to the goals of the RAISE Planning opportunity. Additional details on this selection process are covered in the Selection Criteria Partnership section, but the CGP focused projects that:

- have significant regional and local impact by filling key gaps in the active transportation system with a focus on the east side of Cleveland to balance recent federal investments from the TIGER project and other funding in the network on the west side;
- positively impact underserved communities in order to address racial equity and provide access to opportunities;
- work to expand access to Downtown Cleveland and build on recently completed or soon-to-be-built active transportation infrastructure in order to better leverage these investments;
- support the County’s Climate Action Plan to provide transportation choice to vulnerable neighborhoods; and
- provide a proof-of-concept for ongoing collaboration and partnership for the CGP to advance future projects.

All four projects, once constructed, will have independent utility; however, they work best together to strengthen the overall active transportation network on the east side of Cleveland. Each works in concert with one another to fill key gaps and link to major recent or soon-to-be constructed trail infrastructure.

Since nearly 30.1% of the households in the proposed impact area have no access to an automobile, an active transportation network is critical to allow residents to commute to work and school and access amenities like public parks.<sup>1</sup> As the NOACA Regional Bike Plan notes, “For bicycles to be a more viable transportation option in the region, isolated facilities must grow into local networks, and local networks must connect to each other to form a more robust, regional

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<sup>1</sup> Cleveland Metroparks GIS analysis of project area using US Census Bureau 2014-2018 ACS Block Group Data geodatabase, July 9, 2021.

network.”<sup>2</sup> The RAISE Planning project will set the stage for implementation funding to complete critical gaps in this active transportation network for the city’s east side.

As Harlan M. Sands, President of Cleveland State University, noted in his letter of support for this application:

*Cleveland State University (CSU) sits in the heart of downtown and is accessed by thousands of local residents, some of whom come from underserved and impoverished areas. These four trail projects, which aim to further connect our neighborhoods and city, can help create more transportation options for our existing and future students, as well as faculty and staff. This greater access will allow them to take advantage of the employment and educational opportunities on our urban campus. In addition, as an active community partner, CSU supports these projects as important for our region and as priorities in our county-wide Cuyahoga Greenways Plan.*

The RAISE Planning project is an opportunity to correct decades of isolation, reduced property values and disparity in project area neighborhoods by overcoming transportation barriers that have severely impacted resident mobility and economic opportunities.

#### Cleveland Metroparks Sponsorship & Experience

Cleveland Metroparks, founded in 1917, is a separate political subdivision of the State of Ohio. The Park District encompasses more than 24,000 acres of public parkland in 18 reservations, or park areas, in Cuyahoga County and adjacent counties. It has 688.5 budgeted full-time equivalent staff and an annual operating and capital budget of \$145 million dollars.<sup>3</sup>

Cleveland Metroparks has taken a leading role in planning and developing the shared-use path network throughout the county, and since 2012 has built 27 miles of shared-use paths. The Park District was deeply engaged as a partner in the countywide *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* and is committed to expanding shared-use paths and other trails as a means for residents to access Cleveland Metroparks reservations and to enable active transportation.

The Park District has experience in building complex, regionally significant trail projects, many of which have received federal funding through the Congestion Management and Air Quality improvement program or Surface Transportation Block Grant/Transportation Alternatives program. In 2016, Cleveland Metroparks received a \$7,950,000 TIGER VIII award to design and construct four shared-use paths and a new bridge in the city of Cleveland. Two of the paths

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<sup>2</sup> Marc Von Allmen, *Regional Bicycle Plan 2013 Update* (Cleveland: Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, May 2013), 21.

<sup>3</sup> “2020 Budget,” Cleveland Metroparks, March 16, 2020, <https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/getmedia/82b73f3f-164e-4bf2-b027-12086713f06c/2020-Final-Budget-Protected-1.pdf.ashx>, accessed May 15, 2020, 15, 124. Note: Due to COVID-19 impacts the 2020 budget and staffing information is being provided.

opened in 2019 and the remaining projects opened in 2021. With this experience, Cleveland Metroparks is uniquely qualified to lead the design process for the RAISE Planning project.

### Detailed Statement of Work

The RAISE Planning project is composed of a bundle of four projects that, when built, will serve as the connective tissue between major existing pieces of trail infrastructure in the city of Cleveland. These projects will work together to improve access to Downtown Cleveland and other key destinations.

Upon notification of a RAISE award and after finalizing a Grant Agreement with the US Department of Transportation and ODOT, Cleveland Metroparks will prepare a Request for Qualifications/Request for Proposal (RFQ/RFP) for the project. As proposed, a selection team that includes staff from Cleveland Metroparks, the City of Cleveland, and Cuyahoga County will review proposals and determine the best consultant team or teams to design the project.

Cleveland Metroparks will develop the project in close collaboration with the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County utilizing the highly successful model employed to develop the final three stages of Towpath Trail in the city of Cleveland. A project development agreement provided the framework for regular staff-level and executive leadership meetings to work through the design and ultimately construction of this \$50+ million project. This allowed for all parties to be fully informed and engaged throughout the process and provided the necessary guidance and the structure required for decision making throughout the design process.

The interactive mapping at [www.cuyahogagreenways.com](http://www.cuyahogagreenways.com) shows the routes for the RAISE Planning projects listed below and also the existing and planned infrastructure to which they will connect, as listed in Project Location section.

#### Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North

100% Design/Construction Documents; Total Cost: \$660,000, **RAISE Request: \$572,000**

Cuyahoga Greenways Plan: Regional Link 13B

Facility: Protected bike lane and/or cycletrack

Location: E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street/Orange Avenue, then along Broadway Avenue to Roseville Court at the northern terminus of Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 1

Length: ±2.2 miles

Description: The Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North provides a complement to the recently completed Towpath Trail on the east side of the Cuyahoga River, connecting the Slavic Village neighborhood and the completed Morgana Run Trail to the Towpath Trail through Washington and Ohio and Erie Canal Reservations and to Downtown Cleveland. It connects to shared-use path built as part of ODOT's Innerbelt Project along Orange Avenue that connects to E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street and on to the E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street Extension and Lorain-Carnegie Bridge share-used path.

Key Initiatives:

- One of 27 "Regional Links" in the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*

- Priority of Slavic Village Development Corporation
- Part of Cleveland Metroparks' Trails Matrix - Major Trail Category
- City of Cleveland priority trail project based on 2008 TCLI study sponsored by City of Cleveland and Slavic Village Development: *Slavic Village Greenway: Bike/Pedestrian/Transit Connections* and 2010 (plus 2012 update) *Downtown Connector Trail: Washington Reservation Metropark to East 9th Street* study

#### Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Extension

100% Design/Construction Documents; Total Cost: \$350,000, **RAISE Request: \$303,000**

#### Cuyahoga Greenways Plan: Critical Gap 7

Facility: Shared-use path

Location: Morgana Run trail eastern terminus at Jones Road to Booth Avenue and on to Warner Road/Webb Terrace at Mill Creek Falls - Garfield Reservation

Length: ±0.8 miles

Description: The Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Extension links the completed Morgana Run Trail to the Mill Creek Falls area of Garfield Park Reservation and Warner Road bike lanes/Mill Creek Connector Trail, as well as the future Slavic Village Downtown Connector. The project will also tie into investments being planned as part of the Thrive 105/93 streetscape improvements along E. 93<sup>rd</sup> Street at the eastern end of the project area.

#### Key Initiatives:

- One of 12 "Critical Gaps" in the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*
- Priority of Union Miles Development Corporation
- Priority of Slavic Village Development Corporation
- Part of Cleveland Metroparks' Trails Matrix - Major Trail Category
- Builds on a planning project underway with the National Parks Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance program
- Based on 2008 TCLI study sponsored by City of Cleveland and Slavic Village Development: *Slavic Village Greenway: Bike/Pedestrian/Transit Connections*

#### Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector

Preliminary Engineering/Feasibility; Total Cost: \$190,000, **RAISE Request: \$165,000**

#### Cuyahoga Greenways Plan: Regional Link 14

Facility: Facility type to be determined

Location: Western terminus of the Opportunity Corridor Trail at E. 55<sup>th</sup> Street to connect with the Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North trail near Iron Court/Broadway Avenue

Length: ±0.7 miles

Description: The Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector builds on the investment of the ODOT-sponsored, to connect neighborhoods from the western terminus of that project at E. 55th Street to Downtown Cleveland via Phase 2 of the future Slavic Village Downtown Connector Trail.

Key Initiatives:

- One of 27 "Regional Links" in the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*
- Part of Cleveland Metroparks' Trails Matrix - Major Trail Category
- City of Cleveland and Slavic Village Development trail concept based on 2010 (plus 2012 update) *Downtown Connector Trail: Washington Reservation Metropark to East 9th Street* study

### Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North

Preliminary Engineering/Feasibility; Total Cost: \$300,000, **RAISE Request: \$260,000**

Cuyahoga Greenways Plan: Critical Gap 11

Facility: Shared-use path and/or bike lanes/portions on-road route

Location: Euclid Creek Reservation lakefront portion at Villa Angela to Euclid Creek Reservation at Chardon Road

Length: ±2.0 miles

Description: The Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North will connect the main portion of Euclid Creek Reservation to its separate lakefront portion. Cleveland Metroparks will build Phase I in SFY 2022 from Euclid Creek Parkway to Euclid Avenue, fully on park property. Phase 2 North will assess the feasibility of several routes to make the final connection northward. The existing Cleveland Lakefront Bikeway travels through the lakefront portion of the reservation and on to Downtown Cleveland.

Key Initiatives:

- One of 12 "Critical Gaps" in the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*
- Part of Cleveland Metroparks' Trails Matrix - Major Trail Category
- Supports the County Executive's *Lakefront Public Access Plan*
- Supports *Lakefront Connections* regional NOACA TLCI Planning Grant

## II. Project Location

### Project Details

All four of the RAISE Planning project components are located in the city of Cleveland and are part of the 2010 Census designated Cleveland Urbanized Area (17668) (see Figure 3). The city of Cleveland, and the neighborhoods where the projects are located, have been hit especially hard through decades of disinvestment. Providing a more equitable distribution of the benefits of multimodal transportation projects like those in the RAISE Planning project will help mitigate and correct some of these disparities.

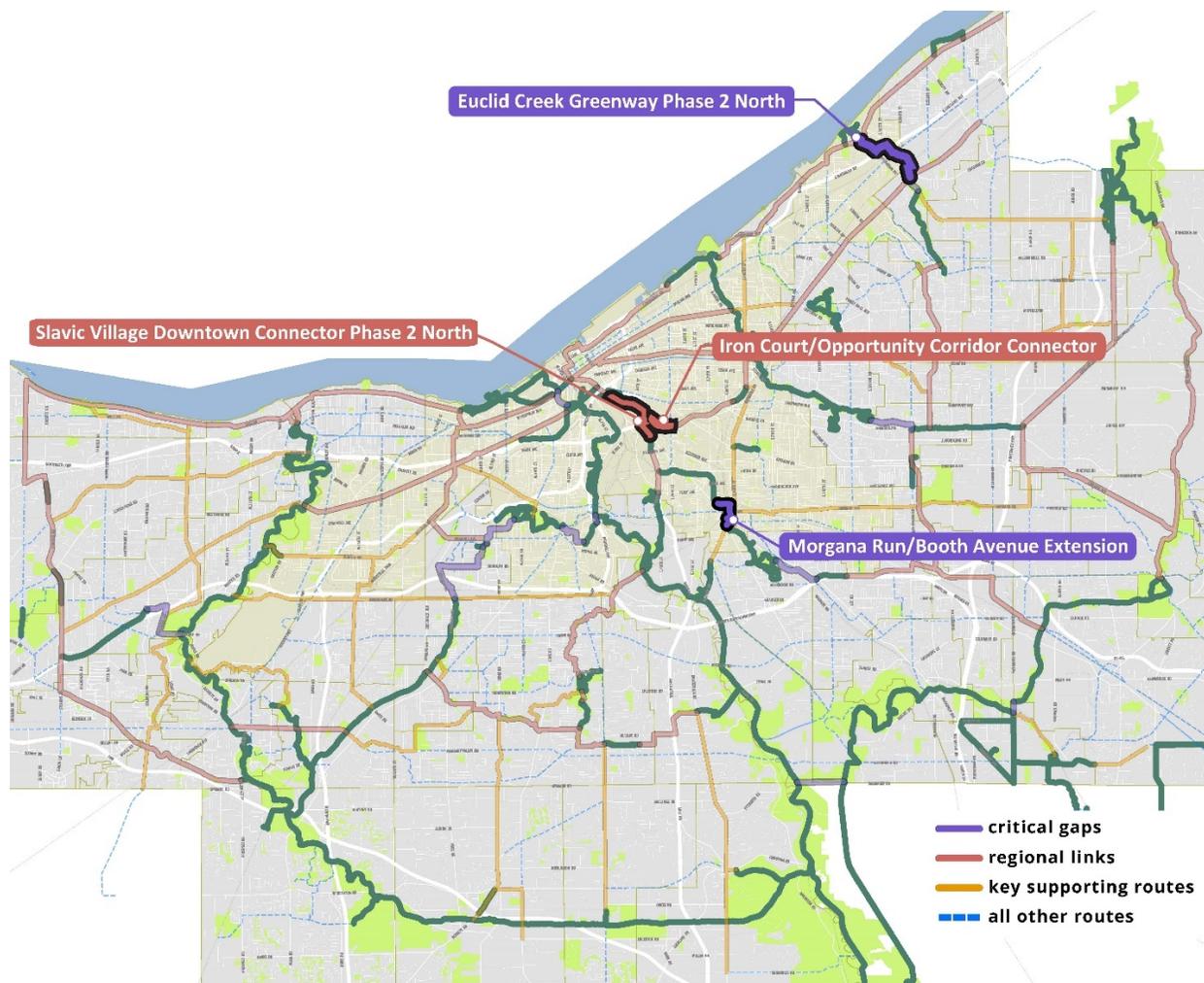


Figure 3: RAISE Planning Project Location Map

### Demographics

The residents of the RAISE Planning project area have a mix of economic and social characteristics. The household poverty rate is 36.5% and 30.1% of households do not have access to a personal vehicle. The RAISE project area is racially diverse as Table 1 shows.

Table 1: Race & Ethnicity

RAISE Cleveland Trail Planning Race & Ethnicity	Total Population	Black	White	Native American	Asian/Pacific Islander	Other	Two or More Races	Hispanic Ethnicity
Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North	27,854	54.4%	36.6%	0.8%	4.2%	1.3%	2.7%	5.0%
Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Extension	21,204	66.8%	29.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.9%	2.9%	4.4%
Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector	15,551	83.3%	13.7%	0.2%	0.5%	1.1%	1.2%	3.2%
Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North	26,225	66.6%	28.0%	0.0%	0.2%	2.3%	2.9%	0.9%
<b>All Project Areas</b>	<b>79,887</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>

### Environmental Justice Areas

Using NOACA’s Environmental Justice Area layer that is based on traffic analysis zones, 97.1% of residents live within an Environmental Justice Area, which is defined as a percentage of minority population at or above either the regional average or the national average (whichever is lower) or a percentage of low-income population at or above either the regional average or the national average (whichever is lower). See Figure 4 from NOACA’s *eNEO2050* Plan.

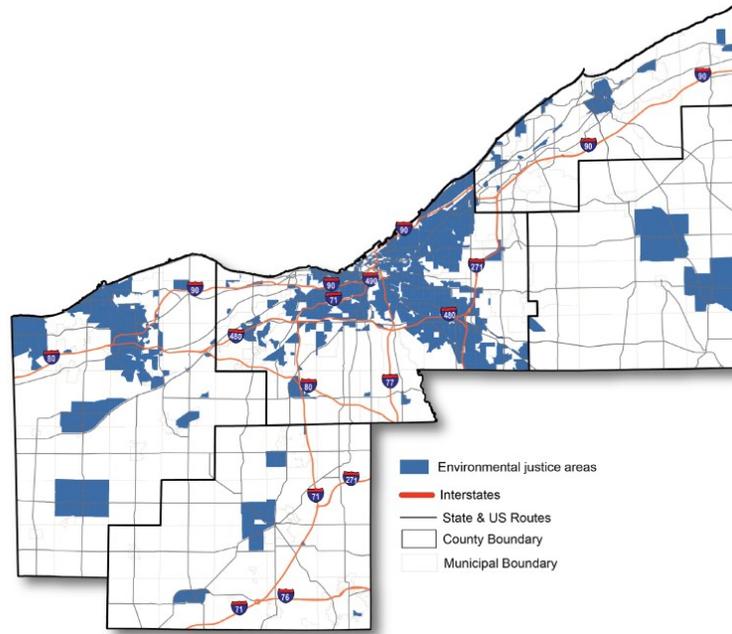


Figure 4: Environmental Justice Areas in NOACA Region

### Areas of Persistent Poverty

All four projects are in and directly serve and benefit census tracts that are classified as areas of persistent poverty under the RAISE program, as noted in Table 2. Census tract 9801 is part of the Industrial Valley that has zero population and is therefore shown in the RAISE list of tracts as “not identified.”

Table 2: Persistent Poverty Census Tracts

RAISE Cleveland Trail Planning	Census Tracts - All Persistent Poverty
Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North	1093.01, 1097.01, 1105.01, 9801*
Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Extension	1153, 1158, 1275.01
Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector	1097.01, 1098.01, 1105.01
Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North	1172.02, 1176, 1177, 1178, 1527.01

### Connections to Existing & Planned Infrastructure

The RAISE Planning projects will build on the following major trail projects recently completed or being undertaken throughout Cleveland that have been made possible through a complex array of public and private sources:

- Opportunity Corridor: The new \$300 million, 3.6-mile Opportunity Corridor project constructed by ODOT creates a boulevard that includes a shared-use path that connects the end of I-490 at E. 55<sup>th</sup> Street to the major job and education center at University Circle,

home of the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospital, Case Western Reserve University, and numerous museums and civic institutions. The project will fully open in fall 2021.

- The **Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector** will develop the plan to link the western terminus of the Opportunity Corridor trail at E. 55<sup>th</sup> Street to the Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North that links to Downtown Cleveland.
- **Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 1:** A short subsection of Phase 1 of this shared-use path was constructed between Pershing Avenue and Broadway Avenue/Roseville Court by ODOT as part of a phase of its larger Innerbelt project. The remainder of Phase 1 from Fleet Avenue to Pershing Avenue has \$1.5 million in Transportation Alternative Program funds from NOACA committed for construction of the project, which is currently being coordinated with a widening and drainage project along the adjacent I-77.
  - The **Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North** will connect to Phase 1 of the trail, which will connect to the Towpath Trail via the existing trail network at Cleveland Metroparks' Washington Reservation and Ohio and Erie Canal Reservation.
- **Morgana Run Trail:** Completed in 2007, the 2.1-mile Morgana Run Trail follows a former Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway corridor through Cleveland's historic Slavic Village neighborhood and was the first rail-trail in the city of Cleveland. The trail's western terminus currently ends at E. 49<sup>th</sup> Street but will connect via an underpass under I-77 to the Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 1 once it is completed.
  - The **Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Connector** will extend the trail from its eastern terminus at Jones Road near Broadway Avenue through the Booth Avenue underpass into the Union-Miles neighborhood, where it will connect to the existing shared-use path system in Cleveland Metroparks' Garfield Reservation.
- **Towpath Trail:** The 101-mile Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, referred to locally simply as the Towpath Trail, was completed in the city of Cleveland in June 2021, enabling off-road trail access to the city of Akron and beyond. This investment of more than \$54 million provides a regional north-south spine trail that runs along the Cuyahoga River.
  - The **Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North** will connect to Phase 1 of the trail that links to the Towpath Trail via the existing trail network at Cleveland Metroparks' Washington Reservation and Ohio and Erie Canal Reservation.
  - The **Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Connector** will connect to bicycle lanes at Warner Road that continue to the Mill Creek Connector Trail and Towpath Trail at Canal Road.
- **Cleveland Lakefront Bikeway & Lakefront Connections:** The Cleveland Lakefront Bikeway is a mixture of signed route, bicycle lane, and shared-use path that runs 17 along the city's Lake Erie shoreline. Significant investments are planned to improve sections of signed route to shared-use path along the east side of the city to mirror recent improvements on the west side as part of the \$100 million Edgewater Parkway project. A major initiative

of the Cuyahoga County Executive is to likewise extend a lakefront greenway throughout the entire county to build upon the Cleveland Lakefront Bikeway.

- The **Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North** will link the lower portion of the Euclid Creek Reservation to its northern part along the lakefront that includes Euclid Beach, Villa Angela, and Wildwood parks in the city of Cleveland, where it will connect into the Cleveland Lakefront Bikeway and on to Downtown Cleveland as well as to infrastructure being installed in the city of Euclid. Phase 1 of the Euclid Creek Greenway is currently under design and will be constructed in 2022.

### Other Trails & Bicycle Facilities

Through the Towpath Trail, the RAISE Planning projects will, once complete, be linked via the aforementioned connections to the nearly continuous, off-road 53-mile Cleveland Metroparks Emerald Necklace Trail that rings much of Cuyahoga County. Through the Emerald Necklace Trail in Brecksville Reservation, users will be able to access the 1,444-mile natural surface Buckeye Trail and the Towpath Trail, a portion of the statewide Ohio to Erie Trail, and to the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition’s Cleveland to Pittsburgh leg of the Industrial Heartland Trails network stretching across 51 counties in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and New York.

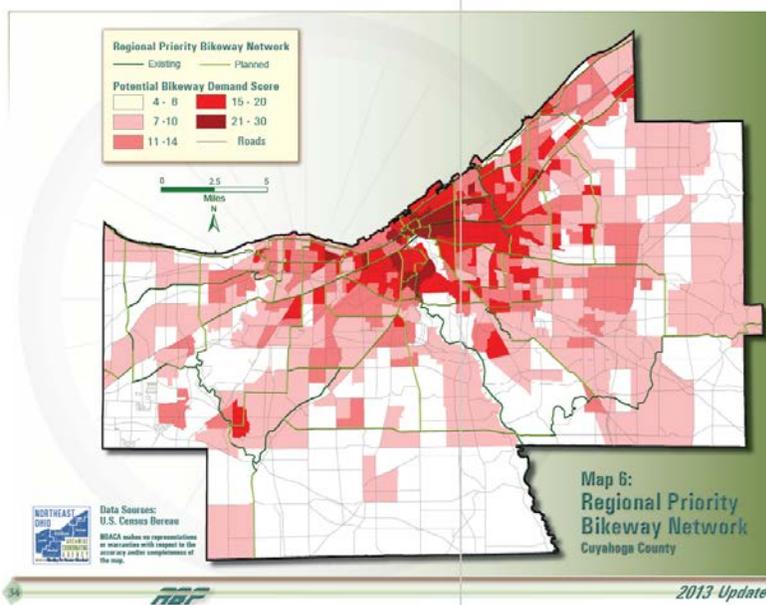


Figure 5: NOACA Regional Bike Plan Update: Potential Bikeway Demand

transit network due to their close proximity to existing bus routes, effectively increasing their catchment area. All RTA buses are equipped with bike racks, and bicycles may be brought onboard all trains and Bus Rapid Transit vehicles, allowing for an even greater population positively impacted by these trails.

Additionally, the census tracts where the RAISE Planning projects are planned have high potential bikeway demand, as modeled by NOACA in its *Regional Bike Plan Update* (see Figure 5). A follow-on analysis by ODOT as part of its first bicycle and pedestrian plan, *Walk.Bike.Ohio*, demonstrates similar demand and need for these area.

### Transit

The RAISE Planning projects will also be designed to help with “last mile” connections to the

### Consistency with Long-Term Plans for Transportation Infrastructure

The RAISE Planning project is consistent with a number of regional planning efforts, including the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*, concluded in late 2019, that laid out a 50-year vision for trail development in Cuyahoga County. It is also consistent with *Vibrant NEO 2040*, a multidisciplinary plan made possible through a 2010 HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, and it meets the plan’s recommendations of enhancing walking and cycling as transportation options to increase regional mobility and improve public health, provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and develop a regional approach to protecting air, water, and soil quality.

Please see the project webpage for links to relevant plans and studies at [www.clevelandmetroparks.com/RAISEPlanning](http://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/RAISEPlanning).

## III. Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of all Project Funding

### Budget & Scope

The total cost of the RAISE Planning project is \$1,500,00, as shown in Table 1. All four projects are in and directly serve and benefit census tracts that are classified as areas of persistent poverty under the RAISE program. Note that the Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North runs alongside and through parts of the Industrial Valley tract 9801 that has zero population and is therefore shown in the RAISE list of tracts as “not identified.” Though a request of 100% federal share for planning projects in areas of persistent poverty is allowed under the program guidance, Cleveland Metroparks has committed \$200,000 in local funds towards match for this bundle of projects. No additional federal funds are associated with this project.

Please see Appendix B for documentation of Cleveland Metroparks’ local match commitment.

Table 3: Summary Budget & Budget by Section

RAISE Cleveland Trail Planning Budget	Cost	Percentage of Total Cost	Uses of Funds	Percentage Federal Funds
Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector	\$190,000	12.7%	Preliminary Engineering	86.7%
Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North	\$300,000	20.0%	Preliminary Engineering	86.7%
Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North	\$660,000	44.0%	Final Design	86.7%
Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Extension	\$350,000	23.3%	Final Design	86.7%
<b>Total RAISE Request</b>	<b>\$1,300,000</b>	<b>86.7%</b>		<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Total Local Matching Funds</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>13.3%</b>		<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>86.7%</b>

## IV. Selection Criteria

### Primary Criteria

#### *Safety*

Creation of dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities will significantly increase the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians in the project area. Off-road trails also improve safety for automobiles by removing areas of conflict. As part of the public outreach and engagement process led by

NOACA for the *Regional Bicycle Plan*, a survey of bicycle use in the region identified safety as the most significant barrier to traveling by bicycle, higher than weather, distance, and travel time, among other barriers.<sup>4</sup>

### Reduce Pedestrian & Bicycle Accidents

As Figures 6-8 demonstrate, data on crashes within the project area gathered from the GCAT tool within the ODOT Transportation Information Mapping System (TIMS) online data system found the project area to have high rates of crashes. Crash data from a one-mile buffer around the projects was filtered to just accidents involving bicycles and pedestrians.

The high rate of crashes indicates the deficiencies that exist due to the lack of active transportation infrastructure. Between 2016 and 2020, there were 257 recorded crashes involving a bicycle or pedestrian for the Slavic Village Downtown Connector and Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector project area (these project areas were processed together to eliminate double counting due to adjacency). For the



Figure 6: Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North & Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector Project Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Data (2016-2020) in ODOT TIMS Viewer

same five-year period for the Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Connector project area there were 80 crashes, and for the Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North there were 69. Across all project areas there were 11 total fatal bicycle or pedestrian crashes reported during this period.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Von Allmen, 74.

<sup>5</sup> Cleveland Metroparks analysis of Ohio Department of Transportation's GIS Crash Analysis Tool (GCAT) based on Ohio Department of Public Safety crash data. Crash data for the project area for years 2016-2020 was pulled based on a one-mile buffer around the digitized project route, accessed July 11, 2021.

<https://gis.dot.state.oh.us/tims/CrashAnalytics/Search>. (Note: registration is required with ODOT to access the GCAT module within the TIMS platform).

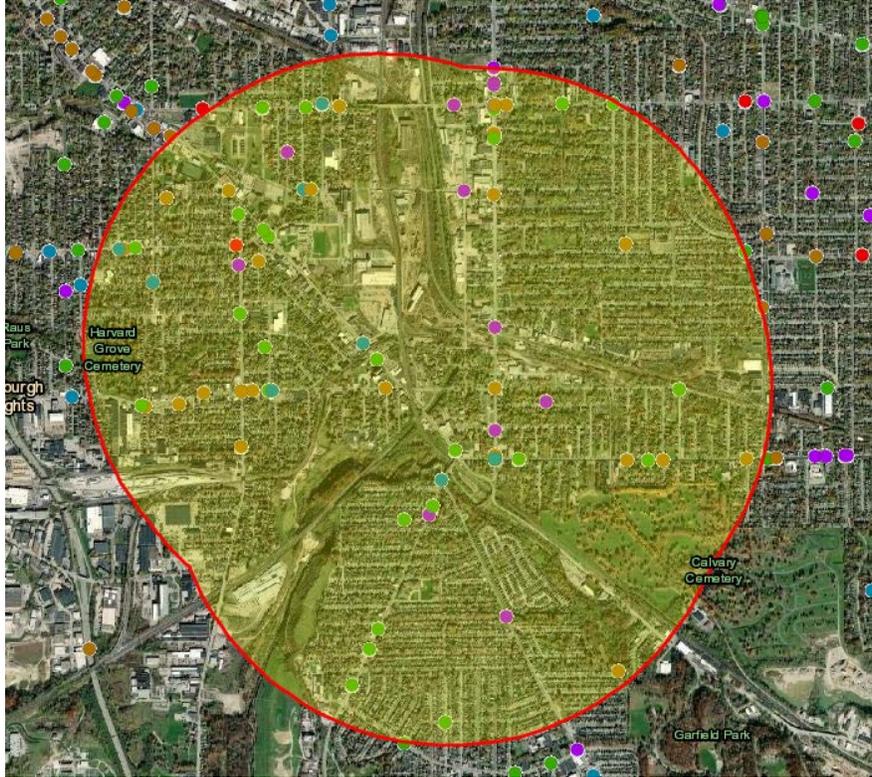
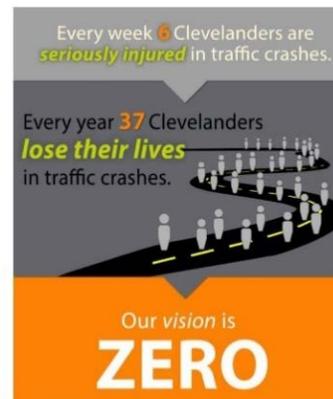


Figure 7: Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Connector Project Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Data (2016-2020) in ODOT TIMS Viewer



Figure 8: Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North Project Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Data (2016-2020) in ODOT TIMS Viewer

The RAISE Planning project is supportive of the City of Cleveland's Vision Zero initiative to eliminate traffic deaths. Providing safe facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians is a key strategy for achieving this goal.



### *Environmental Sustainability*

RAISE Planning projects will add transportation options that allow people to travel safely and efficiently by bicycle or walking. Additionally, *The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks* study determined that the vegetation in parks and along trails plays a role in improving air quality and helping nearby areas avoid the costs associated with pollution. Using the U.S. Forest Service Urban Forest Effects model, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hourly pollution concentration data for the city of Cleveland and calculating the flow of pollutants through Cleveland Metroparks trails and parks, the study calculated that Cleveland Metroparks provides an estimated \$8 million in air pollution removal each year, considering carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. RAISE Planning projects will expand and increase this environmental benefit by reducing air pollutants in the industrial areas that cause damage to structures and endanger human health.<sup>6</sup>

### *Climate Change & Environmental Justice*

The RAISE Planning project directly supports the 2019 *Cuyahoga County Climate Action Plan*. The Climate Action Plan recognizes the stresses that climate change has on the local community and provides direction for strategies to make the county more resilient moving forward. One strategy of the plan is to reduce trips taken by automobiles with a goal to “Make Cuyahoga County a much more bikeable and walkable location in the country and increase the combined mode share of biking and walking.”<sup>7</sup> Further, strategic reinvestment in the urban core through projects like the RAISE Planning projects can catalyze further investment through reutilization of Brownfield, vacant, or underutilized sites.

Jamar Doyle, Executive Director of the Greater Collinwood Development Corporation, expressed in his letter of support for the project:

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<sup>6</sup> *The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks* (Boston: The Trust for Public Land, September 2018), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Cuyahoga County Climate Action Plan, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, May 15, 2019, <https://www.countyplanning.us/projects/climate-action-plan/>, accessed June 26, 2021, 25.

*...Many areas of our community lack access to nearby greenspace, so this expansion of the trail network provides an important health and recreation amenity for our community while providing a link to both the Euclid Creek Reservation and Lake Erie to residents who otherwise lack convenient access to these regional assets.*

### Modal Shift & Resiliency

Biking trips substituted for driving trips involve less wear and tear on the existing infrastructure, which can reduce road maintenance costs, and can help ease congestion. NOACA's Congestion Management Process includes travel management strategies to minimize congestion and improve mobility of people by incorporating bicycle facilities or bicycle improvements. Furthermore, Section 108 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) requires the implementation of Transportation Control Measures to improve emissions from vehicles by reducing vehicle use or improving traffic flow. Lessening automobile use results in less of the pollution that contributes to climate change and its resultant environmental degradation.

Gregory G. Young, DPM, Vice President, Government Relations at Medical Mutual of Ohio, wrote of the project:

*Medical Mutual, one of Ohio's largest insurers, has been an integral part of the Cleveland community since our formation in 1934. We have nearly 3,000 employees, the majority of whom reside in the greater Cleveland metropolitan area...the Slavic Village Downtown Connector is of particular importance to Medical Mutual because it will create environmentally friendly transportation options that will allow our employees, the residents of NE Ohio and visitors to this region to enjoy increased access to the heart of Cleveland's downtown.*

Air Quality in Northeast Ohio is challenged due to non-point pollution, continuing industrial operations, and prevailing winds. Cuyahoga and Geauga counties, and most surrounding counties, are in marginal nonattainment for Ozone (8-hr), and effective April 2019 Cuyahoga County was re-designated by the EPA to a maintenance area after being only one of a handful of areas in the country designated as moderate nonattainment for fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) (24-hr and annual).<sup>8</sup> As the revised National Ambient Air Quality Standards Federal Register notice states, "The human health effects associated with long- or short-term exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> are significant and include premature mortality, aggravation of respiratory and cardiovascular disease (as indicated by increased hospital admissions and emergency room visits) and development of chronic respiratory disease."<sup>9</sup> While Cuyahoga County has recently moved into maintenance on this measure, providing safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian facilities to

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<sup>8</sup> "2019 Air Quality Trends Report," Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, April 2020, <https://www.noaca.org/home/showdocument?id=24921>, accessed May 16, 2020, 1.

<sup>9</sup> "Fine Particulate Matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards: State Implementation Plan Requirements; Proposed Rule," 80 Federal Register 55, March 23, 2015, to be codified at 40 CFR Parts 50, 51, and 93, 15342.

take vehicles off area roadways to improve air quality will help ensure it does not slip back into nonattainment.

## *Quality of Life*

### *Equitable Access to Parks & Trails*

Cleveland Metroparks is committed to serving all residents in the Park District. Cleveland Metroparks' system of parks were established following a plan laid out 100 years ago to develop greenspace through preserving riparian corridors that ringed Cuyahoga County, largely outside the City of Cleveland's park system and the industrial Cuyahoga River. As part of Cleveland Metroparks' 2012 Strategic Plan, *Cleveland Metroparks 2020: The Emerald Necklace Centennial Plan*, the Park District developed priorities and goals to ensure that broader and better access was provided to residents throughout the district, leading to acquisition of lakefront parks in the city of Cleveland and a focus on building regional trails and partnering with communities and nonprofits move beyond the park's boundaries to take a more active role throughout the county.

In 2015, Cleveland Metroparks updated its strategic plan and identified "Connections" as one of five key goals of the agency. These connections include trails that further the Emerald Necklace, as well as other projects that link the Cleveland Metroparks to other local, state, and regional trail networks or places of interest. To help achieve this "Connections" goal Cleveland Metroparks staff evaluates trail, greenway, and bicycle facility projects using the Park District's Trail Matrix decision-making tool to quantitatively rank these projects in order to determine which projects to pursue or support. This tool scores across fourteen different attributes such as improving access to underserved areas and contributing to network connectivity.

This focus led to pursuit of the TIGER grant for the Re-Connecting Cleveland project in partnership with The Trust for Public Land and LAND studio, partnering with the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, and Canalway Partners to complete the Towpath Trail in the city of Cleveland, and many other recent and ongoing efforts. Additionally, Cleveland Metroparks staff serves on many community and stakeholder committees for active transportation efforts, including NOACA's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Equitable access was a key direction in the Centennial Plan and the Park District's new strategic plan, which will be published in early 2022, continues these efforts through analysis of how residents are being served and where there are gaps in access and how best to address them. The Park District also recently updated its Dignity and Respect for All: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Policy that guides the agency's work.

### *New Multimodal Connections to Underserved Communities*

The RAISE Planning projects, in addition to the other projects in the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*, are needed to address damage created by the interstates and from past policies favoring automobiles over people that enabled rapid disinvestment in the urban core in favor of suburban outmigration. This legacy has impacted the whole of Cleveland and its inner-ring suburbs, and

coupled with changes to the underlying economic base, has left the city with a population at roughly half of what it was at its peak in 1950.

Once implemented, the RAISE Planning projects will improve access to adjacent trail systems, transit, and parks, allowing residents more opportunities access work, school, daily activities, and recreation.

Christopher Alvarado, Executive Director Slavic Village Development, said of the project:

*The potential impact of RAISE funds in our neighborhood of Slavic Village is massive. Two decades of trail development and neighborhood planning have primed three projects to become a permanent part of our community trail network. The Morgana Run Trail Extension, Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor connection and Slavic Village Downtown Connector will each play instrumental roles in connecting not only Slavic Village, but many of the historically marginalized east side neighborhoods of Cleveland.*

### Health Benefits

The presence and proximity of trails and parkland improves human health and provides real economic benefits. Access to active transportation and recreation space can increase physical activity, an important issue as obesity rates continue to rise across the nation; however, these benefits accrue to only those who can access the facilities. A 2018 study found that 114,000 adults in Cuyahoga County have improved health through utilization of Cleveland Metroparks trails and parks, resulting in medical cost savings of \$160 million annually.<sup>10</sup>

### Recreation Benefits

Cleveland Metroparks conducts surveys of its users that consistently show support for the development of trails. A telephone survey conducted by Leisure Vision on behalf of Cleveland Metroparks in 2011 (1,246 residents in a seven-county area) found that of the 94% of households that had visited park reservations in Cleveland Metroparks, walking/hiking (72%) was by far the most popular activity, while 31% indicated their favorite activity was bicycling on paved trails. Similarly, 68% of respondents wanted an “increase in efforts to link parklands through trails, parkways and greenways” and 59% wanted an “increased number of hike and bike trails in the park.”<sup>11</sup>

The RAISE Planning project provides the opportunity for residents and workers to enjoy an outdoor experience any day of the year. According to the *Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks*, residents of Cuyahoga County receive \$64.6 million in direct recreational use of Cleveland Metroparks trails and parks.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> “Cleveland Metroparks 2011 Telephone Survey Regarding Park Usage in Northeast Ohio,” Leisure Vision, 2011, 3- 4.

<sup>12</sup> *The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks*, 7.

### *Economic Competitiveness*

The RAISE Planning project is a beneficial transportation project that will improve mobility of residents by providing access to employment centers, transit, parks, and existing trail networks. It will provide safe, alternative transportation access.

Paul J. Dolan, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Cleveland Indians Baseball Club, stated:

*The Cleveland Indians Baseball Club serves our entire community. Accordingly, we routinely support organizations and projects benefitting the community. We believe all four projects are important to our community and should be priorities in our Countywide Greenways plan. Of particular interest to us is the Slavic Village Downtown Corridor because it will provide access for many of our stakeholders to Downtown and all its amenities, including our ballpark. I might also add as an avid cyclist, I have observed how the community has embraced the existing trail network serving many in our community. Extending this network to many more in our community, particularly the neediest among us, will prove beneficial on many levels.*

### Decrease Transportation Costs & Improve Access

Many users prefer the inherent safety of a protected facility, especially families traveling with children or for a safe route to school. This finding is consistent with results of data from other cities and nationwide, and points to a scenario where those who have access to a personal vehicle may be compelled to drive even short distances and those who do not must contend with unsafe conditions. The lack of shared-use paths represents a barrier to access for a significant portion of the population.

Access to safe, low-cost, and reliable transportation is a key component of one's economic mobility, or ability to advance up the economic ladder. According to a March 2015 Brookings report, the Cleveland-Elyria metropolitan statistical area had the largest decrease in the number of jobs accessible within a typical commute time of any metro area, going from 220,056 to 161,694 (-26.5%) between 2000 and 2012.<sup>13</sup> As a 2014 Harvard study showed, a person's commute time to work has the highest correlation to his or her lifetime upward mobility. Cleveland is ranked 40th out of the 50th largest commuting zones for this intergenerational mobility at 5.1%.<sup>14</sup>

Sharon Posner, Fair Lending Manager at Third Federal Savings & Loan Association, stated her letter of support for the project:

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<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Kneebone and Natalie Holmes, "The Growing Distance Between People and Jobs in Metropolitan America," Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, March 2015, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez, "Where Is the Land of Opportunity: The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States," Quarterly Journal of Economics 129 (4), 2014, pp. 1553-1623, Table III.

*Headquartered in the inner-city neighborhood of Slavic Village since 1938, Third Federal Savings & Loan is a long-time, strong supporter of partners and projects that provide avenues for success for the inner-city residents of our neighborhood. Through our partnership with Slavic Village Development Corporation and working with the other collaborators on projects in Slavic Village, we know that access and connection to downtown is vital to the success of our residents and our region as a whole. Through our public/private partnerships, we have developed Trailside, a former brownfield site, into several bustling residential streets lined with single-family homes located on the Morgana Trail. Your support through the RAISE grant would go a long way to providing both the access and connection needed for both the current and new residents of our neighborhood.*

#### Value of Parks & Trails

Proximity of residential housing to Cleveland Metroparks properties and trails has been demonstrated through *The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks* to add a minimum of a 5% premium to the market value of neighboring properties.

Other economic benefits accrue as a result of parks. At least \$873 million of annual benefits are contributed to Cuyahoga County from Cleveland Metroparks, including an overall increase of \$155 million in value of neighboring properties. The cost of managing stormwater is reduced by over \$20 million a year, air pollution costs are reduced by \$8 million, and direct visitor spending generates \$616 million.<sup>15</sup>

#### Strengthening the Economy

Federal investment in trail networks in northeast Ohio has already produced significant spin-off development. A 2011 study of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail by Cleveland State University demonstrated that \$6.6 million in federal funds for the trail and associated projects leveraged over \$27.6 million in non-federal investment.<sup>16</sup> Access to trails for both recreation and transportation are often cited as an important factor for attraction and retention of workers.

David Gilbert, President & CEO of Destination Cleveland, wrote in his support letter for the project:

*Destination Cleveland's mission is to drive economic impact and stimulate community vitality for Greater Cleveland through leisure and business travel. We have conducted extensive local and national research to determine how best to continue capitalizing on significant infrastructure investments to ensure their impacts are felt well into the future. The research identified significant opportunities to better connect our investments so that*

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<sup>15</sup> *The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks*, 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Ohio & Erie Canalway: Connectivity, Community, Culture*, Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University, 2011, <http://npshistory.com/publications/nha/ohio-erie-canalway/connectivity-community-culture.pdf>, 14.

*visitors can seamlessly experience all of Cleveland's world-class attractions, neighborhoods, and destinations. The trail planning projects are critical to these efforts and investment in our community and is key as we continue our work to make Cleveland a destination city.*

The many letters of support received for the project and included in Appendix A are a testament to the interest and excitement for expanding the trail system.

### *State of Good Repair*

NOACA's Long-Range Transportation Plan, *eNEO2050: An Equitable Plan for Northeast Ohio*, establishes goals and strategies and asserts the metropolitan planning agency's vision to "STRENGTHEN regional cohesion, PRESERVE existing infrastructure, and BUILD a sustainable multimodal transportation system to SUPPORT economic development and ENHANCE quality of life in Northeast Ohio."<sup>17</sup> Further, NOACA's Congestion Management Process includes travel management strategies to minimize congestion and improve mobility of people by incorporating bicycle facilities or bicycle improvements.

Existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the project vicinity, while improving through initiatives like the City of Cleveland's bike lane striping program, does not adequately serve many area residents. Conditions of sidewalks are generally poor and there is not yet a continuous bicycle network. Even with bike lanes, many users do not feel comfortable using these busy street corridors, which tend to have high bicycle/pedestrian and vehicle crash rates.

Building out this network also provides additional capacity to move people in the event of emergencies, blackouts, or major weather events that could disable roadway networks. With the recent COVID-19 pandemic and "Stay-at-Home" orders in Ohio, parks and trails in particular provided necessary respite for users and have also served as active transportation options to a much broader segment of the population.

### Future Management of RAISE Planning Projects

The RAISE Planning projects will be designed in concert with the City of Cleveland, which may ultimately implement and own some or all the trails proposed. Should Cleveland Metroparks manage any of these trails in the future, the Park District has extensive experience in providing management of more than 117 miles of paved shared-use paths, 87 miles of bridle trails, 107 miles of hiking trails (including 21 miles of mountain bike trails) in the Park District's more than 24,000 acres. by Cleveland Metroparks professional natural resources and management personnel. The Park District is well recognized for its high-quality park maintenance and received the National Gold Medal Award for "Excellence in Park and Recreation Administration" in 1999,

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<sup>17</sup> *eNEO2050: An Equitable Plan for Northeast Ohio*, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, June 2021, (<https://www.eneo2050.com/vision-plan>), 14.

2001, 2007, and 2016. An In-Park Users Survey by Triad Research (over 4,500 visitors interviewed in 2011) found that 96% of trail users rated Cleveland Metroparks trails as “good to excellent.”

## Secondary Criteria

### *Partnership*

As described in Section I under “Project Background,” the CGP has been working since 2014 to advance trails and bikeways in Cuyahoga County. This consortium identified the need to have a full inventory of existing, planned, and proposed projects that could be analyzed and prioritized as part of a network to help guide trail development over the coming decades.

An outgrowth of the early work of the CGP was the development of the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*, completed in late 2019, which has the goal to connect public transportation and parks to offer recreational opportunities and options for getting around the county, improving the community’s mobility options, health, well-being, and economic vitality. The *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* seeks to build an interconnected network that is safe and welcoming for people of all ages, abilities, and demographics, changing the way people think about and move around the county.

### Planning & Engagement

The Cuyahoga Greenways planning process was community-driven and data-enriched, empowering local leaders and stakeholders with the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions. The plan relied on technical geographic information system (GIS) analysis, expert input, stakeholder observations, and community engagement. Decisions had to be grounded, appropriate for the local context, and supported by the community.

Expert input was provided by a Project Team consisting of 29 local organizations. All 59 communities in the county were contacted to participate in the project Steering Committee to provide local guidance for the alignment of proposed greenways. This engagement helped increase understanding of the physical and socioeconomic context and to recognize local community needs. Eleven Steering Committee Meetings were held throughout the County, with leadership from 43 different communities participating in these small group workshops and mapping sessions. In total, over 20 community-wide events were held, with 10 of these meetings specifically dedicated to public comment and feedback, in person or through various online programs and surveys.

After all data was collected and presented, the team used this information and stakeholder input to pinpoint the best locations for active transportation choices and improved regional mobility. Leveraging both traditional and digital tools, a rigorous spatial analysis of over 300 corridor opportunities was completed, with three main technical tasks performed over the course of this process:

- Step 1: Candidate Route Identification & Hierarchy
- Step 2: Route Evaluation
- Step 3: Framework Plan & Project Prioritization

During the evaluation process, the Project Team, Steering Committee, and other stakeholders identified eight “core factors” that reflected the opportunities and benefits future greenway routes might provide: Regional Trails Access; Park & Recreation Access; Habitat Factor; Socioeconomic Factor; Personal Mobility Factor; Transit Factor, Job Centers Factor; and Commercial/Civic Factor.

Dozens of data sets were reviewed to determine which corridors best aligned with project goals. Route evaluation developed further into a series of Hybrid “Connection” Analyses to distinguish correlations between core factors and routes providing the greatest benefits to these trip origin and destination points. The hybrid analysis included: People to Jobs, Jobs to Transit, People to Trails, and Parks to Habitat.

The resulting priority list of 12 Critical Gaps, 27 Regional Links, and 30 Key Supporting Routes from the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* provides a clear roadmap for agencies and leaders in active transportation to develop the most impactful trails and bikeways for the community.

#### Shared Priorities

A major strength of the CGP is that it brings stakeholders in active transportation together on a regular basis to discuss projects and coordinate complementary projects on top of other infrastructure investments, such as layering trail projects along a green infrastructure project or streambank restoration project being conducted by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS). Importantly, work is done not just at the staff level, but executive leadership from these organizations also meet several times a year with meetings being hosted by a different organization each time to reinforce active participation.

Beginning in November 2020, CGP executive leadership began refining the list of 69 priority projects down to a handful of planning and implementation projects that had the highest need and impact and that would best align with potential funding sources. Subsequent meetings in January, March, and June 2021 resulted in the bundle of planning projects presented in this RAISE Planning application, with one being removed as a result of the ability to progress through a coordinated infrastructure project alongside a NEORS project.

Through continued, genuine discussion, and collaboration around shared priorities and community impact, the CGP has been able to advance a slate of projects for this RAISE funding opportunity so that they can be positioned as the major trail and bikeway initiatives for the coming years. Using the partnership model of cross-agency development of the Towpath Trail, Cleveland Metroparks, the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, and all members of the CGP will work together to ensure these projects progress from design to implementation.

Broad-based support from the overall community, necessary to move from design to construction, is evidenced by the more than 50 letters of support received for the project (see Appendix A).

### *Innovation*

The collaborative model of the CGP with many agencies coming together with a focus on advancing projects most in need of support represents an innovative approach to regional trail development. Funding from the RAISE program will further encourage this collaboration, which could be used as a model for other regions.

Cleveland Metroparks, with facilities in 49 communities throughout Cuyahoga County, provides consistent and non-partisan leadership across these multiple jurisdictions and is well respected for past success in project implementation. Through experience gained from the TIGER project and other federally funded projects, Cleveland Metroparks is well equipped to lead the RAISE Planning project, which will serve as a test case for future joint project development.

Dan Moulthrop, CEO of The City Club of Cleveland, said in his letter of support of Cleveland Metroparks:

*They are everything you want from a public sector agency, truly. In the last decade, they have earned a reputation for the highest quality execution and completion of projects and ideas that have long bedeviled our community. These days, in Greater Cleveland, if it's about green space, connectivity, or parklands, and you want to get it done, you get the Metroparks involved.*

## V. Environmental Risk Review

### Project Schedule

As previously described, the RAISE Planning project will advance four trail projects from the conceptual level through the following design stages:

- Preliminary Engineering/Feasibility Stage:
  - Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector
  - Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North
- Final Design/Construction Documents:
  - Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North
  - Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Connector

Assuming a contract can be executed with FHWA by May 2022, all work on the overall project could be complete by July 2024 as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Project Schedule

Calendar Year	2021		2022				2023				2024			
Calendar Quarter	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<b>RAISE Cleveland Trail Planning</b>														
Application	-													
Award Notification		-												
Contract with FHWA			-											
Design Consultant Selection				-										
Preliminary Engineering/Feasibility					-									
<b>Completion of Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector and Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North</b>														
Environmental Engineering/ROW Plans							-							
NEPA Clearance/CE Document							-							
Final Design/ROW									-					
Final Design Approval												-		
<b>Completion of Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North and Morgana Run/Booth Avenue Connector</b>														
Closeout													-	

## Required Approvals

### Environmental Permits & Reviews

In accordance with the latest update of the Ohio Department of Transportation National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment Categorical Exclusion Guidance, all segments of this proposed project would likely be classified as Categorical Exclusion C2, requiring a minimal level of documentation. Two of the projects in the bundle request full design funding through construction documents and two request funding through the preliminary engineering/feasibility stage.

### State & Local Approvals

On June 17, 2021, the Board of Park Commissioners of Cleveland Metroparks passed a resolution authorizing submittal of a planning application to the RAISE program for this project. The resolution enables Cleveland Metroparks Chief Executive Officer to enter into grant agreements and necessary documents to accept the grant award. Furthermore, Cleveland Metroparks will make funds available as needed until reimbursement from the RAISE program. The resolution is provided in Appendix B. No additional legislative approvals are required for Cleveland Metroparks.

The RAISE Planning project is highly supported by governmental entities, local businesses, community groups, and agencies, including the legislators and direct project partners listed below. The more than 55 letters of support and commitment appear in Appendix A.

- US Senator Sherrod Brown
- US Senator Rob Portman
- US Representative, 14<sup>th</sup> District, David Joyce
- Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)

- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works
- Cuyahoga County Planning Commission
- City of Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson

### State & Local Planning

The components of RAISE Planning project have been developed and refined through public and stakeholder engagement over the last two decades, with significant recent engagement through the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*, Cleveland Metroparks’ Master Planning, and City of Cleveland planning efforts. Please see a listing of these plans and efforts on the project webpage.

This projects within the RAISE Planning bundle were added to the NOACA Long-Range Transportation Plan, *eNEO 2050*, as part of the plan’s adoption in June 2021. Cleveland Metroparks will pursue addition to the Transportation Improvement Programs (STIP/TIP) of both the State of Ohio and NOACA upon notification of a RAISE award. Note that as a policy NOACA will not amend projects to its four-year, fiscally constrained TIP until funding commitments are received; therefore, the RAISE project will be added to the TIP in the quarter following grant award announcements. All projects will be processed through the NOACA Project Planning Review (PPR) process which ensures Intergovernmental Review and Consultation as well as public involvement. Upon successful completion of PPR, a NOACA Board of Directors resolution will allow the project to be amended to the TIP. Once this occurs, the projects will likewise be added to the STIP. Cleveland Metroparks will process the RAISE project through all necessary approvals as it did with the 2016 TIGER award.

### Project Risks & Mitigation Strategies

Cleveland Metroparks is highly valued and supported by the community, and in 2013 passed a 10-year property tax levy (1.8 mill renewal and 0.9 mill increase) in Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township in Medina County with 70% of the vote. The Park District is debt-free, with no capital obligations or unfunded liabilities.

Cleveland Metroparks has the financial strength and experience to effectively manage and implement the RAISE Planning project as it did the Re-Connecting Cleveland TIGER project. The Park District has a long history and solid reputation for administration of grants across the spectrum of federal, state, and private sources, including Federal-aid trail projects in full compliance with NEPA and other federal requirements. Cleveland Metroparks regularly develops, bids, and manages multi-million-dollar construction projects using a professional staff of civil engineers, landscape architects, architects, surveyors, GIS specialists, and planners.

The RAISE Planning project has the support of surrounding communities, stakeholders, and private industry, as evidenced by the more than 50 letters of support received (see Appendix A).

## VI. List of Appendices

**A. Letters of Support**

**B. Funding Commitments**