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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Federal Grant Awarded to Study Rebuilding of Bay Bridge and Expanding Sandusky Bay Pathway

Port Clinton, Ohio – The City of Port Clinton has been awarded funding through the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP), a grant program from the Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. The funding will be used to plan a connected multi-use pathway that will transform pedestrian and bicycle travel between Erie and Ottawa Counties.

The City of Port Clinton welcomed the ATIIP selection as one of only 14 from a competitive field of more than 350 applicants nationwide. “This award will help link the City with popular destinations for residents to enjoy, as well as drive new traffic to the great businesses and local amenities our community offers residents, neighbors and visitors alike,” said Mayor Mike Snider. “The award will allow the region to further leverage this great location along Lake Erie and continue to provide world-class outdoor recreation opportunities,” said Snider.

A key element of the plan is a 14-mile extension of the Sandusky Bay Pathway, which will connect Sandusky to Port Clinton. For the first time in over 35 years, this initiative will reunite communities that were once linked by the now-decommissioned Sandusky Bay lift bridge, familiarly known as the *Old Bay Bridge*.

The Sandusky Bay Pathway is part of a 100-mile vision to connect communities around the Greater Sandusky Bay Region. Currently, 20 miles are completed or funded, with the Route 6 Corridor as one of those critical pieces awarded the RAISE grant in 2022. Future connections include Sandusky to Huron and expanding as far as Vermilion.

“The Sandusky Bay Pathway extension is a bold step toward creating a regional trail network that redefines how people experience our region. It will establish our region as a premier destination for recreation and community connection—offering residents and visitors alike a unique way to explore, engage, and enjoy the beauty and vibrancy of Greater Sandusky Region,” said Jeff Kerr, Director of Planning and Policy for Greater Sandusky Partnership.

The study will involve robust public engagement and preliminary engineering design to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach. Once completed, the connection will become a vital link

in the region, providing safe, sustainable, and enjoyable transportation and recreation opportunities for all.

The City of Port Clinton, the Park District of Ottawa County and Greater Sandusky Partnership, worked in collaboration to complete and submit the application for the grant. This initiative represents a partnership for a vision of strong regional connectivity.

“Bringing communities together through innovative projects like the Sandusky Bay Pathway is a testament to the power of collaboration. This transformative initiative not only connects people but also opens the door to opportunities for outdoor recreation and regional growth,” said Jannah Wilson, Executive Director, Park District of Ottawa County.

About the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program

The ATIIP was created in 2021 as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also known as the Connecting America's Active Transportation System Act. The program funds the planning, design, and construction of active transportation networks across the country.

“I am thrilled to see this additional federal funding come home to this joint effort from the City of Port Clinton, the City of Sandusky, the Greater Sandusky Partnership, and The Park District of Ottawa County for the Sandusky Bay Pathway,” said Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (OH-09). “This will build on the \$24.5 Million federal RAISE Grant investment secured in 2022. Thanks to bipartisan collaboration, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law continues to deliver commonsense investments to further connections between Sandusky and Port Clinton. These additional federal dollars advance the work to bring the 100-mile Sandusky Bay Pathway to fruition. It has been an honor to work with our regional stakeholders to build bridges between lake-oriented communities and put new emphasis on our Great Lake Erie.”

Bayview Mayor, Larry Gwinner, and Bayview Village Council President Kimberly Broker stated, “We are incredibly grateful Greater Sandusky is committed to the Village of Bayview. This project is a powerful reminder that every community, no matter its size, truly matters. The connection through the Sandusky Bay Pathway will not only benefit Bayview but also strengthen ties across the entire region.”

Shores & Islands Ohio President, Larry Fletcher, said “A pedestrian-friendly bridge linking Erie and Ottawa Counties would be an attraction, an economic driver, and yet another high-profile amenity for the region’s residents and the millions who visit us each year. Thank you to those whose hard work resulted in this grant!”

Special thanks have been extended to both Ottawa and Erie Counties for their leadership and commitment to this transformative project, as well as Shores and Islands Ohio as a supportive partner.