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Press Release

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VILLAGE OF SMITHTON AWARDED MEPRD GRANT FOR COMMUNITY-WIDE TRAILS MASTER PLAN

MADISON AND ST. CLAIR COUNTIES, IL – The Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) on Monday announced that its Board of Directors approved a \$6,770 award to the Village of Smithton for a community-wide bicycle and pedestrian master planning project.

The project, aptly titled the “Smithton Shared-Use Path Master Plan,” promises to bring about the creation of Smithton’s first dedicated bicycle-pedestrian trail master plan and is expected to get underway later this year. The plan is projected to be complete by 2023 and will include recommendations for the improvement of existing bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure, identify potential alignments for future trails and shared-use paths, and establish a plan for implementation; all in an effort to lay the groundwork for safe and accessible pathways that better connect Smithton’s residential neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and other destinations within the community.

The award is funded through MEPRD’s FY21 Community Planning Grant Program, a funding opportunity targeted at the jurisdiction-wide planning of parks and/or bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure, which in turn is meant to serve as a catalyst for the future development and enhancement of regional trails and recreation facilities throughout MEPRD’s jurisdiction. The Village of Smithton is the latest agency to apply for and receive a grant through MEPRD’s Community Planning Grant Program, joining the City of O’Fallon, the City of Troy, the Village of Godfrey, and Roxana Community Park District as one of several agencies throughout Madison and St. Clair Counties, IL currently developing a community-wide parks or bicycle and pedestrian plan.

“There is tremendous potential in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, not only from a recreation standpoint but also in active transportation, so needless to say, we are excited to see Smithton embark on this pioneering project,” remarked Cole Preston, MEPRD Grant Coordinator. “Trails, shared-use paths, bike paths, complete streets, and any combination thereof can be transformative, ushering in a more vibrant, accessible, and connected community for those who live and do business within that village, town, or city,” he continued. “And, importantly, it can create an opportunity for surrounding communities to plan and develop interlinking bike-ped infrastructure.”

The FY 2021 Community Planning Grant Program is open to qualifying agencies within MEPRD’s jurisdiction seeking to develop or update a community-wide parks and/or bicycle-pedestrian master plan. Applicants can request a reimbursement grant valued at 40% of the total project cost, up to a maximum award of \$40,000. Refer to the application for additional program guidelines and eligibility requirements.

MEPRD is accepting applications for the FY 2021 Community Planning Grant now through 3:00 PM on May 31, 2021, or until all remaining program funds have been depleted, whichever comes first. The FY21 grant application, remaining program funds, and other helpful resources can be found online at www.meprd.org/planning-grant.

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The Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) was formed by voters of Madison and St. Clair Counties, Illinois in November 2000. MEPRD partners with local governments, special districts, and other jurisdictions for the purposes of developing and improving parks, recreational facilities, and trails throughout the two-county area. MEPRD also increases awareness and use of these amenities by providing related maps, data, statistics, and marketing materials. For more information, visit www.meprd.org