EAST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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An Economic Development District and Metropolitan Planning Organization
Serving the East Central Wisconsin Region for over 30 years
A Recipient of the 2010 Fox Cities Greenways, Inc. "Partnership Award"

October 12, 2011

Common Council
City of Menasha
140 Main Street
Menasha, WI 54952

RE: Province Terrace Trail

Dear Aldermen,

As the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), we are responsible for coordinating land use and transportation planning efforts within the Fox Cities Metropolitan Planning Area. In 2012, MPO staff will be working with WisDOT and Fox Cities and Oshkosh communities to prepare a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. Recently, we learned that the City of Menasha is considering turning down Transportation Enhancement (TE) grant funding intended for the design and construction of the Province Terrace Trail. Due to its regional significance, and the potential benefits it presents, we wanted to offer our support for moving forward with the project. Listed below are several key points, as well as an explanation of each, that played a role in forming our opinion.

Complete Bicycle/Pedestrian Network – The Menasha area is already home to a number of great trails and other bicycle/pedestrian facilities, including the Friendship and Midway Road Trails. Similar projects, like bike lanes along STH 47, are also in the works. Continuing to develop and connect these facilities is crucial to creating a multi-modal transportation system, one that allows all user types to move around in a safe and efficient manner.

Established Planning Goals & Efforts – Several initiatives led by our organization, including the Long-Range Transportation/Land Use Plan for the Fox Cities (Appleton) Urbanized Area, are supportive of "creating a physical and cultural environment which encourages travel by foot or bicycle." In Menasha, the City's Comprehensive Plan lists "the extension of the Province Terrace Trail to the Friendship Trail on USH 10/Oneida Street" as a priority project.

Ramifications of Turning Down Grant Funding – Funding opportunities, such as the TE Program, are increasingly competitive. Passing on the Province Terrace Trail project, and the funds awarded for its implementation, may set a precedent for other allocation decisions and have an impact on the City's ability to secure funding in the future.

Benefits of Trail Development – By allowing for reduced fuel consumption, decreased air pollution, and more interaction among neighbors, the development of trails provides mode choices that can produce tremendous economic, environmental, and social benefits.

While we recognize that the final determination regarding the Province Terrace Trail will be made at the local level, for reasons unique to the City of Menasha, we hope that these points are included in the discussion and a useful part of the decision-making process. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Walt Raith

Walt Raith, MPO Director

Cc: Don Merkes, Mayor