



DAN ONORATO
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

101 COURTHOUSE • 436 GRANT STREET
PITTSBURGH, PA 15219
PHONE (412) 350-6500 • FAX (412) 350-6512
WWW.COUNTY.ALLEGHENY.PA.US

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 1, 2006

CONTACT: Kevin Evanto
412-350-3171 office
412-352-4075 cell

Onorato Signs Landmark Riverfront Park Legislation

Chief Executive embraces Burn-Fawcett concept of world's longest urban linear park

PITTSBURGH — Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato has signed legislation that will lead to a 128-mile long riverfront park along the Allegheny, Monongahela, Ohio and Youghiogheny rivers. The finished park will become the County's tenth regional park, and it will touch more than half of Allegheny County's 130 municipalities. The riverfront park will also hold the distinction as the world's longest urban linear park.

"This landmark park takes Allegheny County's commitment to reclaiming, rejuvenating and conserving our riverfronts to the next level," said Onorato. "Not only will the countywide riverfront park be an international draw for recreation and tourism, but it will also be a tremendous economic development tool for our region. Businesses want to locate in communities that offer a high quality of life and a wide range of activities, and the new riverfront park will add to both of those in Allegheny County."

County Council members Dave Fawcett and Jim Burn introduced the concept of the countywide riverfront park in early November, and the ordinance was approved by Allegheny County Council on November 21 with a vote of 14-0.

"This park will be spectacular," said Fawcett. "We envision a park that will offer something for everyone. It will be the longest park of its kind, and it will put Allegheny County in a class of its own. In fact, I can't think of anything better that County government could do right now to boost our regional economy and improve our ability to compete in the global marketplace."

"We have made great strides in developing our riverfronts over the last few years," said Burn. "This plan will complement the development we have begun, and it will continue to provide our residents access to Allegheny County's most beautiful natural resource – our rivers."

The legislation authorizes the County Parks Department and Public Works Department to map the park's boundaries and commence design and engineering plans. In addition, the ordinance also authorizes Allegheny County to begin acquiring property for the park.

“Today, I have instructed County Parks Director Andy Baechle, Public Works Director Tom Donatelli and Economic Development Director Dennis Davin to begin the process of mapping and planning the riverfront park,” added Onorato. “I want to commend Councilmen Burn and Fawcett for their vision and dedication to this effort.”

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Allegheny County operates nine public parks that span 12,000 acres and offer a wide array of sporting, leisure, cultural and entertainment opportunities. The Allegheny County Parks system serves to enhance the quality of life and well-being of citizens of Allegheny County and Southwestern Pennsylvania. Various seasonal and year-round programs, activities and amenities provide residents with educational and recreational opportunities, while also contributing to the economic vitality of the region.

The nine County parks are: Boyce Park, 1,096 acres located in Monroeville and Plum Borough; Deer Lakes Park, 1,180 acres located in Frazier and West Deer townships; Harrison Hills Park, 500 acres located in Harrison Township; Hartwood, 629 acres located in Hampton and Indiana townships; North Park, 3,010 acres located in Hampton, McCandless and Pine townships; Round Hill Park, 1,101 acres located in Elizabeth Township; Settler’s Cabin Park, 1,589 acres located in Collier, North Fayette and Robinson townships; South Park, 1,999 acres located in Bethel Park and South Park Township; and White Oak Park, 810 acres located in White Oak Borough.

For additional information on Allegheny County parks, visit www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks.