

## OFFICE OF MAYOR MIRO WEINBERGER

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Parks Foundation Announces Successful Completion of \$1 Million Campaign in Support of the Waterfront Bike Path**

**Burlington, VT** – Today Mayor Miro Weinberger, Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department (DPRW), the Burlington Parks Foundation, and other City officials celebrated the Parks Foundation reaching its goal of raising \$1 million in support of the rehabilitation of the Waterfront Bike Path. The Parks Foundation set the goal in 2014, and today announced at one of the Bike Path's new pause places that it has raised \$1,026,622 in cash and pledges from over 250 residents and businesses, and presented a symbolic check to Mayor Weinberger.

\$350,000 of the \$1 million contribution has been invested in the Bike Path rehabilitation within the Urban Reserve, including the creation of three new pause places, the first three installations of University of Vermont Medical Center-donated fitness equipment (see more below), the creation of accessible connectivity to the recently acquired Texaco Beach, and the planting of over 120 trees. This work is part of the second phase (1b) of the Bike Path rehabilitation, which broke ground in the summer of 2016 and will conclude construction in December of 2016. This second phase will realign and revitalize the one-mile section of the Path from the Andy "A-Dog" Williams Skate Park to North Beach. The total budget for this phase of the Bike Path rehabilitation is \$2.4 million, funded by the Parks Foundation contribution, Waterfront Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Fiscal Year 2016 Capital Improvement Program Support, Penny for Parks, and Bike Path Maintenance and Improvement Fund.

The new fitness equipment at the three new pause places is made possible by the generous donation from the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMHC) to the Parks Foundation. These first installations will make up the beginning of the UVM Medical Center Fitness Trail, which is planned to continue in other parks and pause places throughout the rehabilitation of the Path. The remaining \$650,000 of the total \$1 million Parks Foundation contribution will be used to add this fitness equipment, and to create additional pause places and connections along the Waterfront Bike Path, transforming it into a multi-purpose Burlington Greenway.

"By the end of this construction season we will have dramatically improved two of the most frequently traveled miles of our treasured Bike Path with the help of federal dollars, TIF, and the generous contribution of philanthropic dollars to the Parks Foundation," said Mayor Miro Weinberger. "Six miles remain. Burlington voters have the opportunity to finish the job by voting YES on #1 on November 8."

"Building on the work of previous generations and volunteers, we continue our efforts to dramatically improve our parks system," said Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Director Jesse Bridges. "With the help of the Parks Foundation we realize not just an improvement to the

pavement conditions of the Bike Path, but an elevation of the ecology, recreational amenities and sense of place. Transforming the path into a true linear park, the Burlington Greenway is a gift to the community thanks to the generosity of so many."

"The Parks Foundation is proud to represent the hundreds of individual donors and businesses who gave to support the rehabilitation of the Bike Path," said Parks Foundation Founding Chair John Bossange. "This gift to the City ensures that Burlingtonians and visitors will enjoy the new amenities along the eight mile path, including the new pause places in the Urban Reserve, for decades to come."

"We see our collaboration with the city of Burlington to renovate the Burlington Bike Path and create a new fitness trail with exercise stations as a great example of a public-private partnership that is helping to move Burlington forward," said UVM Medical Center Senior Community Relations Strategist Maria McClellan, who spoke on behalf of UVMHC at Tuesday's event. "Our core mission is to improve the health of the communities we serve, and we are pleased that Mayor Weinberger is committed to making these types of investments to the infrastructure of our city that will promote healthy lifestyles and help people stay fit."

### **Parks Foundation Background**

The Parks Foundation of Burlington is an independent non-profit established to support the Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront in its mission to maintain the City's diverse recreational assets and provide excellent services to sustain the high quality of life that makes the Burlington community a special place to live, work, and visit. Since its launch in the spring of 2013, the Foundation has raised \$2.9 million in total pledges and gifts, which have gone towards renovations at Roosevelt Park, Andy A-Dog Williams Skatepark, a new gym floor at the Miller Center, and more.

Today's announcement demonstrated the commitment of the City, Foundation, UVMHC, and generous donors to a Bike Path that benefits local businesses by providing a scenic recreation corridor, contributes to the health and wellness of its users, and offers an important transportation network for those who walk or ride to and from Burlington. With its Bike Path fundraising campaign now concluded, the Foundation will continue to accept donations for the Bike Path, but will be turning to a strategic planning effort in order to determine the next signature project for which it will raise funding.

The City is currently proposing funding the remaining work to rehabilitate the total eight-mile Bike Path using a portion of its comprehensive, 10-year capital plan and its related \$27.5 million bond, which will be before voters on November 8. This bond will pay for much-needed infrastructure improvements to Burlington's streets, sidewalks, public parks, Bike Path, the replacement of aging Fire Department fire engines, and more. Investing in the proper stewardship of City resources will save taxpayers money in the long-term, and will ensure that Burlingtonians continue to enjoy our beautiful city – including a world-class eight mile Bike Path - for decades to come.