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Elizabeth River Trail Foundation Reaches \$4 Million Capital Campaign Goal

NORFOLK, Va. (March 2020) The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation has raised \$4 million, reaching its Phase I capital campaign fundraising goal. Lead donors include: Sentara Healthcare (\$500,000), City of Norfolk (\$500,000); TowneBank Foundation (\$250,000), PRA Group (\$250,000) and the Hampton Roads Community Foundation (\$200,000). Major donors (\$70,000 +) include Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters, Landmark Foundation, Patricia & Douglas Perry Foundation, Hampton Roads Shipping Association, Virginia Maritime Association, Port of Virginia, Grow, Norfolk Southern Foundation, Work Program Architects and W.M. Jordan Company.

These investments will be used to enhance the Elizabeth River Trail, and \$10,000 + donors will be acknowledged in a sculpture to be installed along the trail.

Chuck McPhillips, chairman of The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation stated: "Allow me to pay tribute to our Mayor, Kenny Alexander, and his colleagues on City Council, who backed this successful public-private partnership from the very beginning; to our Fundraising Co-Chairs, Andria McClellan and John Matson, for their unflagging leadership during our Phase I campaign; to the vision and commitment of the 'Dream Team' represented by our diverse and passionate board of directors; and to the extraordinary generosity of the local business, healthcare and civic leadership with which we have been blessed."

On the ground since 2003, the ERT currently runs 10.5-miles from Norfolk State University to the Port of Virginia. Formed in 2016, the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation is responsible for master planning, fundraising and activating the trail. In April 2018, the Foundation embarked on a Phase 1 \$4 million capital campaign. Planned improvements include 12 new trailhead access points with amenities ranging from bike repair stations and kayak launches to shade structures and public art. These additions will maximize the quality of life for Norfolk's residents while increasing awareness of the local environment and providing a source of local pride.

Initial improvements are already in the works with the installation of 500+ wayfinding signs slated to start this spring. This initiative will quadruple the number of current signs on the full 10.5-mile trail and Sentara Loop. ERT mile markers will also link to the City's emergency dispatch system, ensuring everyone can enjoy the trail safely.

Along with generous corporate sponsors, the ERT Foundation's capital campaign includes more than \$365,000 in grant awards to design the trail's first signature trailhead at Plum Point Park. A new ADA-accessible kayak launch opened in January, and additional amenities like a Double-Turbo Challenge Course, award-winning playground equipment, improved landscaping and a meditative walking labyrinth are slated for installation this spring and summer.

“We are so grateful for the support we have received from the community,” said Cheryl White, executive director of the ERT Foundation. “Their generosity will allow us to maximize trail access and ensure that the trail experience is safe and exceptional for people of all ages, interests and abilities. The planned enhancements have been conceived in partnership with the local community stakeholders, business owners and civic league members who see the trail as essential to their quality of life and the future of Norfolk.”

The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation’s mission is to promote, enhance and transform the Elizabeth River Trail into the most iconic urban riverfront trail in the country. The ERT runs 10.5 miles and connects businesses, historic attractions and 28 neighborhoods within a five-minute walk. The multi-use trail is designed for walking, running and biking. It comprises 12 sections and 12 trailheads from Norfolk State University to NIT Terminals along the Elizabeth River. Highlights include Harbor Park, Downtown Norfolk, Freemason Historic District, Sentara campus, Fort Norfolk, Chelsea, West Ghent, Lambert’s Point, Old Dominion University, Larchmont and Lochhaven. For more information, visit www.elizabethrivertrail.org.

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