

## **PRESS RELEASE**

(For Immediate Release)

### **Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz Announces Completion of \$94,929 West Drullard Outdoor Fitness Center in Village of Lancaster**

*Community project received \$94,929 from Erie County Consortium Community Development Block Grant – Cares Act Recreation Improvements Project Fund*

Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz and the Village of Lancaster announce the grand opening of the West Drullard Outdoor Fitness Center that has been purchased and installed with funding assistance through the Erie County Consortium Community Development Block Grant- Cares Act Recreation Improvements Project Fund. The Village has received grant funds in the amount of \$94,929 to cover the cost of this project. The outdoor fitness equipment is located adjacent to the West Drullard Fire Hall and playground at 24 West Drullard Avenue.

Creation of the West Drullard Outdoor Fitness Center will increase access to physical fitness equipment and provide outdoor fitness/recreation facilities for all residents in the Village of Lancaster, regardless of socio-economic status. The equipment that has been installed will enable users to engage in physical fitness activities outdoors, without having to purchase a gym membership or buy their own equipment for home use, making fitness opportunities more equitable for all Village of Lancaster residents. The ability to exercise outdoors will also inhibit contracting or spreading of COVID-19 or other airborne-transmitted viruses, contributing to better public health. The installation of bike racks will encourage and support the use of bicycles as a form of recreation and transportation, aligning with the Village's recent installment of bicycle lanes on Central Avenue, adjacent to the West Drullard site.

Increasing outdoor recreational and fitness opportunities can lead to healthier living and lifestyles. Studies have shown that individuals in higher income levels tend to have a higher level of physical activity, while those with lower income levels have a lower level of physical activity. This outdoor adult fitness center will provide access to equipment that will promote physical activity for those who are unable to afford the cost of other fitness options. Higher levels of physical activity contribute to a better quality of life and a longer lifespan.

**Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz said,** "These park improvement projects are in direct response to the pandemic as we look to increase opportunities for residents to enjoy new and improved facilities outdoors, with \$95,000 in federal Community Development

Block Grant (CDBG) Cares Act funds allocated for this project alone. Erie County receives these funds from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development agency to assist municipalities in the Community Development Consortium in responding to the pandemic and we are doing that. These improvements are long overdue, will improve residents' health and quality of life, and will have long-lasting benefits for the community.”

**Mayor Lynne Ruda said** “Providing opportunities for our residents to lead a healthy lifestyle within our community is a priority for the Village of Lancaster. We are grateful that Erie County recognizes the importance of improving outdoor park facilities to enable residents to have more access to facilities to maintain a healthy lifestyle. We envision the outdoor fitness center being used by residents of all ages and socio-economic levels and are excited to provide a facility for the firefighter fitness initiatives within the Lancaster Fire Department. This project would not have been feasible without the support of Erie County and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Cares Act funds.”

**Whole Fitness and Wellness Owner Kelly Williams said** “People know that they need to move and strengthen their bodies but they don’t always know WHAT to do or have the equipment to do it. This park is going to give them access to a facility where they can use their own body weight to exercise. We are working to ensure that everyone will have access on how to use the equipment.”

**Director of Athletics for the Lancaster Central School District, Eric Rupp said** “The new outdoor fitness center offers a tremendous opportunity for our residents and student athletes to work out in a functional and innovative setting. We look forward to using this facility to help enhance our physical and mental health.”

**Lancaster Police Lieutenant Jon Ziders said** “The addition of this equipment to the West Drullard Avenue Park is a remarkable asset providing access to a unique physical activity destination in the Village of Lancaster. This equipment brings the opportunity for community members to get outdoors and be active in a different way. We look forward to seeing the community out at the park and using the equipment to enhance their health and well-being.”

A ribbon cutting is being held on Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00 PM at 24 West Drullard Avenue to celebrate the opening of this Outdoor Fitness Center.

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