MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Mount Washington Community Development Corporation (MWCDC)
Spins Off Emerald Trail Corps (ETC): Ilyssa Manspeizer to Lead

Pittsburgh, PA, November 19, 2015 -- Since 2011 the Mount Washington Community Development Corporation’s (MWCDC) Emerald Trail Corps (ETC) has developed high quality park amenities while supporting job search and acquisition skills for adults struggling to find and hold employment. Other non-profits – such as the Allegheny Land Trust, PGH Works, GTECH Strategies and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy—have partnered with the MWCDC to extend the ETC model to construction and maintenance of greening projects throughout the Pittsburgh region.

In January 2016, the MWCDC will officially spin-off ETC. Ilyssa Manspeizer, current MWCDC Executive Director, will depart the organization on December 14th, 2015 in order to take the helm of the emerging Pittsburgh Conservation Corps (PCC - a working name). GTECH Strategies will initially be the fiscal sponsor of the organization. According to Breen Masciotra, MWCDC Board President, “We are grateful for Ilyssa’s long and productive tenure with the organization, and are excited to see how the fruit of our labor will enable MWCDC and other organizations who are stewarding greening projects to achieve their goals while simultaneously contributing to the development of Pittsburgh’s human capital.”

The PCC will initially be supported by a two-year seed grant from the Henry L. Hillman Foundation. Andrew Butcher, CEO of GTECH Strategies, said, “We are delighted to be a part of the creation of such a bold and innovative new initiative with such an esteemed array of partners, and are deeply grateful to the Hillman Foundation for entrusting us with this responsibility.”

Manspeizer, who holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology, started with the MWCDC in December 2006 to lead the Emerald View Park initiative, and stepped into the Executive Director position in May 2014. In addition to bringing the ETC to fruition, Ilyssa oversaw the transition of Emerald View Park from a grassroots vision for sustainable steep hillside conservation to the reality of Pittsburgh’s magnificent new Regional Park. As Executive Director, Ilyssa worked to empower Mount Washington residents, rehabilitate the neighborhood’s most visible public spaces, and strengthen the organization’s growing real estate program.

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The Mount Washington Community Development Corporation is a non-profit community development corporation serving the neighborhoods of Mount Washington and Duquesne Heights to cultivate growth, development and community investment. Strategic programs include business development, park and
conservation management, real estate development, public safety, advocacy and outreach. For more information about MWCDC, please visit mwcdc.org

**GTECH Strategies** is a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit that cultivates the unrealized potential of people and places to transition land use liabilities into community assets. For more information about GTECH, please visit gtechstrategies.org

**Allegheny Land Trust** helps local people save local land. ALT’s mission is to serve as the lead land trust conserving and stewarding lands that support the scenic, recreational and environmental well-being of communities in Allegheny County and its environs. Since 1993, ALT has protected over 1,800 acres in 25 municipalities.

**PGH Works** specializes in community engagement processes that bring resident voices to the front. Our goal is to raise community capacity to match community need.

**The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy** was founded in December and works closely with the City of Pittsburgh under an official public-private partnership agreement to restore and improve the city’s park system to its full potential.