

A person is riding a bicycle on a paved path. The bicycle is purple and black. The rider is wearing a white shirt and shorts. The path is bordered by a wooden railing. In the background, there are green trees and a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

Heels & Wheels Summit

Trail Town Program®

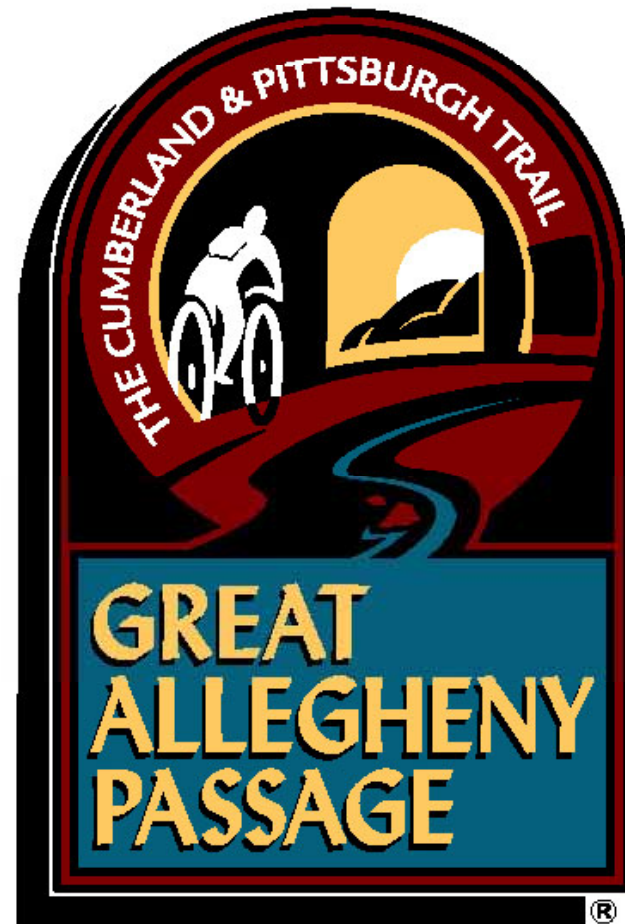
William Prince

March 21, 2014

Great Allegheny Passage

Fast Facts

- P&LE and WM Railroads
- 150 miles of non-motorized biking & hiking trail
- 2 States, Five Counties
- First Section started in 1986
- Completed June 2013
- Connects with C&O – 335 miles
- Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail



Highly Honored & Recognized

- First trail named to “Rail-Trail Hall of Fame”
- Featured in:
 - *New York Times*
 - *USA Today*
 - *National Geographic Adventure*
 - *Washington Post*
 - *Adventure Cyclist*
 - *US Airways Magazine*

2014 CNN 50 States, 50 Spots



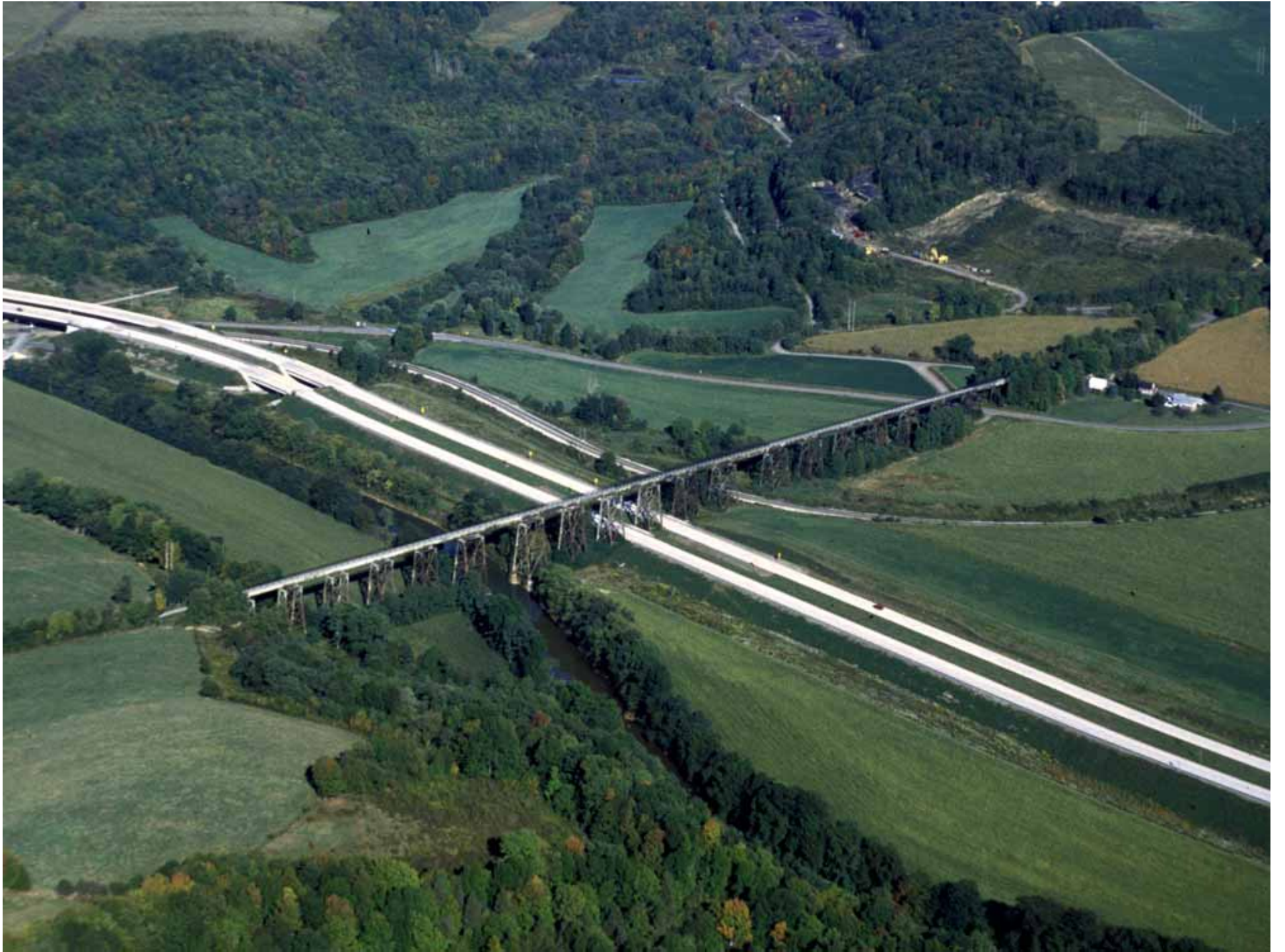
















- Non-Profit Established 1997
- CDFI with Rural Focus
- Provides Capital & Business Coaching
- Tourism & Agriculture
- OH, PA, WV, and western MD

Trail Town Program

An economic development initiative along the Great Allegheny Passage

- Concept developed in 2001
 - State agencies & tourism officials
 - Trail builders
 - Economic & community developers
- Trail Town Manual published in 2005
- Funds raised by The Progress Fund
- Program staffed in 2007
- Expanded to Maryland in 2009
- Expands to new corridors in 2014



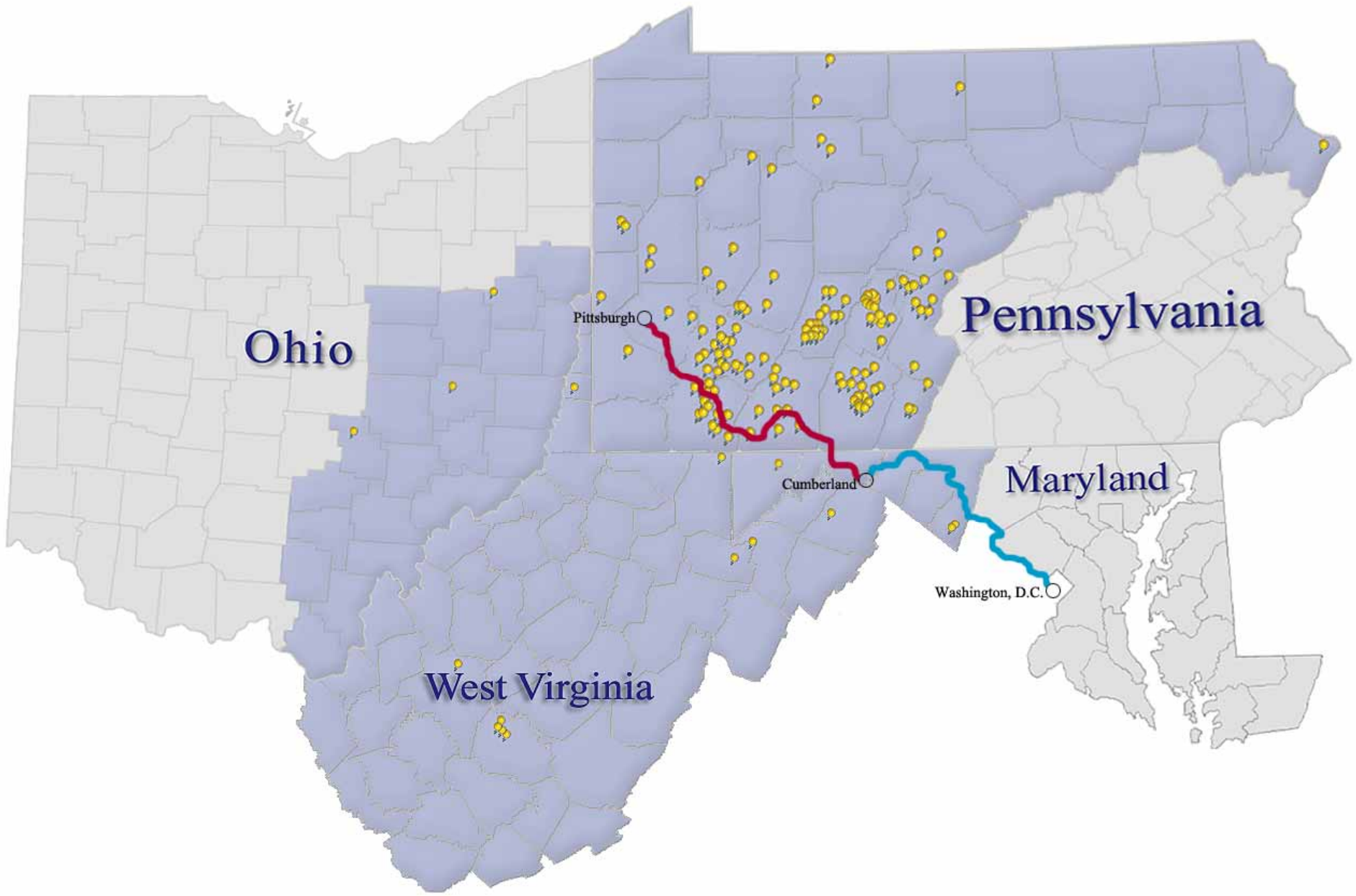


Goals

- Encourage business development and expansion; capitalizing on the trail user market
- Identify and fill service gaps
- Attract visitors from the trail into towns and encourage them to spend money
- Support sustainable development while building healthy, livable communities

Leadership and Partnerships

Local	Regional	State	National
Borrowers	Allegheny Trail Alliance	PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Appalachian Regional Commission
Business Groups	Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau	PA Department of Community and Economic Development	Student Conservation Association
Main Street Programs	Chatham University, Center for Women's Entrepreneurship	Maryland Department of Planning	National Park Service
Town Councils	Saint Vincent SBDC		
County Governments	Commercial Banks		
	Foundations		



What makes a "Trail Town?"

- Located on a long distance trail
- Towns approx. 12-16 miles from neighboring Trail Towns
- Physical connection between trail and town
- Gateway moment between trail and town
- Defined access and parking area



What makes a "Trail Town?"



- Traditional downtown commercial area & trailside businesses
- Services catering to cyclists
- Bike repair/rental
- Lodging
- Food
- Unique retail
- Snacks/To-go options
- Other recreational services

What makes a "Trail Town?"

- Potential for growth in businesses/services
- Marketing efforts with neighboring towns & trail
- Includes other natural, historic, tourist attractions
- Culture of Hospitality: welcome visitors to town
- Incorporates bike/pedestrian infrastructure



Trail Town Assessment Checklist

- Self look at your community
- Traffic & Access
- Businesses
- Design



Creates a priority for each town and the region



TTP's Six Services

1. Business Assistance & Development
2. Marketing
- 3. *Economic Research***
- 4. *Community Connection Projects***
5. Real Estate Development
6. Small Business Loans

1. Business Assistance & Development

- Assess Existing Business Services
- Identify Opportunities
- Provide Market Information
- Regional Summits/Networking Events
- Trail Town Certified Business Network



2. Marketing

- Collaborative
- TrailBook
- Website resources
- Brochures
- Newsletter & Blog
- Social Media
- Online Events
Calendar



3. Economic Research



- Trail Counts
 - Electronic, Manual, Synchronized
- Research Studies
- Monitor Business Opening/Closings
- Business Opportunity Lists

Knowing Your Visitors



- Intercept Surveys & Counts
 - Zip Codes
 - Local vs. Through Rider
 - Starting/Ending Locations
 - Age
 - Group Size
 - Use of Trail
 - Spending
 - Lodging
 - Services Wanted
 - Find out about

Economic Impact of the

Total Trips

2002: 347,000

2013: 900,000





Visitors From Around the Globe

Economic Impact Studies



- Previous Studies
 - 1998 baseline study
 - 2002 economic study
 - 2006 trail user survey
 - 2007-08 economic study
- 2011 Trail User Survey
 - 1,200 GAP Trail Users
- 2012 Business Survey

2011 Trail User Survey



- Part I of Economic Impact Study
- 11 Trailheads
- July 20 – October 15 2011
- Collected 1200 surveys
- Part II – Business Survey
- Frostburg State analyzed results

Trail User Survey Results

- $\frac{3}{4}$ of Those Interviewed from PA
- 2,858 represented
- Most Trail Users are 35+
 - Nearly half 45-64 year range
- **22%** first time users

Trail User Survey Results

- Most travel in pairs
- Individuals - \$17 daily – mainly on snacks/beverages and restaurants
- Groups - \$51 daily – also mainly snacks/beverages and restaurants

Overnight Visitors

- **28%** plan on overnight stays
- Overnight accommodations:
 - **60%** indoor lodging
 - B&Bs followed by hotel/motel
 - **26%** camping
 - **7%** mixed (indoor and camping)
 - **6%** stay with family/friends
- **\$114** average for overnight stay
- **82%** staying more than 2 nights
- **16.5%** one night only



Business Survey Results

- About 25% of responding businesses close for more than 2 weeks, most commonly in the winter
- On average about 30% of gross revenues were attributed to the Trail
- 30% of surveyed businesses plan to expand
- About half of the businesses agreed that the Trail affected their decision to expand

4. Community Connection Projects



Community Connection Projects

- Bike Racks
- Town Bike Loops
- Trailhead & Park Improvements
- Landscaping
- Viewsheds
- Public Art
- Signage
 - Directional
 - Interpretive
 - Business



5. Real Estate Development

- List Available Properties

www.trailtowns.org/availableproperties

www.historicproperties.com

- Renovate Key Buildings/Properties



6. Small Business Loans

- The Progress Fund Loan Program
- Bike shops, Restaurants, B&Bs, Hostels, Outfitters, Farm to Table...
- Over two dozen businesses along the GAP

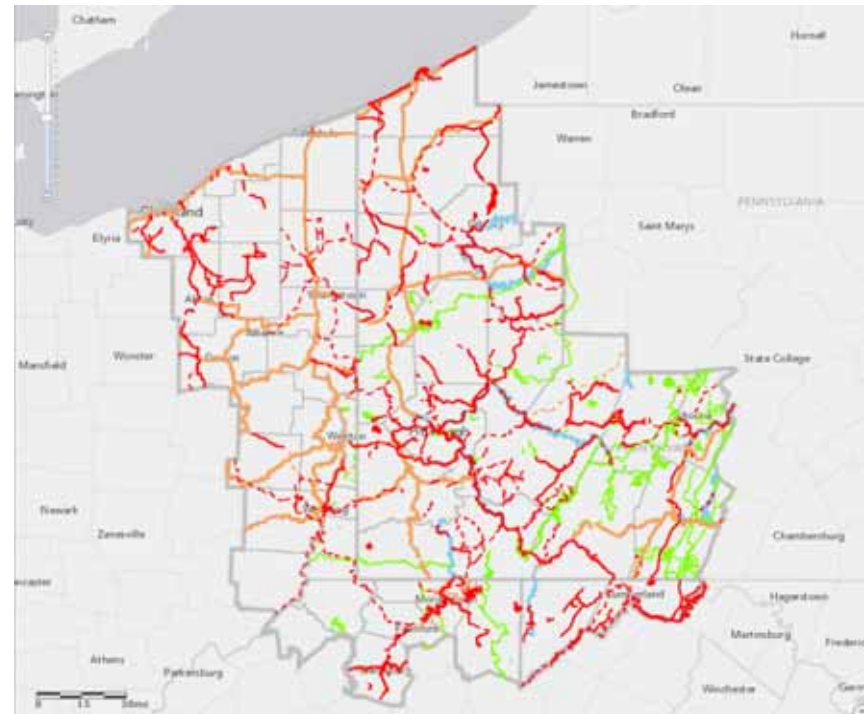


Contributing factors to success

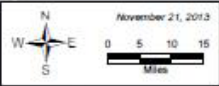
- Access to capital
- A trail long enough to visit
- Community character
- A local culture that embraces trails



Power of 32+ Regional Trail System



THE NETWORK - STATUS POWER OF 32 REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM 2013 REGIONAL TRAIL STAKEHOLDERS MEETING



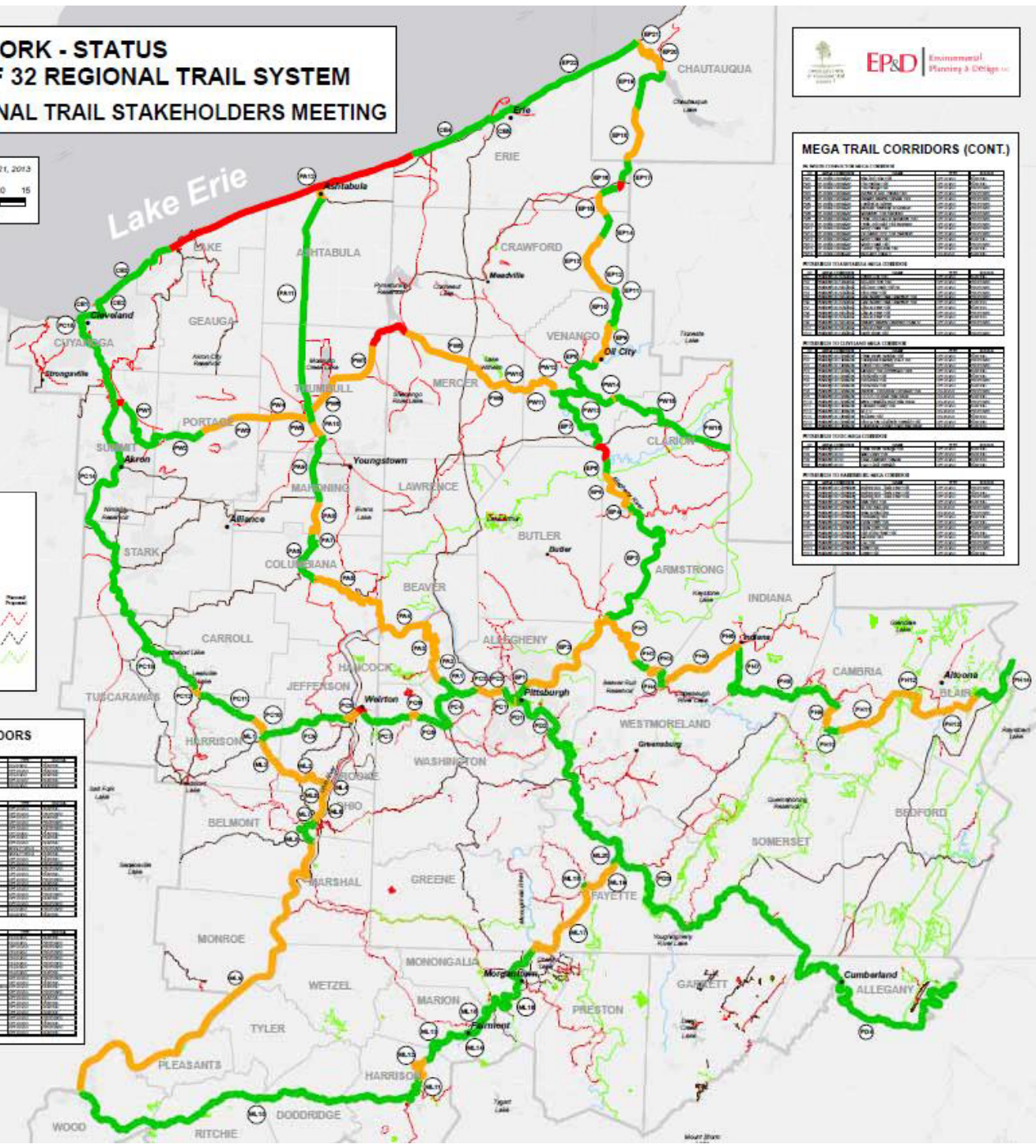
MEGA TRAIL CORRIDORS

Corridor	Start	End	Length (mi)	Status
MEGA TRAIL CORRIDOR M1				
M1-001
M1-002
MEGA TRAIL CORRIDOR M2				
M2-001
M2-002
MEGA TRAIL CORRIDOR M3				
M3-001
M3-002



MEGA TRAIL CORRIDORS (CONT.)

Corridor	Start	End	Length (mi)	Status
MEGA TRAIL CORRIDOR M4				
M4-001
M4-002
MEGA TRAIL CORRIDOR M5				
M5-001
M5-002



Trail Town Program

An economic development
initiative along the
Great Allegheny Passage

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www.trailtowns.org

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www.gaptrail.org

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