

West Virginia's Statewide Trail Plan Renewal – A Framework for the Future



Building on the WV trails movement



As West Virginia's only statewide organization focused on **promoting, expanding, and maintaining non-motorized trails**, WV TRAIL is laying the groundwork to organize the trails community. WV TRAIL is **not a trail building organization**. Instead, we're working to unite and mobilize the trail community. We do this through **advocacy and information sharing**.



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West Virginia's current
statewide trails plan = 25
years old.

How do we build a new
plan?

Garner Support?



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Scan For The
Statewide Trail
Plan Framework



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Advisory Committee

Brian Bolyard, WV DNR
Michael Dodd, WV DOH
Rich Edwards, WVU OEDC
Sam England, WV TRAIL
Nathan Hilbert, National Park Service RTCA
Fielding Moss, West Virginia Scenic Trails Association
Eric Oberg, Rails to Trails Conservancy
Kelly Pack, Rails to Trails Conservancy
Amanda Pitzer, Friends of Cheat, Flatwater Trail Commission
Dillard Price, WV State Parks
Tim Sedosky, WV Division of Highways
Breann Shell, WV Chapter of American Planning Association
Kent Spellman, Harrison Recreational Trails
Cory VanBibber, West Virginia Tourism
Andy Williamson, Brad and Alys Smith Outdoor Economic
Development Collaborative

Lisa Maraffa (staff, WV TRAIL/Friends of the Cheat)



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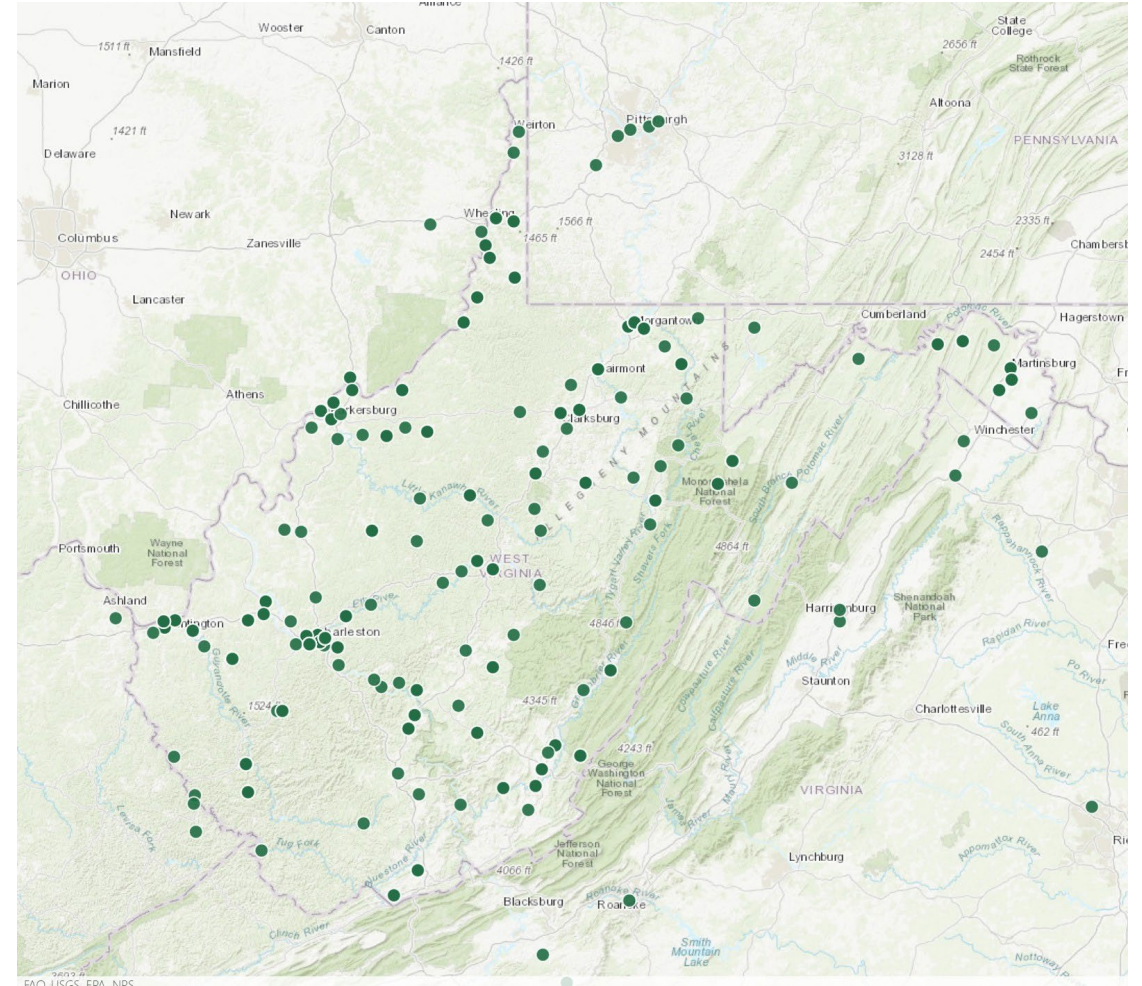
Our Funders and Partners



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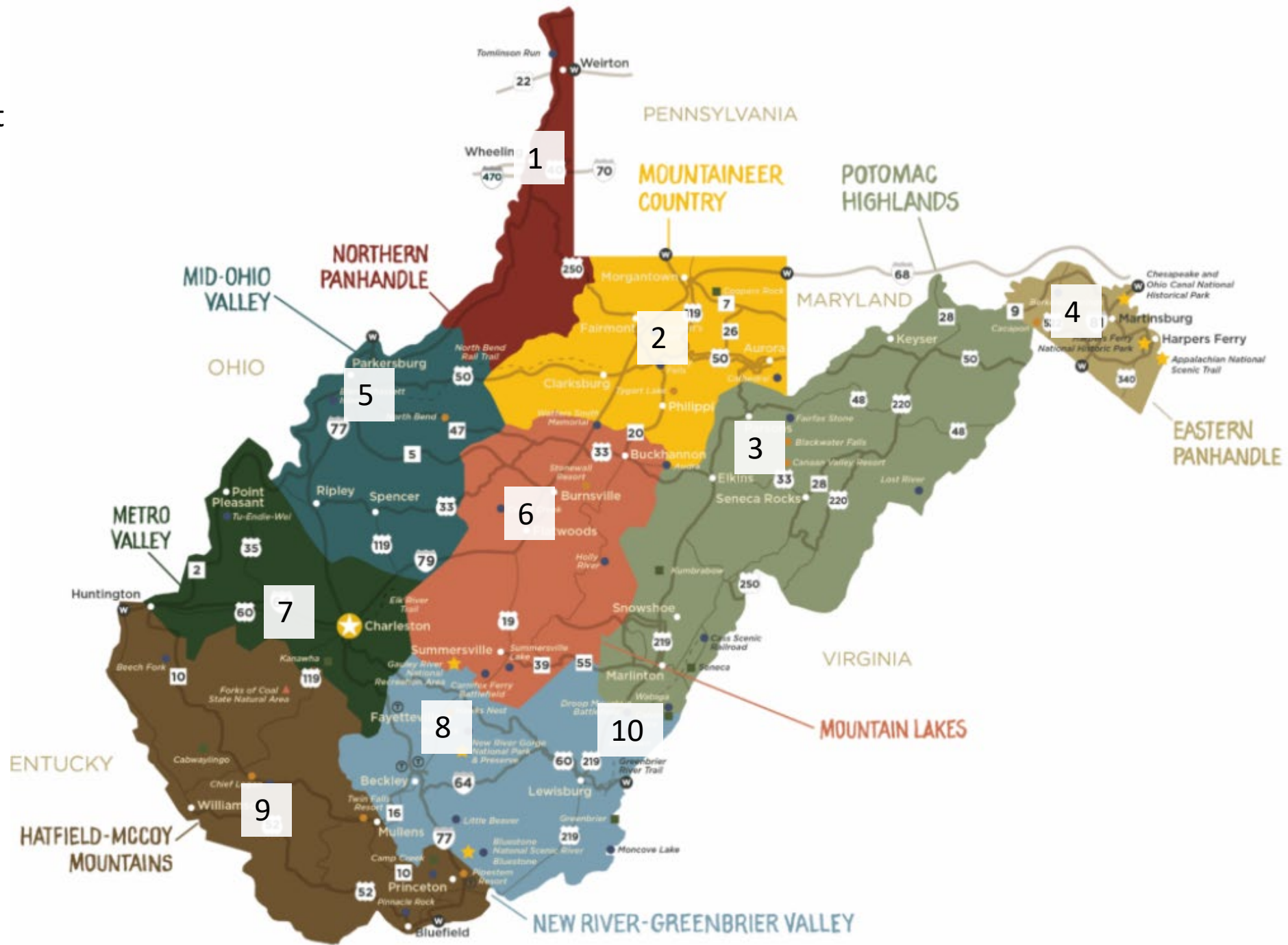
The Process Consisted of:

- 10 in-person workshops – listening sessions
- 1 virtual workshop
- Stakeholder and Focus Group Interviews
- Electronic Survey



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- 1 – Wheeling
- 2 – Prickett's Fort
- 3 – Blackwater
- 4 – Cacapon
- 5 – Parkersburg
- 6 – Flatwoods
- 7 – Hurricane
- 8 – Fayetteville
- 9 – Logan
- 10 – Lewisburg



Workshop Co-Hosts

Accelerate Maidson	Greenbrier Environmental Group
Beckley Area Trails	Greenbrier Valley Off Road Biking
Beckley Outdoors	Association (GVORBA)
Braxton County EDA	Harrison Recreational Trails
Cacapon State Park Foundation	Meeks Mountain Trail Alliance
City of Fairmont	Mon River Trails Conservancy
Elk River Trail Foundation	Mountaineer Trail Network Authority
Fayette Trail Coalition	Ohio Valley Trail Partners
Friends of Cheat	Putnam County CVB
Friends of the New River Gorge	River Valley Mountain Bike Association
National Park	Tucker County CVB
Friends of the Tug Fork	USDA Rural Partners Network
Gilmer County EDA	



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- Over 1,000 responses recorded!
- logging 2,000 miles across WV
- 333 survey responses
- 425 in-person participants
- 186 organizations



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Fractured Community



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Findings

- People say trails make a difference in their lives and want elected leaders to know as much.
- 93% of survey respondents believe an updated plan is important or critical.
- 88% of respondents believe that trails make a significant difference in their community's quality of life.



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Findings

- People want state leaders to hear that trails improve people's lives, strengthen the economy, and require continued investment.
- The top reported trail-related barriers are consistent across the state and across audiences.



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Findings

- When asked what trail-related success looks like in a decade from now:
 - Trails as a driver of economic vitality and community health
 - Accessible, safe, and well-maintained trails for everyday use
 - Connected trails that link people, communities, and regions
 - Sustained leadership, funding, and stewardship



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Findings

- When you're done with the plan, it's just the start of what has to happen!



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Recommendations

Alignment

- **Articulate a Shared Vision that Mirrors WV Residents' Hopes for Trails: A trail for WV by WV**
- **Include Information on Trail-Related Successes; Folks want to hear about these successes and use them for their own success.**
- **Include Definitions and Use Clear Vocabulary: to help with understanding among leadership and legislation.**



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Recommendations

Collaboration and Governance

- **Develop a New Collaborative Management Model: a potential precedent setting opportunity for WV**
- **Facilitate an ongoing engagement process. Not just a plan.**
- **Include an Implementation Strategy**
- **Address Barriers and Ways to Overcome Them**
- **Provide Guidance to Help Improve Landowner/Manager Relationships – helping connections on both sides.**



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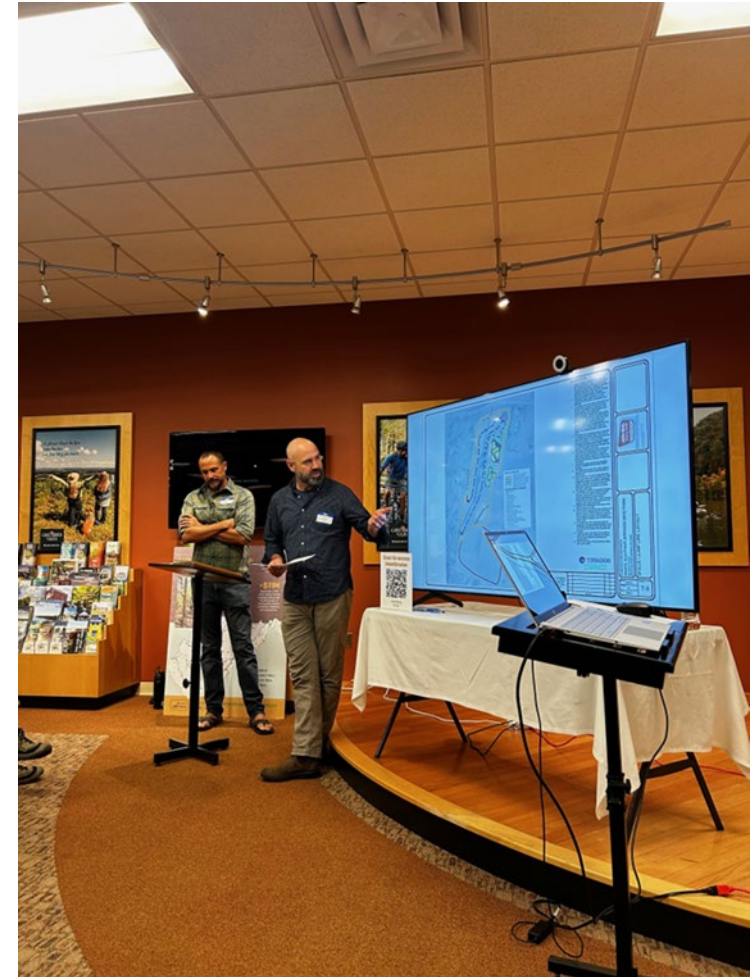
Recommendations

Infrastructure

- Address Safety Improvement Opportunities
- Prioritize Trail Maintenance
- Prioritize Improved Trail Connections



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Take Aways

Trails Are Essential to Daily Life

West Virginians consistently affirm—and want state leadership to understand—that non-motorized trails are not luxuries. They are essential infrastructure that meaningfully improve quality of life across the state.



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Take Aways

Trails Are Infrastructure— and Require Investment

Trails function as transportation assets, community connectors, and economic drivers. Like roads, water systems, and broadband, they require intentional planning, sustained funding, and long-term stewardship.



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Take Aways

A Modern Transportation System Must Be Multimodal

West Virginia needs a comprehensive transportation system that includes safe, accessible active transportation options. Trails, sidewalks, and bike facilities expand mobility, reduce transportation barriers, support safe routes to schools, and strengthen community resilience.



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Take Aways

Trails Power Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation is one of West Virginia's fastest-growing economic sectors. Trails—hiking, biking, paddling, and shared-use paths—are central to the visitor experience and critical to sustaining and expanding the state's tourism economy.



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Take Aways

Trails Strengthen Communities and Support Growth

Quality of place is a deciding factor in where people live and work. Communities with strong outdoor assets attract businesses, workers, and investment. Trails help retain residents and draw new ones, including remote workers and young families.



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Take Aways

Trails Are a Public Health Solution

West Virginia faces some of the nation's highest rates of chronic disease. Trails provide a low-cost, accessible opportunity for physical activity for people of all ages and abilities—especially important in communities with limited access to safe, affordable recreation.



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Take Aways

Trails Expand Opportunity and Access

Many of West Virginia's most underserved communities lack safe places to be active. Investing in trails helps close this gap by providing free, local, year-round access to movement, connection, and well-being.



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Take Aways

Trails Contribute to Higher Perceived Property Values and Community Attractiveness

Trails strengthen neighborhood appeal, support stable, long term community value and encourage reinvestment while bringing benefits to residents without undue burdens for existing residents.



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Take Aways

Statewide Leadership Is Needed to Unlock Full Potential

West Virginia's trail community is passionate and committed, but efforts are fragmented. There is a clear opportunity for a statewide leadership to align priorities, coordinate investment, and build a unified, statewide approach that maximizes impact.



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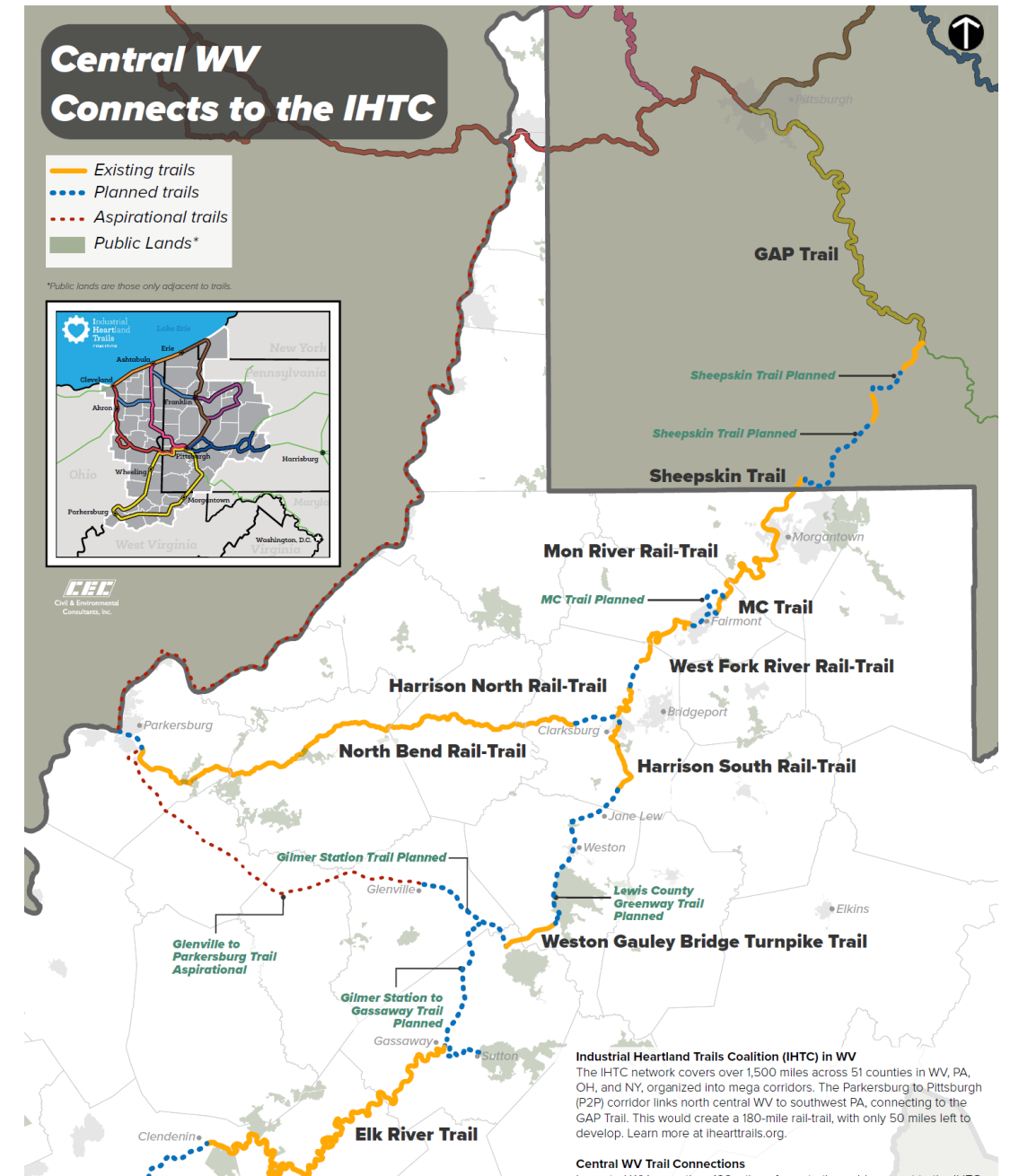
Take Aways

**The Most Common
Term We Heard:
Connection**



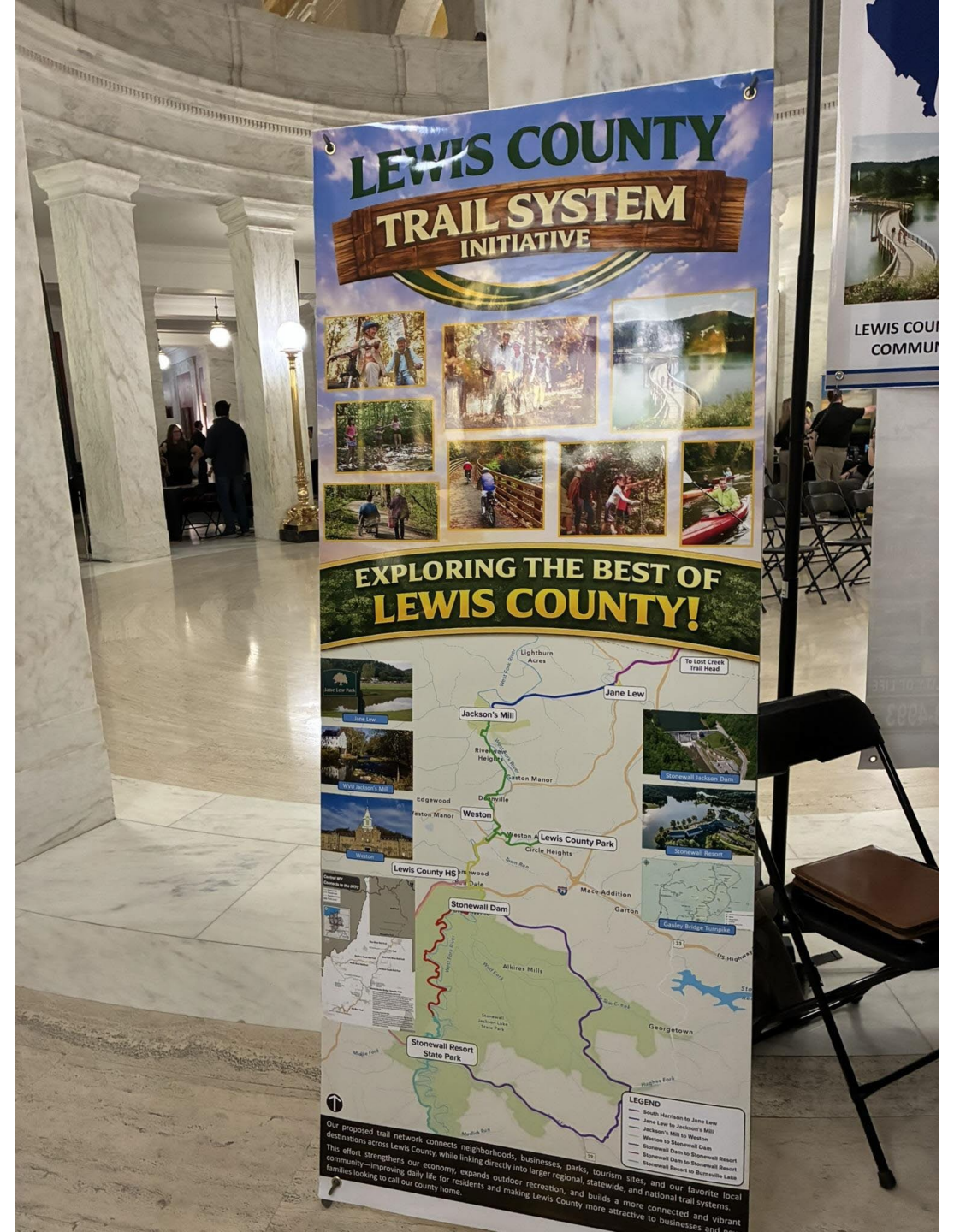
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- 232 Miles – Charleston to Morgantown
- 60% is currently public trail
- 29% of gaps have an identified corridor
- Only 25 miles need to identify a route
- Current CDS – 6 miles connecting Gassaway to Sutton
- Harrison, Lewis, Braxton, Kanawha Counties and Fairmont are actively closing gaps



**Harrison, Lewis, Braxton, Kanawha Counties
and Fairmont are actively closing gaps**

**RTC selected Lewis and Braxton Counties for
a Trail Nation Accelerator - to help
communities plan, connect and activate
multiuse trail networks that serve people
and places equitably.**



Surface Transportation Reauthorization

Current House Version



- Transportation Alternatives (TA) - In, but vulnerable. Rollback of transfer protections makes it easier to shift funds. For states like WV, where TA and RTP are the only dedicated funding sources for active transportation, this introduces real risk to project delivery
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – In, but not indexed to inflation.
- Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) - Out
- Safe Streets and Roads for All - In
- Surface Transportation Accelerator Grants – New but unproven. Currently lacks a structure that prioritizes multimodal, community-driven projects, raising concerns about whether trails, walking and biking projects will compete as successfully.



Building on the **WV trails movement**

A photograph of a dirt trail leading through a wooded area. On the left, there is a steep, mossy rock face. The ground is covered in dry leaves and twigs. The trees in the background have green and yellowing foliage, suggesting an autumn setting. A dark, rounded rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text 'P2P' and 'Parkersburg to Pittsburgh' in a light-colored serif font.

P2P

Parkersburg to Pittsburgh

Parkersburg to Pittsburgh (P2P) Corridor

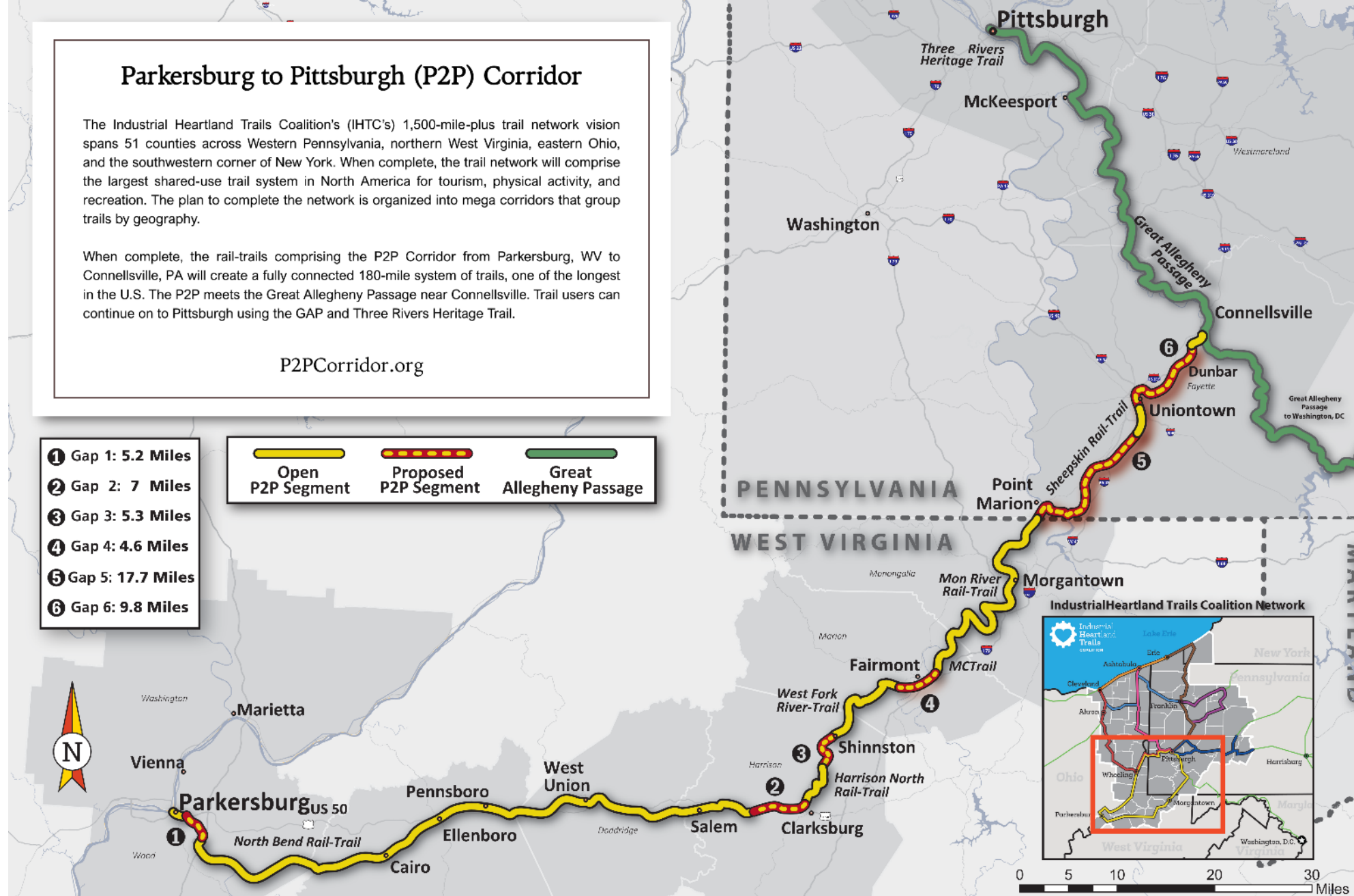
The Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition's (IHTC's) 1,500-mile-plus trail network vision spans 51 counties across Western Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, eastern Ohio, and the southwestern corner of New York. When complete, the trail network will comprise the largest shared-use trail system in North America for tourism, physical activity, and recreation. The plan to complete the network is organized into mega corridors that group trails by geography.

When complete, the rail-trails comprising the P2P Corridor from Parkersburg, WV to Connellsville, PA will create a fully connected 180-mile system of trails, one of the longest in the U.S. The P2P meets the Great Allegheny Passage near Connellsville. Trail users can continue on to Pittsburgh using the GAP and Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

P2PCorridor.org

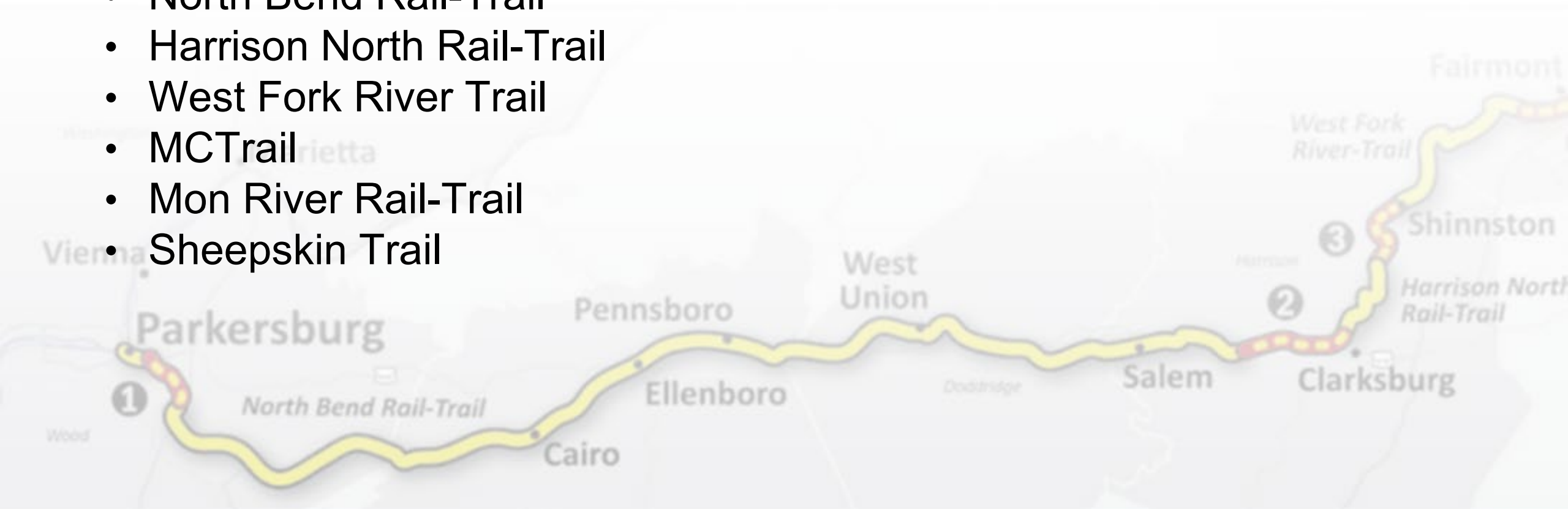
- ❶ Gap 1: 5.2 Miles
- ❷ Gap 2: 7 Miles
- ❸ Gap 3: 5.3 Miles
- ❹ Gap 4: 4.6 Miles
- ❺ Gap 5: 17.7 Miles
- ❻ Gap 6: 9.8 Miles

		
Open P2P Segment	Proposed P2P Segment	Great Allegheny Passage



Project Area

- The P2P Corridor is made up of six trails spanning seven counties across West Virginia and Pennsylvania:
 - North Bend Rail-Trail
 - Harrison North Rail-Trail
 - West Fork River Trail
 - MCTrail
 - Mon River Rail-Trail
 - Sheepskin Trail

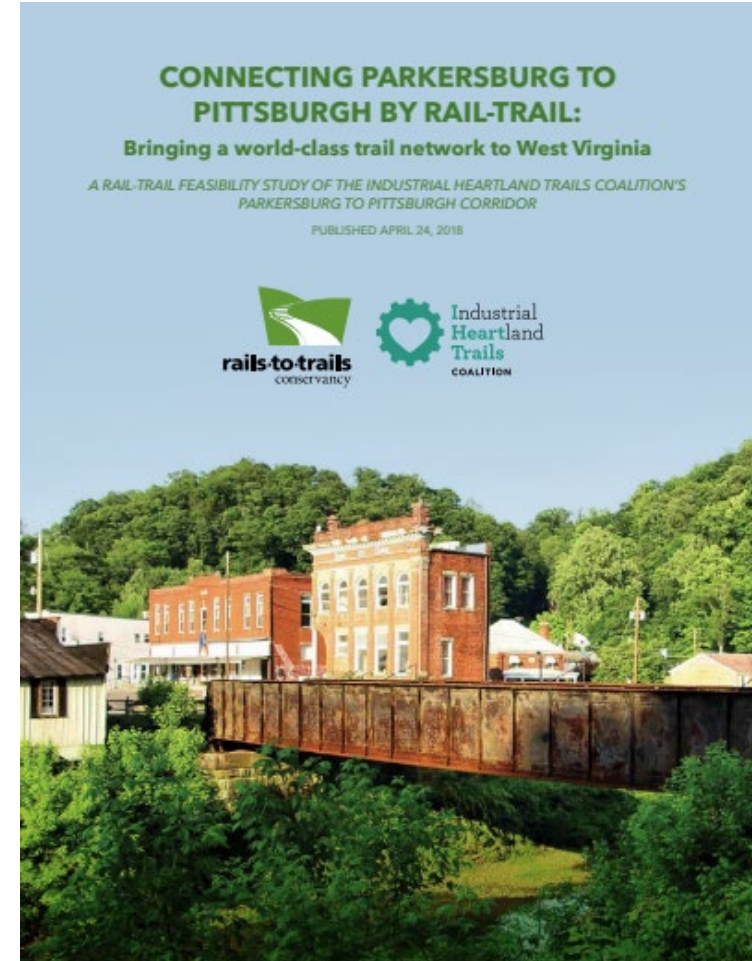


P2P Corridor Regional Master Plan

- Funded through an ARC ARISE grant with matching funds from the Just Transition Fund, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, and the City of Fairmont
- Project partners:
 - City of Fairmont
 - Great Allegheny Passage Conservancy
 - Harrison Recreation Trails, Inc.
 - Mon River Trails Conservancy
 - Morgantown Riverfront Revitalization Task Force
 - National Road Heritage Corridor
 - Pennsylvania Environmental Council
 - WV TRAIL, Inc.

Builds on Past Successes

- P2P and Sheepskin corridor studies
- RTC's "Unlocking" report
- Years of IHTC and corridor-level collaboration



Project Components

1. Community engagement
2. Infrastructure, assets, & connectivity toolkit
3. Market research, marketing recommendations, & economic development strategies
4. Funding roadmap & sustaining the work



Why this Matters

Trails Part of a \$1.3T Outdoor Economy, but...

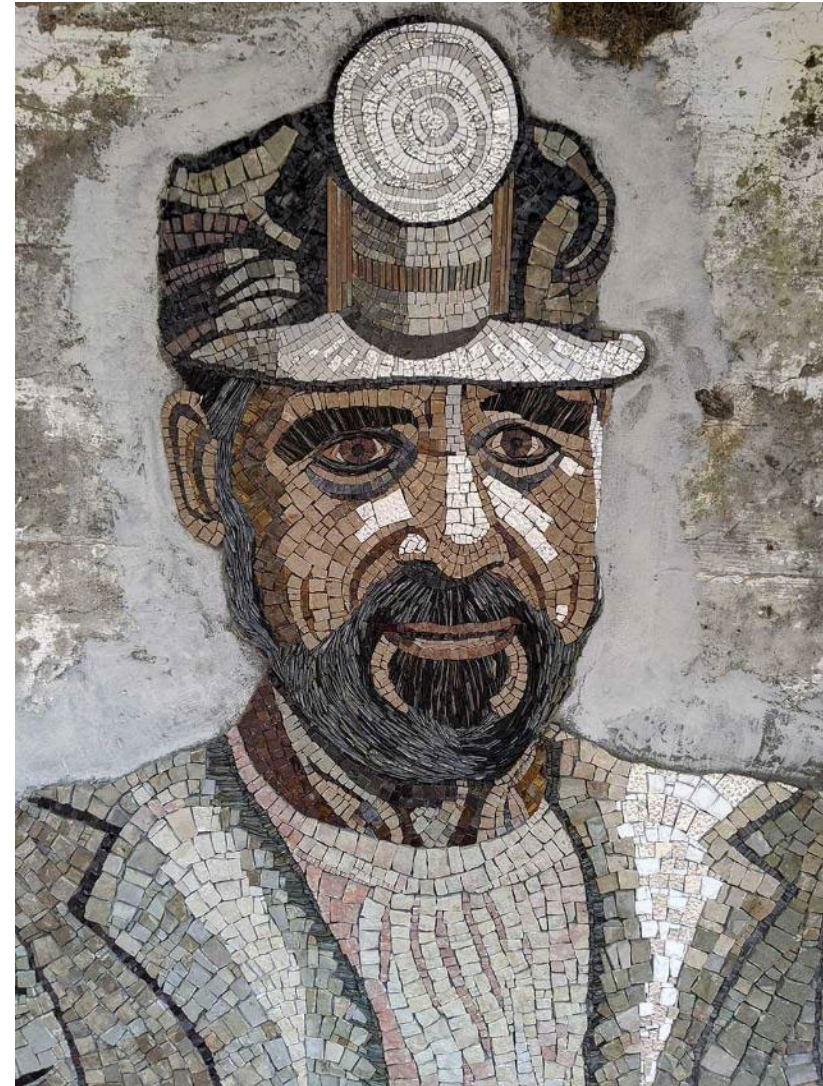
- Economic benefit is not automatic
 - It requires investment and intentionality
- Trails are *more than* their economic output
 - They contribute to:
 - Quality of life
 - Improved health outcomes
 - Memorable trips/vacations
 - Connectivity
 - Land conservation
 - An area's competitiveness



Naming What Exists

“People who have watched their places deteriorate often carry a low-grade unnamed grief.”

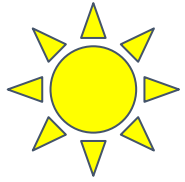
– Rachel Sager, *The Ruins Project*
& author of *Your Grandfather Worked Here*



Artist: Margy Cottingham

Purpose

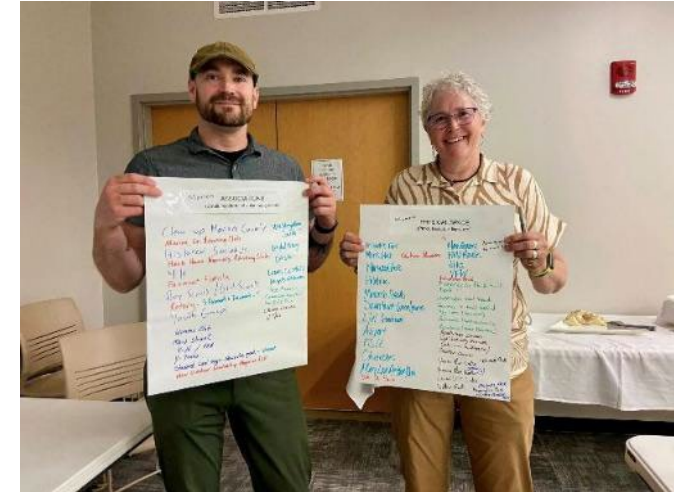
To develop a community-based implementation plan that will unlock the community and economic development potential of the P2P Corridor



An actionable blueprint for achieving and sustaining rural prosperity

Community Engagement

- 24 indoor, outdoor, and virtual programs
- 6 community meetings + 6 virtual engagement sessions
- ~200 surveys received



Survey open
through June 22



Four Thoughts...

Multiple Benefits

1. Trails contribute to tourism, economic development, regional competitiveness, improved health outcomes, and quality of life.



Enormous Connectivity Potential

2. When complete, the P2P Corridor will connect to one of the best performing trails in the country, creating 240 miles of connected trails.



Filling the Gaps Amplifies Potential

3. There's a lot we can do with what we already have, but the aspirational component relies upon connectivity.



If the Connections are Made...



Varied Planning Needs

4. This isn't just about addressing the trail gaps.



Planners can help with:

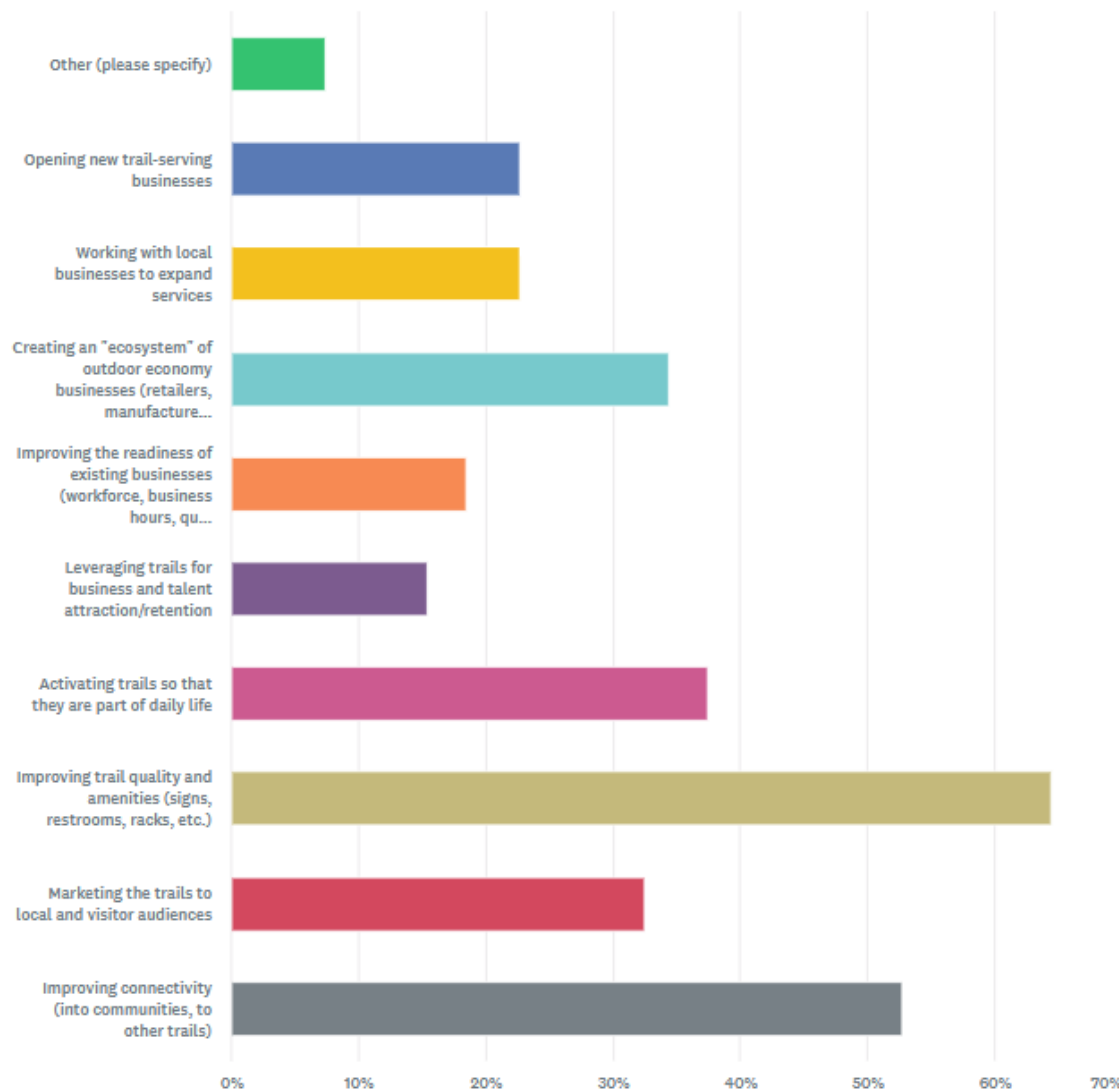
- Trail-oriented development
- Road connections
- Well-maintained roads
- Access points
- Sidewalks
- Bike lanes

Midway Survey Finding

Improved trail quality, amenities,
and improved connectivity the
path to regional prosperity



If the goal is sustained regional prosperity, what must be addressed in the P2P master plan?
Select your top three choices.



Thank you!

Amy Camp

Cycle Forward

amy@cycleforward.org

www.p2pcorridor.org



P2P Survey



Statewide Trail Plan
Framework



Thank you



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