

INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND TRAILS COALITION: PARKERSBURG TO PITTSBURGH CORRIDOR

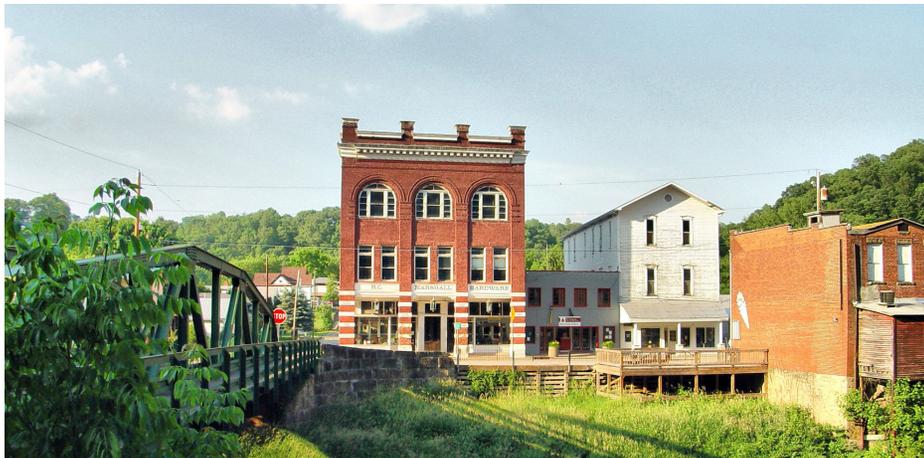
Pennsylvania and West Virginia

Bolstering an Outdoor Tourism Economy in America's Industrial Heartland

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The vision of the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (IHTC) is to create a 1,500-miles-plus trail network stretching across 48 counties in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and New York, establishing the area as a premier outdoor tourism destination. Communities in this area, including many former railroad towns that are now struggling with a decline in industry, are eager to realize the economic benefits that trails can bring. Outdoor tourism has the potential to generate tens of millions of dollars in revenue for local economies and encourage job creation in small-town rural America.¹ By leveraging the cultural heritage of the region—and harnessing and amplifying the benefits of existing trails—the IHTC aims to stimulate economic development and small business investment that will reverberate and transform the entire project footprint.

Completing the IHTC Parkersburg to Pittsburgh Corridor will bolster existing trail-oriented economic development strategies in West Virginia and support Main Street local economies throughout the region, helping local businesses thrive. The corridor stretches for 238 miles between Morgantown and Parkersburg in West Virginia, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. With sufficient federal support, local governments can fill gaps between seven existing or developing trails, connecting major urban hubs with many smaller towns and communities that would all benefit from visitor spending. New trails would connect the North Bend Rail Trail, Harrison North Rail Trail, West Fork River Trail, Marion County “MC” Trail, Mon River Rail-Trail network, Sheepskin Trail and Three Rivers Heritage Trail. Many towns along the corridor eagerly welcome the trail infrastructure investment, with vocal and active support from chambers of commerce, mayors, and city and county council members along the corridor.



North Bend Rail Trail | Mike Tewkesbury

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

LEAD AUTHORITY:	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, National Park Service, Pennsylvania Environmental Council
TOTAL PROJECT COST:	\$44,490,884
FUNDING PLEDGED TO DATE:	\$17,701,924
FEDERAL:	\$5,310,328
STATE:	\$25,000
LOCAL:	\$3,798,524
PRIVATE:	\$350,000
SHOVEL-READY:	Three years or less
TYPE:	Rural, suburban, urban

TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

JOB CREATION

An estimated 459 to 756 directly²

ECONOMY IN PENNSYLVANIA

A 2014 study of the 24-mile Three Rivers Heritage Trail in Pittsburgh recorded more than 600,000 visits by trail users and total user spending in excess of \$8.2 million.³

ECONOMY IN WEST VIRGINIA

Along the Mon River Rail Trail, median property values have increased 172.6 percent since 2004.⁴



SOURCES

¹Creating Opportunities Along the Nation's Trails: Economic Impact of Regional Trails, available at: <https://gaptrail.org/about-us/economic-impact-studies>

²Estimated at 17 jobs per \$1 million spent, according to a study commissioned by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) on American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) job creation; jobs in terms of full-time equivalents

³A 2012 Economic Impact Study of the Great Allegheny Passage found that users spent \$50 million along the trail per year, available at <https://gaptrail.org/about-us/economic-impact-studies>

⁴According to an economic impact study by the West Virginia University School of Public Health, Health Research Center