



SHENANDOAH RAIL TO TRAIL PROJECT STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shenandoah Rail Trail is a proposed project that crosses three counties and nine villages and towns. The setting along the trail is largely agricultural, rural, with the trail crossing through some denser towns. The student team was provided with resources and background context from the community partners who engaged the team to fulfill the PLAC 6090 requirements.

The student team provided several deliverables for this project. They are a full report that includes recommendations for community engagement, model mile, land use changes, and tourism, precedent projects, infographics, and renderings for the trail.

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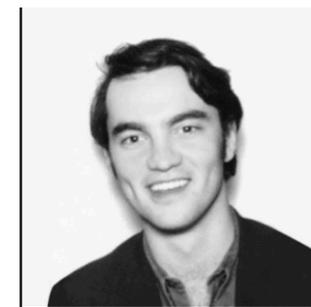
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INTRODUCTION

The proposed Shenandoah Rail Trail would convert a 48.5-mile inactive Norfolk-Southern Railroad corridor into a recreational trail running from Broadway to Front Royal. The proposed trail runs parallel to Interstate-81 with most of its length running through Shenandoah County, with the exceptions of the southern end in Rockingham and the northern end in Warren County. It runs through hamlets, villages, towns. In the case of New Market, the dashed line represents one proposed route for a connector to the main trail.

Our partners for this project were in Shenandoah County's Office of Community Development. Lemuel Hancock is that office's director, and Tyler Hinkle, a recent alumnus of the MUEP program, serves as the County Planner. We also engaged with the Citizens Advisory Committee, known as the CAC. It's a group of 12 citizen members with two representatives from each of the six Electoral Districts of the County and are appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

This report was created to assist the development of the Shenandoah Rail Trail is to help visualize and conceptualize what this rail trail could be and how it can benefit the towns on the rail trail and the rest of the Shenandoah valley area with a list of recommendations ranging from community engagement, tourism, and land-use.

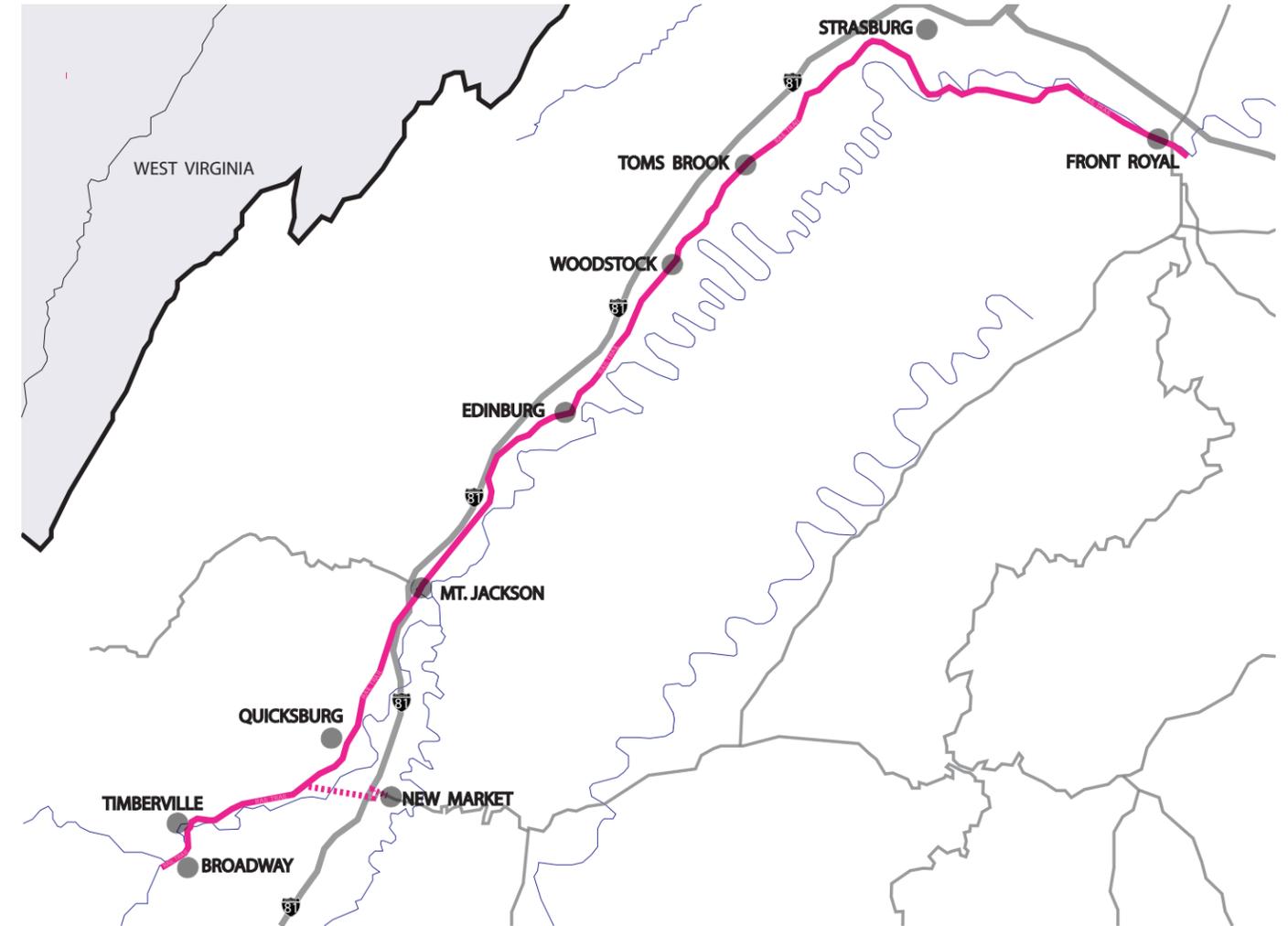
Background and Contextual Information:

Rail trails and greenways are a part of cities around the world and create various opportunities and benefits to those who live near and use them. Aside from connecting communities to the outdoors, rail trails also provide the following benefits:

- Recreation
- Transportation and safe non-motorized mobility opportunities
- Support and encourage healthy living
- Economics advantages
- Property appreciation
- Environmental Protection
- Safe and livable communities

From the precedents researched and presented to the CAC on March 30th, 2022, we have analyzed tourism, land-use, and community engagement methods to understand what creates a successful rail trail and the steps needed for its fabrication.

- Evaluation of actions from precedents shenandoah can use - (modle mile program, community engagement, land use changes etc)
- Specific Community engagement methods
- Specific Zoning changes
- Timeline



Shenandoah Rail to Trail Overview Map

PLAN A: WHOLE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

Short Term Recommendations

We have set up this set of short term recommendations to trigger the long term recommendations. If the short term recommendations do not work out, then the long term recommendations would not go forward. The short term recommendations focus on the grassroots community engagement and the acquisition of funding and land. This is the legwork part of the project that will set up the trail for long term success. We see this section beginning immediately and ending when land and funding have been acquired, at which time the switch flips to focusing on the long term, which is the construction of the whole trail, getting into some more minor details, and explained further in this report. The recommendations below should occur simultaneously to be most effective and efficient. These should also be considered ongoing tasks when the switch flips to the long term, with the exception of the model mile program.

Plan A, Short Term Recommendation 1: Form an Official Friends of the Trail Group or Designate an Existing Group

A single group should be formed or designated to take the lead on funding and community engagement. The group should include at least one person from each town along the trail, county officials, and should be broad enough so that each person touches a different aspect of life in the community. The goal for this friends group is diversity – a local stay at home mom, a longtime homeowner and resident, a local business leader, perhaps someone in law enforcement, a school teacher or daycare provider, someone who owns their second home along the trail, an avid cyclist, or a farmer.

There are several options of existing groups that could transition into a friends group such as the Shenandoah Alliance, etc. Thought will also need to be given to whether or not this group will become a 501(c) 3 organization in order to collect and raise funds for the trail.

Plan A, Short Term Recommendation 1: The Model Mile Program

The model mile program creates a series of short sections of rail-trail throughout the entirety of the proposed Shenandoah Rail Trail. These small, fully completed portions of rail-trail serve as a model for communities to gain first-hand knowledge about what the trail can be and can look like. Having model miles with amenities like benches, tables, water fountains, and bike racks can serve to not only spark the imagination about the future rail to trail, but they can ensure that localities are better prepared with future trail developments.

Funding for the model mile program should be the focus of early funding and land acquisition. This is also an opportunity to get additional resident input on what amenities they would like to see along the trail and also a chance to voice concerns.

Plan A, Short Term Recommendation 2: Land and Funding Acquisition

Acquiring land and funding are what the long term hinges on. Without the land rights and the funding for construction, the path forward to a fully connected trail is unlikely. Funding should be targeted as soon as possible. The 2022 budget money from the state should be put toward the model mile program, and additional funds should be identified and procured in an ongoing process. A goal amount should be set for the model program to be implemented. A secondary goal should be set for the construction of the rest of the trail.

Negotiations with the railroad should begin as soon as possible, either directly with the county or through a third party designated by the county or the friends group. We suggest negotiating for a few one-mile sections of the trail in certain towns for the model mile program. A continued relationship with the railroads should be maintained regardless of whether land is provided. If it is not possible to acquire land at this time, then the prioritization should be continued funding development.

Plan A, Short Term Recommendation 3: Form a Network of Partnerships

A network of partnerships should expand beyond the CAC and the friends group. A key partner should be the Rails to Trail Conservancy. This national level organization advocates at the federal level for funding for rails to trails projects. Their headquarters are in DC and according to their website, they have staff available to talk about how to move forward with a rails to trails project. Their website also has a toolkit for getting started and includes tips on negotiating with the railroads and ideas for funding. Shenandoah County officials should connect with Rails to Trails and utilize their existing toolkit online.

Other partnerships or simply relationships should begin to form with state officials who can engage the railroads and secure funding, state agencies, local business groups, schools, churches, local law enforcement, and any group that has direct influence on a large group of people.

Plan A, Short Term Recommendation 4: Engage the Community All Along the Proposed Trail At All Times

Community engagement has already begun along the trail, but more engagement can help propel the project forward. Meetings are good but activities can also be beneficial and this is where the CAC can take the lead. Partnering with a local restaurant to do a fundraising night where part of the proceeds go toward the funding of the model mile program gets everyone out in the community, drums up business, and gets people excited about a trail. Have a friend's group member talk to local media to raise awareness. Find the places where existing events are happening and double up on them to continue to fundraise and engage people. If there is a festival, the friends group should be there with a donation table and infographics about the trail and promoting any additional, separate fundraising events and opportunities.

Long Term Recommendations

Once the short term projects are realized and funding and land goals have been reached, construction of the whole trail can begin. We detail below some long term goals and recommendations for the whole trail project. These can be considered extensions of the short term goals, but shifting the priorities.

Plan A: Long Term Recommendation 1: Tourism

Create a Shenandoah Rail trail website that centralizes information, maps, tourist details, quick facts, detours and attractions in each town on the trail for easy access. Reference the Cardinal Greenway Reference the Cardinal Greenway Website and the W&OD Trail.

Map all tourism sights and attractions along or near the trail. This could include visitor centers, wineries, breweries, restaurants, other surrounding trails and bike routes, historical and heritage sites. This task could also be part of a larger community engagement effort.

Plan A: Long Term Recommendation 2: Management of the Trail

Decisions should be made whether a public agency or a private organization will be responsible for land acquisition, management, and maintenance of the trail. The Alliance for Shenandoah County, The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC), or another private, non-profit organization dedicated specifically for trail management should be considered for official ownership.

Plan A: Long Term Recommendation 3: Funding Mechanisms for Maintenance

This recommendation dovetails with recommendation 2. Management of the trail requires sustainable funding and the following should be explored.

- Additional local sales tax: per the Virginia code, localities can exercise a local sales tax by first adopting a local ordinance (Section 58.1-605 C1). The localities must notify the Tax Commissioner within five days of adoption of the ordinance.
- Increase the existing local sales tax: Per the same code section, localities can increase the local sales tax through an ordinance and notification to the Tax Commissioner. Part of this sales tax should be put toward funding the construction of the trail.
- Implement a food and beverage tax: similar to the prior two options, imposing a food and beverage tax to be put toward the construction of the trail could be implemented.
- Create special service district overlay: Used to improve the area that is captured in the overlay. This is administered by a public entity.
- Other sources of funding: existing private entities provide grants to turn abandoned rail lines into trails for local use. Other grants can be obtained from the federal and state government, private donations, bonds, and selling salvaged parts of the railroad itself (ties, rails, ballasts).

Plan A: Long Term Recommendation 4: Land Use

Land use changes naturally occur with the scope of such a large project. The following are recommendations to explore and propose as needed.

OVERLAY ZONING -

Additional regulations or standards applied over a designated area to achieve a specific goal. Overlay zoning has proved to be effective in a variety of planning circumstances including Rails to trails projects.

- The Midtown Greenway implemented a variety of overlay districts throughout the length of the corridor, extending in some sections 1000 feet beyond its edges. Its overlay district types include pedestrian oriented, transitional parking, and industrial living. Pedestrian Oriented overlay promotes pedestrian activity in commercial areas. Transitional parking provides additional parking spaces once a set of criteria are met. Industrial Living overlay allows for some amount of residential occupation in light to medium industrial zones.
- In Cincinnati, a transportation overlay resolved a conflict between the short-range interests of bike/ped advocates and the long-range potential of a new light rail system. It allowed current use as a bike/ped corridor while allowing continued planning for the future light rail.

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL -

This type zoning provides for higher density housing structures. This may be a valuable tool for giving more people access to the value provided by the rail to trail.

- Upzoning - along the same lines as the multi-family residential land use above, upzoning allows for greater density to accommodate population growth - low or medium density residential to medium or high density residential - providing more housing opportunities near the rail to trail
1. Medium Density Residential - areas that allow for small multi-unit housing
 2. High Density residential - areas that allow for taller apartments; more suitable for the larger localities along the rail-to-trail

TRANSITIONAL ZONES -

In general, transitional zones smooth rapid change from one zoning type to another and are typically employed where multiple zoning district types occur. Transitional zoning may be associated with the characteristics of a particular district, while still allowing for some land use flexibility. They are listed under the American Planning Association's Special District zone because they don't readily fall into the one of the standard categories associated with zoning.

- Because of the potential for conflict in these areas, they should be subject to a heightened design standard process to avoid negatively impacting adjacent land uses.
- For examples of transitional zones, see Fredericksburg, Virginia (Commercial/Office-Transitional District), Falls Church, Virginia (transitional zone T-1 that minimally integrates residential with commercial uses, and transitional zone T-2 that does the same for various other land uses), among many more.

“DOWNTOWN” CORE -

(Specifically for the larger towns that have proposed larger mixed use areas after rail trail development) - Downtown core districts encourage land use integration and flexibility. Downtown areas near the rail-to-trail may benefit from increased walkability from the compact character of downtown zoning.

- Downtown core districts are often accompanied by a set of design standards intended to maintain desired character and promote cohesiveness with the area around it.
- For more details about mixed use districts beyond the downtown core district see commercial mixed use description below.

COMMERCIAL MIXED-USE -

Typically calls for properties that combine commercial with other types of land use such as office space, residential, industrial, etc.

- Mixed use developments can contribute to an area's walkability and convenience.
- Having this near a rail trail can bring economic benefits to the community.
- By implementing alongside design standards, commercial mixed-use can also help to achieve/maintain town's compact, historic character if desired

LOCAL BUSINESS -

- Districts that provide residential areas easy access to convenience shopping opportunities. These districts can be geared towards the neighborhood character and therefore convey both economic and community-building benefits to the area.
- According to Shenandoah County code, such businesses might include general country stores, restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores and services, specialty retail stores, home occupations, health and care services, and many more. For the entire list of uses that a local business district allows, see Shenandoah County code.
- Local Business districts from General Business districts in minimum lot size, frontage regulations, and certain yard regulations and access requirements.
- With a few exceptions, uses permitted by Local Business districts are a subset of those permitted by General Business districts. A few examples of uses offered by Local but not by General Business districts are home occupations, and public and semi-public uses.

GENERAL BUSINESS -

- District offers a wider range of services and goods than the typical local business district.
- According to Shenandoah County code, recreational facilities not owned by the state are allowed by special use permit including but not limited to camp grounds, miniature golf courses and swimming pools. Local Businesses provide for public and semi-public uses (e.g., community centers) as mentioned above, but do not specifically mention certain recreational facilities that General Business districts allow for.
- Typically along arterial roads.

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL -

- District allows for more intensive industrial activities than the limited industrial zones
- Shenandoah County's code states that "[a]ll uses permitted by right in the Limited Industrial (M-2) District" are also permitted in the general industrial zone.
- Those uses permitted only in general industrial zones include but are not limited to wood yards, contractor's yard with outside storage, truck stops, truck service centers, and junkyards

AGRICULTURE PROTECTION ZONING (APZ) -

Zoning district that increases the protection of agricultural character beyond what Shenandoah's agricultural zoning provides. By designating an area under Agricultural Protection Zoning, other types of land use may be discouraged, specifically those that could be detrimental to farming. May also be called Effective Agricultural zoning

- There are risks associated with implementing Agricultural Protection Zones; however, where protecting large swaths of land for agricultural purposes is integral to maintaining character and preserving economic interests, it is highly effective and once provided for by an ordinance, can be implemented relatively quickly.
- APZ is more likely to be appealing in areas where there are not plans in place for significant non-agricultural development.
- As with many land use and zoning changes, implementing an APZ in your area should start with community education and engagement to determine whether this type of zoning is of interest and would be beneficial to residents. If benefits are identified it should become part of the localities next comprehensive plan, or planning addendum.
- A successful example of agricultural protection zoning is the Town of Washington in New York which uses farmland protection zoning in addition to conservation easements. Comparing the existing land circumstances (such as existing conservation easements and other protected land) and goals of the Virginian community with those of the Town of Washington, New York will be very helpful for evaluating APZs as a potential avenue of protection.

OPEN SPACES AND PARKS -

Open-space land is defined under The Code of Virginia Title 10.1 Chapter 17 as follows: "any land which is provided or preserved for (i) park or recreational purposes, (ii) conservation of land or other natural resources, (iii) historic or scenic purposes, (iv) assisting in the shaping of the character, direction, and timing of community development, (v) wetlands as defined in § 28.2-1300, or (vi) agricultural and forestal production."

- If a public body, like a county or municipality, chooses to designate land it has acquired into open-space land, the land will have to maintain that designation for at least five years and into perpetuity. The designation of open-space land should agree with the comprehensive plan of the town or the village.

RIVER BUFFER -

Area along a river that is left undeveloped according to setback regulations to accommodate flooding and preserve the ecology and integrity of the river channel.

- Provided for in Shenandoah's municipal code § 165-85.1 Stream Buffers to reduce nonpoint source pollution and preserving riparian habitat; and under the Code of Virginia § 58.1-3666 Wetlands and riparian buffers; living shorelines.
- Land along river often held by easement
- Among many of the available technical and financial assistance programs available to public and private landowners in Virginia are the Virginia Riparian Buffer Initiative and the Virginia department of Forestry (VDOF) Riparian Forest Buffer and Afforestation Program. VDOF also provides tax credits to landowners who maintain the integrity of their riparian buffer zones through the Riparian Buffer Tax Credit program.
- Can be simple in design and effective at managing surface runoff and reducing risks associated with storm events when appropriately coordinated with other stormwater management measures.

FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND SAFETY

- Each town should identify access points/ rest areas that can connect into their main districts, if possible.
- These areas should accommodate all or some of the following assets: bike parking, bathrooms, car parking, lockers, playground, shade/seating, tables.
- Consider installing bike racks along local main streets or near popular spots like restaurants or breweries.
- Adequate lighting along the main parts of the trail that go through the towns should be a priority.
- Limited the use of the trail to non-motorized bikes, and horses and other equine should be considered for the more rural parts of the trail. Proper signage should be included to alert pedestrians, cyclists, and riders to the changing usage along the trail.

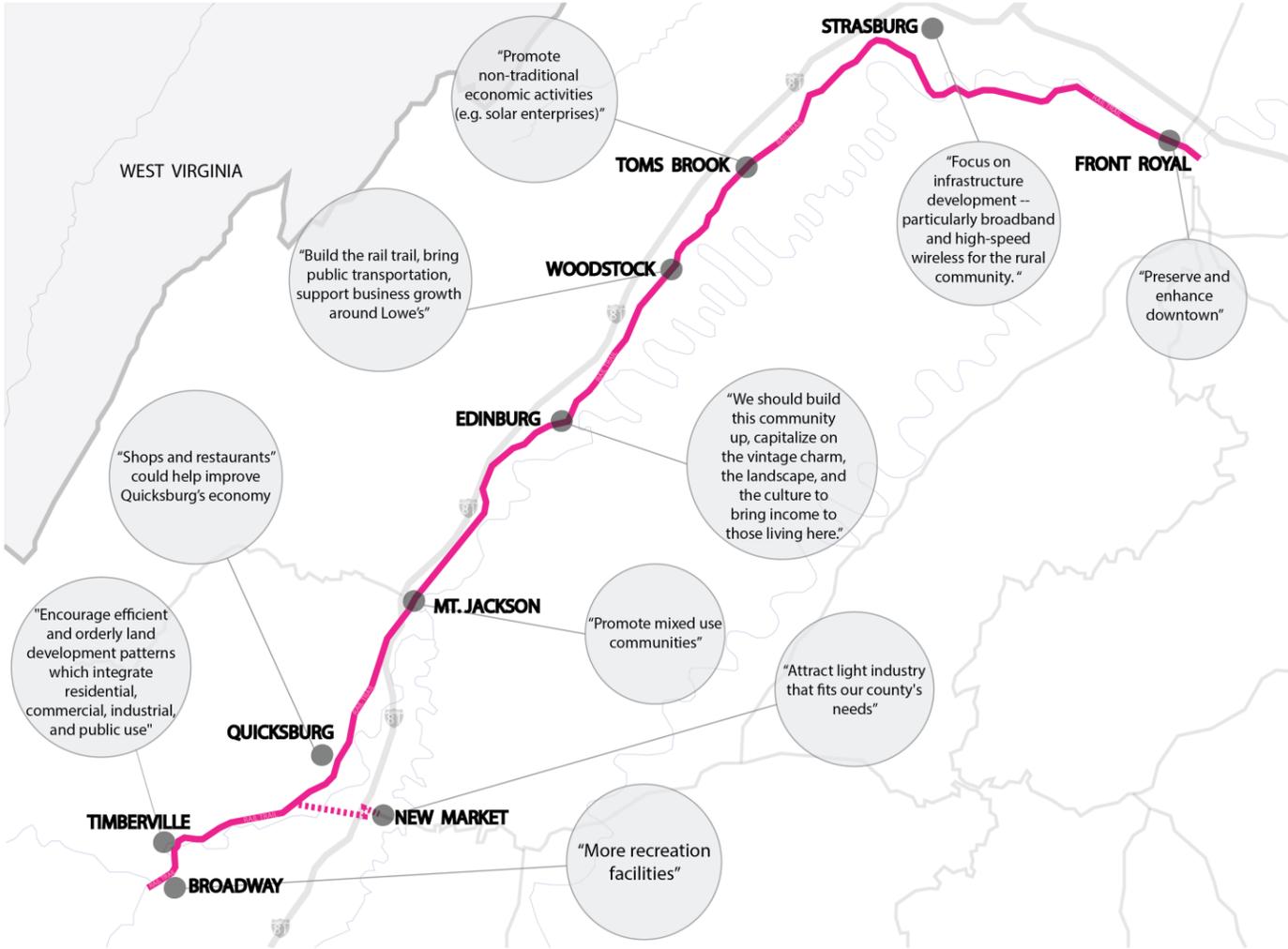
TOWN INFORMATION AND SPECIFIC LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

Land has yet to be acquired and funding has not been secured for the Shenandoah Rail Trail Project. However, in the future, we believe the following land use changes would be applicable in the towns when the time is right.

The Shenandoah 2045 survey questions and residents responses were the most helpful in generating land use suggestions. The questions that were more significant in these land use suggestions were the ranking of natural resources, economic, and housing priorities and the additional comments left under each category and at the end of the survey. From the survey results, the most significant priorities to the residents are to preserve their natural resources, increase access to recreation, support of the rail trail, develop land use patterns that can help communities increase their economic vitality through mixed-use communities, attracting more local businesses, and preserving the small town charm.

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The map below illustrates is what some residents had to say:



Broadway

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS

The town of Broadway is located in Rockingham County, Virginia, just south-adjacent to Shenandoah county.

Demographics - Its population in 2020 was estimated to be 3,925. The town itself is just under 2.5 square miles with a density of 1,652.2 people per square mile. There is a 97% occupation rate for the 1,576 housing units in the town. The majority of these units are owner occupied at 62%, with a median value of roughly \$200k. Eight-two percent of the housing units are single family units.

The town is currently undergoing review for an updated comprehensive plan. The most recent comprehensive plan for the

LAND-USE

When it comes to land use recommendations for Broadway the town has already made positive choices to encourage the growth of business and the use of a rail-trail for citizens and tourists alike. Going forward, converting the northern most area from general industrial to open green park space will not only help Broadway to capitalize on the beauty of their natural surroundings, it will also enhance the livability of the area surrounding the trail. This proposed new park space sits alongside the banks of the river, so this change to more park space can help integrate the river into the rail-trail. Additionally adding a mixed-use component to land use directly along the rail trail will give flexibility of use for business owners wanting to capitalize on increased tourism and activity in the area.



Existing Land Use



Proposed

Trailhead is at Turner Avenue



Timberville

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS

Like Broadway, the town of Timberville is located outside in Rockingham County. The town encompassed 611 acres and 200 acres of growth area just outside its border in 2012—the time of its most recent comprehensive plan; however, in 2018 the town passed an ordinance to annex just over 32 acres along the town’s southern boundary.

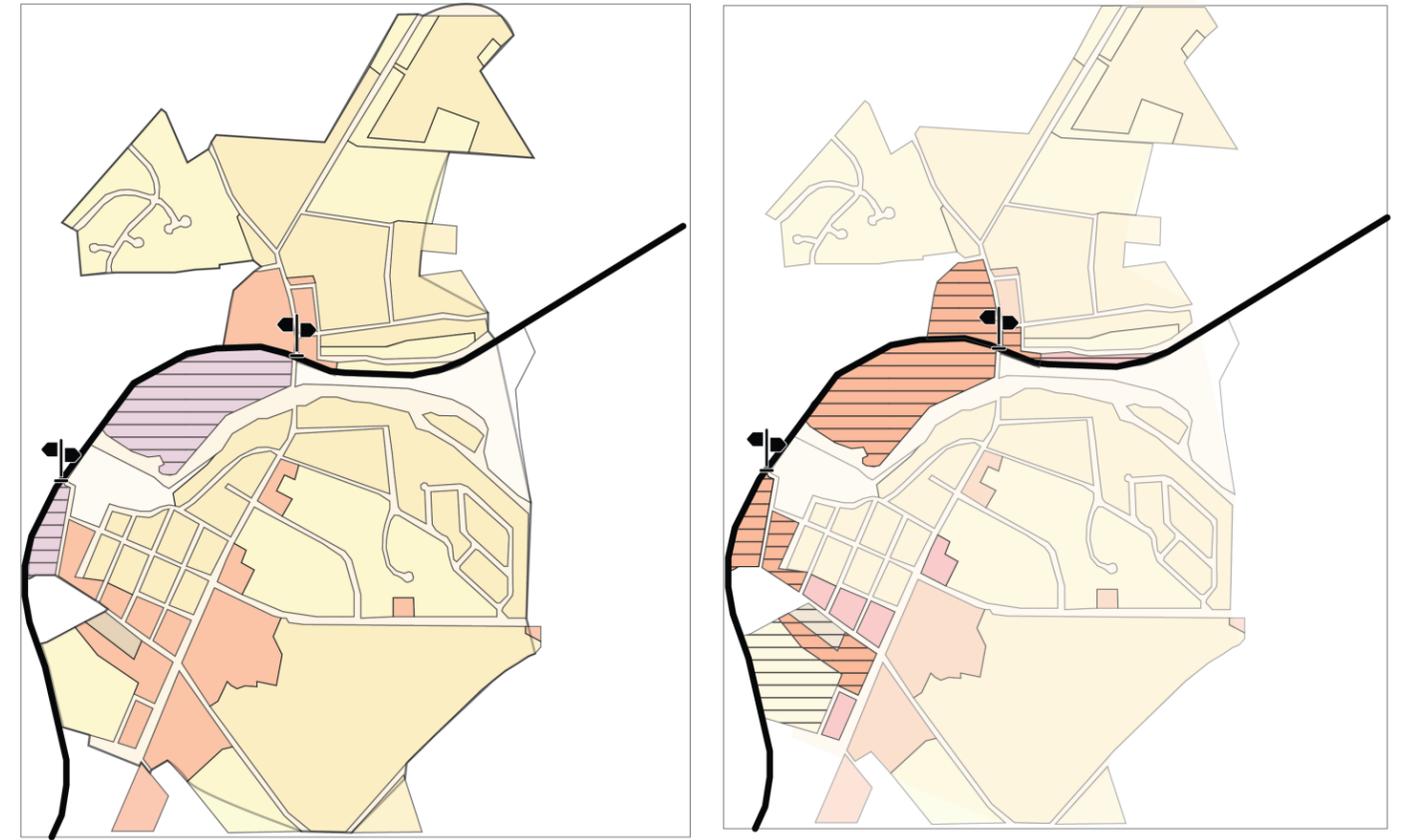
In 2019 Timberville had a population of 2,635 people. Its 1-year growth rate of 0.842% was lower than the 1.77% per year growth goal stated in its 2012 comprehensive plan. The median household income in Timberville is just under 50k with 9.3% people living below the poverty line. There are 1,060 housing units available in Timberville, though 7% are unoccupied. 64% of occupied units are owned while the other 36% are rented. The median value of the owner-occupied housing units is just over 153k. The majority of housing units, 80%, are single family units. The average time it takes someone in Timberville to get to work is 27.7 minutes, roughly the same amount of time as the average Virginian to commute.

LAND-USE

The trail is adjacent to business, single family residential, agricultural and industrial zoning districts where it bisects the town.

According to the town’s 2012 comprehensive plan, maintaining historically significant features and the historic character of the town is a major goal. At the same time, it is also desirable to continue to integrate various zoning districts with one another, moving away from the separation of uses zoning once emphasized.

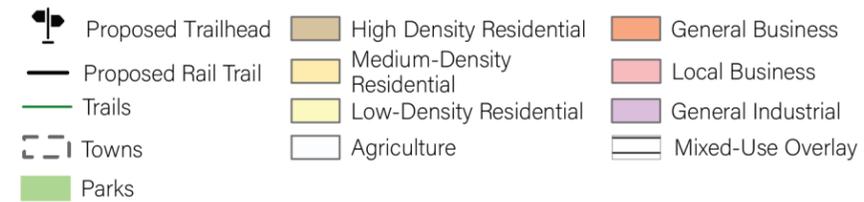
The town wants more commercial land use in areas adjacent to the trail. The town also intends to introduce mixed use in a significant portion of the town, including a small area to the north of the trail near riverside—mixed use is a valuable resource for encouraging continued growth and supporting the local economy. To encourage development along the trail that provides draw for trail users, it would be ideal to consider incorporating mixed use development in the areas alongside the rail to trail.



Existing Land Use

Proposed

Trailhead at Memorial Park and North Main Street



Quicksburg

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS

A very quaint, small unincorporated town in Shenandoah County, Quicksburg is home to around 1000 people. Quicksburg is a small area with a population density of only around 51 people per square mile, with a majority white population and a median household income of about \$55,000.

LAND-USE

Existing land use throughout the tiny town, as taken from Shenandoah County's Comprehensive Plan, consists of mainly agricultural uses. Though it may be small, the town is not without points of interest, and its citizens are not without a vision for the future of their town. In addition to the beautiful farmland surrounding the town, Quicksburg is home to two items listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Zirkle Mill, a restored grist mill that was in use around the 1760s, and the Benjamin Wierman House, a two-story frame I-house built in 1859, offer tourists a chance to explore the town and its history. Respondents to the Shenandoah 2045 A Future Together Survey reported that what they most cared about was the ability for citizens to safely and easily access places for recreation, going on runs, walks, or biking. After this priority towards natural resource protection survey respondents indicated that preserving and restoring historic buildings as well as creating community gathering spaces were equally important to them. Keeping survey responses in mind, land use in Quicksburg should work to protect farmland, and the surrounding natural beauty of the area while promoting economic opportunities and dedicated infrastructure to incorporate the Shenandoah Rail Trail. Given the heavily agricultural nature of the town, using an overlay of an Agriculture Protection Zone can be helpful to assuage any concerns for farmers livelihoods or the character of the town. It could also be useful to explore mixed-use options along the proposed rail-trail path. This mixed-use would work to give citizens the flexibility to respond to changing businesses needs in the area without going through any rezoning complications.



Existing Land Use

Proposed

- Low-Density Residential
- Agriculture Protection Zoning (APZ)
- Local Business
- Agriculture
- Proposed Trailhead
- Proposed Rail Trail
- Railroad

New Market

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS

The historic town of New Market, Virginia is located in the heart of the beautiful Shenandoah Valley. It is home to the New Market Shockers of the Rockingham County Baseball League, the New Market Rebels of the Valley Baseball League, the Schultz Theater and School of Performing Arts, and the Shenvalee Golf Course. The town is known for having been the site in 1864 of the last major Confederate victory in the American Civil War.

In 2019, New Market, VA had a population of 2.18k people with a median age of 46 and a median household income of \$41,892. Between 2018 and 2019 the population of New Market, VA declined from 2,341 to 2,180, a -6.88% decrease and its median household income declined from \$42,500 to \$41,892, a -1.43% decrease.

The 5 largest ethnic groups in New Market, VA are White (Non-Hispanic) (80.1%), White (Hispanic) (13.1%), Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (3.62%), American Indian & Alaska Native (Non-Hispanic) (1.7%), and Asian (Hispanic) (0.642%). 0% of the households in New Market, VA speak a non-English language at home as their primary language. 97.4% of the residents in New Market, VA are U.S. citizens.

In 2019, the median property value in New Market, VA was \$233,300, and the homeownership rate was 40%. Most people in New Market, VA drove alone to work, and the average commute time was 21.5 minutes. The average car ownership in New Market, VA was 2 cars per household.

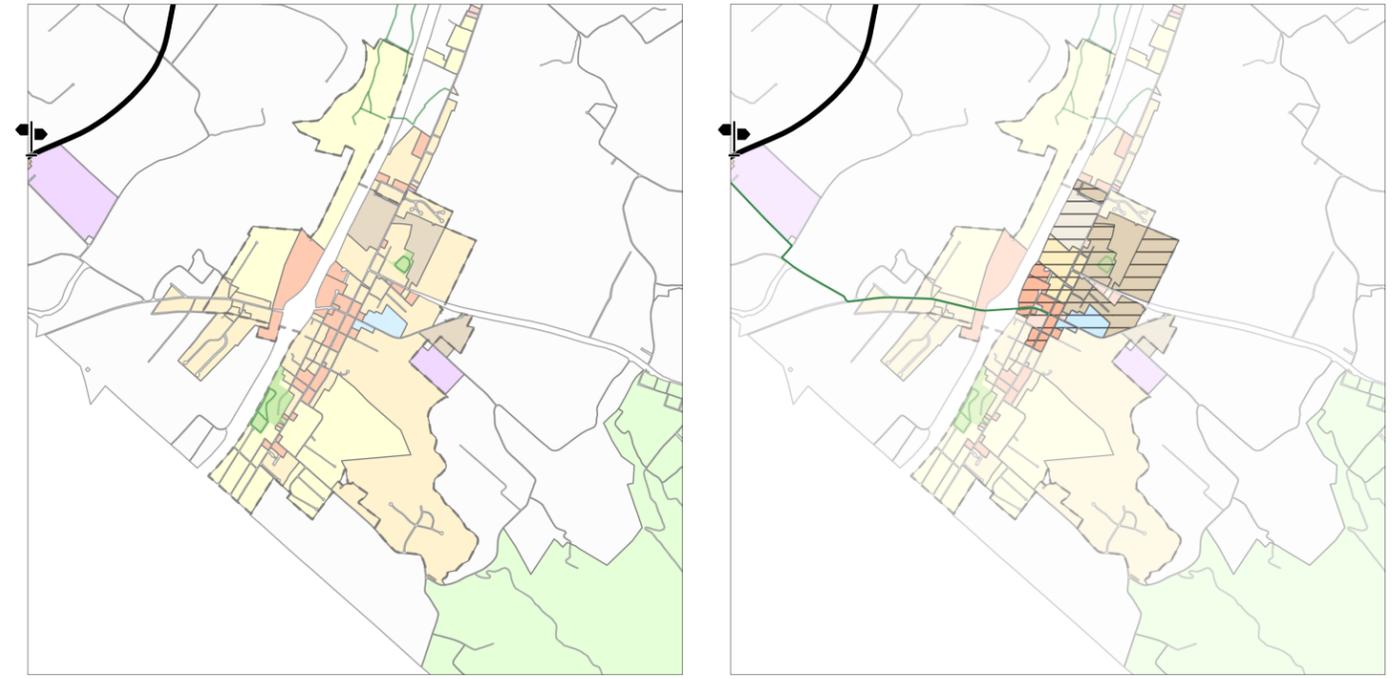
New Market is a town connecting itself to the proposed Shenandoah bike trail. The impact would be indirect and the creation and maintenance of the trail connecting the New Market and the Shenandoah trail is essential, which will help to further community goals by integrating design features commonly referred to as green infrastructure, which include permeable pavement and tree box filters. Connecting the town of New Market also provides a variety of transportation choices as well as encouraging walkable neighborhoods and preserving open spaces. It would also achieve the goal of expanding the scope of public history by attracting residents and guests to spend more time in public spaces that integrate local history.

LAND-USE

About 2 square miles or 1,300 acres of land exists within New Market town boundaries. New Market in following the tenets of smart growth must facilitate market conditions and craft policies oriented towards:

1. Maintaining desirable, current land-uses consistent with the comprehensive plan.
2. Enhancing currently undeveloped land not preserved in perpetuity for residential and commercial uses.
3. Redeveloping select commercial and residential sites because of their potential to host and benefit from future growth.
4. Annexing portions of the New Market Future Growth Area (2007) as needed.

According to survey responses, concerns about maintaining historical buildings and preparing more historical and art programs for education are key concerns for residents. Redeveloping commercial and residential sites, incorporating mixed-use of the downtown, and creating more job opportunities would be economically beneficial for future development in New Market. In terms of community development, designing green and sustainable infrastructures and facilitating equitable and accessible public transportation systems are important.



Existing Land Use Proposed



Mount Jackson

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS

Mount Jackson, in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley has many natural views that people can enjoy. The most prominent feature of this mountain is “The Knob”. The Knob is a short mountain seven miles in length, from Mount Jackson on the south end to Edinburg on the north. Mount Jackson’s history can be traced back to 1746, and get its name from General Andrew Jackson. During the Civil War Era, the town also played a role as part of the warzone. Through that long history, residents built churches, commercial buildings, residential buildings, and institutional buildings that now showcase striking examples of early American architectural styles.

In 2019, Mount Jackson, VA had a population of 2,129 people with a median age of 38.5 and a median household income of \$46,833. Between 2018 and 2019 the population of Mount Jackson, VA declined from 2,451 to 2,129, a -13.1% decrease and its median household income grew from \$42,339 to \$46,833, a 10.6% increase.

The 5 largest ethnic groups in Mount Jackson, VA are White (Non-Hispanic) (60%), White (Hispanic) (16.8%), Other (Hispanic) (12.8%), Two+ (Non-Hispanic) (5.78%), and Asian (Non-Hispanic) (1.64%). None of the households speak a language other than English. 85.6% of the residents in Mount Jackson, VA are U.S. citizens.

In 2019, the median property value in Mount Jackson, VA was \$134,900, and the homeownership rate was 61.2%. Most people in Mount Jackson, VA drove alone to work, and the average commute time was 22 minutes. The average car ownership in Mount Jackson, VA was 2 cars per household.

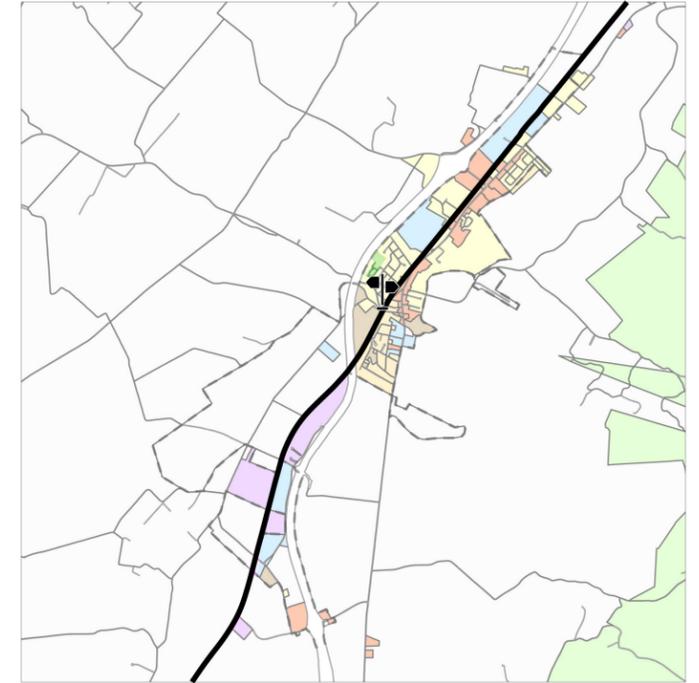
LAND-USE

The former rail runs through the middle of the town of Mount Jackson dividing the town into two roughly equally sized sections. The existing zoning of land adjacent to the trail includes residential, business, industrial, and agriculture. Because Mount Jackson will be one of the towns with a trail “headquarters” it may have the capacity to accommodate and support more business in the future, the local residences also willing to encourage growth with protecting the agriculture land.

Under that circumstance, for the most productive land use proposals, it will be wise to set up some agricultural protection zoning or ordinance, and increase median or high-density residential to decrease the instances of sprawl. Those higher density residences could be added to the northern part of the town adjacent to the industrial area. As for the commercial consideration, we propose adding mixed use zones on the area adjacent to the trail. The land already has some mixed use, we want to add more to help the town develop their retail and hospitality to serve the visitors especially in the existing general business zoning. We also added more transitional area in the middle of the town and focused on using the existing light industrial area.



1.5 Miles
Existing Land Use



1.5 Miles
Proposed
Trailhead at Town Hall



Edinburg

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS

A small town with rich historical ties, Edinburg boasts easy proximity to camping, hiking, fly-fishing, mini-golf, and many other outdoor activities. For visitors who may enjoy spending their time indoors, the town houses a winery, restaurant, and museum at the Edinburg Mill, a Virginia Historic Landmark built in the early 1800s. The town's advantageous location along Stony Creek, the railroad, as well as its proximity to the North Fork Shenandoah River made it a strategic site during the Civil War, resulting in multiple skirmishes between Confederate and Union troops. The height of Edinburg's economy was in the 1870s, resulting in the town's unique Victorian homes and continued 19th century charm.

According to the United States Census Bureau Edinburg is a small town with a population of around 1100 people with a median age of 34 and 577 households. The town has a median household income of \$66,845 with an employment rate of 76%. With the goal of increasing tourism and boosting the local economy Edinburg began hosting the "Edinburg Ole' Time Festival" in 1981. Shenandoah County 2045: A Future Together Survey respondents from Edinburg reported access to natural resources as their top priority followed by preserving and restoring buildings and creating more walkability and trails for pedestrians.

When asked for additional thoughts about important issues not directly asked about in the survey, respondents listed goals for active living, historical education and preservation, and encouraging growth of business. One responder suggested "We should build this community up, capitalize on the vintage charm, the landscape, and the culture to bring income to those living here" another, stated their thoughts for the county's goals being "to create easily attainable lifestyles for the locals that are cost effective, energy efficient, and promote individuals growth/self improvement as well as growth as a county. Things like rails to trails would allow for greater fitness and a safe way to commute throughout the county via walking, running, and/or biking. It would also bring tourism as we could hold more running, walking, and biking events here that impose less on those living in the community."

Creating a rail-trail through Edinburg and across Shenandoah county more broadly will help to further community goals by increasing access to pedestrian infrastructure within the town as well as pedestrian access to the greater outdoors. Focusing the Edinburg section of the trail on its historical Victorian architecture can provide a unique experience for the town to capitalize on. It would also be beneficial to tie the rail trail to the nearby rivers and campgrounds, thus encouraging tourists to spend more time exploring the town.

LAND-USE

For map - trailhead is at the 1848 Edinburg Mill (will have stairs) and stoney creek boulevard next to VFW
 Taking into consideration survey respondent's concerns about affordability of housing for seniors as well as preservation of historic and natural charm, future land use changes should encourage greater density in the town, providing more housing opportunities and greater walkability. To achieve this goal areas along the rail-trail currently labeled for low-density residential should be increased to medium residential, areas labeled general business could be given a mixed-use layer to encourage flexibility and loft-style apartments. In addition to land use changes Edinburg should also embrace a form based code to ensure any newer development complements the quaint, Victorian charm of the town and does not disrupt the natural beauty of the area.



Woodstock

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS

Woodstock, Virginia, the county seat of Shenandoah County, sits on 3.8 square miles of land along the ‘Seven Bends’ of the north fork of the Shenandoah River. The town is centrally located to the rest of the county and embraces its strong connections to the Revolutionary and Civil War history which it holds. There are many parks and outdoor recreation centers which are easily accessible from Woodstock, like the Woodstock Tower and the Seven Bends State Park which has great hiking trails and access to the Shenandoah River.

Outside of the recreational amenities, Woodstock has a population of 5,309 people, with a .32% annual growth rate. The demographic breakdown of the population is female: 55.85%, male 44.15%; White 88.69%, Asian 6.31%, Black or African American 2.67%, two or more races 1.71%, and other races 0.61%. The average age in Woodstock is 41.4 for the general population; it is 39.6 for males, and 43 for females. The housing market in Woodstock is right on par with the state average, the median sold home price is \$258,000, while the median home value is \$245,000. Residents of Woodstock have access to amenities such as local restaurants: Woodstock Garden Cafe, I’Guana Taco, Woodstock Cafe, Candy’s diner, chain stores like Food Lion and CVS Pharmacy, and local retail at the Market at Woodstock.

The average economic data for Woodstock shows that the 2019 poverty rate is at 24.4% while the median household income in 2019 was \$42,868, with a 16.9% growth rate from the prior year. The average household also has two car ownership and travels approximately 24.9 minutes during their commute. The development of the rail trail bike path has the ability to create an opportunity for less automobile congestion and rather create connectivity via cycling and walking.

LAND-USE

Just under four square miles, Woodstock has the proposed rail trail development along mostly high and medium density residential development and general industrial, as well as some general business. For the most productive land use proposals it would be wise to look at the potential development of furthering the general business with local restaurants and retail businesses. This development can come in the place of the general industrial uses that are on the north end of the trail in Woodstock. The ideal development and land use changes would lead toward economic growth and betterment for the community, as well as provide room and attraction for more tourists. The current residential uses should be continued to remain as they provide for higher density development. It would be wise however to consider the possibility of using mixed-use zoning to allow for first floor retail with higher density residential above.



Toms Brook

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS

The charming Toms Brooke, Virginia, is one of the smaller towns along the proposed rail trail with only a population of 409, which has grown from 258 people back in 2010. The median age of those who live in Toms Brook is around 31, with a median household income of \$55,000. The majority of the population is white (82.6%), followed by Black or African American (9.05%), White Hispanic (6.85%), Multiracial (0.89%), and lastly, Black or African American Hispanic (0.49). Toms Brook foreign-born population (4.4%) has continued to increase since 2018 and also has a large percentage of its population who served in the Military during the Gulf War. As of 2019, Toms Brook employs around 160 people. Its biggest industries include Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Admirative, Support, and waste management services. However, 4.2 percent of the population of Toms brook live under the poverty line, and females aged 75 and above make up most of this demographic. This town plays a part in the many histories within this area of Virginia. Specifically, this town is known to be the location of the Battle of Tom's Brooke in the American Civil War. In addition, Tom's Brook School was registered as a Historic Place by the National Register of Historic Places in 2011.

LAND-USE

The town encompasses around .02 square miles right next to US highway 11. Most of the town's land use includes residential with some businesses including both local and general business. Other assets to the community features include paved sidewalks, three churches, a fire hall and post office. However, the town's population continues to grow with new residents and community needs which has highlighted an importance for the future development of open public spaces and commercial options to accommodate and serve their growing community. From the Shenandoah 2045 survey and the community residents of Toms Brook that responded, many people are in support of growth within the community and the rail trail. Especially when it comes to the growth of local businesses, restaurants, and attracting other businesses to the area. Residents are also interested in looking at precedents for tourism. As one respondent stated, "local businesses...have hours that people can't even shop during. Very little night life other than a brew house. Need to look at vibrant small towns and see how they are drawing in tourists". Some of their other priorities when it comes to land use and future community growth include the protection of agricultural and natural lands, recreational areas, and the Shenandoah river. There is a desire for more access to recreational areas and other ways of mobility as "there are extremely limited options for alternative transportation if your car is in for repairs, even regular maintenance. You either walk or have to wait hours for the car to be repaired and released". However, with community growth comes the concern of major developments and high-rises. Community members are interested in growth but require that Tom Brook keep the charm and small town traditional design feel that it currently has.



Strasburg

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS

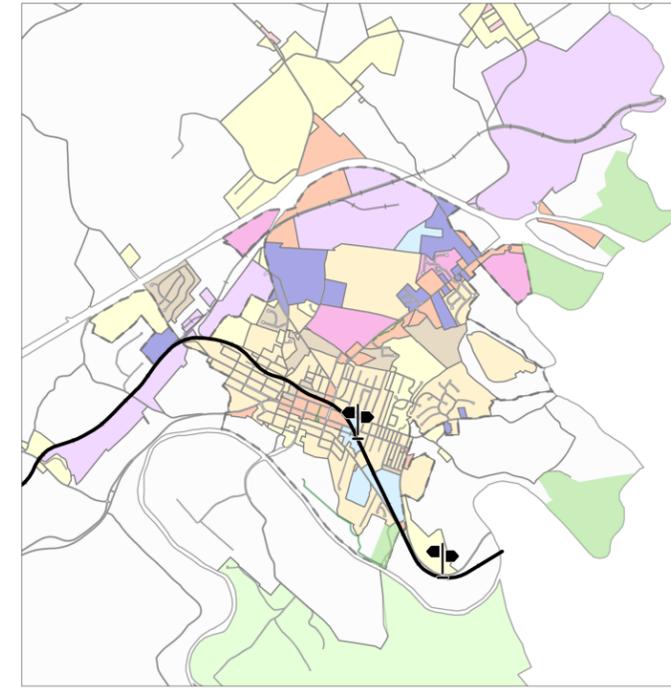
The largest town in Shenandoah County, Strasburg is home to about 6,600 residents. Sited along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, Strasburg boasts an historic downtown with many cultural amenities in addition to its beautiful riverfront Town Park. Proximity to Interstates 81 and 66 make trips to this Shenandoah gem accessible for visitors from all over the region. The Strasburg Museum offers glimpses into this 18th century town's history within a structure that once hosted first an earthenware manufacturing business and then a train station and depot before its conversion into this application in 1970. Residents, visitors, and fans from all over the Shenandoah enjoy summer evenings cheering on the town's Valley Baseball League team, the Strasburg Express.

LAND-USE

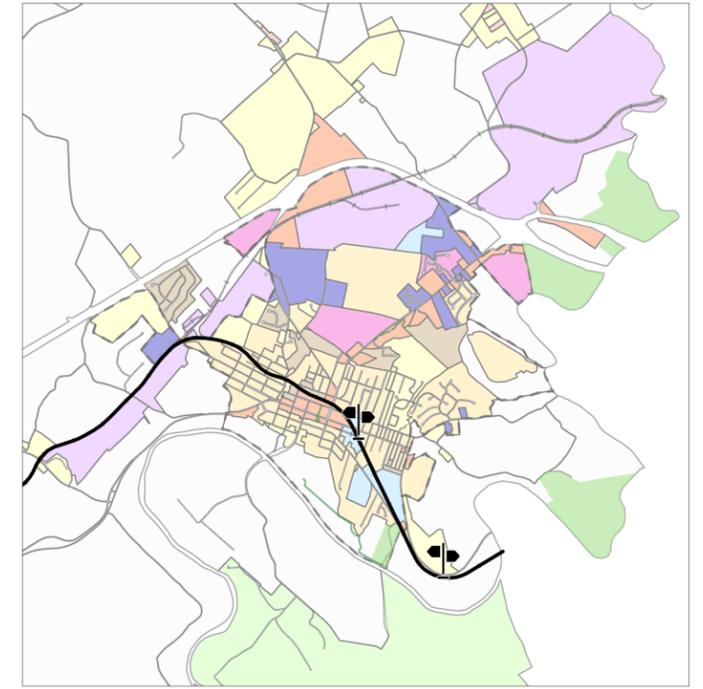
Land use in Strasburg follows a general Smart Growth framework. The historic center of town is encircled within a Historic District Boundary. Along the center and main strip of the historic downtown is zoned for Community Commercial and encircled within a Historic District Boundary. The central blocks primarily along King Street and Washington Street in this boundary are zoned for Community Commercial. Medium Density Residential is found when expanding outward in all directions from this central corridor, and pockets of both Lower Density and Multi-Family Residential can be found in pockets throughout. The riverfront areas within the floodplain are wisely zoned for Agricultural/Rural Residential. The areas around the bend of Interstate-81 are zoned for more intensive uses: Highway Commercial and Business Park/Limited Industrial.

Recommendation

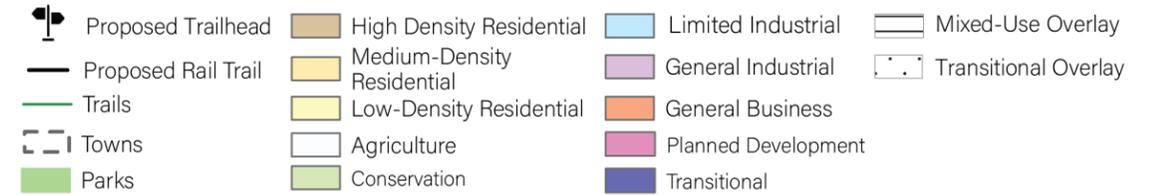
Addressing Strasburg residents' expressed desires for more diverse housing options without wanting large developments, we recommend upzoning some portions of the medium density zones as well as exploring the possibility of encouraging small apartments and accessory dwellings closer to town. The high value of sustainability suggests Strasburg should continue its low intensity zoning on the riverfronts.



1 Miles
Existing Land Use



1 Miles
Proposed



Front Royal

INTRO & DEMOGRAPHICS:

The only incorporated town in Warren County, Front Royal had a residential population of around 15,000 in 2019. Easy access to Shenandoah National Park and George Washington National Forest and its historic downtown attract visitors to Front Royal in Warren County. Situated at the confluence of the north and south forks of the Shenandoah River, Front Royal was designated the Canoe Capital of Virginia in February 1999. In the summer, the Front Royal Cardinals of the Valley Baseball League play in Bing Crosby Stadium.

LAND-USE

Front Royal's existing land use focuses pedestrian scale commercial activities along its historic main streets and surrounds those zones with residential zones of varying intensities. Much of the land along the southern bank of the South Fork of the Shenandoah is zoned for Industrial Employment while the area between the two forks of the river is largely split between two residential zones.



RENDERINGS

SINGLE PATH WITH TWO DIRECTIONS



- Paving bike path based on the trail
- Planting road trees
- Growing shrubs and grass alongside the path
- Paving pedestrian path

SINGLE PATH WITH SINGLE DIRECTION



- Paving bike path based on the trail
- Planting road trees
- Growing shrubs and grass alongside the path



HOUSING ALONGSIDE THE PATH



- Paving bike path based on the trail
- Planting road trees
- Growing shrubs and grass alongside the path
- Paving pedestrian paths
- Mixed-used houses alongside path

OPEN SPACE FOR ACTIVITIES



- Paving bike path based on the trail
- Planting road trees
- Growing shrubs and grass alongside the path
- Paving pedestrian paths
- Mixed-used houses alongside path
- Embedding relaxing umbrella and benches
- Setting up bike racks
- Adding swings and other recreational facilities

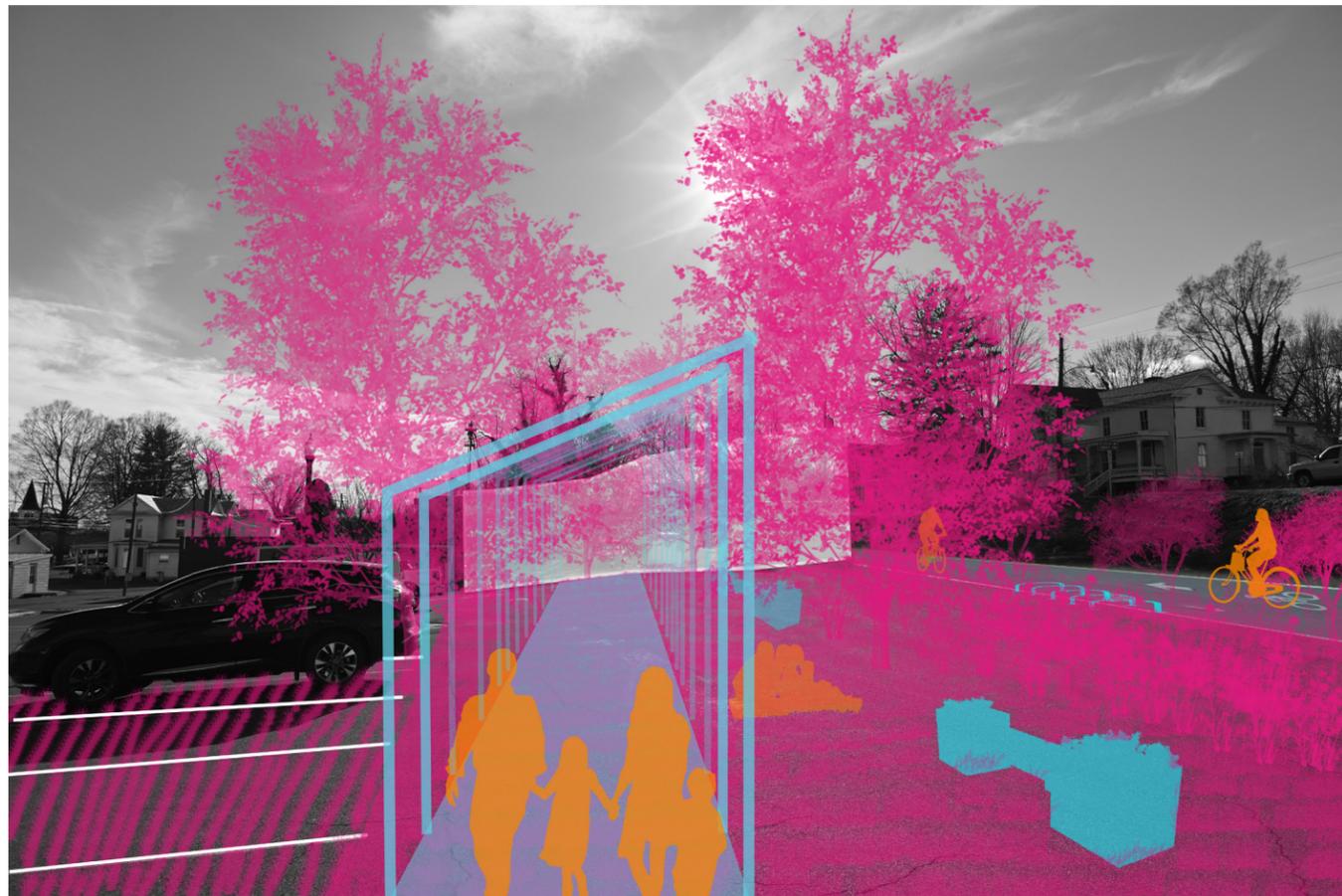


INFOGRAPHIC

TURNING PARKING LOT INTO PARK

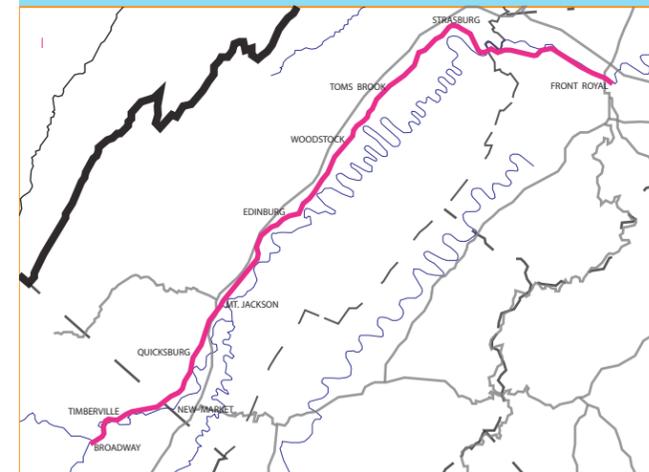


- Paving bike path based on the trail
- Planting road trees
- Growing shrubs and grass alongside the path and parking lot
- Paving pedestrian paths
- Mixed-used houses alongside path
- Embedding shrub benches
- Adding bike rack alongside the bike path
- Using infiltrated paving for parking lot
- Planting rain gardens to maintain the soil
- Facilitating canopy for the pedestrian paths



THE SHENANDOAH RAIL TRAIL

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE DEVELOPMENT



* ALSO PROVIDED TO GROUP PARTNERS AT SHENANDOAH COUNTY

QUESTIONS FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Hi! Thanks for your interest in the Shenandoah Rail Trail Project. I heard you had some questions about its development- anything I could answer for you?

“Will the trail increase our taxes?”

Your expenses and taxes should remain steady. The trail has the potential of increasing the value of your property but should not do anything too drastically. The trail will bring more visitors to the area, but they will buy different goods and should not drive up

“What if people steal my things?”

The trail will connect the communities and county residents together. Although tourism is a goal many users will likely be your neighbors and will respect your property.

“Will the trail harm the environment?”

The railroad has been there for decades, the work will just convert it for cyclists and pedestrians. Plus, the increased use of biking for transit will reduce personal vehicle use!

“Will there be any sort of speed limit for cyclist going through town?”

Signage can be posted at trailheads to warn cyclists of residents around and speed limits can be discussed if communities would like!

“Will it be noisy when it opens?”

Nope! The trail shouldn't increase your town's noise pollution!

Thank you so much for your questions - you bring up some really important questions! I hope I was able to ease some of your worries, but if you have any more concerns or questions, feel free to contact us by our email: info@shenandoahrailtrail.org or you can look at shenandoahalliance.org!



TRAIL VISITORS FOR RESIDENTS & TOURISTS

The Shenandoah Rail Trail will create new opportunities for outdoor recreation and non-motorized transportation.

Want to have fun exploring a new place outdoors, but you are already too familiar with existing trails?



The Shenandoah Rail Trail will provide a new path to hike that's close to our homes!



The trail can help tell the story of Virginia history while providing a new path for residents to exercise upon!



The Shenandoah trail will also introduce new services and amenities!

The trail will also help to reduce traffic and car use!



The trail will also be good for our health! Biking improves your heart, lungs and circulation, reducing your risk of cardiovascular diseases.



The Shenandoah Rail Trail is going to provide a great connection between towns with well maintained bike routes. I am so excited for it to open!



What kind of amenities can we expect?

Within the Shenandoah Valley there are several existing and proposed private campgrounds. Private businesses range from bed and breakfasts, riding stables, museums, water liveryes, caverns, golf courses, and much more.

The U.S. Forest Service provides different outdoor recreation opportunities, including camping, hiking, and many more activities. Nearby battlefields provide additional opportunities for connections to history and open space.

PLAN B: PARTIAL TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

WAYS TO EARN INCOME SERVICES THAT PEOPLES CAN PROVIDE

Shenandoah National Park had 1.7 million visitors in 2020. The trail will bring many opportunities for development spots along the trail. They can open local restaurants to sell food, provide bicycle sale and repair services, or can rent their rooms out for hospitality services like Airbnb.



ICECREAM



FOODTRUCK



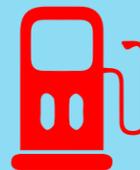
HOUSE RENT



RESTAURANT

The trail presents a great opportunity to increase the quality of the Shenandoah region and create open space for residents. The trail will enhance the open space and land. If you have any more questions or concerns about the project, or want to get involved please reach out to us!

Email: info@shenandoahrailtrail.org
Websites: shenandoahalliance.org



The ideal scenario would be to have all the land, funding, and community support lined up so that trail construction can begin as soon as possible. However, it is possible that one or all of the above may not be fully realized. As such, We are recommending a Plan B- Partial Construction of the trail.

Plan B consists of a phased in construction rather than a sweeping wholesale construction. Land could be acquired from the railroads in only a few towns, for only a couple of miles. Our group still sees that as a win.

Plan B, If Community Support is Lagging in Some Areas:

If community support is not as robust in certain towns, we recommend identifying the towns that are excited and would welcome a partial trail. It would be ideal if two towns next to each other were both accepting of the trail and a connection could be made.

Plan B, If Funding is Insufficient

Funding is always a big problem. Funding can come from anywhere including shifting the tax base to send more funds to the trail project. If funding is still an issue, community engagement should continue as well as land negotiations.

Plan B, If Land Negotiations Fall Through or Fail

Negotiating with the railroads can be tricky at best. If land deals fall through or talks stall, continued community engagement, support, and enthusiasm for the project should be kept up as well as fundraising.

PRECEDENT CASE STUDIES

Firefly Trail

Location: Northeast Georgia. Clarke, Oglethorpe, Greene Counties. Athens, Winterville, Maxeys, Union Point
Which category it fulfills: A town located on a rail trail, a county with open space along a rail trail

Funding and Maintenance

Funding for the Firefly comes in the form of state grants, and local voter approved optional taxing.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources- Grant 2005- \$1,588,276
Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program- 2020-2021 \$2,109,375

Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) & Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST).
SPLOST- 2005- \$4,069,450, 2011- \$7,700,000
TSPLOST- 2018- \$16,752,000

Maintenance is handled by a combination of support from cities and volunteers as a part of the Firefly trail INC. Firefly Trail Inc. is working to create a maintenance fund. The goal is for them to handle most of the maintenance so that cities are not burdened or negatively impacted.

Community Engagement

Meetings within the three counties along the trail are held to discuss the Firefly trail project, gain community feedback, and address community concerns .

Local Action Committees- Small groups along different portions of the trail that can take up causes specific to their local section of the trail. They handle issues related to perception, maintenance, and local fundraising efforts.

Model Mile Program- A program to fund and complete small sections of the trail throughout the different counties. These help get people familiar with having a rail trail in their area and help raise general excitement about the project as a whole.

Economic Impact and Land-Use

Georgia Department of Transportation commissioned an economic impact analysis in 2016 and estimated that the firefly trail, once completed, will attract around 1.1 million users per year with a total economic impact of \$14.7 million annually.

As a result of the rural nature of much of the firefly trail no changes have had to be made to the three counties land use plans. Maxeys (a town along the trail) owns much of the right of way for the rail, and Greene county has stated that they are willing to condemn property to use for the trail. Oglethorpe County has stated they will NOT use eminent domain to acquire right of way.

Tourism

Tourism along the Firefly Trail is expected to be bolstered by its connection to Athens-Clarke County (ACC). ACC is home to the University of Georgia, and as a result has many visitors, particularly around football season. Having a rail-trail system that connects to ACC can be used to encourage safer transportation after tailgating and reduce drunk driving.

Additional Information

39 total miles planned
~19 miles completed.

Main takeaways from speaking with John Kissane(trail coordinator)
Model Mile Program
Local Action Committees

Vennbahn Trail

Location: Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg (Can be connected to the Netherlands and French networks as well)
Which category it fulfills: Villages on a rail trail, Villages that connects itself to a rail trail

Funding and Maintenance

Originally one of the most important rail lines, the Vennbahn was converted into a rail trail in the 1990's and officially opened to users in 2013. It spans over 79 miles and runs through Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg with 11 different loops within the trail.

Community Engagement

Community engagement was unfortunately not a strong aspect of the trail development for the Vennbahn Rail project. As the project already had to include three different municipal bodies for each nation, and then also the local jurisdiction which the trail passed through, community engagement of stakeholders and private businesses was not accessible.

Economic Impact and Land-Use

The Vennbahn Railtrail was advertised during its conception as a way to leverage the benefits of rural tourism throughout Europe. Hiking and biking makes up 35% of European tourism revenue, or roughly 44 billion Euros annually. With all of this in mind, the European agencies raised and funded the project to fruition with 14.5 million Euros.

Tourism

With most of the major European tourist destinations focusing on internationally renowned cities, the Vennbahn Trail had to discover new ways to highlight the features of rural Europe. The trail twists between countryside terrain, water landscape, and across mountainous ranges; by dividing the trail in sections of beautiful landscapes and altering loops, the project was able to create multiple experiences relating to nature through the same pathways.

Additional Information

Vennbahn Trail Development Strategy:

- Highlight the Natural Environment
- Reuse Infrastructure
- Provide Services
- Marketing Regional Tourism and increase visitorship to rural areas

Decision Makers:

- Shared between Belgium, Germany, and Luxembourg
- Belgium:
 - DMO: destination management organization
 - TAO: East Belgium tourism association
- Germany:
 - ET: Eifel Tourismus
 - Aachen and other Regional Districts
- Luxembourg:
 - Local Tourism Agency in Monschauer

Partners:

- EU INTERREG Funding
- Wallonia region of Belgium
- Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia, district of Aachen, municipalities)
- Luxembourg road building ministry and municipalities of Luxembourg
- Belgian municipalities
- Eifel-Ardennen Marketing
- German-speaking community of Belgium

Awards:

- European Greenways Award, 2013
- 4 out of 5 Stars on the ADFC, German Cyclist Federation
- Lauded for poor public transit accessibility
- Cycling Route of the Year at annual Dutch Cycling and Hiking Fair in 2014
- ‘Excellence Award’ in 2017 from the European Greenways Association
- International Tourism Exchange awarded Vennbahn 4 out of 5 Stars, 2019

Cardinal Greenway

Location: Muncie, Indiana

Which category it fulfills: A County with open space along a rail trail

Funding and Maintenance

The Cardinal Greenway is a rail trail in Indiana that is around 62 miles and connects two more prominent cities and Indiana’s rural towns. It was developed in 1993 after Cardinal Greenway Inc. purchased the abandoned rail line in 1968. Each county that the trail runs through (Grant, Delaware, and Wayne County) was in charge of creating its own county rail trail committee to raise funds and build its section of the rail trail. Since its construction has finished, two members of the county commission have been elected to be a member of the Cardinal Greenway Board of Directors, who oversee the greenway and host a diverse set of decision-makers with a variety of backgrounds. This rail has over 450 community volunteers and partnerships that oversee, maintain, and fund the rail trail for local use.

Community Engagement

Some of their community engagement methods include five annual biking and running events, loaner bikes available at the headquarters, and youth nature programs.

Economic Impact and Land-use

This rail kick-started a mixed-use park in Muncie called the Kitselman Pure Energy Park, which is estimated to be a 60 million dollar development. This park will also include a 9 million trailhead gateway to tie the greenway to two other trails. Annually, cardinal greenway users spend an average of 4,528 dollars.

Tourism

There is no tourism information to note. However, it has been stated that this trail has increased the number of people who pursue healthy living but also a non-motorized method of commuting. This trail has also made Muncie a more attractive place for young people to move and stay in the city. However, the cardinal greenway has a website that centralizes most of the rails information, including a page dedicated to exploring the various towns on the rail by giving a brief excerpt on the village or city and what it has to offer trail users.

Ozaukee Interurban Trail

Location: Between Milwaukee County's Oak Leaf Trail and Sheboygan's Plank Road Trail, and east of the Eisenbahn State Trail in Washington County.

Which category it fulfills: Towns on a rail trail, Towns that connects itself to a rail trail

Funding and Maintenance

The Interurban Trail Advisory Council has been responsible for many successes along the Ozaukee Interurban Trail including the original creation and development of the Trail. As its first success, the Ozaukee Interurban Trail Advisory Council garnered political and financial support to create the Ozaukee Interurban Trail, a 30-mile, paved, non-motorized transportation and recreation trail in Ozaukee County. Beginning in 2001 the Advisory Council was awarded a \$1,075,805.00 grant to develop the now 30-mile trail. The Advisory Council members were also instrumental in negotiating a long-term license use agreement with We Energies, a local power utility that owns the historic right-of-way, for the development of a multi-use, non-motorized transportation and recreation trail. More recently and perhaps most notably, a \$1.76 million project that made significant improvements to the safety of users on the OIT is the bicycle/pedestrian bridge over County Highway W and Interstate 43.

Community Engagement

The Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department was awarded a Wisconsin Department of Tourism Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant to develop and implement a marketing strategy to promote usage of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail during the fall and winter shoulder seasons. This grant allowed Ozaukee County to develop an engaging branding campaign that provided for consistency throughout trail communities. This project is a partnership of active, passionate community organizations, including the Ozaukee County Tourism Council, Ozaukee County Planning and Parks, and our area Chambers of Commerce (including Grafton, Cedarburg, Mequon-Thiensville, Port Washington and Belgium).

Economic Impact and Land-Use

Better marketing of the Interurban Trail provides additional recreational opportunities for residents and visitors who are currently unaware of this amazing amenity.

The Advisory Council members were instrumental in negotiating a long-term license use agreement with We Energies, a local power utility that owns the historic right-of-way, for the development of a multi-use, non-motorized transportation and recreation trail. The following year the Council developed a "model" ordinance for this multi-jurisdictional trail and subsequent jurisdictional agreements between six incorporated jurisdictions (e.g. cities and villages), 3 unincorporated jurisdictions (e.g. towns), and the County.

Tourism

The Trail is intended for year round uses such as biking, in-line skating, walking, running, and cross-country skiing, and is designated as a "Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail." Use of motorized vehicles (including snowmobiles) and horses is prohibited.

Additional Information

The Route of the Badger, launched in 2014 through Rails-to-Trail Conservancy (RTC), is an initiative to connect trails throughout Southeastern Wisconsin's seven counties including Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha. The Route of the Badger offers a vision centered on a 700-mile-plus regional trail system connecting people and providing opportunities for recreation, connections to nature, tourism and local businesses. This network of trails currently consists of about 340 miles of existing trails. Small investments that build upon existing infrastructure will greatly improve connectivity within the region.

Trans Canada Trail

Location: Canada

Which category it fulfills: Management of trail

Funding and Maintenance

The Board of Directors is responsible for the future development and direction of the trail, The Foundation pulls in the cash, and Management is responsible for operations and communication for the non-profit.

The partners and sponsors are corporations, governments (local and state), individual communities along the trail, and individual people who promote the trail, famous people, internet influencers, etc.

The TCT relies on provinces and territory trail partners (local and state governments) and volunteers for building and maintaining the trail. They have a large emphasis on organizing a broad coalition of stakeholders and inclusive trail planning. Their most recent accomplishment was a digital accessibility map. Volunteers are mainly older, so they've started a program for youth to demonstrate that a career in trail building is viable. Takes the form of summer camps, paid internships, and paid part time employment.

Community Engagement

Unknown

Economic Impact and Land-Use

Unknown

Tourism

Part of the board's future vision is more programming along the trail, in partnership with local governments. In 2020 they held the first Great Canadian Hike, a day where they encouraged everyone to get out and take a walk or hike.

Another large part of the vision is promoting certain sections for eco-tourism to boost local economies.

Additional Information

The origins of the trail date back to 1992 to celebrate the 125th birthday of Canada. The trail completely connected the country in 2017, connecting the Pacific, Arctic, and Atlantic. It is accessible for cyclists, walkers, hikers, but some parts of the trail are water crossings (like across the Great Lakes and some rivers) and can only be accessed by kayaks/canoes. Other parts, like the northern areas, are accessible by snowshoe and sometimes snowmobile.

Silver Comet Trail

Location: Northwest Georgia (Cobb County, Paulding, and Polk)

Which category it fulfills: Urban and Rural Settings, Recreation and Commuting Activities

Funding and Maintenance

The conversion of this deprecated right-of-way into a vibrant multi-use path in the connecting three counties in the late 1990s and early 2000s was a collaborative effort between multiple organizations, public and private. On the public side was the Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia State Parks, Cobb County Department of Transportation, Paulding County, Polk County, and a critical partner on the private side was an organization called the PATH Foundation whose mission is to connect metropolitan Atlanta with a network of trails. The two initial construction phases were reported to have cost around \$30MM raised from among the mentioned groups.

Community Engagement

Little information is available about community engagement practices during the initiation and construction of the project, but a key community partner over time has been a local advocacy group called the Georgia Rails Into Trails Society, or GRITS. Contemporary expansion projects always feature substantial community engagement meetings.

Economic Impact and Land-Use

An economic impact study conducted in 2013 calculated a total economic impact of \$118MM for the region, supporting 1,310 jobs. It also found a 4-7% increase in property values for homes within a quarter mile of the trail.

Tourism

That same 2013 economic impact report estimated 1.9 million users that year, of whom 400,000 were tourists.

Additional Information

The trail takes its name from the Silver Comet passenger train line that ran from New York to Birmingham. It extends through three counties in Georgia—Cobb, Paulding, and Polk—to the Alabama border and now connects to the Chief Ladiga Trail on the Alabama side (the two trails together stretch over 95 miles).

Washington and Old Dominion Trail

Location: Arlington, Falls Church, Dunn Loring, Vienna, Reston, Herndon, Sterling, Ashburn, Leesburg, Purcellville, and Hamilton.

Which category it fulfills: Villages on a rail trail, Towns open space along the trail

Funding and Maintenance

The Friends of the Washington and Old Dominion Trail (or Railroad Regional Park) — FoWOD for short in charge of maintenance the trail.

Community Engagement

Established in 1991, the Friends of the Washington and Old Dominion Trail (or Railroad Regional Park) — FoWOD for short — is a citizen-driven organization dedicated to protecting and improving the W&OD Trail. It works as an advisory body of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. The governing body of the FoWOD normally consists of 15 residents of Northern Virginia who, living in jurisdictions that are located either on or near the W&OD Trail, have a variety of recreational interests in it. The purpose of the FoWOD is to support and enhance the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park (W&OD) as a recreational, environmental and historic resource through volunteer efforts in fundraising, promotion, educational programming and maintenance.

The Friends of the W&OD generally meet on the first Tuesday of each month beginning at 7p.m. at the Vienna Community Center, and membership is open to any individual, business firm, or group interested in furthering the objectives of the Friends.

Economic Impact and Land-Use

A 2004 research estimated that 1.7 million adult W&OD users spent in total about \$12 million annually related to their use recreational use of the trail. Of this amount, about \$7 million was spent directly in the northern Virginia economy by locals and non-locals using the trail. The estimated 1.6 million local visits accounted for about \$5.3 million of spending directly related to the use of the W&OD.

Nonlocal visitors spent about \$199 per group trip and \$74 per person to visit the W&OD. Of this amount, \$41.50 per group and \$15 per person was spent in the northern Virginia economy directly related to trail use. Overall, the estimated \$1.4 million in nonlocal spending generated about \$1.8 million in local economic impacts and supported 34 full time job equivalents and about \$642 thousand of personal income.

Finally, while access to the trail is "free," there is nevertheless considerable economic value that accrues to W&OD users. This net economic value or consumer surplus is a dollar measure of the amount of welfare that users would lose if the trail were unavailable. Using conventional economic methods, it was determined that, on average, a trip to the W&OD was worth between \$9 and \$14 dollars per person more than the average cost to use the trail. Extrapolating this net economic benefit across 1.7 million adult visits, of which 93 percent were for the primary purpose of visiting the W&OD, leads to an annual net economic benefit of trail access to users of between \$14.4- and \$21.6 million. Because the W&OD is primarily a local resource (95% of visits are by locals) rather than a destination trail, the vast majority of these net economic benefits accrue to northern Virginia residents.

Tourism

The W&OD trail is noted for being a rails-to-trails success story and is used by more than 2 million two million walkers, runners, cyclists, bladders and equestrians annually. All but 5 percent are from counties adjacent to the trail, with the average user traveling 19 miles to reach the trail. Recreation and fitness are the most common uses for the trail at 84 percent, with 6 percent using the trail to commute. A quarter of users surveyed lived adjacent to the trail.

Nearly all (93%) respondents identified health benefits from the trail as having high importance. A safe place to recreate had the next-highest ranking (73%). The opportunity to view nature and fostering a sense of community had the next-highest importance level, followed by a place for athletic training, an alternative commuting option, and a place to exercise pets.

Additional Information

The route was the site of a few skirmishes during the Civil War, and was truly witness to the development of Northern Virginia based largely on its route. The tracks wound through what is today Arlington, Falls Church, Vienna, Reston, Herndon, Sterling, Leesburg and Purcellville – all significant modern sites, many of which are key for economic development.

The railroad encountered its demise in 1968 and on November 5, 1988, NOVA Parks celebrated the opening of the Trail's final nine miles into Purcellville. Today, the Trail is an artery for visitors and commuters year-round.

PRECEDENT SUMMARY

NAME (Location)	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION	OPENED	ENVIRONMENTS				ACTIVITIES		
				URBAN	RURAL	SUBURBAN	COMMUTING	TOURISM	RECREATION	
FIREFLY TRAIL (Northeast Georgia, USA)	39 miles (5.2 open)	In-progress rail trail connecting Athens-Clarke County, Ga to Union Point, Ga	2017 - First Model Mile	X	X	X	X	X	X	
VENNBAHN (Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg)	79 miles	Connects Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg	2012		X		X	X	X	
OZAUKEE INTERURBAN (Eastern Wisconsin, USA)	40 miles	Long rail trail in Ozaukee and Sheboygan Counties	2002 - Majority Opens 2009 - Expands		X	X	X	X	X	
TRANS CANADA (Spans Canada)	15,000 miles	Crosses Canada and connects the Atlantic, Arctic, and Pacific Oceans	1992 - First Section 2017 - Fully Connected		X	X	X	X	X	
SILVER COMET (Northwest Georgia, USA)	61 miles	Extends from Cobb County northwest of Atlanta to the Alabama border.	2003 - Majority Opens 2007 - Remainder Open	X	X	X	X	X	X	
WASHINGTON AND OLD DOMINION (Northern Virginia, USA)	44.5 miles	Trail connects Arlington, Falls Church, Vienna, Reston, Herndon, Sterling, Leesburg and Purcellville	1968 - First section of trail 1988 - Trail Complete	X	X	X	X	X	X	
SHENANDOAH TRAIL (Shenandoah Valley, VA)	44.5 miles	Connects Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties		X	X	X	X	X	X	