

Erie to Pittsburgh/PA Wilds Gap Assessment Report



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An electronic version of this report can be found at pecpa.org/ARCreport



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The vitality of communities in rural Appalachia is directly tied to the natural resources around them. In the last twenty years, this vitality has transitioned from one of extraction of those resources to developing attractions that highlight the natural resources of the region. As towns and villages take stock of their strengths and assets in order to foster sustainable communities, they have adopted resilient strategies to avoid the boom-to-bust cycles that have typified the region going back 200 years. In no small part, outdoor recreation (and trails specifically) has helped to stabilize many communities that have chosen to focus on utilization of the natural environment to develop recreational attractions. This study lays out a path for the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the PA Wilds Loop to embark upon with the objective of bringing economic stability and community vitality to an eleven-county region of Western Pennsylvania.

The project team assessed 250 miles of the physical corridor on the proposed routes, as well as performed a selective review of open trails. This approach was focused on increasing the understanding of where the best application of resources and technical assistance could begin to deliver the most benefit quickly. It is a truism in trail development that success begets success; completion of one key segment builds momentum towards the completion of the next trail gap.

Contained in the Results and Recommendations section of this study (p. 172) is a table of the trail sections that rise to the top for implementation. For the purpose of trying to impact the communities through which trails will pass, PEC's approach to this study concentrated on projects that would draw significant attention to the entirety of the trail corridor. This was done because once a trail reaches a critical length, it becomes more than a local amenity and begins to attract a wider user base. Additionally, the study identified trail sections containing projects that are critical infrastructure pieces that will benefit from the focused attention that a study of this nature can bring. Completion of these infrastructure investments will make it possible to approach the remaining gaps that have languished because they face significant hurdles that are beyond the capacity of local trail groups.

Both the Pittsburgh to Erie Trail and the PA Wilds Loop are part of the larger, more ambitious project, the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (IHTC). The IHTC is an effort to connect the region's population centers via destination trails that will attract users locally and nationally. In order to best take advantage of the economic impact that these visitors can have, PEC has developed visitor-readiness tools for trail communities, called "Outdoor Towns". The Outdoor Towns online toolkit has been developed to help communities identify assets and the development of those assets, and to ensure successful outcomes. The tool kit focuses on six steps to help communities pull together, engage in a self-assessment, create an action plan and implement a strategy to make a difference in their community. This work isn't just about the out of town visitors, as the efforts provide tangible benefits to residents who may have avoided these trail corridors when they were the remnants and reminders of a long-gone industrial past. PEC is committed to continuing engagement with communities along these corridors.

INTRODUCTION

Long distance, multi-use trail systems provide a multitude of well-documented benefits. Trails are an asset to the communities and regions they pass through, providing opportunities for recreation, economic development, conservation, exercise and overall improved quality of life. The completion of these trails often takes decades, with challenges including property ownership, funding and lack of capacity. This study assesses the gaps in the trail corridor on the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and PA Wilds Loop. The goal is to identify key segments that are currently feasible for completion. Completion of these segments would serve to move the overall project forward and increase the benefits that trails provide.

The eleven-county study area is typical of rural Appalachia, despite its proximity to Pittsburgh, the 2nd largest city in Pennsylvania. The unemployment rate is .3 to 2.7 percent higher than the state as a whole, and the median household income in every county (except Allegheny) is consistently \$10,000 to \$15,000 less than the average household in Pennsylvania. The age and earning trends also reflect this discrepancy, as the counties tend to have an older population and fewer opportunities for earning advancement than the southeastern portion of the state. With these factors in mind, the proposed trail project presents a chance to bring fresh opportunities to local communities and allow these populations to engage in a new resource. The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail (EPT) is a planned 270-mile network of trails, of which 66% of the route is connected as of 2019. When completed, the network will connect the Erie bayfront at Dobbins Landing to Point State Park in Pittsburgh. The effort to complete the EPT is being spearheaded by the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance (EPTA), a volunteer organization that started in 2008.

The PA Wilds Loop is a 220-mile network of trails spanning the PA Wilds region, designated by the state of Pennsylvania as a Conservation Landscape Initiative to help promote the region and focus planning efforts. At the time of this study, 73% of the PA Wilds Loop is complete or in progress. Unlike the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, no formal system-wide alliance exists. PEC began convening trail groups, advocates and municipal leaders to support this effort in 2018. With the outreach conducted as a part of this study, it was evident that there is energy among the individual trails to connect into the larger network.

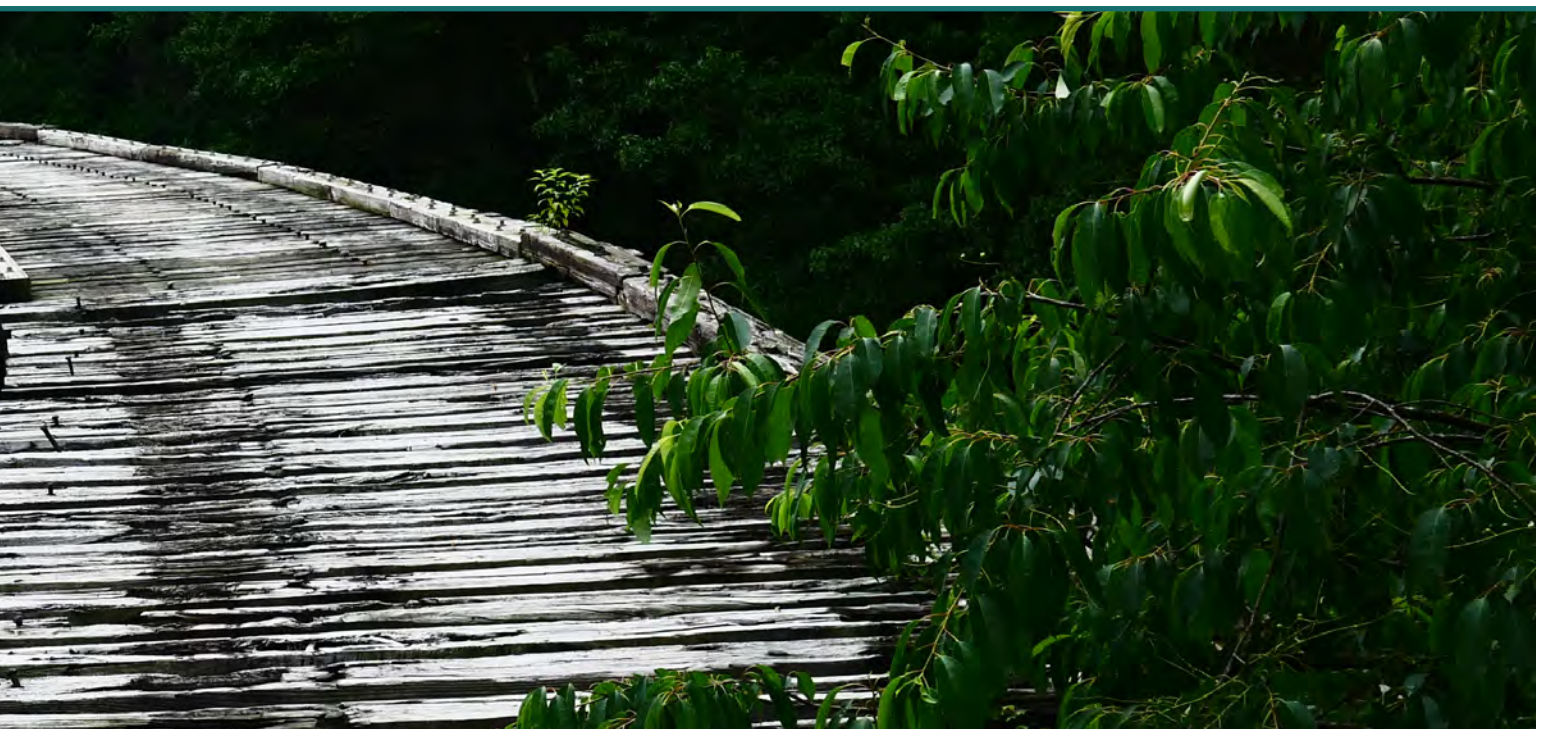


Both trail networks face obstacles to their completion. While significant progress has been made, key issues exist on the remaining gaps including a lack of legal rights-of-way, funding deficiencies and/or lack of project management capacity. This study focuses on planned and unplanned gaps in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail system and the Pennsylvania Wilds Loop Trail system. Additionally, the study also provides a general analysis of open trail segments and on-road routes. To accomplish this, the project team conducted a combination of GIS analysis, existing plan review and ground truthing for the entirety of the trail corridors.

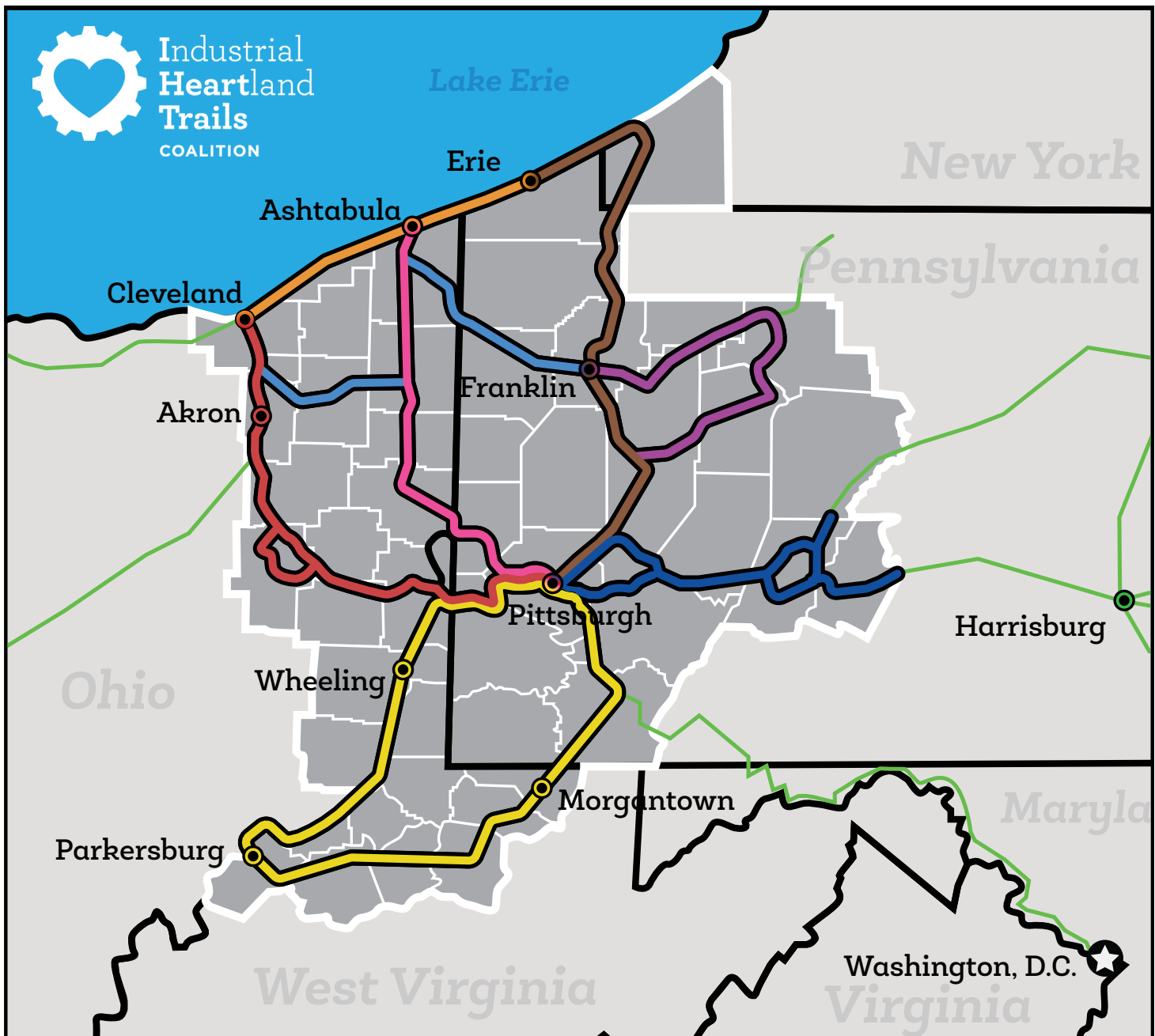
The desired outcome of this work is to chart a course for the completion of the gaps in these trail systems. The intention is to identify key projects that have attributes that lend to their readiness to move towards development. The completion of these key projects will help to bolster the effort to advance the remaining segments of trail. The results will aid in strategizing future funding requests from federal, state and private sources.

In any prospective trail study, certain approaches and assumptions are made about the feasibility of the project. In terms of this study, the focus was on the physical feasibility of the trail corridor, meaning: is it possible to connect the trail corridors along the proposed route? Specifically, we attempted to assess how much of the original rail corridor was still intact and to suggest alternate alignments when following the original corridor was no longer viable. In cases where the desired trail route does not follow a historical corridor, the study team proposed several options which were narrowed down in the writing of this report towards the most practical and expedient options.

Although we did cursory research into the property ownership issues of the corridor, we did not approach landowners outside of the conversations that local trail groups are already engaged in. We also noted several instances where there is a discrepancy between tax parcel data and local information about ownership. Because PEC will not be the entity to begin negotiations to take ownership of any parcels, we did not pursue the legal feasibility of the trail project. That work is best handled on a case by case basis and is outside of the scope of this study.



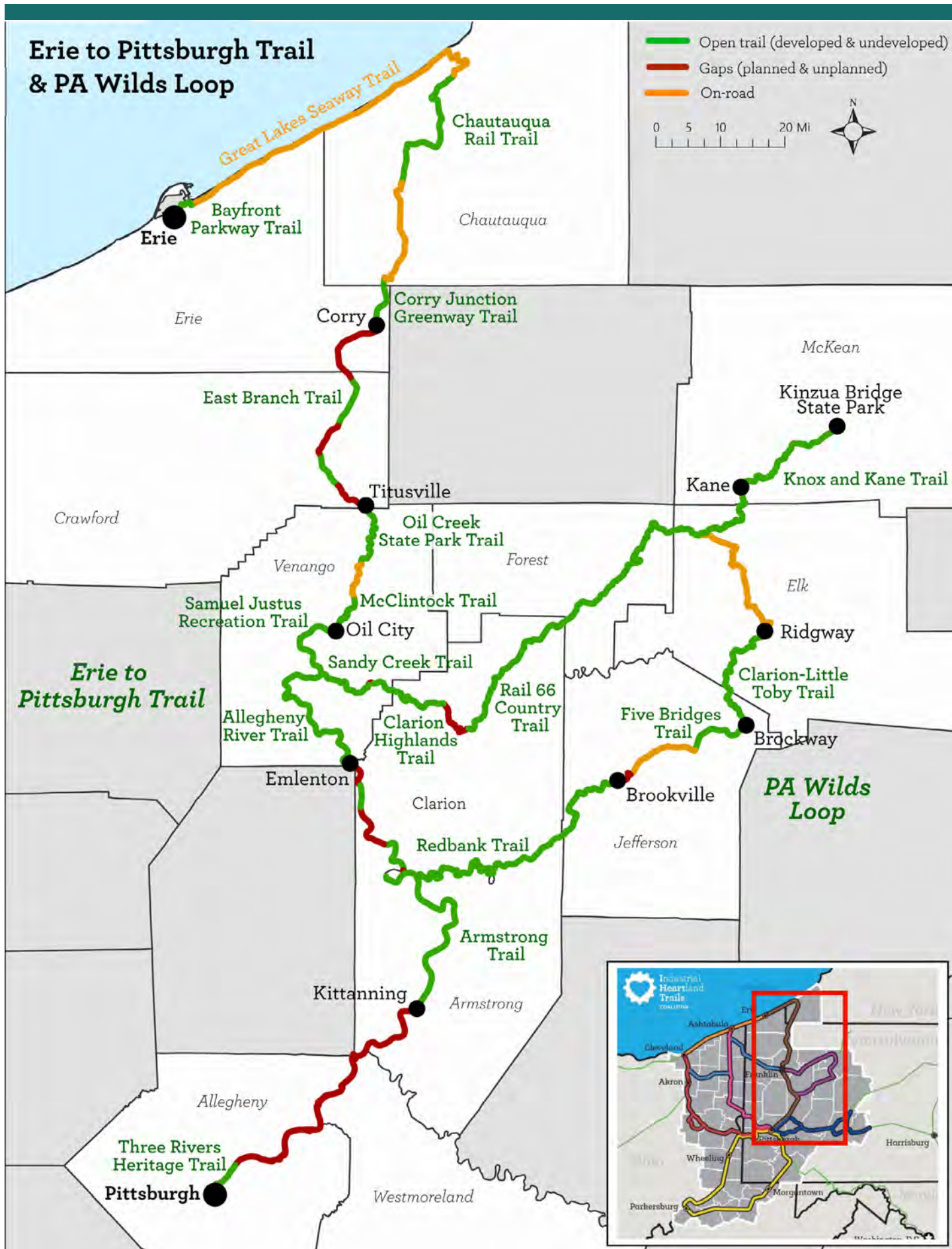
TRAIL CORRIDOR OVERVIEWS AND MAPS



Industrial Heartland Trail Coalition

The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and PA Wilds Loop Trails are corridors included in the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (IHTC). The IHTC is an outgrowth of the Power of 32, a regional visioning process looking at the needs of 32 counties in western Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, southern Ohio and western Maryland. Trail connections were identified as one of the initiatives of the Power of 32 report and a coalition of advocates throughout the region began working together. In 2013, this group met with yet another set of trail advocates from northeast Ohio at a gathering called The Forks of the Ohio, and agreed on some basic goals for a new coalition, to be coordinated by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), and the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program (NPS RTCA). In 2015, after over a year of work developing an identity and agreement on some core principles, the coalition formalized under the name Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (IHTC) and brand, I Heart Trails.

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail & PA Wilds Loop



The focus of the coalition is to develop eight destination corridors, linking the major population centers of the region via primarily off-road trails. The goal is to gain national recognition and bring consistent economic impact to the region. To do this, PEC, RTC and NPS have all taken on a leadership role in the corridors to both help advance the specific trail projects, and make sure that the broader community is engaged to fully take advantage of the opportunity. To this end, the coalition has sponsored community meetings, developed a tourism strategy and created trail itineraries to take advantage of what is on the ground now and build excitement for the full potential.

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail System

This report is focused on the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance's preferred alignment for the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. The trail, when complete, will be a 270-mile network of trails in Erie, Chautauqua (NY), Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Armstrong, Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties.

Erie Bayfront Connector Trail

The EPT uses the Erie Bayfront Connector Trail, starting at Dobbins landing on Lake Erie, for approximately 1.6 miles. The paved, multi-use trail is maintained by the City of Erie.

Great Lakes Seaway Trail

The EPT follows the Great Lakes Seaway Trail, an on-road scenic byway, for approximately 38 miles. The Seaway Trail connects Erie, PA to Brocton, NY.

Chautauqua Rail-trail

The Chautauqua Rail-trail is overseen by Chautauqua Rails to Trails. The 24-mile-long primarily crushed limestone-surfaced path connects Brocton to Sherman in Chautauqua County, NY.

Corry Junction Greenway Trail

The Corry Junction Greenway Trail is located in Chautauqua County, NY and Erie County, PA. The nearly six-mile path is a project of the Northwest PA Trails Association.

East Branch Trail

The East Branch Trail, located in Crawford County, PA, is a paved asphalt multi-use trail. The trail is currently three miles long and is overseen by the Clear Lake Authority.

Queen City Trail

The Queen City Trail is located on the border of Crawford and Venango County. The two-mile-long asphalt trail passes through Titusville and connects to Oil Creek State Park Trail.

Oil Creek State Park Trail

The Oil Creek State Park Trail is located within the boundary of Oil Creek State Park in Venango County, PA. The nine-mile crushed stone trail is overseen by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of State Parks.

McClintock Trail

The McClintock Trail is in Venango County, PA. The northern 1.8-mile section is share-the-road. The southern 1.7-mile section is a paved, off-road rail-with-trail, paralleling active railroad tracks.

Samuel Justus Trail

The Samuel Justus Recreation Trail is in Venango County, PA. The asphalt-surfaced trail is 6 miles long and is overseen by the Allegheny Valley Trails Association.

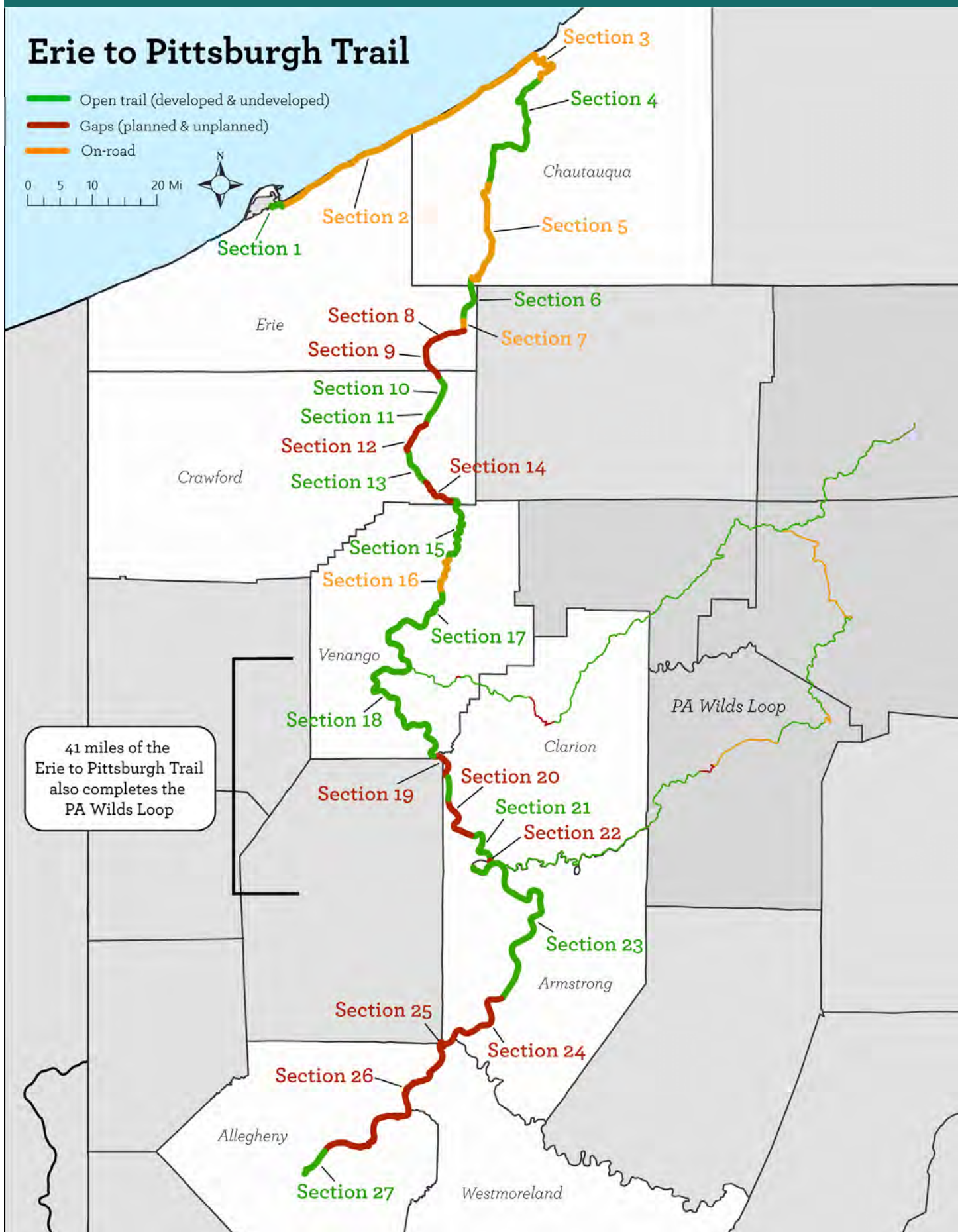
Allegheny River Trail

The Allegheny River Trail is 32 miles of non-contiguous trails along the Allegheny River in PA counties of Venango and Armstrong. The asphalt-surfaced trail is overseen by the Allegheny Valley Trails Association.

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail

- Open trail (developed & undeveloped)
- Gaps (planned & unplanned)
- On-road

0 5 10 20 Mi



Armstrong Trail

The Armstrong Trail is located along the eastern bank of the Allegheny River in the PA counties of Armstrong and Clarion. The 36-mile-long crushed stone surfaced trail is overseen by Armstrong Trails.

Three Rivers Heritage Trail

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail is a multi use riverfront trail system. This 24 mile nonlinear trail has segments on both banks of Pittsburgh's three rivers. The trail, as it aligns with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor, currently connects Point State Park and Millvale, with plans to continue development to Freeport to connect to the Armstrong Trail. Friends of the Riverfront is coordinating the effort, working with municipal partners including Allegheny County and the boroughs and townships the planned route passes through.

PA Wilds Loop

The PA Wilds Loop is an approximately 220-mile loop trail in Clarion, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Venango counties, showcasing some of the remote beauty of the PA Wilds region. It is comprised of nine individual trails, each with its own individual character. The Loop connects to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, sharing a portion of the Erie to Pittsburgh alignment for 41 miles.

Sandy Creek Trail

The Sandy Creek Trail is overseen by the Allegheny Valley Trails Association. It is an asphalt surfaced 12-mile-long rail-trail. It is in Venango County and is complete.

Clarion Highlands Trail

The Clarion Highlands Trail is overseen by the Allegheny Valley Trails Association. It is an asphalt surfaced, 8.5-mile-long rail-trail located in Venango County.

Rail 66 Country Trail

The Rail 66 Country Trail is overseen by Rail 66 Country Trail Association. It is 12 miles of open, improved trail from Marianne to Leeper in Clarion County, part of the Knox and Kane Trail System.

Knox and Kane Trail

The Knox and Kane Trail system is a planned 74-mile rail-trail, connecting the community of Knox with the Kinzua Bridge State Park through Elk, Forest and Clarion counties. The corridor is owned by the Headwaters Charitable Trust and several trail groups and entities are jointly working on completing sections. This includes the Rail 66 Country Trail Association, Jenks Township, Mount Jewett to Kinzua Trail Club and the Trail Association of the McKean/Elk Divide.

Clarion-Little Toby Trail

The Clarion-Little Toby Creek Trail is overseen by Tricounty Rails-to-Trails. The 18-mile-long crushed stone-surfaced trail, located in Elk and Jefferson counties, connects Ridgway and Brockway. A 1.8-mile section is rail-with-trail, still hosting rail traffic.

Five Bridges Trail

The Five Bridges Trail is overseen by Tricounty Rails to Trails. 8.44 miles of the rail-trail corridor is open to the public but not surfaced other than ballast and loose gravel. The trail is in Jefferson County.

Redbank Valley Trail

The Redbank Valley Trail is overseen by the Redbank Valley Trail Association. The 42-mile-long crushed-stone surfaced rail-trail is in Jefferson and Clarion counties and connects Brookville with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail near East Brady.

Armstrong Trail (see description in the Erie to Pittsburgh overview)

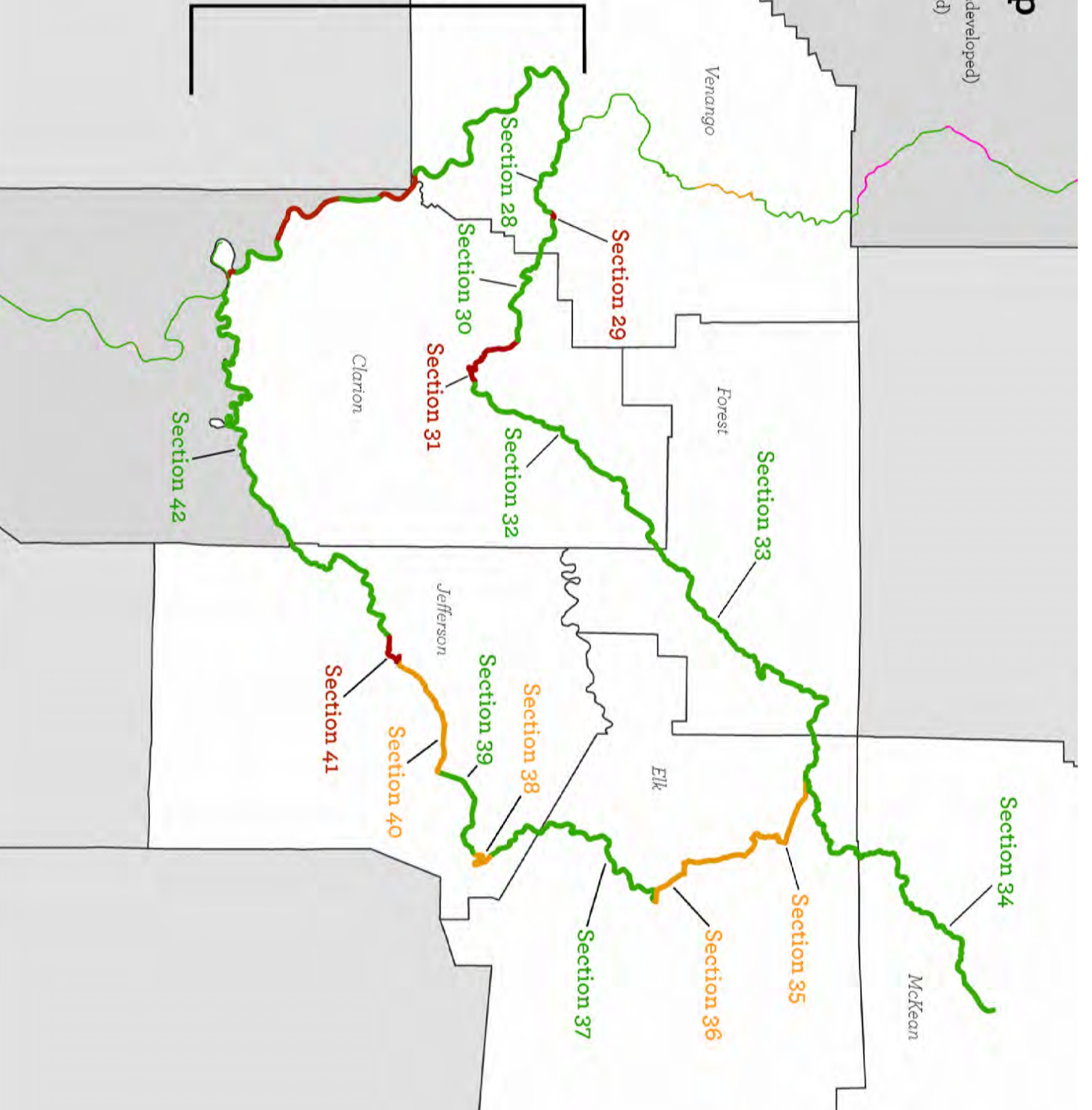
Allegheny River Trail (see description in the Erie to Pittsburgh overview)

PA Wilds Loop

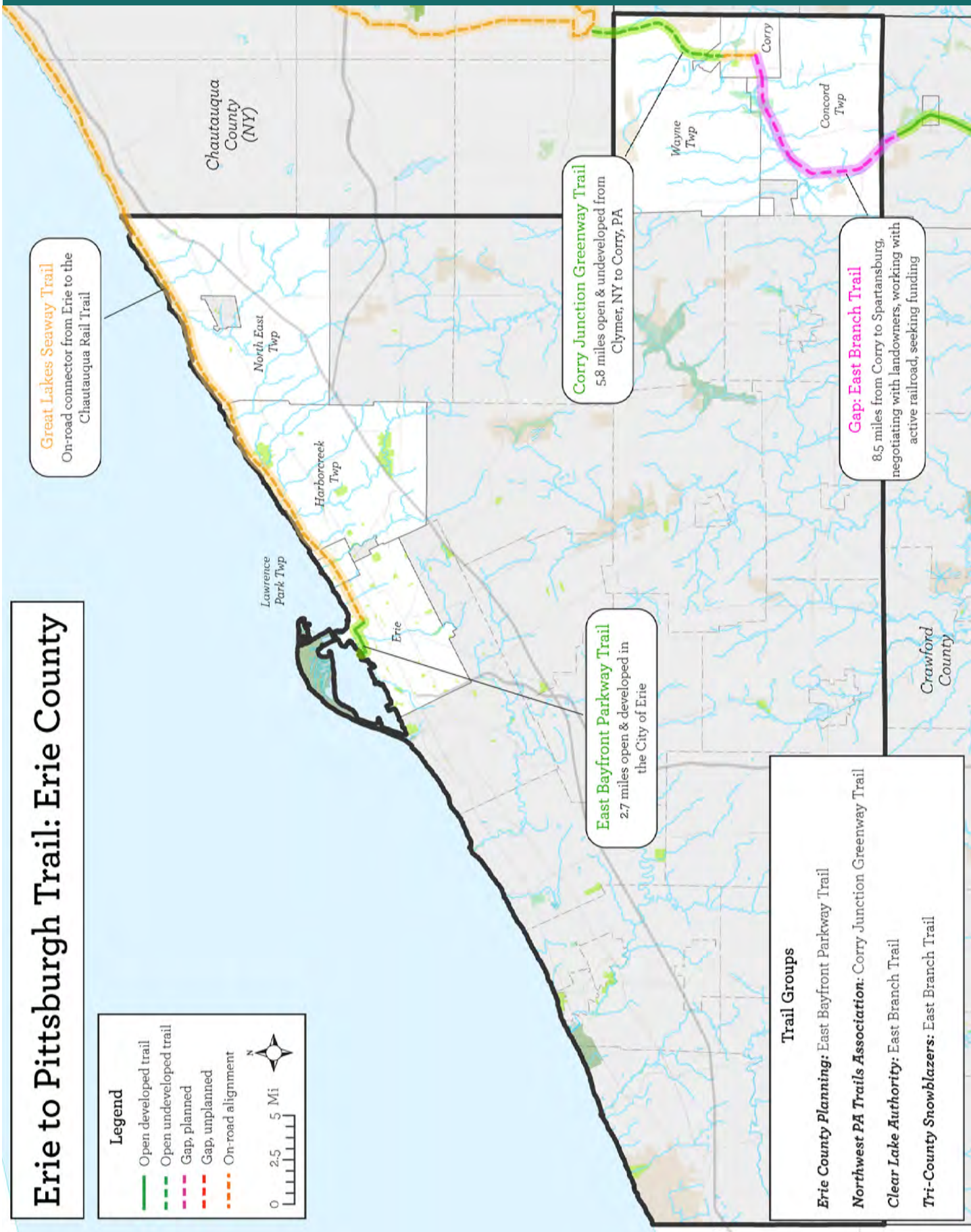
- Open trail (developed & undeveloped)
- Gaps (planned & unplanned)
- On-road



41 miles of the
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail
also completes the
PA Wilds Loop



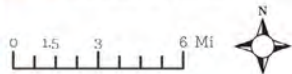
ERIE TO PITTSBURGH TRAIL: COUNTY MAPS



Erie to Pittsburgh Trail: Chautauqua County

Legend

- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment



Trail Groups

Chautauqua Rails to Trails:
Chautauqua Rail Trail

Great Lakes Seaway Trail

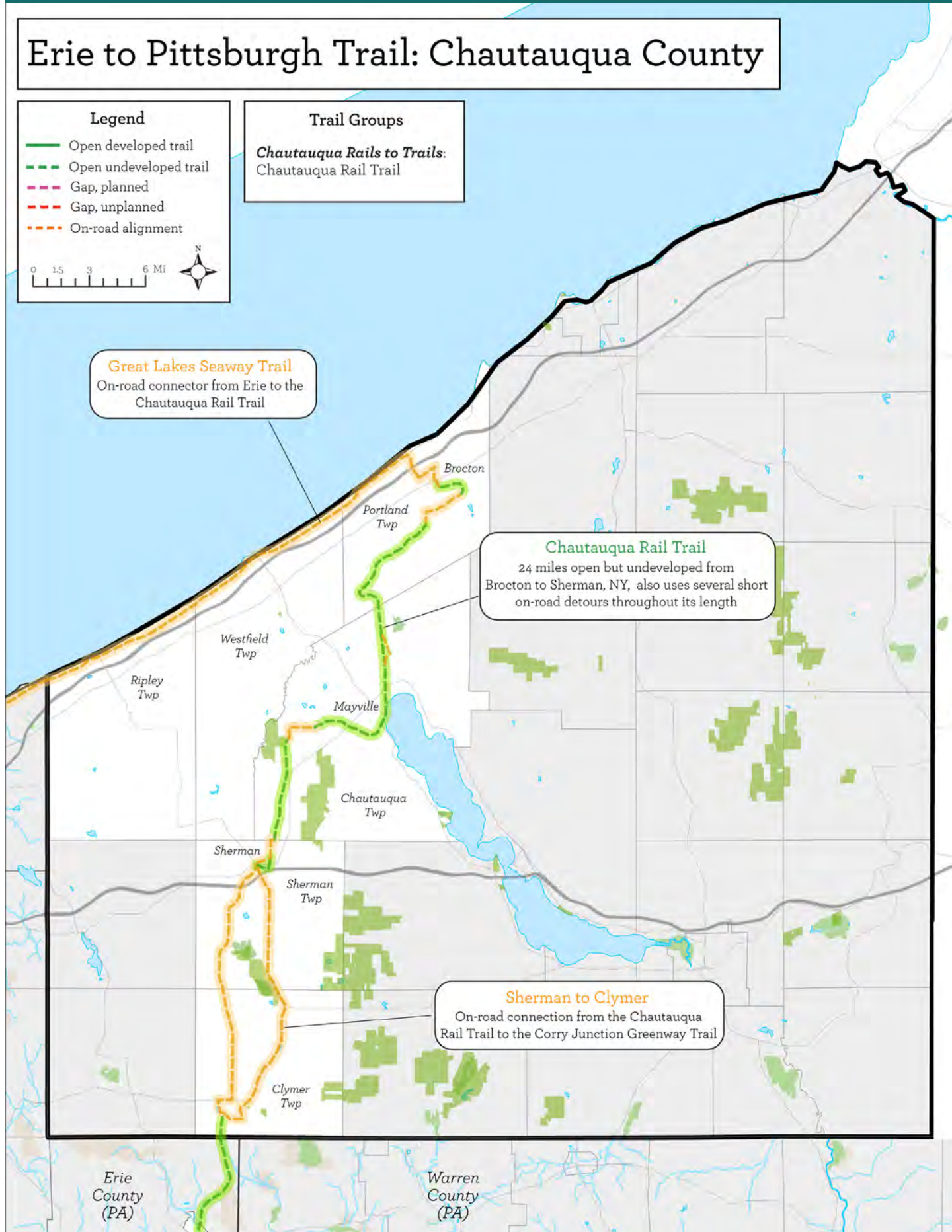
On-road connector from Erie to the
Chautauqua Rail Trail

Chautauqua Rail Trail

24 miles open but undeveloped from
Brocton to Sherman, NY, also uses several short
on-road detours throughout its length

Sherman to Clymer

On-road connection from the Chautauqua
Rail Trail to the Corry Junction Greenway Trail



Erie to Pittsburgh Trail: Crawford County

Legend

- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment



Trail Groups

Clear Lake Authority:
East Branch Trail

Tri-County Snowblazers:
East Branch Trail

City of Titusville:
Queen City Trail

Gap: East Branch Trail

8.5 miles from Corry to Spartansburg, developing strategies for trail development, funding needed

East Branch Trail

3 miles open & developed through Spartansburg and Sparta Township

East Branch Trail

3.5 miles from Spartansburg to Fish Flats Rd, property owned by Clear Lake Authority, some work has been done by CLA, corridor is passable but undeveloped

Gap: East Branch Trail

4 miles from Fish Flats Rd to Station Rd, property owned by Clear Lake Authority but major implementation roadblocks exist

Centerville to Hydetown

6 miles, property owned by Clear Lake Authority, no activity on this section yet, corridor is passable but undeveloped

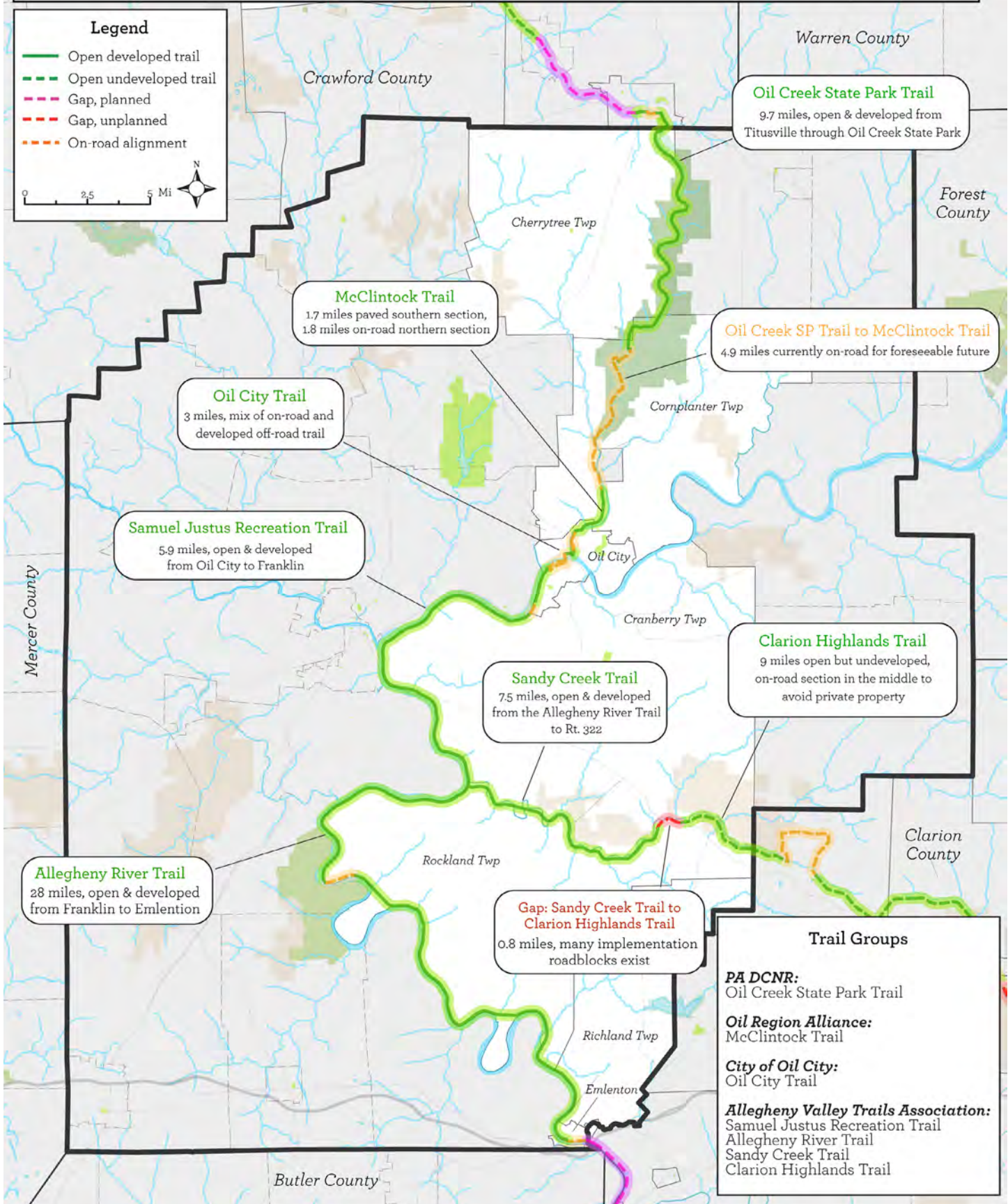
Queen City Trail

1.25 miles open & developed off-road, .25 miles on-road through Titusville

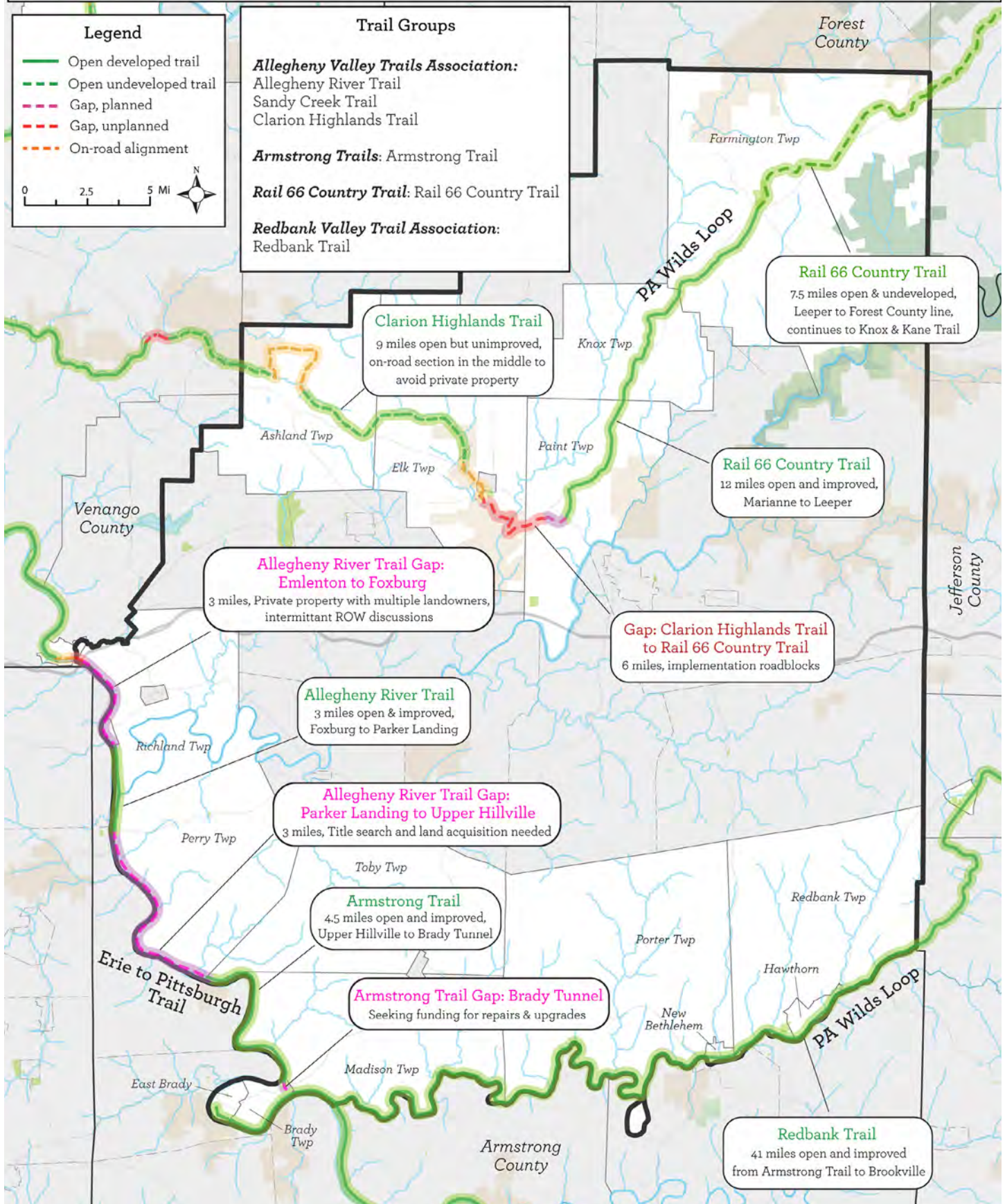
Gap: Hydetown to Titusville

4 miles, currently no active trail group

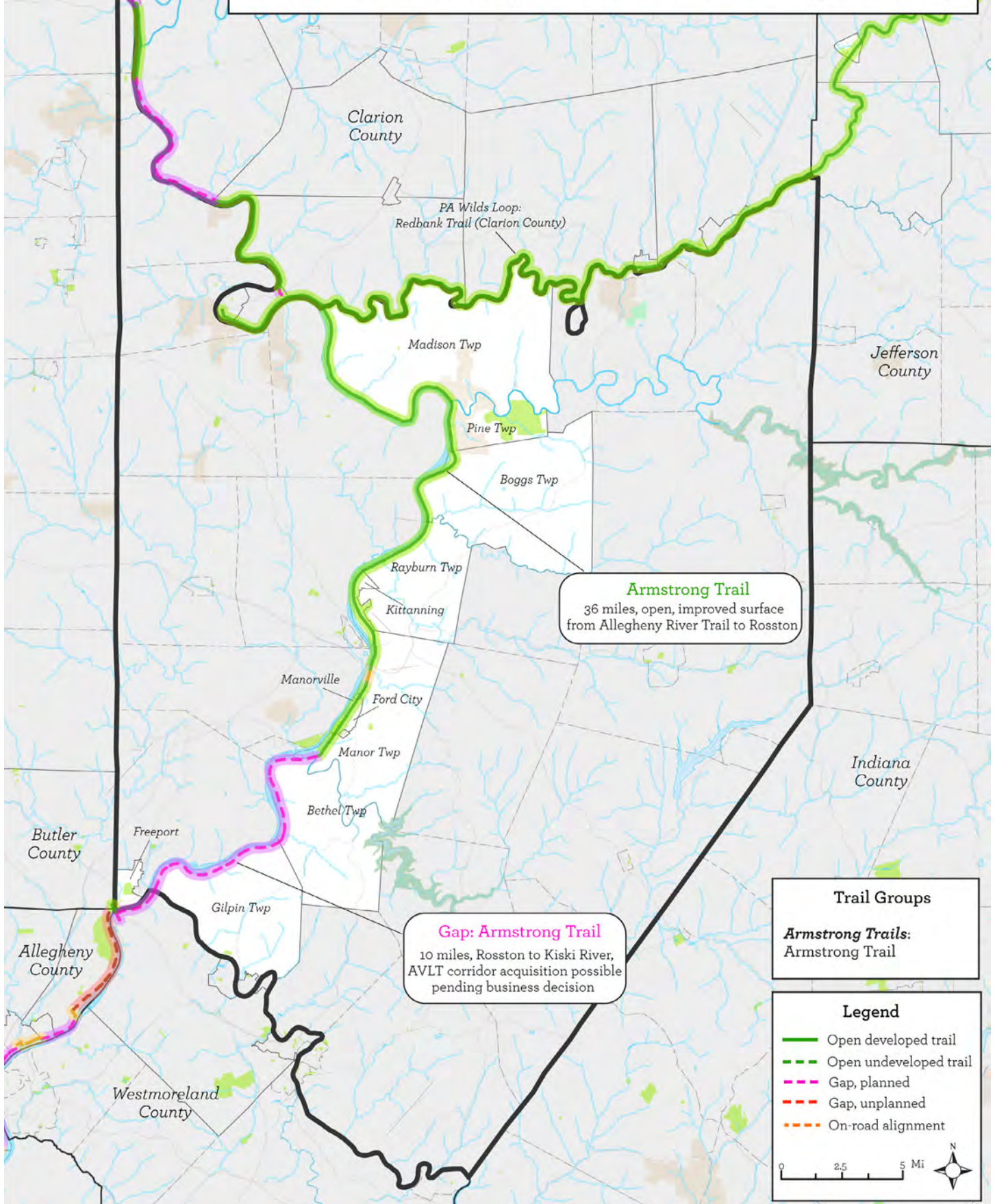
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail & PA Wilds Loop: Venango County



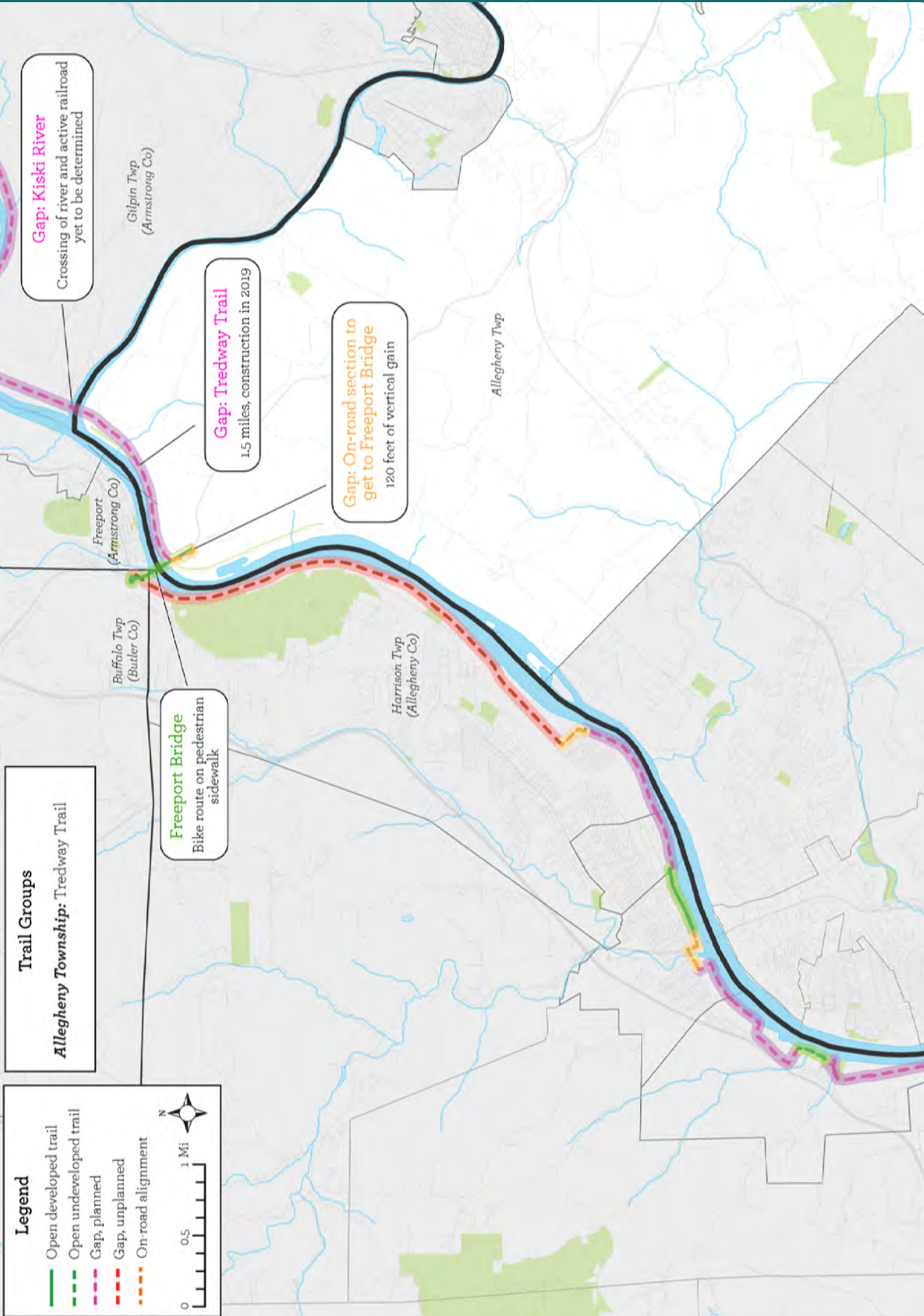
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail & PA Wilds Loop: Clarion County



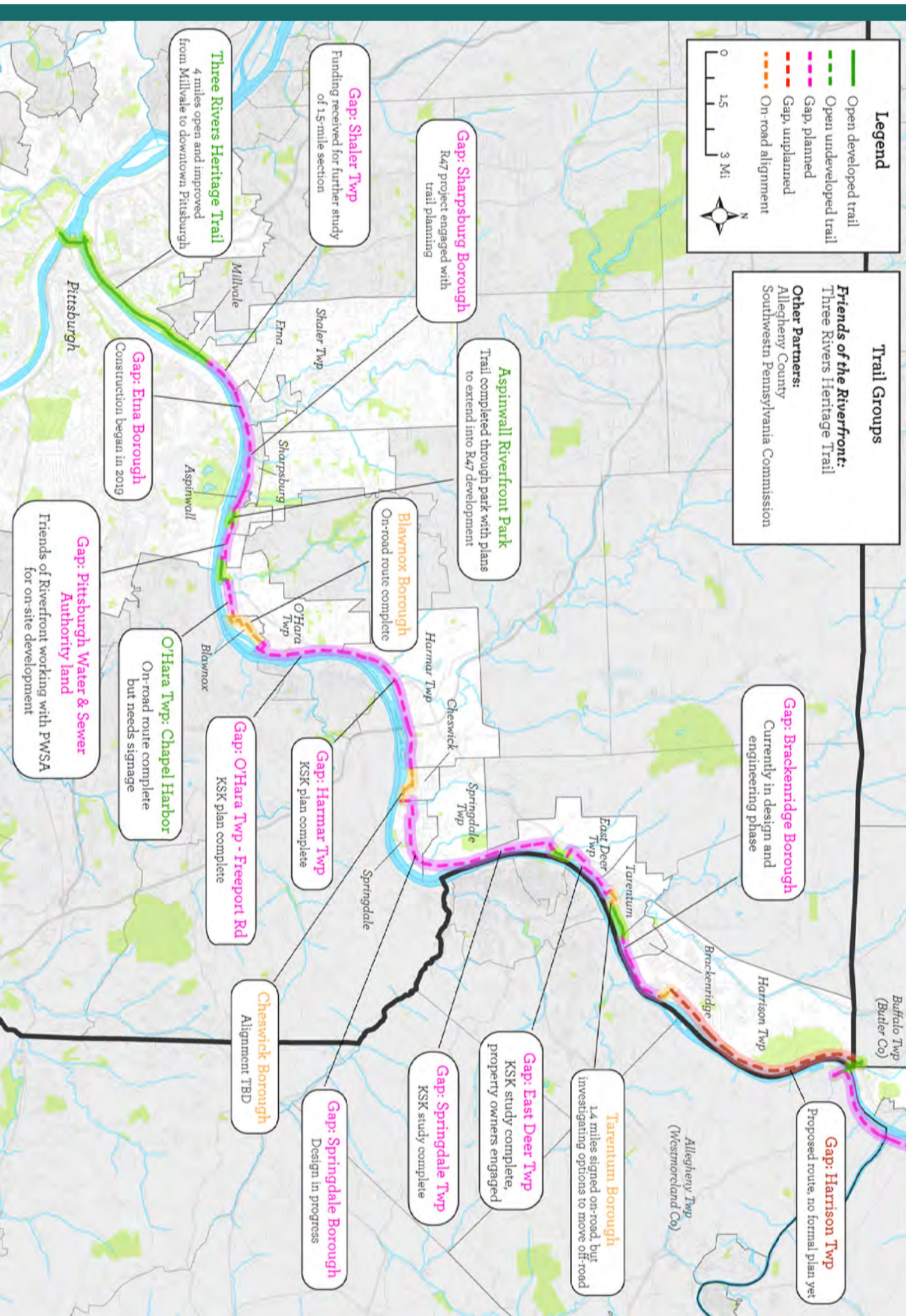
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail: Armstrong County



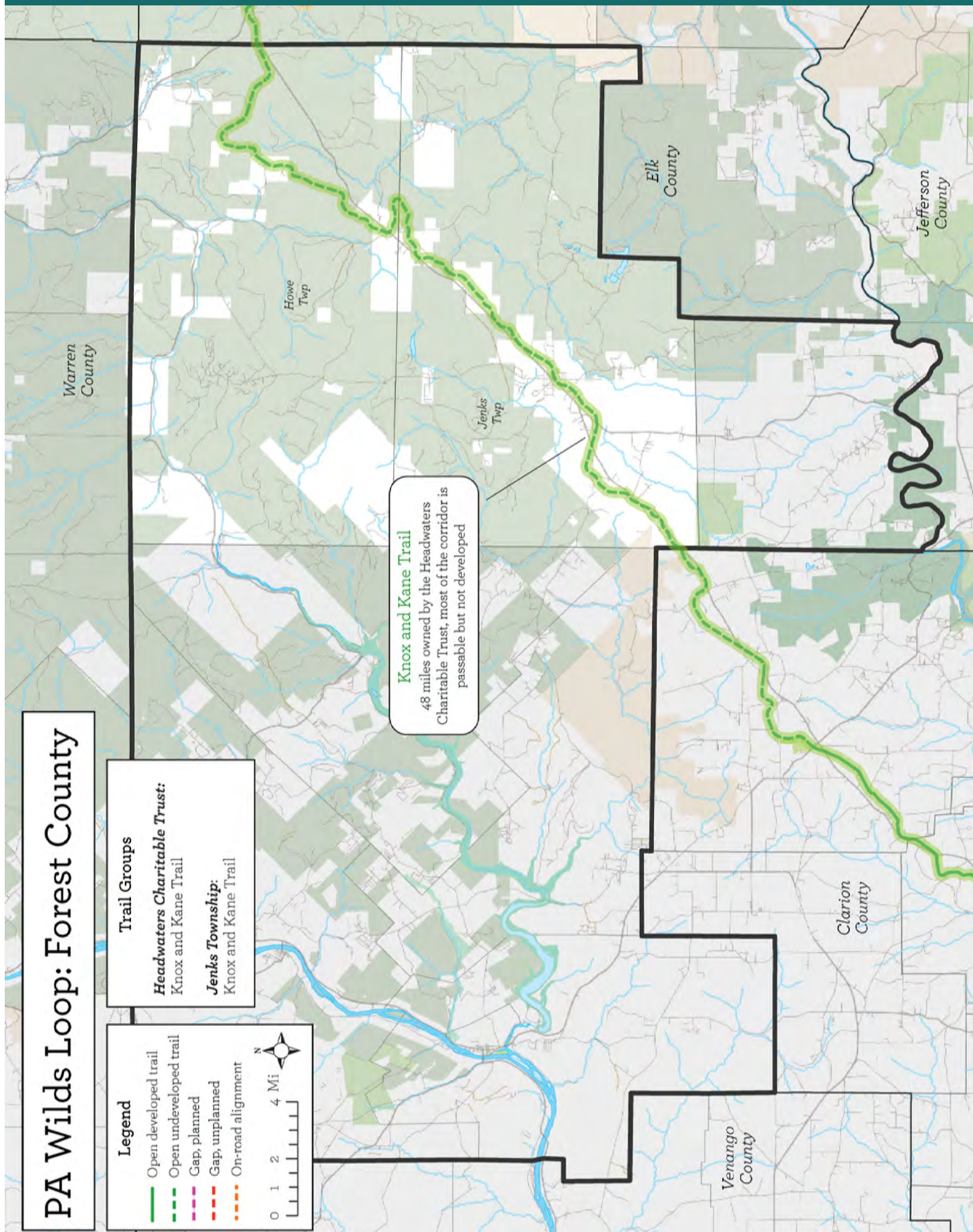
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail: Westmoreland County



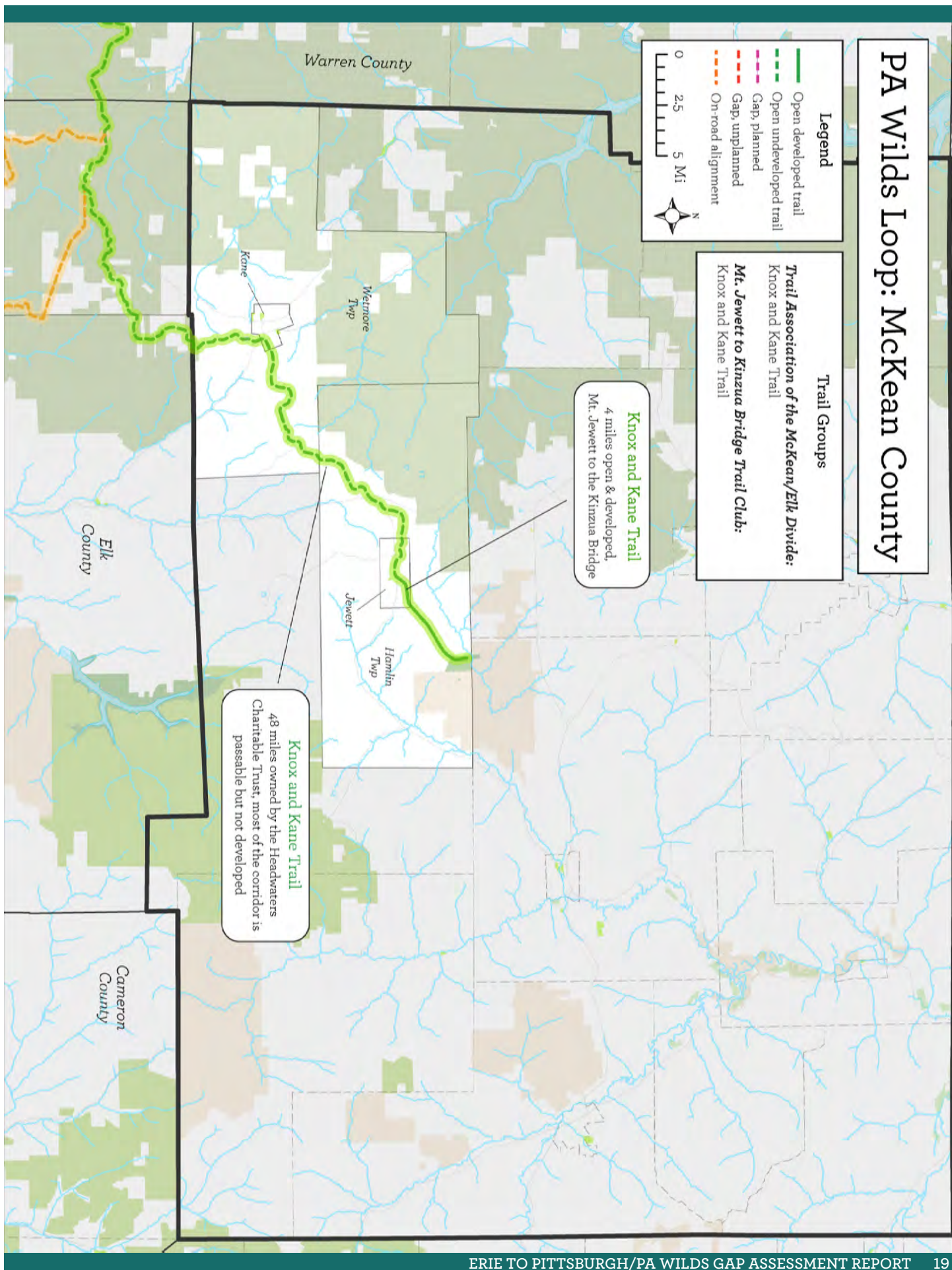
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail: Allegheny County

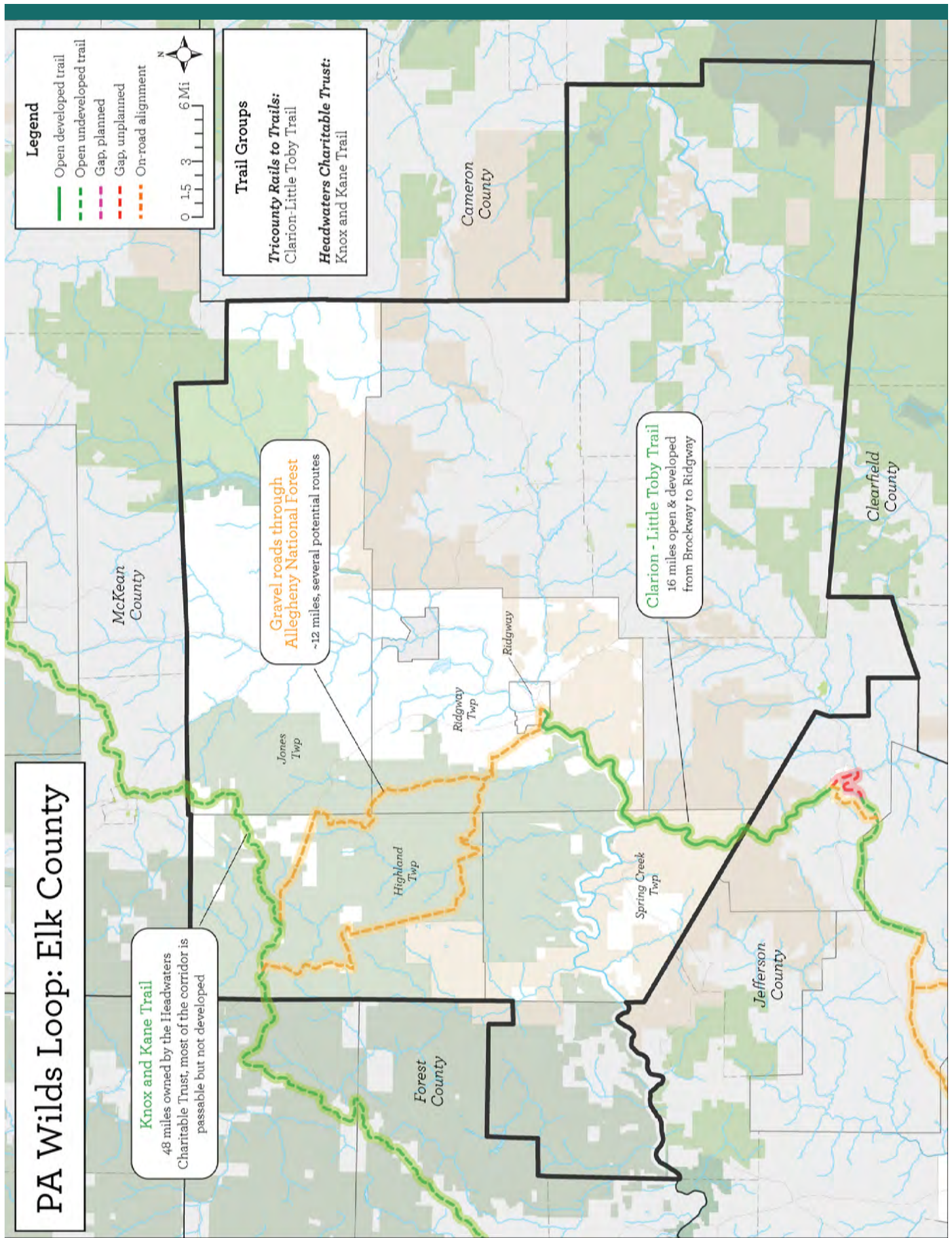


PENNSYLVANIA WILDS LOOP: COUNTY MAPS



PA Wilds Loop: McKean County

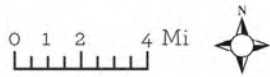




PA Wilds Loop: Jefferson County

Legend

- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment



Trail Groups

Tricounty Rails to Trails:
Clarion-Little Toby Trail
Five Bridges Trail

Redbank Valley Trail Association:
Redbank Trail

Clarion - Little Toby Trail

7.5 miles open and developed from Brockway to Ridgway

Five Bridges Trail

16 miles, open but undeveloped from Allens Mills Road to Arch Street outside Brockway

Gap: Brockway

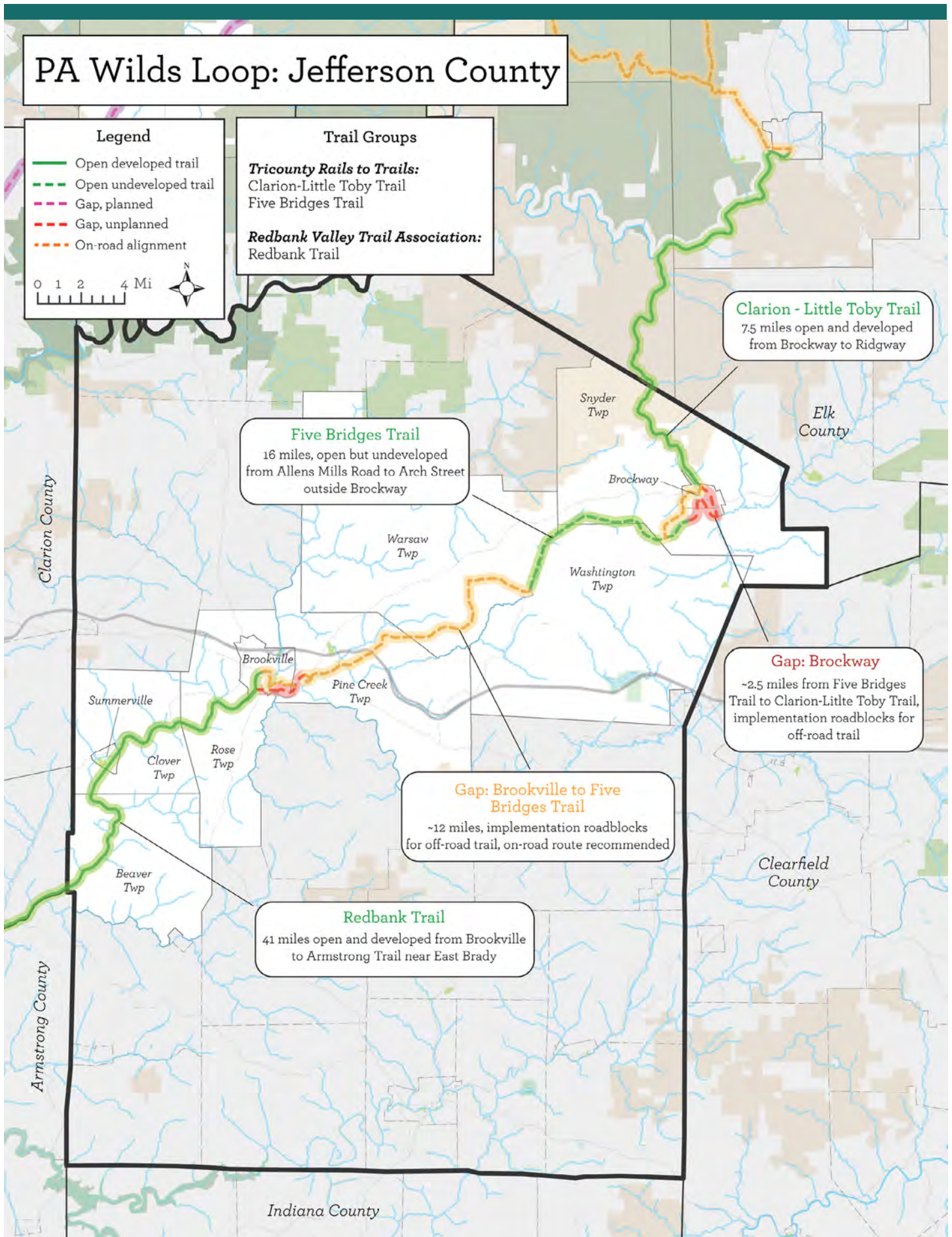
~2.5 miles from Five Bridges Trail to Clarion-Little Toby Trail, implementation roadblocks for off-road trail

Gap: Brookville to Five Bridges Trail

~12 miles, implementation roadblocks for off-road trail, on-road route recommended

Redbank Trail

41 miles open and developed from Brookville to Armstrong Trail near East Brady



METHODOLOGY

Existing Plan Review

An examination of all pertinent plans and literature focused on the trails in both systems was conducted to pull substantive findings, cost estimates and other applicable data and information. A list of these plans is included in Appendix B.

The document review for this study was not limited to feasibility studies or trail specific documents, but rather included reviews of economic impact studies, regional planning efforts and other corridor level plans from within the IHTC footprint. This study strives to provide a path forward for implementation and intends to stand as a strong case for construction of the trail. In this way, the hope is that not only is the physical nature of the trail corridor described, but an effort is made to demonstrate the value the project will bring to the communities adjacent to the trail.

When determining the scope of this study, there was an effort made not to duplicate any work completed in recent, singularly-focused trail planning documents. The *Knox & Kane Feasibility Study* provides a thorough assessment of the Knox and Kane Trail. The *Allegheny County Multi-Municipal Connectivity Gaps and Conflicts Resolution Study* and the *Allegheny River Corridor of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail Millvale to Freeport Section Feasibility Study* resulted in a complete assessment of the trail corridor in Allegheny County. In both of these trail corridors, the existing planning documents have presented the issues facing their continued development in a detailed format and the circumstances on the ground have not changed significantly since their completion.

Trail Status Classifications

For the purpose of analysis and prioritization, the status of each section of trail assessed will fall into one or more of the following classifications:

Open, Developed

These sections of trail represent the desired future condition of the completed trail corridor. The public is encouraged to use the trail, signage and wayfinding is installed, trailhead facilities have been developed and the finished surface of the trail is regularly maintained.

Open, Undeveloped

Although legal access has been established and the public is welcome, these segments lack one or more of the components that make up the Open, Developed trails.

On-Road

Trail connectivity is achieved by using public roadways, but this is not the desired experience of trail users. In some situations, the on-road portion of the trail will be in place for the foreseeable future and certain improvements can be made to enhance the perceived safety and comfort of the trail user. Other sections should be treated as temporary detours and will need to be moved off the roadway if the trail is to ever achieve its use goals. The details of this will be noted in the segment description.

Gap, Planned

The segment has been subject to some level of corridor-focused planning, including but not limited to feasibility studies, trail master plans or transportation plans.

Gap, Unplanned

The segment lacks anything more than a desired connection across the landscape. These sections will require more local capacity to be completed and are currently a much lower priority.

Ground Truthing Reasoning/Explanation

The project team conducted a mile-by-mile on the ground assessment of the unresolved gaps that the team was able to access in both the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the PA Wilds Loop corridors. The off-road analysis was conducted via bicycle and the on-road assessment was conducted via a combination of bicycle and vehicle travel. The process of ground-truthing involved traveling the entirety of the gaps in the trail system to record field conditions, test GIS mapping accuracy, explore alternate routing and look for barriers and opportunities to the trail's development.

The only segments of the corridors that were not field assessed were those privately-held where explicit permission to enter had not been granted. The expectation is, based on the state of the corridor on each side of privately held right-of-way and GIS analysis, the conditions on the contiguous public segments are representative of those on the privately held pieces.

Recording Field Conditions

This work was performed to assess the physical and environmental characteristics of the corridor. The following are general features the project team set out to assess:

- condition of trail surface
- trail surface materials
- width of the cleared right-of-way
- gradient
- drainage issues, potential wetland conditions
- vegetation
- structure conditions (size, general condition, apparent effectiveness - no determination of safety or structural integrity)
- adjacent land use concerns
- potential environmental hazards
- potential positive attributes
- potential negative attributes
- utility crossings

Mapped Route Truthing

The GIS mapping for the alignment of the corridors was pulled from a collection of source data. The field work checked the accuracy of the remotely developed data by on-site verification, ensuring the lines on the maps matched the trail corridor on the ground.

Alternate Alignment Examination

In areas where interruptions in the connectivity of the corridor prevent creating a continuous, linear route, alternate alignments were considered. In some instances, alternative alignments were already identified in the collected GIS data. In cases where no current alternate alignments have been proposed, the project team, through a combination of GIS and ground truthing, examined the potential for alternate routing of the trail.

Outreach

The process to gain a broader understanding of the issues facing the advancement of these trail projects required the project team to conduct a variety of outreach efforts. Open house style public meetings were not employed since prior planning efforts had conducted traditional public outreach. Instead, the project team performed focused outreach with project partners to solicit information related directly to the unresolved gaps on the trail systems. Stakeholder interviews were also conducted amongst a targeted group of participants to gather perspectives on issues facing these projects.

Trail Group Engagement

Throughout the course of the study, project team members attended trail group meetings to discuss the intent of the gap analysis, receive feedback about the undertaking and obtain a general sense of the state of affairs of the groups spearheading the projects. In addition to trail group meetings, the project team held one-on-one site meetings to gain a better understanding of issues impeding the trail's continued development. Lastly, the team attended a variety of trail related events to conduct outreach and garner a broader perspective on these trail's impacts to the communities through which they pass.

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail County Commissioners Meeting

PEC, along with the political leadership of Erie and Allegheny Counties, organized a gathering of county commissioners from all seven counties on the Erie to Pittsburgh Corridor. The purpose of the meeting was to highlight the work completed on the system to date and discuss challenges and opportunities for moving the projects forward. As an outcome of this event, each county signed a resolution stating support for the project. *For copies of the Resolutions, see Appendix A.*

Stakeholder Interviews

A series of structured stakeholder interviews were conducted. The stakeholders were chosen to represent a broad spectrum of partners involved in the trail projects. The participants included representatives from the non-profit trail sector, staff of elected officials, municipal government employees and other project partners.

“Pipeline” Tool

The ability for project partners to manage and cohesively work on projects on linear trail systems was identified as an issue. PEC is working with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance to create a GIS-based project management platform similar to the “Circuit Pipeline Tool” PEC first implemented on the Circuit Trails in Southeastern PA. This tool will allow involved participants to have increased understanding and control of the unresolved gap segments while also providing a space for institutional knowledge of past projects. Once fully developed, users can access the tool by visiting pecpa.org/ARCreport.

Cost Estimate Calculation

This study has developed the following opinion of the probable cost for undeveloped sections of trail. Where appropriate, the cost estimate was included in the section heading and was broken out by segment. The segment estimates appear again in the results and recommendations.

The cost estimate ranges were informed by similar case studies or recently developed trail projects within the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition region and represents the best comparable numbers. The projected cost range for a typical mile of trail for this report is **\$135,000-165,000**. More detailed cost estimates will need to be developed during the master planning, design and implementation phases. The estimates developed for this report are for general planning purposes and the basis for future funding requests.

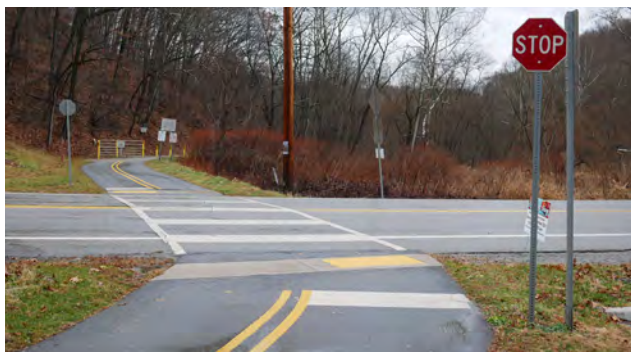
This cost range is for a typical 10' wide, crushed limestone surfaced trail on former railroad bed. The range is provided to account for fluctuating economic factors affecting publicly bid projects and minor typical site conditions experienced during our ground truthing exercises. The cost estimates are based on the following:

- The inclusion of design, engineering and construction inspection fees
- The former stone ballast sub-base is serviceable as a base course
- Development would include typical trail construction activities including clearing and grubbing, drainage improvements, grading, surfacing and seeding.
- No bridge/culverts are required; infrastructure development costs were outside the scope of this report
- Road crossings costs are not included

- Costs for items such as stream crossings, remediating adverse soil conditions or non-typical grading/excavation are not included and will increase development costs if encountered
- Projects will be publicly bid projects and subject to prevailing wage rates
- These costs reflect existing right of way control, acquisition costs are outside the scope of this report
- Any site environmental remediation costs are outside the scope of this report

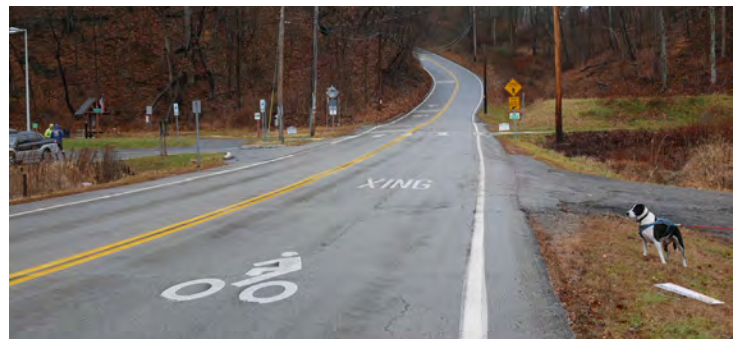
A note on road crossings

The overwhelming focus of this study was on assessing trail gaps on the corridors for implementation feasibility. But across both the “Open” and “Open, Undeveloped” sections of trails that our team assessed, deficient at-grade road crossings were observed. The deficiencies included unmaintained signage and lack of striping, insufficient warning signage on the trail, poor sight lines on the roadways, to no infrastructure at all located at crossings. Since many of these trail crossings are located on remote rural state route roads, the default speed limit is 55 mph, and anecdotal evidence indicates that the speed limit is often exceeded.



Knowing the process by which many trail projects are built and maintained in Pennsylvania, this situation does not come as a shock; the process to gain “legal” access to state road right of way is seen as burdensome by many. To develop a road crossing would require a municipal entity to secure a “Highway Occupancy Permit” (sometimes referred to a Bicycle Occupancy Permit) from PennDOT, which includes a transfer of liability. Since many trail development projects in Western PA are driven by volunteers and non-profits, they are not in a position to enter into these agreements.

A wide variety of options exist to improve upon these road crossings. The gold standard treatment would be the installation of trail-user activated rapid-flashing beacons at particularly challenging road crossings. But that level of cautionary (and costly) infrastructure should only be considered once all the road sections have been improved for a particular trail, as it could create outsized expectations from users or could create a backlash from the community as a waste of resources not equal to the need.



Local users of these existing trails likely understand the existing road crossing conditions well enough to take the appropriate amount of caution, but this will become more of an issue when the goal of attracting visitors from across the country is met. In the future, PEC will look to convene trail advocates, PennDOT officials and transportation planners from the region to develop a strategy to deal with these issues in a concerted effort. The goal will be to both bring a consistency in approach and economies of scale to the issue.

RAILROADS AND TRAILS

It is fairly clear that, without the ability to use railroad corridors, much of the long-distance trail development in the United States since 1983 would not have happened.

Railroads reached their peak mileage in the 1950's and then lost traction as trucks using the interstate highway system provided a cheaper and more flexible alternative form of transportation. Between 1945 and 1990, over 100,000 miles of rail line were abandoned, leading to a provision in the National Trail Systems Act of 1983 that allows unused railroad rights of way to be converted to trails with the understanding that they could be recommissioned for rail, if necessary. Known as "railbanking," this process allows communities to leave corridors intact rather than the properties reverting to potentially a multitude of owners and effectively foreclosing the possibility of reassembling the route. Thanks to this process, there has been a huge boom in rail-trails nationally and over 2,000 miles of new rail-trail in Pennsylvania in the last 40 years.

While using railbanking as the basis for trail construction is a huge success, there is another opportunity to leverage the nation's investments in railroad infrastructure; **Rails with Trails**, or the co-location of trails within or along existing railroad rights of way. This study of gaps in the Erie to Pittsburgh and PA Wilds Loop trail alignments documents at least three areas where a trail already exists within close proximity (less than 50') of active railroad operations. In some cases, this occurs because the parallel right of way was outside the control of the active line.

However, in the case of the McClintock Trail near Oil City, a short line hauler was willing to enter into an agreement with the trail operator to allow co-location of rail and trail as long as the trail didn't interfere with their business operations. One requirement was that the trail take steps to deter trespassing and help limit the railroad's liability exposure. Since it was opened in 2013, the lack of issues along this trail provides but one clear example that rails with trails work. (For other examples, including in Pennsylvania, see the Federal Highways Administration's publication *Rails-with-Trails: Lessons Learned*)

While we can make the case that rail-with-trail is, in many instances, even safer than rail without trail, it has proven extremely difficult to get Class 1 Railroads in this country to open up to the idea. This despite the fact that many areas that would be best served by rail-with-trail are at over-capacity of rail infrastructure given continuing market changes and practices within the industry.

In the 11-county area that this study covered, having Norfolk Southern Railroad as a partner in trail completion is a critical component for success. There are several specific segments where completion of the trail is essentially impossible without meaningful partnership from the railroad. Specifically, in Section 26, Freeport Bridge to Millvale, a solution that includes Norfolk Southern is necessary to advance all the key gaps. Also, a crossing of Norfolk Southern tracks in Westmoreland County just south of the Kiski River will need to be addressed before the 100 plus miles of trail to the north is connected to the 1.2 million residents of Allegheny County.

As trail advocates, we need the State government to acknowledge the immense public benefit trails can bring communities and work with us to bring railroads to the table. Without the political will to challenge the way that railroads have operated since the 19th century, the true potential of trails as a community change agent will not be realized.

Numerous studies have indicated the potential economic impacts that can follow the creation of long-distance trails. The benefits are not guaranteed, and the impacts of any benefits are not equally distributed amongst the communities in proximity to the trails. To put it simply, the work of creating the trail is just one part of the effort. To truly benefit from the trail, a community must come together and put out the welcome mat.

To help develop these welcome mats, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council has been working with communities within the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition to reflect on their assets and needs through a self-assessment process. In 2018, several communities along the Allegheny River and Red Bank Creek corridors worked directly with Cathy McCollom of McCollum Development Strategies to start a conversation about what they can do to make themselves visitor friendly. The resources first developed for those meetings were compiled into an online resource called the Towns and Trails Toolkit. PEC later built upon this work, augmenting it with information from multiple community engagement efforts from Pennsylvania and beyond. This new resource is available to communities online at outdoortowns.org. The site provides communities guidance on leveraging community-centered benefits from trails and other nature-based assets.

Among the cohesive strategies that communities are encouraged to develop are Services, Wayfinding and Promotion. These three activities are most effective when coordinated along entire trail corridors as that helps create word-of-mouth promotion – the most effective advertisement for any trail.

Services – Trail users often seek out services that a new trail community would likely have little use for. This provides a business opportunity for an aspiring entrepreneur, but can be a chicken or egg scenario. The critical mass to support a new business takes a while to develop, but if a service isn't offered in a town, then word of mouth will quickly spread among potential customers that that particular product is not available in the town. The services themselves need to be located where they are accessible from the trail, so considerations such as travel routes or drastic elevation differences should play a part when considering if a business is a trail business.

Wayfinding – Wayfinding takes two forms when it comes to trails; first is how a potential trail user finds their way to the trail through the community and the other is how the trail user finds the community's services from the trail. Both types of route-finding signage should have a consistent design element that reinforces an identity, effectively reassuring trail users they will not lose their way in the new environment. The signage plan should be adopted by all the communities along the corridor to reassure visitors and a review process should be implemented to make sure the most current information is displayed.

Promotion – Every long-distance trail offers more than just miles completed, even if that is the first thing that a trail user may focus on. The totality of the experience is a story that each community should focus on conveying to the users, to entice them to spend time (and money) in any community. In addition to services and signage, many trail communities have successfully integrated trail visitors into their existing civic events as well as adding special, trail-focused celebrations during the year. These efforts reinforce the trail connection and provide additional ways to put their best foot forward.



Entering East Brady on the Armstrong Trail

UNDERSTANDING SECTION ASSESSMENTS

To better prepare the reader to understand the following Trail Section Assessments, please review this guide. Each Section Assessment will include some or all of the following elements:

1. Section Map
2. Section Title
3. Section Info Box
4. Field Notes
5. Opportunities (for undeveloped trail sections)
6. Barriers (for undeveloped trail sections)
7. Potential Improvements (only for open, developed trail sections)

Navigating the Mapping

At the beginning of the section assessments for the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the PA Wilds Loop, overview maps of each respective corridor give readers a big-picture look at the entirety of the system, with each section labeled for geographic reference. Note that these maps show a more generalized view of the study area, differentiating only between open trail, gaps and on-road sections, and not drilling down to the five different status categories that can be found on each section map.

Each of the 42 sections has its own map, which can be found on the first page of each section assessment. Sections were divided by similar attributes, such as ownership, on-the-ground conditions or challenges to development. County and municipal boundaries were not a factor in this process, so section maps often cross jurisdictional lines. Different symbology is applied to all five status categories that are defined in this assessment, and on each map, the section that is being referred to in the written assessment is highlighted. In some cases, the assessment discusses multiple alignments for a section, in which case the primary or recommended alignment is highlighted. Relevant roads, road crossings, waterways, public lands, points of interest and photo locations are all labeled on section maps as well.

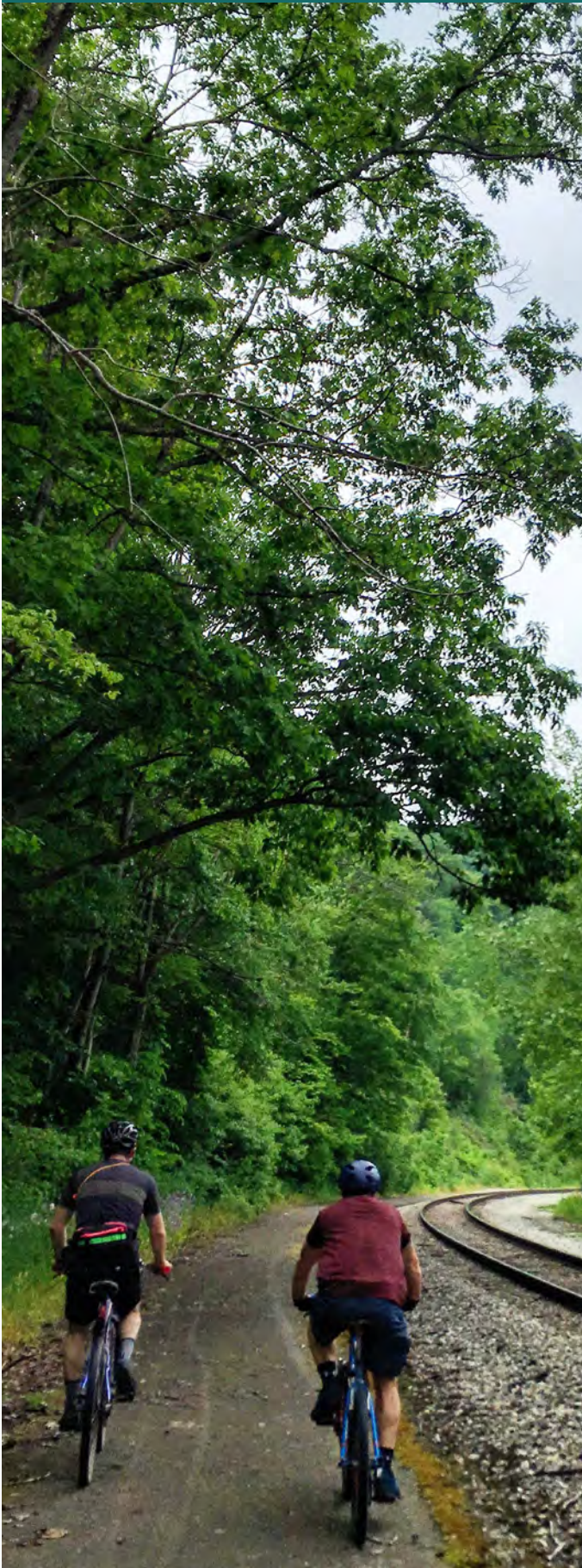
In addition to corridor and segment maps, individual maps for each of the 12 counties in the study area are available on pages 10 - 21. These maps respect jurisdictional boundaries, highlighting only the trails within each county and the municipalities that host existing or potential trail alignments.

An interactive map is also available at www.pecpa.org/ARCreport, which will be continually updated with the most current information about each segment.

Info Box Terminology

Status	Open,Developed; Open,Undeveloped; On-Road; Gap,Planned; Gap,Unplanned; see Methodology Section for the Status Descriptions
Distance	Length of the entire Assessed Section
Acquisition Status	Complete: trail entity has control of the right-of-way Negotiations Ongoing: trail entity has engaged in constructive discussions with property owners about providing some level of legal access for the trail to pass; examination of title, surveying and other property research may be required Negotiations Need to Occur: substantive negotiations with property owners have not taken place or have failed to yield progress, there is potentially some level of discrepancy on who holds title to parcels of property required for the trail to developed; examination of title, surveying and other property research may be required On-Road: a current off-road trail isn't feasible; the alignment follows on-road routes on public right-of-way either permanently or until off-road options are available
Segment	Corresponding to the designation in the "pipeline tool" project management program
County(s)	County(s) where the project is located
Project Partners	The entity spearheading the project shown in bold , organization(s) providing a discernable level of support to the project shown in normal text
Cost Estimate	Provided for general planning purposes; based on cost range for a typical mile of trail construction; see Methodology Section for a full explanation (not provided for On-Road segments, Structure Rehabilitation or Segments in Allegheny County, unless otherwise noted)

SECTION ASSESSMENTS



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Pittsburgh to Erie Trail

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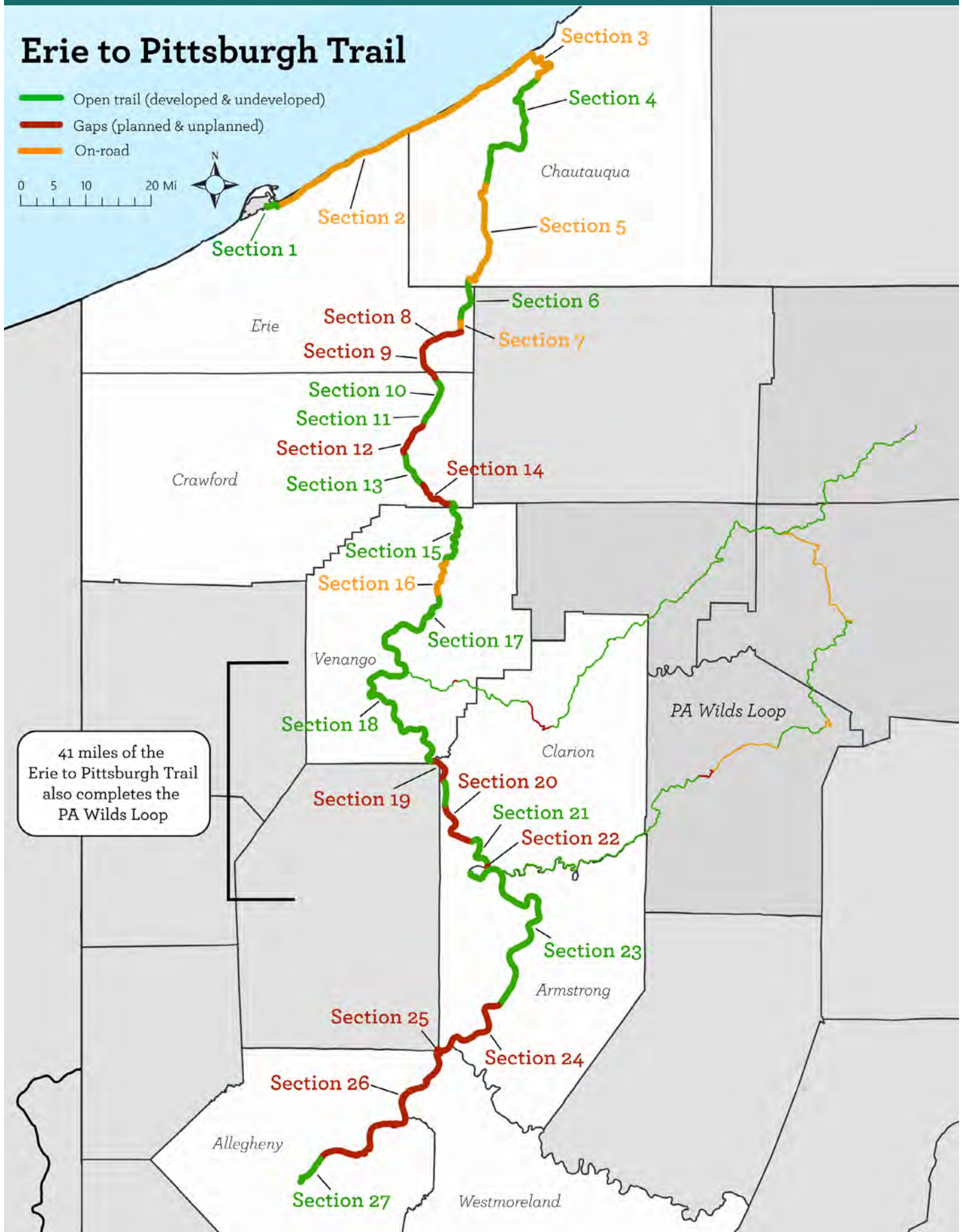
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Erie to Pittsburgh Trail

- Open trail (developed & undeveloped)
- Gaps (planned & unplanned)
- On-road

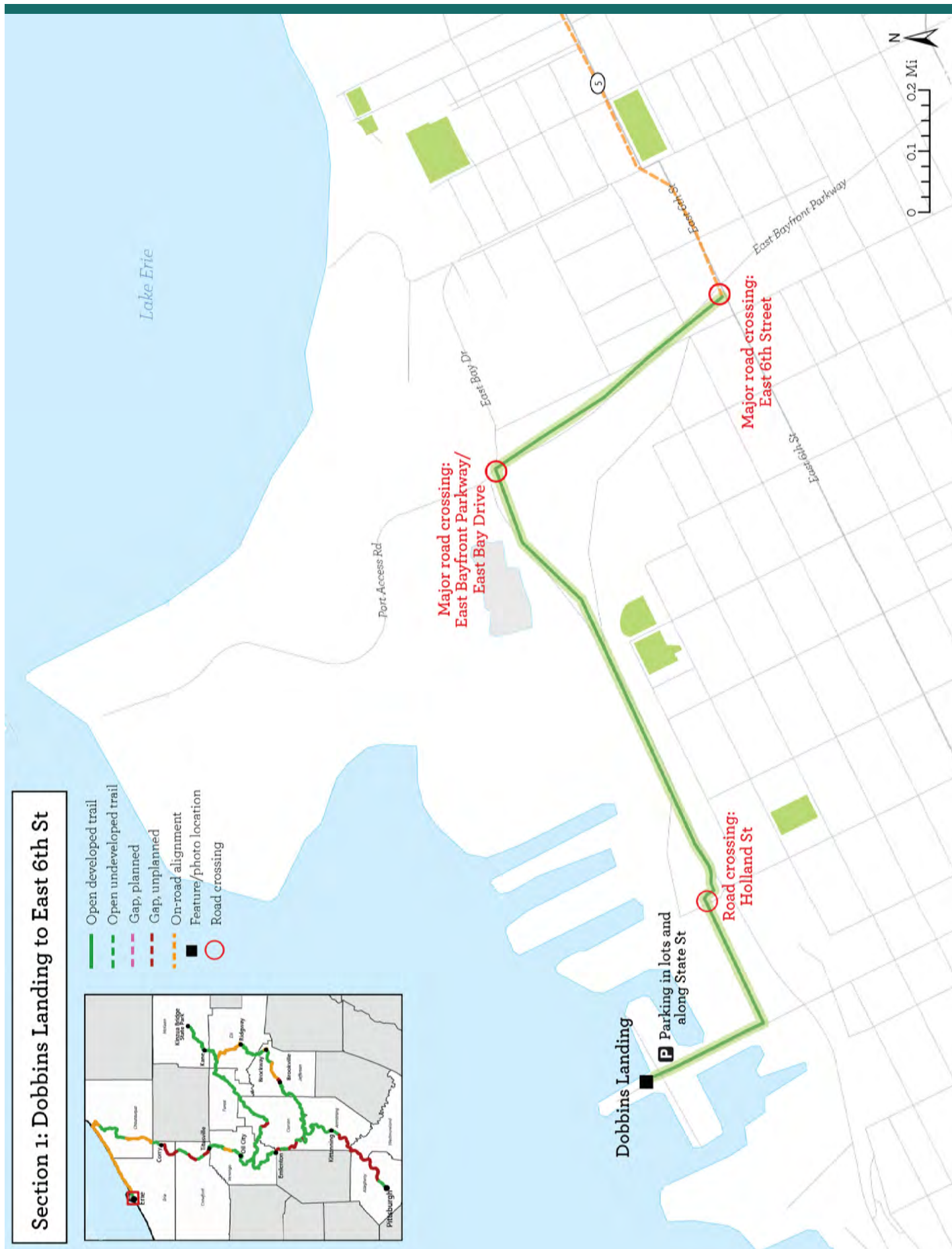


41 miles of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail also completes the PA Wilds Loop

Section 1: Dobbins Landing to East 6th St



- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- . - . Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- . - . On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 1: Dobbins Landing to E 6th St.

County(s): Erie County, PA	Status: Open, Developed	Distance: 1.61 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 1
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Project Partners: Erie County Planning, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Erie and WPA Port Authority	Cost Estimate:
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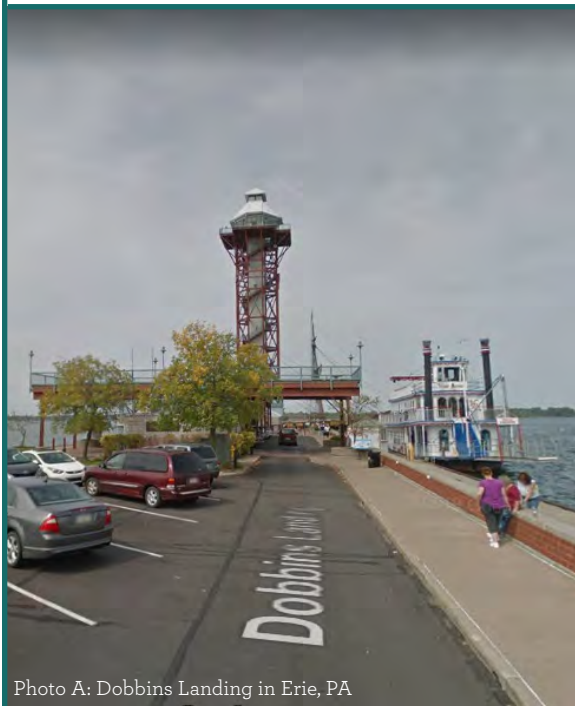


Photo A: Dobbins Landing in Erie, PA

Field Notes

Dobbins Landing is part of a developed retail and commercial attraction district. A shared-use, (pedestrian and bicyclist,) pathway encircles a small, centrally located parking and drop-off area. The concrete pathway is approximately 5' wide with a number of potential 'pinch-points.' While suitable for light traffic, the pathway does not meet current NACTO design guidelines. Overall, the surface quality is consistent and in good repair. From Dobbins Landing, the pathway continues onto State Street before intersecting with E Front St. Heading east, trail users continue on E Front St. for .25 miles before crossing Holland St. and picking up the East Bayfront Bikeway, a shared-use paved pathway. The East Bayfront Bikeway is a physically separated pathway paralleling the East Bayfront Parkway to East 6th St. The East Bayfront Bikeway is 8' wide in most sections with a relatively level grade besides a slight crest from the point the Bikeway turns southward to its intersection with East 6th St.

Potential Improvements

Redesigning the space around Dobbins Landing could result in a wider pathway, with fewer spots for user conflicts. Creating and instituting a wayfinding signage plan would guide trail users through a busier space while also creating a sense of place and identity. Improvements to the East Bayfront Bikeway, Port Access Rd., East Bay Dr., and East Bayfront Parkway intersection to alert motorists of pedestrian and bicyclist crossing, along with traffic control device timing to allow an extended crossing of pedestrians and cyclists would provide a safer and more welcoming trail user experience.

Coordinating the City of Erie, the WPA Port Authority, and other stakeholders presents an opportunity for these members to become more engaged and invested in the project.

Section 2: East 6th Street to Pecor Street



- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location



Section 2: E 6th St. to Pecor St.

County(s): Erie, PA & Chautauqua, NY	Status: On-road	Distance: 38.27 miles	Acquisition Status On-road	Segments: 2, 3, 4
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Project Partners:
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Chautauqua Rails to Trails

Cost Estimate:



Photo A: PA side surface conditions of Great Lakes Seaway Trail



Photo B: NY side surface conditions of Great Lakes Seaway Trail

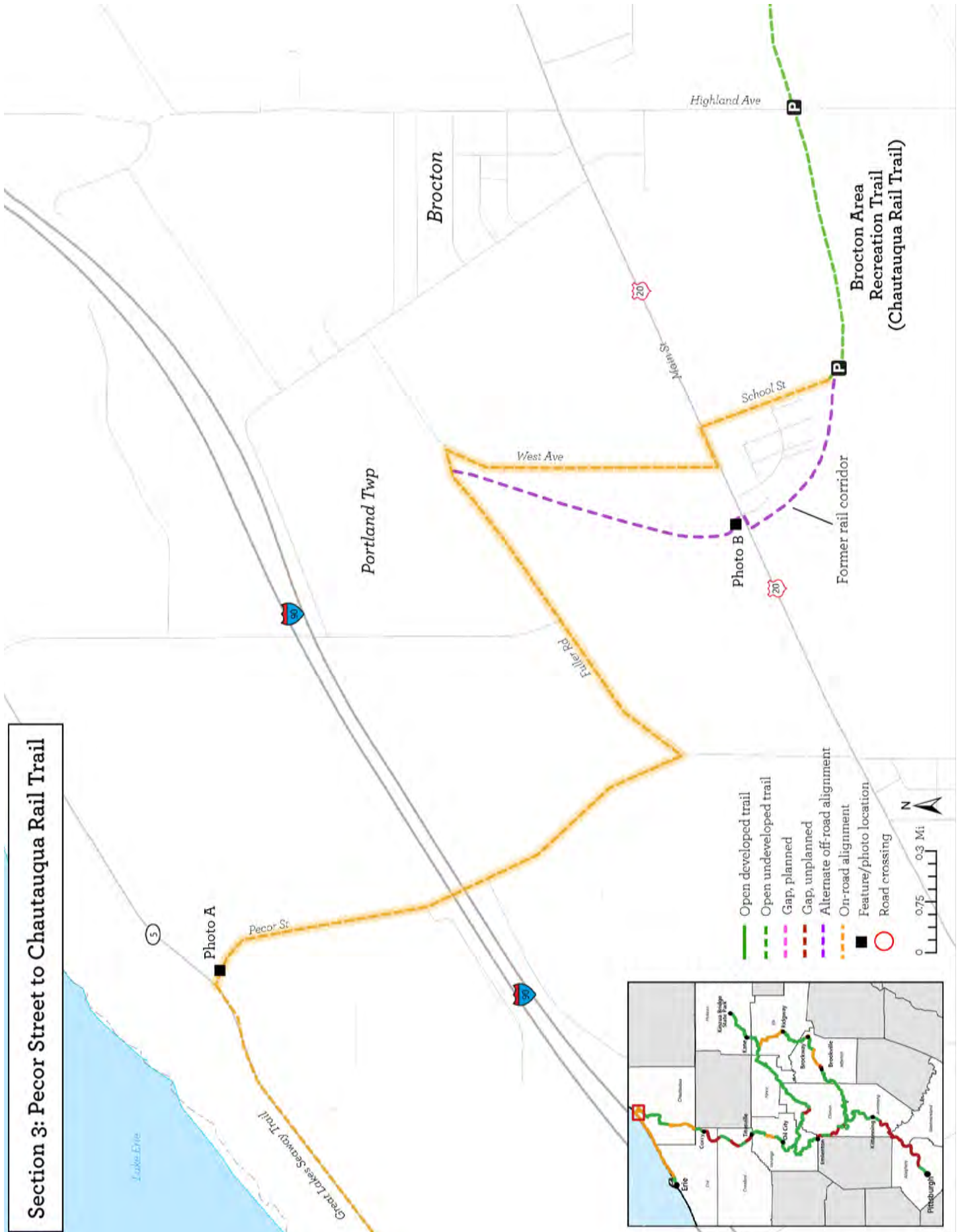
Field Notes

At East 6th St. (Rt. 5), the proposed corridor departs the East Bayfront Parkway and follows the road eastward. The intersection of the East Bayfront Parkway and Rt. 5 is busy, with multiple lanes in each direction. Once on Rt. 5, there are 2-3 travel lanes in each direction for approximately 3.5 miles until the intersection with Rt. 955. This section of the highway has minimal to no shoulder in a few spots. Eastward of Rt. 955, the shoulder conditions improve. Rt. 5 is also known as the Great Lakes Seaway Trail and is part of PA Bicycle Route Z, and is a signed, mapped scenic byway that parallels the shores of Lake Erie northeast towards Buffalo, NY. It has a posted speed limit of 55 mph and a moderate traffic volume. Road surface and shoulder width varies throughout its length. Near Erie, the road surface is older and deteriorating in spots, while the New York side was recently resurfaced and has wide shoulders with a rumble strip separating the shoulder from the road. The road is generally fairly straight and flat, only gaining 171 feet in elevation over the 36 miles between Rt. 6 and Pecor St. However, there are small rollers that cause short sight lines for motorists in a few spots, especially at the intersection with Pecor St.

Potential Improvements

The Great Lakes Seaway Trail is recognized as a National Scenic Byway by the U.S. Department of Transportation but could be better marketed to non-motorized use with some improvements. Sharrows or a dedicated bike lane on the Erie end of Rt. 5 and a wider shoulder on the more rural sections, and share the road signage, would help improve the safety of cyclists and pedestrians using this connector. A coordinated effort between the states to improve this corridor would be an improvement.

Section 3: Pecor Street to Chautauqua Rail Trail



Section 3: Pecor St. to Chautauqua Rail-trail

County(s): Chautauqua County, NY	Status: On-Road	Distance: 2.8 miles	Acquisition Status On-road	Segments: 5
Project Partners: Chautauqua Rails to Trails Association, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance			Cost Estimate:	

Field Notes

Section 3 is an on-road connection from the eastern end of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail (PA and NY Rt. 5) to the northern terminus of the Chautauqua Rail-trail in Brocton, NY. Turning southward from the Great Lakes Seaway Trail to Pecor St. presents a significant challenge for the trail user. The intersection occurs at a dip and bend in the roadway, creating poor sightlines for motorists approaching from the east. Traffic travelling on Rt. 5 is generally travelling above 45 mph at a moderate volume for this roadway. The asphalt of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail is in very good condition.

Pecor Rd. is a low-volume local road generally in good repair though it appears to have been 7-10 years since its last resurfacing. This stretch of Pecor Rd. lacks lane marking and is relatively level in grade. Visibility is high, though some mature trees line the roadway. The primary trail alignment turns eastward from Pecor Rd. onto Fuller Rd., with conditions remaining similar to Pecor Rd. From Fuller Rd. to the northern terminus of the Chautauqua Rail-trail, the route makes a few turns in quick succession. For these sections, surface quality of the asphalt is consistent and in good repair. For approximately 500', the alignment utilizes Rt. 20 in Brocton. NYDOT identifies Rt. 20 as a Rural Principal Arterial Other roadway. Based on observations, this section of Rt. 20 sees moderate traffic volume. It is posted for 35 mph for 100' near the intersection with West Ave. before changing to a posted school zone for 25 mph.

Alternatively, there is potential to use the former rail corridor from the intersection of Fuller Rd. and West Ave. to the beginning of the currently-developed Brocton Area Recreation Trail at School St. The rail corridor appears to be intact and free of encroachments for its 1-mile length between these two points.



Photo A: Looking south on Pecor St.
Road surface markings are absent



Photo B: Though not used at this point,
the former rail corridor is defined

Potential Improvements

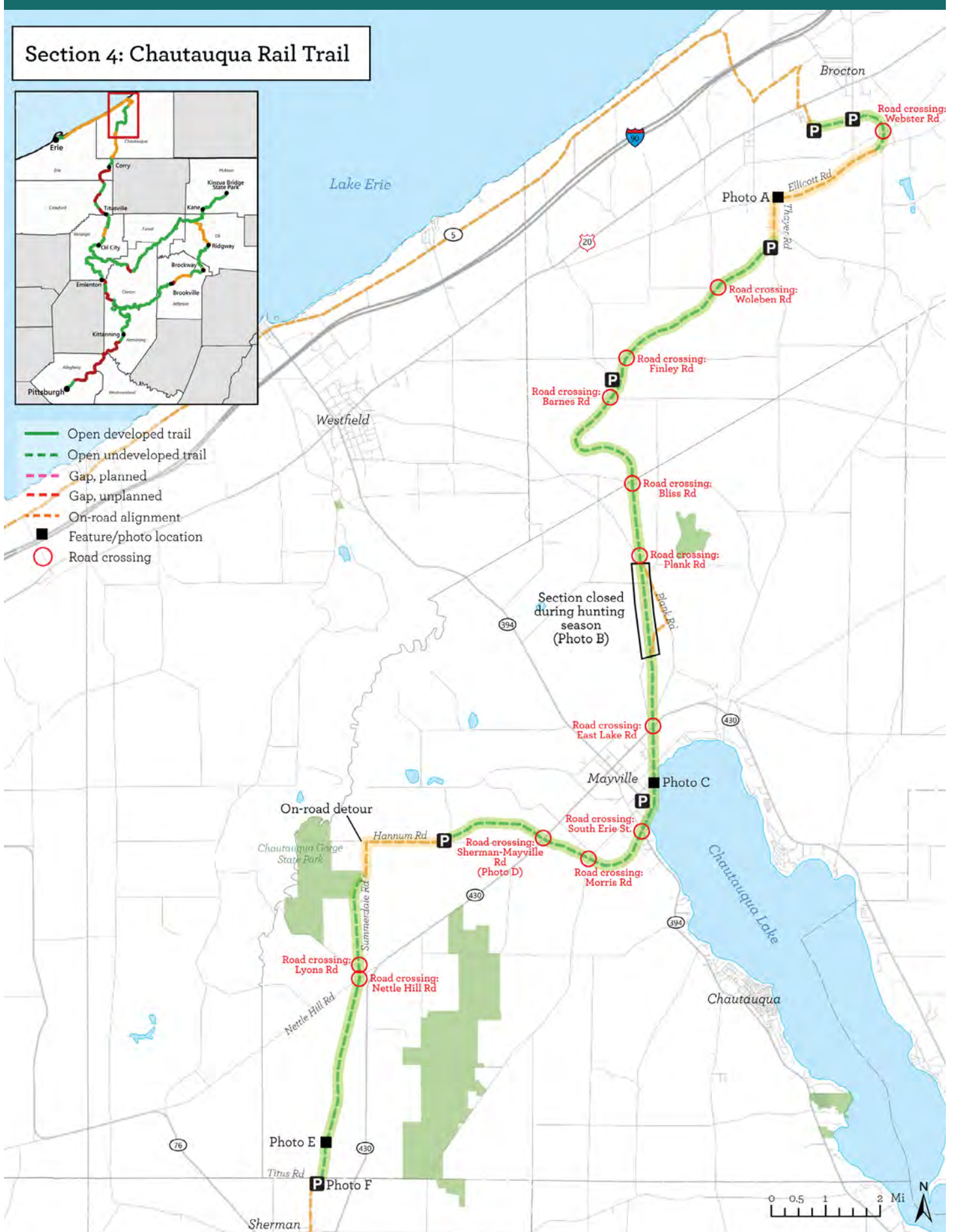
The intersection of Rt. 5 and Pecor Rd. would benefit from a number of infrastructure improvements to ensure a safe transition for users from the Major Collector Parkway to the local road. Signage on the local roads between Rt. 5 and the Chautauqua Rail-trail would provide a more cohesive trail user experience. Bicycles May Use Full Lane signs could be installed to acknowledge the presence of potential trail users on the short stretch of Rt. 20 in Brocton.

Chautauqua County, NYDOT, the municipalities of Portland, Brocton, and Vineyard, along with Chautauqua Rails to Trails could coordinate efforts to enact these improvements.

Section 4: Chautauqua Rail Trail



- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 4: Chautauqua Rail-trail

County(s): Chautauqua, NY	Status: Open, Undeveloped	Distance: 23.56 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 6a, 6b, 6c
Project Partners: Chautauqua Rails to Trails Association			Cost Estimate: 6a: \$186,690 - \$228,177 6b: NA 6c: \$2,703,028 - \$3,303,701	



Photo A: On-road section on Ellicott Rd near Brocton



Photo B: Overgrown trail on section closed during hunting season

Field Notes

The Chautauqua Rail-trail ties together multiple shorter trails to form a nearly-continuous corridor that stretches almost 24 miles from Brocton to Sherman, NY. From the north, it begins on School St. in Brocton on the Brocton Recreation Trail. The first half mile of this trail from School St. to Highland Ave. is paved before it turns into crushed limestone for the remaining mile to Ellicott Rd. Bicyclists are required to follow an on-road connection for 2 miles on Ellicott Rd. and Thayer Rd. to pick up the next section of trail. Both of these roads are designated as Rural Local Roads and have very low traffic volume.

A small gravel pull-off and signage for the Alison Wells Ney Trail denote the trailhead on Thayer Rd. The corridor does extend across Thayer Road headed northeast, but it dead-ends in the middle of the woods with no way to connect to Ellicott Rd. and into Brocton. From Thayer Road headed south, the pathway climbs the Lake Erie Escarpment gradually towards Mayville with an average grade of about 1.5-2%, but reaching 6-7% for short stretches. Vineyards at lower elevations give way to a forested landscape as the trail climbs. The treadway has a solid crushed stone base and seems to drain well, but grass is growing through the entire trail, most heavily in the middle. This stretch of trail crosses four Rural Local Roads. There is trail-facing signage alerting users to stop, as well as gates in some instances. There is no crosswalk striping and in most cases, no motorist-facing signage alerting vehicles of the trail crossing.

Approximately 9 miles south of Brocton, there is a 1.3-mile section of the corridor that is marked both on Chautauqua Rail-trail maps and on the ground as closed during hunting season. During the July field work, this stretch was grown in with tall grasses and nearly impassable in spots. A 1.4-mile on-road detour using Plank Road (Major Collector) and Honeysette Road (Minor Collector) take users back to the trail.

South of Honeysette Rd., the treadway is soft and grass covered for about a mile until it crosses East Chautauqua Street (Rt. 430). From there, the trail is paved for approximately 1.5 miles as it follows the Lake Chautauqua waterfront through Mayville, a small but vibrant town offering amenities such as lodging, food and breweries. The

Section 4: Chautauqua Rail-trail



Photo C: Paved path along the lakefront in Mayville



Photo D: Rough crossing of Sherman-Mayville Rd (Rt. 430)



Photo F: Titus Rd parking lot

Field Notes, cont.

paved path turns into a parking lot with no trail markings for a few hundred yards before it intersects with West Lake Road (Rt. 394) and transitions back into a mix of ballast and grass.

Just west of Mayville, as the trail crosses Sherman-Mayville Rd., there is a significant grade change where there likely used to be a bridge and the trail dips down to meet the road and climbs back up again. The roadside at the crossing is very rough with a mix of rocks and broken pavement creating a potential hazard and signage warns cyclists to dismount and walk. The road is fairly straight with decent sight lines and there is motorist-facing, pedestrian-crossing signage but no crosswalk striping.

At Hannum Rd., the Chautauqua Rail-trail follows another on-road detour for 1.4 miles, picking up again on Summerdale Rd. Both of these roads are Rural Local Roads with low traffic volume. The trail passes very close to Chautauqua Gorge State Forest, and a short detour offers camping, hiking and picnicking opportunities. Continuing southward towards Sherman, the trail passes through a mix of forested and marsh landscapes. The treadway remains similar to the other sections with a crushed stone and grass surface interspersed with some muddy spots. It ends at a packed dirt parking area on Titus Rd. that offers room for about 5-8 vehicles and an information kiosk with maps.

Potential Improvements

Surface consistency and drainage improvements would create a more favorable user experience. Asphalt paving likely isn't the best option in this scenario due to the heavy snowmobile use that the trail sees, but improving the crushed stone surface could be an adequate compromise for all user groups.

The installation of motorist-facing signage and striping on the roads would increase the safety of the road crossings and share-the-road signage and/or sharrows on the on-road detour sections would help alert vehicles of potential bicycle traffic.

The section in the town of Mayville can be difficult to navigate, so some additional wayfinding signage for trail users would help to create a more seamless route through town. Signage in town could also direct trail users to amenities and create a stronger connection to the community.

Section 4: Chautauqua Rail-trail

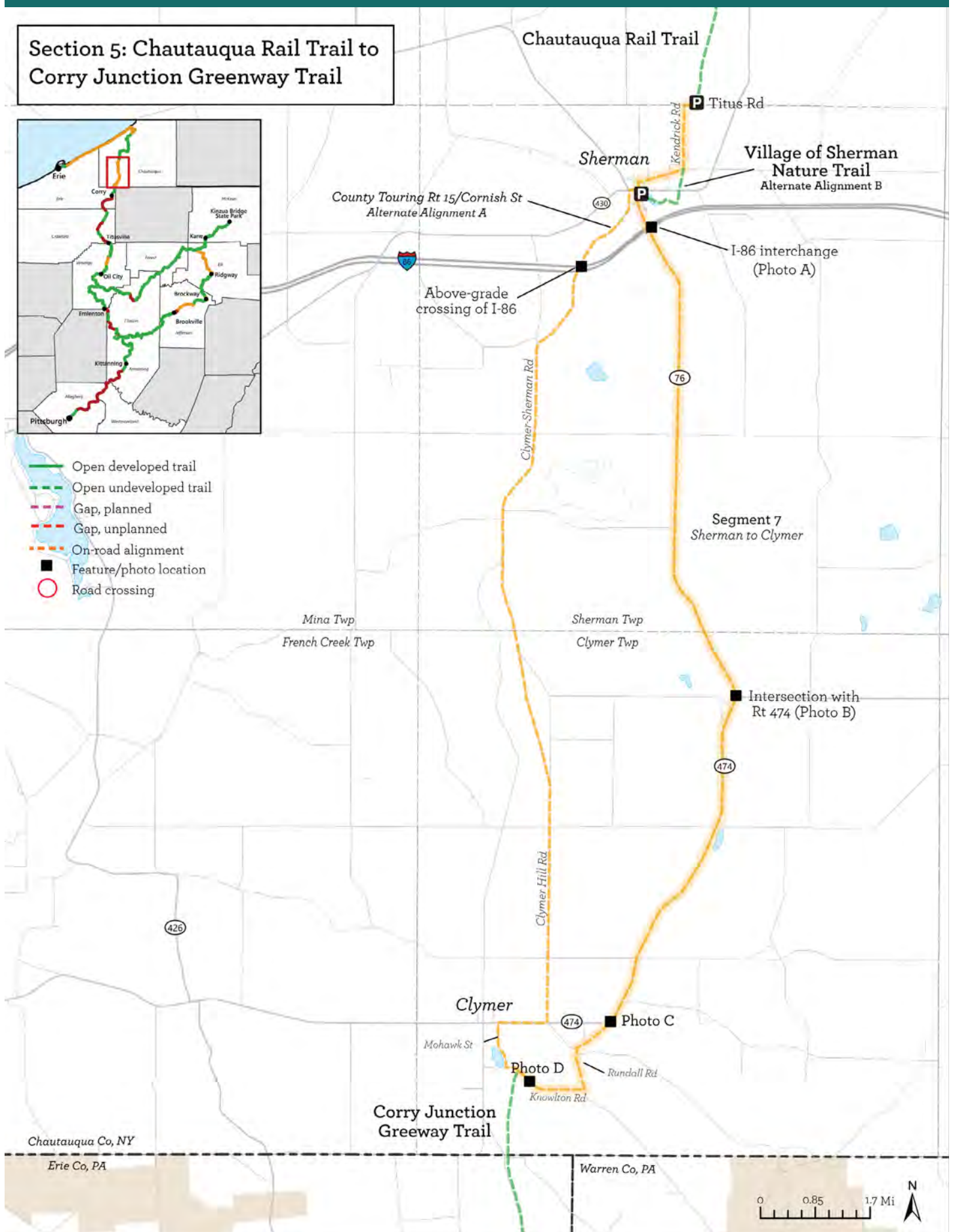


Photo E: Typical trail conditions

Section 5: Chautauqua Rail Trail to Corry Junction Greenway Trail



- Open developed trail
- Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 5: Chatauqua Rail-trail to Corry Junction Greenway Trail (Sherman to Clymer)

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Chautauqua County	On-Road	Primary Alignment : 12.74 miles Alternative Alignment : 12.1 miles	On-road	7
Project Partners: Chautauqua Rails to Trails, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Chautauqua County			Cost Estimate: NA	



Photo A: Rt. 76 crossing I-86



Photo B: From Rt. 474 looking towards the intersection with Rt. 76, at left



Photo C: Road surface conditions on Rt. 474

Field Notes

The primary alignment for this section involves slightly over 12 on-road miles between the towns of Sherman at the north end of the section and Clymer at the south. Trail users would connect to Sherman by travelling a mix of low-volume local roads with no roadway striping and Rural Minor Connector roads into Sherman proper. The Rural Minor Connector roads are striped, though the striping is considerably faded. On both classes of roadway into Sherman, the asphalt surface is in fair condition with signs of checking and cracking.

Sherman is a small town of about 1,600 residents and features a main street business district with amenities such as restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and a hardware store. Users would travel south from Sherman using NY Rt. 76. The turn from Main Street to Rt. 76 is not signalized, but observed traffic traveled at a reasonable speed of no more than 30 mph. A striped bike lane exists on Main Street as it traverses Sherman proper.

Rt. 76 is a NYDOT roadway that is a Rural Major Connector. As such, traffic frequently moves in excess of 45 mph. The shoulder of the roadway varies from 3' to 5' with an additional 18-24" of gravel and is generally in good repair though some markings are beginning to grow faint. Horse and buggy traffic is evident on the shoulder. About .5 miles from Sherman, Rt. 76 interchanges with I-86. Halfway between Sherman and Clymer, Rt. 76 merges with Rt. 474. Traffic from Rt. 76 is directed to stop before turning onto Rt. 474. Once on Rt. 474, the surface conditions are fair, with noticeable patches and long cracks.

Users maintain course on Rt. 474 into Clymer before a short series of turns to Knowlton Rd. and the Corry Junction Greenway trailhead. The landscape along this section is mostly agricultural, with a number of single-family residences along the way. Due to the nature of the land use, sightlines are mostly clear. Over the 12 mile stretch, elevation gain is roughly 600' with the maximum grade being 5%.

Section 5: Chatauqua Rail-trail to Corry Junction Greenway Trail (Sherman to Clymer)



Photo D: Knowlton Rd. near northern terminus of Corry Junction Greenway Trail

Field Notes, cont.

Alternate Alignment A: Leaving the boundary of Sherman, trail users would travel south on Cornish St. Approximately 1 mile from Sherman, Cornish St. crosses I-86. As opposed to Rt. 76, there is no interchange at this above-grade crossing. After crossing I-86, the local name of the roadway changes to Clymer-Sherman Road. Trail users could continue on this route until the 5 mile mark before continuing straight onto Clymer Hill Rd. Cornish St. is a county-owned roadway designated a Rural Minor Collector. Clymer Hill Rd. is a low-volume local road. From Clymer Hill Rd., a short series of turns lead users to the northern trailhead of the Corry Junction Greenway on Knowlton Rd.

The landscape for this alternate alignment is very similar to the primary alignment. The elevation gain is comparable as well. Surface conditions are generally in good repair though the roadway's shoulder is narrower than that of the primary alignment.

Alternate Alignment B: In Sherman, proximate to the intersection of Main St. and Rt. 76, is a small trailhead parking area for the Village of Sherman Nature Trail. The Nature Trail lies on a former rail corridor and connects to the southern end of Kendrick St., moving users off-road for a mile.

Potential Improvements:

The few low volume roads between the southern end of the Chautauqua Rail-trail-trailhead on Titus Rd. to the business district in Sherman would benefit from wayfinding signage as well as signage informing motorists that cyclists, pedestrians, and potentially xc-skiers, may be recreating on the roadway.

Alternate Alignment A provides a potentially safer connection between the Chautauqua Rail-trail and the Corry Junction Greenway. Avoiding the I-86 interchange on Rt. 76 is recommended. Either the Primary Alignment or Alternate Alignment A would benefit from wayfinding signage for trail users as well as signage directed towards motorists to expect trail users. Neither roadway alignment is wide enough for a dedicated bike lane, but shared lane markings could help with wayfinding as well as setting the expectation for motorists.

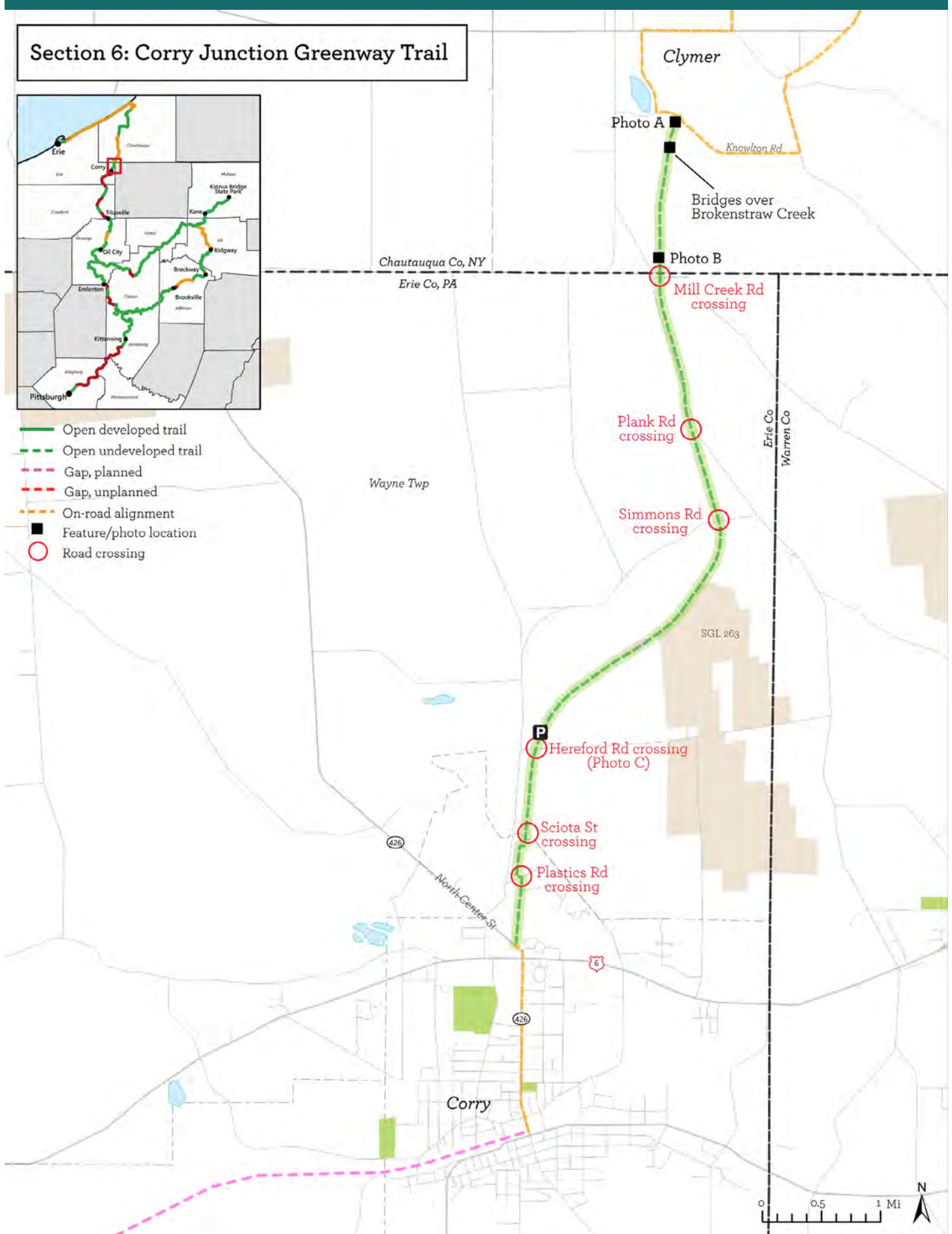
While the former rail corridor is visibly intact between Knowlton Rd. and Sherman, the rail corridor is in private ownership on this section that prevents further off-road trail development.



Section 6: Corry Junction Greenway Trail



- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 6: Corry Junction Greenway Trail

County(s): Chautauqua County, NY and Erie County, PA	Status: Open, Undeveloped	Distance: 5.8 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 8, 9
Project Partners: Northwest PA Trails Association, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, City of Corry, Impact Corry, Blue Zones Project - Corry, Tri-County Snowblazers			Cost Estimate: 8: \$133,131 - \$162,716 9: \$651,604 - \$796,405	



Photo A: Northern end of the trail showing rutted treadway

Field Notes

Section 6 consists of the entirety of the Corry Junction Greenway Trail stretching from Knowlton Rd. in Chautauqua County, NY to North Center St. (PA Rt. 426). The trail's northern point has no distinguishing improvements to identify it as a trailhead. From Knowlton Rd., the trail merely looks like a dirt road access serving the nearby pallet manufacturer. On this initial piece, there is heavy evidence of motorized vehicle use, likely from the pallet company. Stacks of pallets sit in the corridor, though the treadway was clear. Roughly .25 miles from Knowlton Rd., the trail crosses Brokenstraw Creek. Two small, parallel bridges cross the creek at slightly different elevations. The bridges appear to be in sound repair. Between the creek crossing and Knowlton Rd., the trail surface is mostly hard-packed dirt about 8' wide. Treaded tire tracks and light rutting from motorized vehicles using the trail were evident.

From Brokenstraw Creek to Mill Rd., the main treadway is 8' wide with the overall corridor width being roughly 12'. The treadway is grass, and, although the rolling resistance is high, the ground underneath is compact. This stretch is surrounded by ag land with a thin barrier of trees separating the corridor from the adjacent land in some spots. Overhead canopy is nonexistent. Mill Rd. is low-volume, unpaved farm road. Bollards and a gate allow trail users to pass from the trail across the roadway without allowing motorized traffic onto the trail. Trail traffic is directed to stop before proceeding through the crossing. Sightlines for this crossing are clear, the transition from trail to road is smooth, and the crossing is perpendicular to the roadway. The dirt berm of Mill Rd. is less compact than the center.

Continuing south, the trail parallels Plank Rd., a Rural Minor Collector, as well as Brokenstraw Creek. The area adjacent to the trail through this stretch is characterized as an apparent wetland and a thin tree canopy is present. Trail users cross Plank Rd. .7 miles from Mill Rd. This crossing is at a diagonal and intentional. Bike-crossing signs are posted on Plank Rd. warning drivers. Trail users are again directed to stop before the road crossing. Although it is designated a Rural Minor Collector, Plank Rd. has no pavement markings and observed volume of traffic is low.

Section 6: Corry Junction Greenway Trail

Field Notes, cont.



Photo B: Corridor crossing at Mill Rd.

The surroundings briefly become wooded after crossing Plank Rd. with a few single family residences alongside the trail. Crushed limestone makes up the trail's treadway for this stretch, but it is thin with some larger, base material stones rising to the top. The trail then enters an active agricultural area with signs alerting trail users to crossing farm equipment. No canopy exists through this parcel and the treadway is grass-covered.

At the Simmons Rd. crossing, the trail rises to meet the road grade. Bollards, gates, and trail-facing signage guide the user through this crossing. Simmons Rd. is another low-volume unpaved road, similar to Mill Rd. Approaching the trail crossing from Simmons Rd., the roadway crests, but not to a point of impeding sightlines. Bike-crossing signage was observed, but it had been dislodged and was lying in the berm of the road.

Conditions become more wooded from Simmons Rd. southward, as a section of trail sits adjacent to State Game Lands 263. Apparent wetlands are observed .8 miles from Simmons Rd., with evidence of beaver dams which bring standing water levels close to the level of the treadway.

Part of this stretch is open cut with surrounding lands 25' above the treadway surface. This stretch also has a number of small pools of ponding water where current drainage is not sufficient. The corridor at points reaches 20' in width with about 10' of crushed limestone treadway. Light and low-growing vegetation makes up the difference. Hereford Rd. features a dedicated Corry Junction Greenway Trail-trailhead with compact dirt parking for upwards of a dozen vehicles. Trailhead signage exists at the Hereford Rd. lot, but vegetation obstructs the sign to a high degree. Crossing Hereford is similar experience to crossing Simmons and Mill Rd., and the bike-crossing signage is dislodged here as well.

Heading closer to Corry, the trail treadway changes from crushed limestone to pavement. The Sciota St. crossing is well-maintained and marked with signage intact. After passing a ballfield, the trail leaves the former rail corridor and passes through a wooded parcel ending near Plastic Rd. The crossing at Plastic Rd. features heavily patched pavement and faded road and crosswalk striping. The trail passes a soccer field complex, a concrete production plant, and cemetery before hitting its southern terminus at North Center Street. There is evidence of horse usage on the last stretch of trail with horse hoof marks pocketing the trail. While the corridor remains sufficiently wide at this point, the actual treadway was worn down to singletrack at points.

The southern end of the Corry Junction Greenway Trail doesn't feature a prominent trailhead facility and seems to share the space with the adjacent concrete plant.

Section 6: Corry Junction Greenway Trail

Potential Improvements

The status of the Corry Junction Greenway Trail is Open, Undeveloped. This is primarily due to the fact that it has received little maintenance recently. Dedicated maintenance would potentially elevate the trail back to full Open status. The low-growing vegetation on the treadway should be scraped for the length of the crushed limestone sections and more deeply cleared for the ag land sections closer to the northern end. Weed trimming, especially around the existing benches, picnic tables, and trail signage would create a more inviting trail. All dislodged signage should be replaced to ensure motorists are prepared for crossing trail traffic. On the southern end, improvements to the trailhead in the way of new signage and clearly defined parking boundaries would entice potential trail users to stop and explore. Likewise, the northern terminus would benefit from overall infrastructure improvements and agreements with the pallet company to keep motorized vehicles off the treadway. Map kiosks at both northern and southern trailheads would provide opportunities to connect the trail users' experience to the broader regional context of trails and recreation and inform them of other potential outdoor opportunities.

A number of new initiatives have recently come to the Corry area, including a Blue Zones Project <https://www.bluezonesproject.com/>. Blue Zones, Impact Corry, The City of Corry, Erie County, NW PA Trails Association, and other engaged partners are revitalizing the idea of trail connections into, through, and beyond Corry. This renewed interest should be capitalized upon for Corry Junction Greenway Trail improvements.

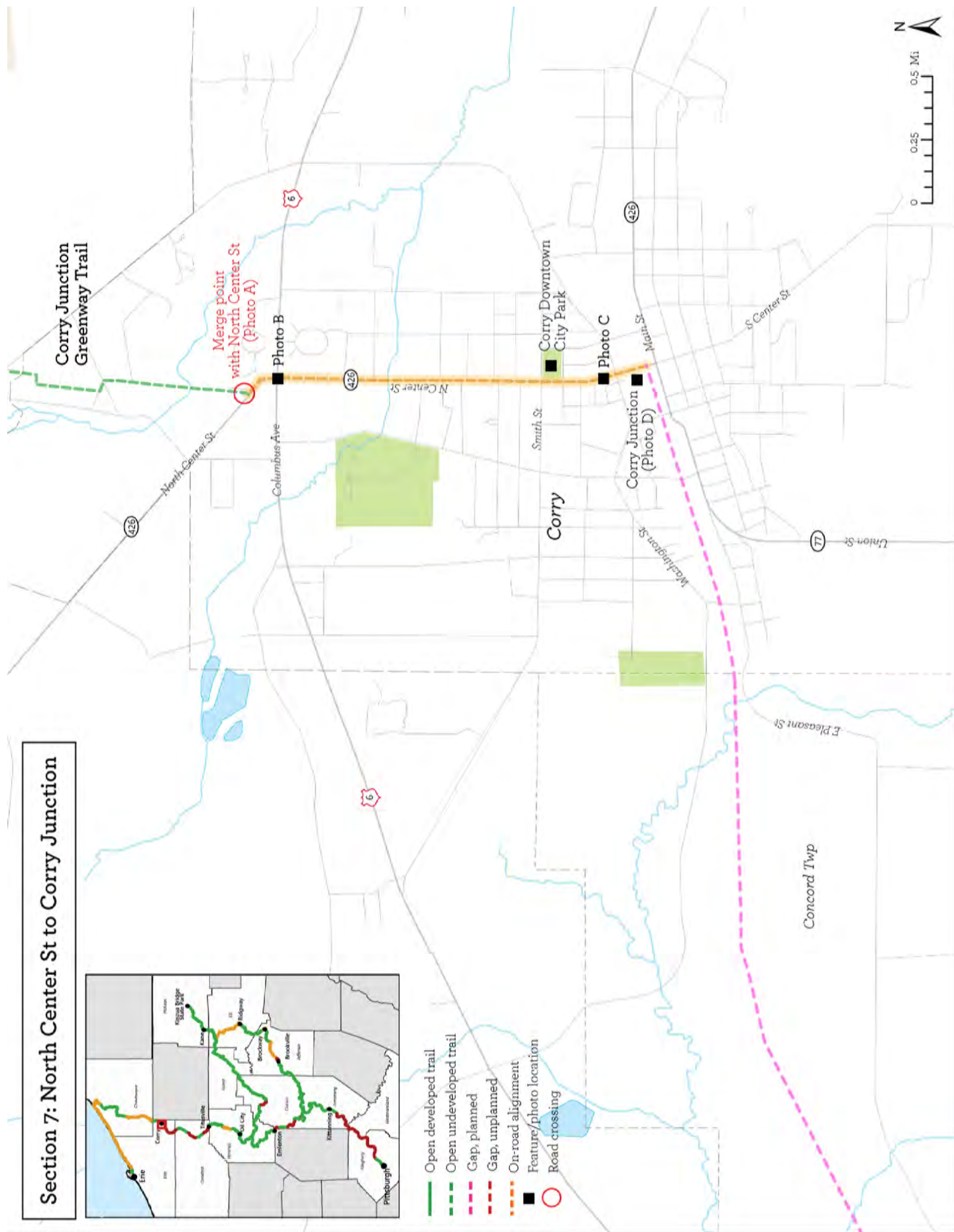


Photo C: Opposite of the trailhead on Hereford Rd.

Section 7: North Center St to Corry Junction



- Open developed trail
- Open undeveloped trail
- Gap, planned
- Gap, unplanned
- On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 7: N. Center St. to Corry Junction

County(s): Erie County, PA	Status: On-road	Distance: 1.2 miles	Acquisition Status On-road	Segments: 10
Project Partners: City of Corry, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, NW PA Trails Association, Impact Corry, Blue Zones Project - Corry, Tri-County Snowblazers City of Corry				Cost Estimate: NA



Photo A: Corry Junction Greenway Trail-trailhead looking to N Center St.



Photo B: N Center St./Rt. 6 intersection looking northward

Field Notes

Section 7 represents the proposed on-road connection from the southern point of the Corry Junction Greenway Trail to Corry Junction through the City of Corry. From the Corry Junction Greenway Trail, the alignment travels on North Center St. for 500' before intersecting with Columbus Ave. (Rt. 6). From the intersection with the Corry Junction Trail, North Center St. curves to meet Rt. 6. Southbound riders have to depart the Corry Junction Greenway Trail, cross oncoming traffic and enter the opposite lane to head south. Motorized traffic on North Center St. above Rt. 6 moves at a steady volume, though typically not at speeds in excess of 25 mph as they approach the signalized intersection. PennDOT has classified this stretch of North Center St. as a Minor Arterial Roadway.

The intersection of North Center St. and Rt. 6 sees a constant flow of traffic. While there are curb cuts on each side of the intersecting roads, no bike or pedestrian signalization is present. The roadway is unmarked for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. A number of business entrances are adjacent to the intersection, but setbacks are significant and buildings do not obstruct the sightlines.

For .8 miles, North Center St. is a two-lane moderate-volume, low-speed Minor Arterial roadway. This stretch is lined with trees and there is roughly 4' of setback before a consistent sidewalk. The road surface is in fair repair with some checking and fading markings. Numerous businesses exist on each side of North Center St., as well as single family residential development that is of a density consistent of a small city.

Reaching Corry's Downtown Park along Park Pl., the roadway widens and parking lanes exist on each side of North Center St. Street trees are close to the edge of the roadway, with very wide sidewalks and considerable setbacks for downtown buildings. Downtown Corry consists of light retail with a few 3+ story light commercial and administrative buildings. 3 signalized intersections lie along this 1.2 mile stretch.

This section terminates at the historic Corry Junction near the North Center St. intersection with Main St. A new interpretive

Section 7: N. Center St. to Corry Junction

Field Notes, cont.

kiosk at Corry Junction explains Corry's history as well as current connections to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and other regional initiatives. A self-serve bike repair station accompanies the kiosk. A redesign for the junction is in the future and a former rail station is in the process of being renovated for new tenants.

Potential Improvements

A number of new initiatives have recently come to the Corry area, including a Blue Zones Project (<https://www.bluezonesproject.com/>). Blue Zones, Impact Corry, The City of Corry, Erie County, NW PA Trails Association, and other engaged partners are revitalizing the idea of trail connections into, through, and beyond Corry. This renewed interest should be capitalized upon for Corry Junction Greenway Trail improvements. Concepts such as Complete Streets are being discussed and explored.

Transitioning between the Corry Junction Greenway Trail could be slightly improved with signage directed towards motorists that trail users would be entering the roadway. This section of North Center St. is not necessarily wide enough for a dedicated bike lane, though shared-lane markings would also inform motorists of trail users on the roadway.

The intersection of North Center St. and Rt. 6 presents a key opportunity for improvement. This area could be considered for a full redesign as it is the gateway to Corry's downtown. Crosswalk markings for pedestrians and bicyclists along with signalization for pedestrians and bicyclists would increase the safety of this crossing. From the intersection to Corry's Downtown Park, the lane width is not currently sufficient for a dedicated bike lane. The sidewalk setback is significant enough to widen the roadway, though this would be a major redesign with removal of street trees.

From the edge of the Park at E Smith St. heading further into Downtown Corry, a road diet could be considered. Parking lanes could be condensed to a single side of the street with a bi-directional protected bike lane taking the place of a former parking lane. It is worth investigating the potential of creating parking-protected bike lanes which would allow both parking lanes through Downtown Corry to be retained.



Photo C: Downtown Corry, showing parking lane, businesses, and sidewalk

Section 7: N. Center St. to Corry Junction

Potential Improvements, cont.

As the first major community encountered by southbound travelers, Corry has the potential to further elevate its status as a trail-friendly community by installing more bike parking options and having businesses identify as ‘trail-friendly’.

Outside of Corry’s main corridor, the neighborhood streets offer options that are less trafficked by motor vehicles. If an alternate alignment was selected using the secondary streets, opportunities for trail users to clearly connect to Corry’s business district would be necessary. Additionally, south of PA Rt. 6, the trail corridor appears to be intact as far as W Irving St, which would eliminate passing in front of houses and driveways.

North Center St. through Downtown Corry is scheduled for resurfacing in 2021. The City of Corry is currently in contact with PennDOT District 1 representatives to discuss possible improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure concurrent with resurfacing.

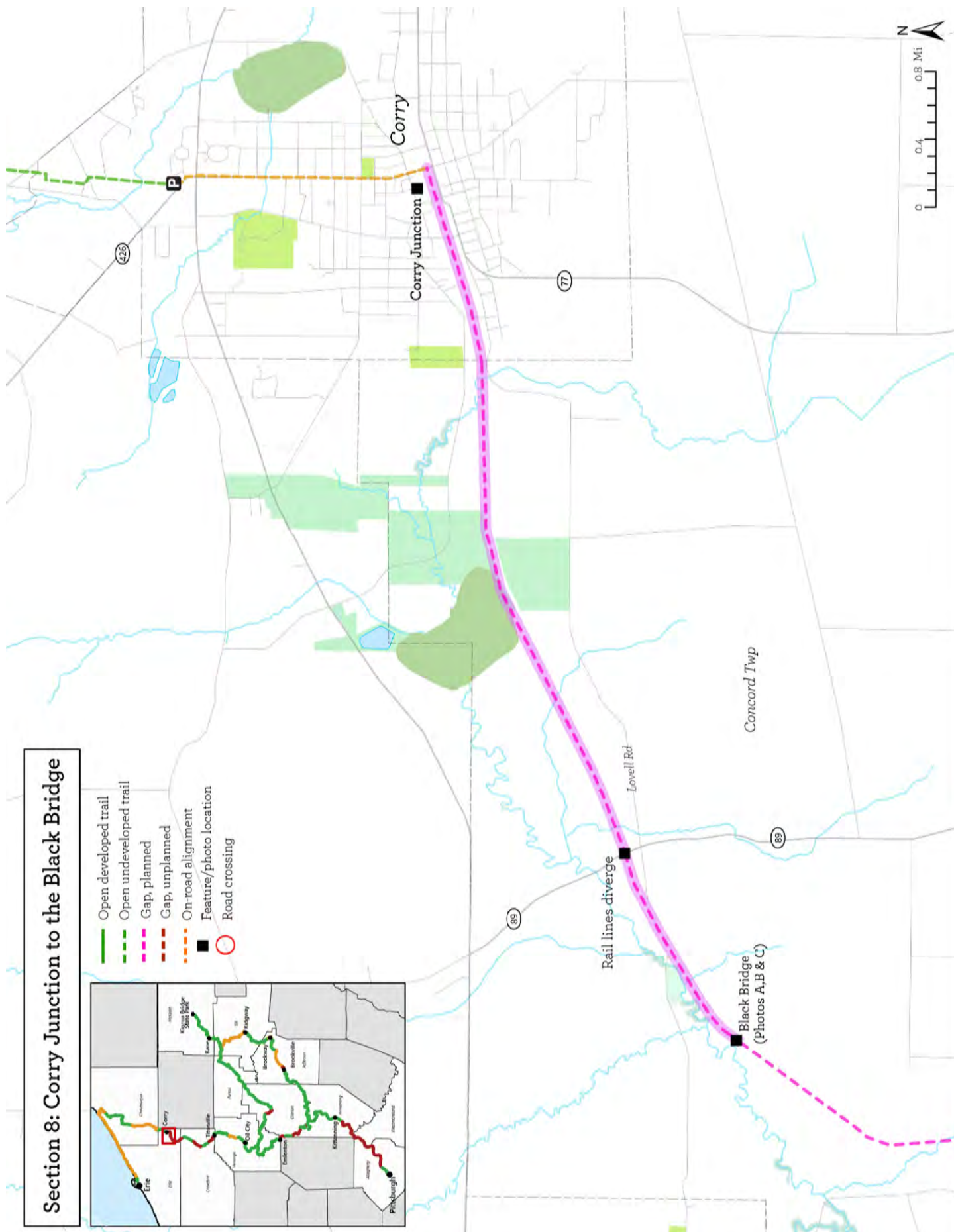


Photo D: Corry Junction looking west

Section 8: Corry Junction to the Black Bridge



- Open developed trail
- Open undeveloped trail
- Gap, planned
- Gap, unplanned
- On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 8: Corry Junction to the Black Bridge

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Erie County, PA and Crawford County, PA	Gap, Planned	4.44 miles	Negotiations Ongoing / Complete	11, 12, 13, 14

Project Partners:

NW PA Trails Association, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, City of Corry, Impact Corry, Blue Zones Project - Corry, Tri-County Snowblazers, Oil Region Alliance

Cost Estimate:

11: \$130,219 - \$159,157
 12: \$327,355 - \$400,100
 13: \$135,185 - \$165,226
 14: \$8,419 - \$10,290



Photo A: View of the Black Bridge with active line below

Field Notes

Impact Corry, a community development group facilitating cooperation and coordination in Corry, is leading the redevelopment of the former rail station at Corry Junction. This point represents the northeastern terminus for Section 8. Corry Junction is an area of land that lies at the edge of the City of Corry between two active rail lines. The line to the north is owned by Genesee and Wyoming Inc. (GWI), with the southern line owned by Western New York and Pennsylvania LLC (WNYP)

From Corry Junction, the proposed alignment follows both sets of rail lines heading west / southwest towards Concord Twp. As this is railroad-owned private property, direct observation wasn't possible. Viewing the active rail corridor from Lovell Rd., 3.4 miles from Corry Junction, showed a well-maintained rail corridor with consistent ballast, trimmed vegetation, and intact signage.

At Rt. 89 in Lovell, the two active lines diverge and the trail's primary alignment stays to the north side of the southern, WNYP-owned track. The alignment continues following a stretch of previously abandoned rail corridor as it gains elevation approaching an abandoned through-truss railroad bridge locally known as the Black Bridge. The Black Bridge crosses the active WNYP line. The bridge is intact, with the superstructure appearing to be in good repair. The decking timbers are in poor shape however. A formal engineering inspection is needed to determine the necessary steps for rehabilitation. The Tri County Snowblazers, a snowmobile group, owns the bridge.

Section 8: Corry Junction to the Black Bridge



Photo B: Current state of Black Bridge decking



Photo C: 1971 aerial image of the Black Bridge

Opportunities

A number of parties are working to meet with representatives from the Western New York and Pennsylvania and the Genesee and Wyoming Railroad to discuss the potential of consolidating rail service to a single track from Corry Junction heading southwest. This would result in fewer railroad crossings that need to be maintained and serve as a mechanism to further limit crossing liability.

Barriers

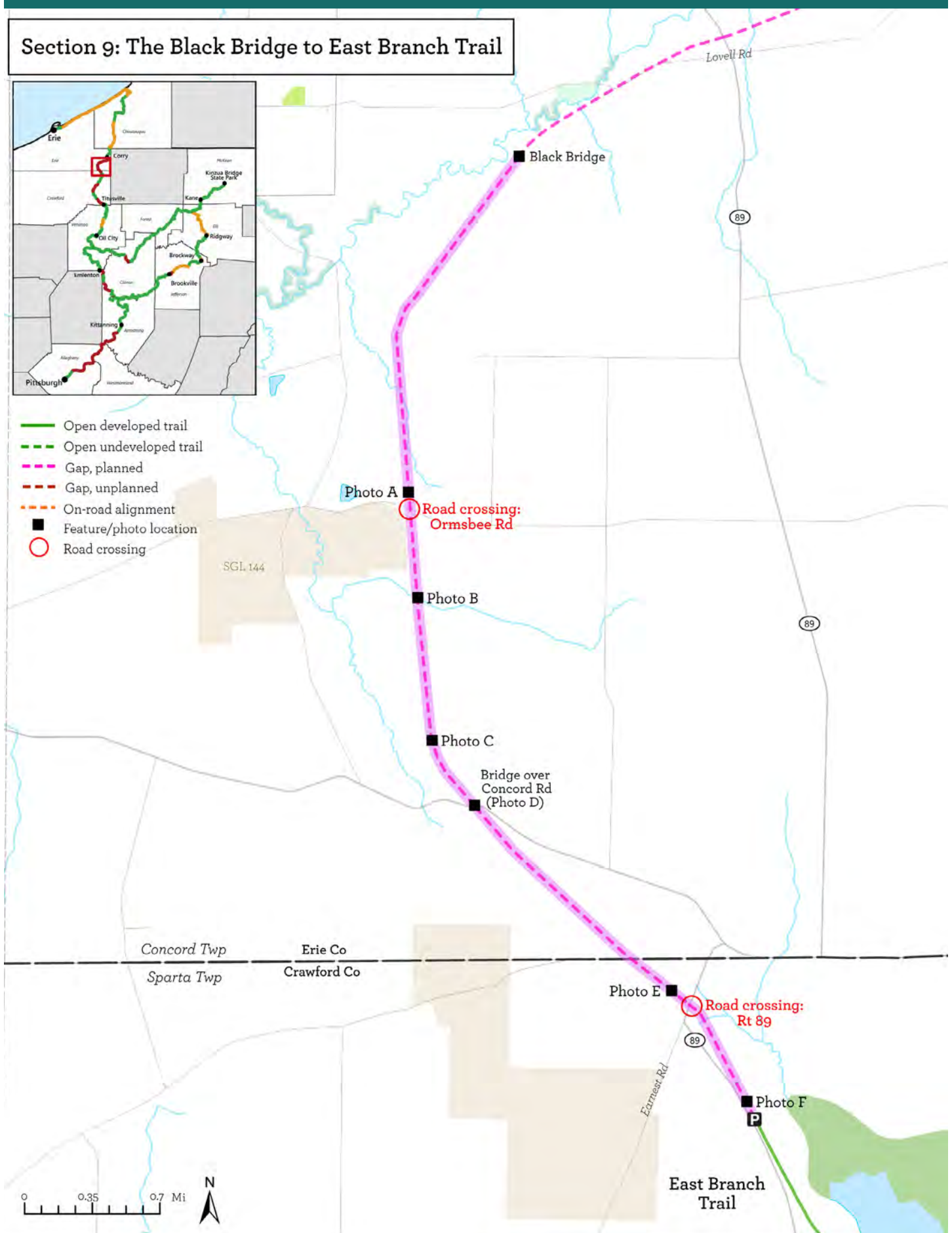
Partially due to the recent sale of the Genesee and Wyoming Railroad to Brookfield Infrastructure Partners, a meeting to discuss rail service consolidation has not occurred. If the Black Bridge is to be used, a formal inspection will need to occur. Since the bridge crosses an active rail line, negotiating permissions with the railroad must precede the inspection. At this point, no single group has been identified to lead the continuing development of trail between Corry and the East Branch Trail. Without a responsible entity coordinating efforts in Crawford and Erie County, progress is not moving swiftly.



Section 9: The Black Bridge to East Branch Trail



- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 9: The Black Bridge to East Branch Trail

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Erie County, PA and Crawford County, PA	Gap, Planned	4.2 miles	Negotiations Ongoing	15, 16, 17
Project Partners:			Cost Estimate:	
NW PA Trails Association, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, City of Corry, Impact Corry, Blue Zones Project - Corry, Tri-County Snowblazers, Oil Region Alliance			15: \$391,987 - \$479,095	
			16: \$166,025 - \$202,920	
			17: \$71,457 - \$87,337	



Photo A: Large, base-material rock at Ormsbee Rd crossing.



Photo B: Culvert over Lilley Run, corridor on top.

Field Notes

From the Black Bridge to the Erie/Crawford County line, the alignment runs just over 4 miles through privately owned property. The corridor is relatively open during this stretch. The treadway is mostly compact with some ponding water, impeded drainage and evidence of ATV use. The width varies from 8-12'. In some cases, low-growing vegetation shows in the middle of the treadway and on the immediate edges. For much of this corridor, the treadway is on a raised causeway that varies in height to the natural ground level but differs by upwards of 40' at points. Apparent wetlands and small streams were observed with numerous culverts cut through rock and lined with concrete.

The corridor crosses two roads along the way to the county line. Ormsbee Rd., the first of these crossings, is a low-volume, unpaved road. Formerly, the corridor crossed below the road grade but has since been filled in forcing the prospective trail user to climb a short, steep chute with large, base-material rock to reach Ormsbee Rd.

South of the Ormsbee Rd. crossing, the surrounding land is wooded, with a high tree canopy. The corridor crosses Concord Rd. above grade over a 50' span. Concord Rd. bends on either side in close proximity to the bridge. The treadway does not change and remains compact across the bridge.

Crossing into Crawford County, the corridor is owned by the Clear Lake Authority. The corridor from the county line to Rt. 89 is impassable, with heavy vegetation on the former railbed. Some of the fill material used in creating the causeway for the railbed has also been removed resulting in a depression greater than 100' long. A bridge formerly carried the rail over Rt. 89, which is no longer in place. While the Clear Lake Authority owns the corridor continuing south, local landowner encroachment in the form of active ag land prevented further observation. According to the Tri-County Snowblazers, snowmobile traffic is allowed over the winter through the dormant farm fields. An 800' section of corridor lies between the farmed field and the beginning of the Clear Lake Authority's East Branch Trail.

Section 9: The Black Bridge to East Branch Trail



Photo C: Typical surface conditions



Photo D: Bridge over Concord Rd.



Photo E: Overgrown corridor north of Rt. 89.

Opportunities

The landowners south of the Black Bridge are aware that groups are interested in developing the corridor for dedicated trail and have been willing to discuss transferring ownership to a new group. With the exception of the piece between the northern point of the East Branch Trail and the Erie County line, the treadway is largely intact. Resurfacing this section of the corridor would yield a user experience consistent with most developed rail-trails.

Barriers

An agreement would have to be reached with the landowner north of the East Branch Trail to allow users around the farmed field. Without this connection, trail users would have to connect via Rt. 89, which is a Rural Major Connector without accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. It is not foreseeable that the corridor from Rt. 89 to the county line can be easily remediated. Instead, trail users would have to access the trail near the county line via Chilton Hill Rd., an unpaved, low-volume road.

Section 9: The Black Bridge to East Branch Trail

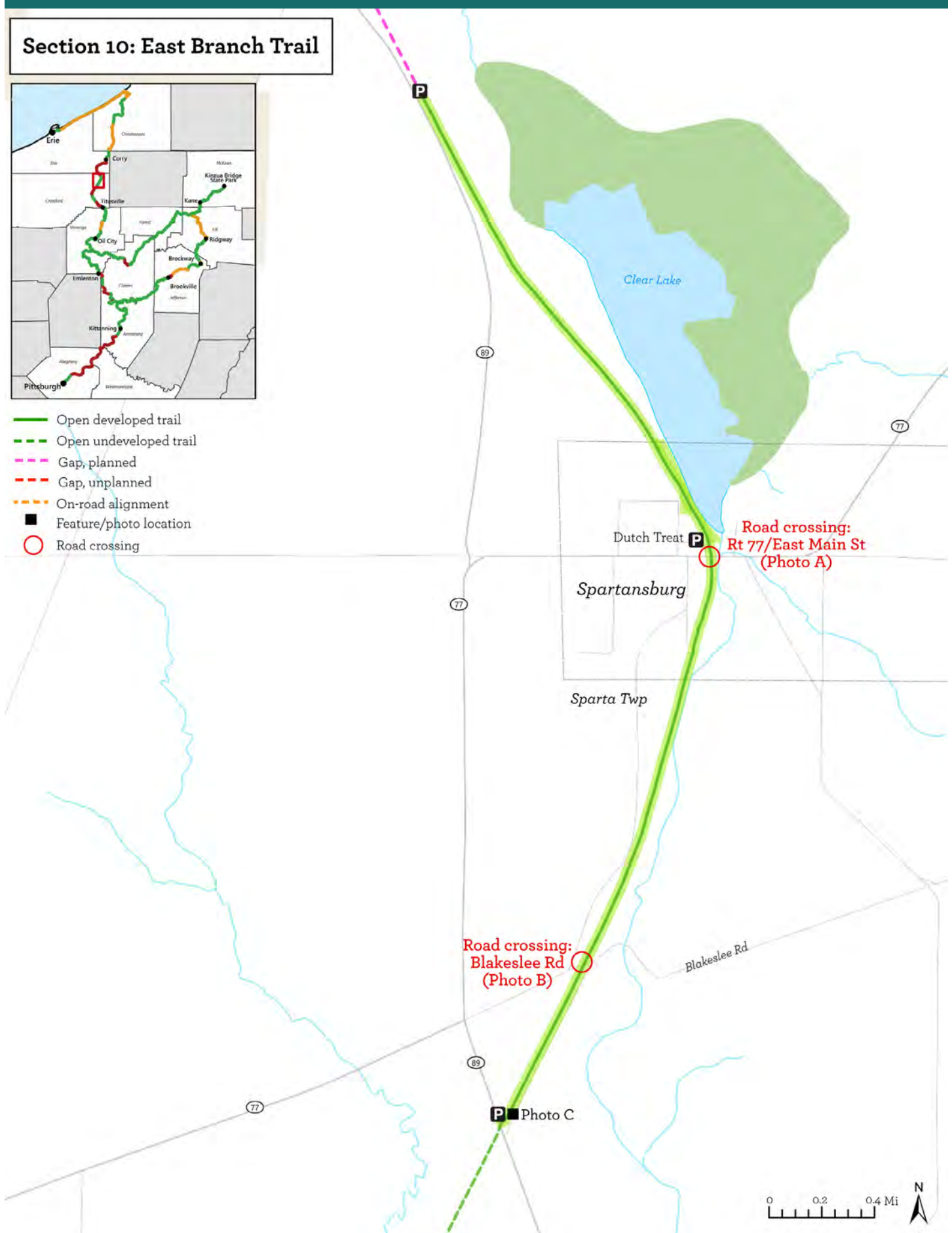


Photo F: Looking north from East Branch Trail-trailhead toward Concord Valley Farm.

Section 10: East Branch Trail



- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 10: East Branch Trail

County(s): Crawford County, PA	Status: Open, Developed	Distance: 3 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 18
Project Partners: Clear Lake Authority, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Tri-County Snowblazers, Oil Region Alliance, Crawford County Planning			Cost Estimate: NA	



Photo A: Spartansburg's business district from the trail level



Photo B: Blakeslee Rd. crossing

Field Notes

Section 10 consists entirely of the developed portion of the East Branch Trail. The treadway of the East Branch Trail is asphalt and maintains a consistent width of 8' with the total cleared corridor width reaching 18'. Running for 3 miles from a small trailhead off Rt. 89 beside Clear Lake through Spartansburg to its southern trailhead in Sparta Township, also on Rt. 89. The Clear Lake Authority owns and operates the East Branch Trail.

The East Branch Trail experiences no change in elevation over its 3 mile span. Land adjacent to the trail is flat and open with some trees lining the trail. The corridor is kept clear of trees to its full width and no tree canopy exists. The asphalt treadway is in good repair.

Spartansburg Boro is the halfway point of the developed East Branch Trail and features amenities attractive to trail users. Asphalt paved parking is available along the trail beside the Dutch Treat Restaurant. In Spartansburg, the trail crosses East Main St. (Rt. 77), a Rural Minor Arterial. The only other road crossing is at Blakeslee Rd., an unpaved, low-volume road.

The southern trailhead of the East Branch Trail is the larger of the two with parking for about 15 vehicles. As the trail approaches Rt. 89, it climbs to meet the grade of the roadway. A small, asphalt spur near this junction leads to the trailhead parking area.

Potential Improvements

During the warmer months, cyclists and pedestrians frequently use the developed 3 mile portion of the East Branch Trail. The greatest opportunity to improve the existing trail is to develop the corridor further southward creating more continuous miles of trail.

Additionally, the northern trailhead is undersized and could benefit from expansion. Information kiosks would educate trail users about the East Branch Trail's alignment relative to the broader Erie to Pittsburgh Trail alignment.

The crossing of Rt. 77 in Spartansburg is signed and marked well

Section 10: East Branch Trail



Photo C: Southern end of EBT, looking north



Photo D: Southern trailhead

Potential Improvements

but could be improved. The roadway features a short dip as it crosses the trail. Motorists travelling through Spartansburg toward the east do not have a clear line of sight to the trail, nor can trail users clearly see above the crest.

Due to its classification as a low-volume road, not much motorized traffic is encountered at the Blakeslee Rd. crossing. Bollards, gates and signage alert the user to the upcoming crossing. The roadway surface is rougher than the trail treadway creating a potential hazard. Resurfacing this transition would create a more seamless crossing or cyclists using the trail could be directed to dismount and walk through the intersection.

The southern trailhead is well marked and easily identifiable. Again, informational kiosks could be installed to put the East Branch Trail in context with the regional trail effort.

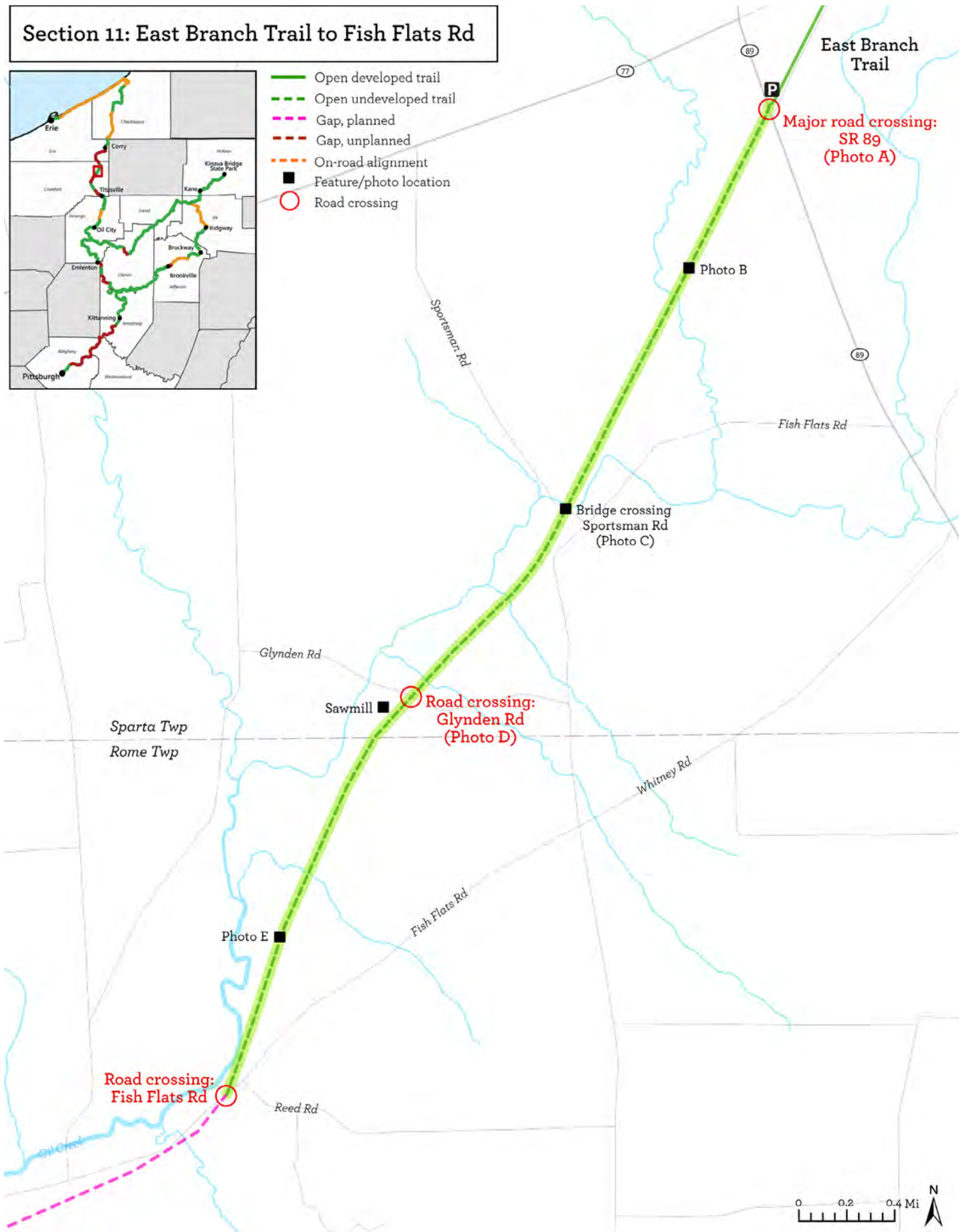
As an organization, the Clear Lake Authority is short on capacity to develop the trail to the south or north. An agreement could be explored with other interested parties in the region to develop a strategy to share the responsibility and progress with development efforts.



Section 11: East Branch Trail to Fish Flats Rd



- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- . - . Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 11: East Branch Trail to Fish Flats Rd.

County(s): Crawford County, PA	Status: Open, Undeveloped	Distance: 3.54 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 19
Project Partners: Clear Lake Authority, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Tri-County Snowblazers, Oil Region Alliance, Crawford County Planning			Cost Estimate: \$478,221 - \$584,492	



Photo A: Sportsmans Rd. Bridge, above grade crossing



Photo B: Glynden Rd. crossing, looking north



Photo C: Typical corridor conditions

Field Notes

This section extends from the southern end of the paved East Branch Trail along the same former rail corridor for 3.54 miles. The Clear Lake Authority's ownership extends along this section. Originally, the rail corridor crossed below the roadway grade. This difference is now filled in, with a groomed slope existing between Rt. 89 and the corridor. The Clear Lake Authority has scraped this section of treadway and it does see limited recreational use. The treadway is clear, with good compaction, and few drainage issues. This stretch experiences significant horse and buggy traffic and, as a result, parallel rutting is evident. Corridor width is about 15-18' from Rt. 89 to Glynden Rd. The surrounding landscape is a mix of rural residences, open farmed land and patchy forest cover. While trees are abundant on each side of the corridor, the width allows for little canopy. Generally, the adjacent land is flat.

About 1.4 miles from Rt. 89, the corridor crosses Sportsman Rd. and the East Branch of Oil Creek above grade. At over 100' in length, the bridge is in generally good repair. As of fall 2019, it has had a preliminary inspection, but requires removing all the surface material from the treadway to thoroughly examine the decking.

Travelling .8 miles southward, the corridor crosses Glynden Rd. at grade. Glynden Rd. is a low-volume, unpaved road with open sightlines lined with dispersed residences. About 100 yards south of Glynden Rd., the corridor passes an active, small-scale sawmill. The corridor appears to be used to access this sawmill. Log piles on each side of the treadway are visible.

For the next 1.5 miles between Glynden Rd. and Fish Flats Rd. the corridor remains open, though the width decreases nearing Fish Flats Rd. Ponding water on the treadway made for a softer surface in some places. Though the overall width decreases, some sections of the corridor become wider, presumably as users avoid the ponding water. A number of refuse piles were observed, primarily empty bottles and boxes.

The corridor intersects with Fish Flats Rd. at grade. Fish Flats Rd. is a low-volume, unpaved road. The corridor is buffered by trees as it approaches Fish Flats Rd. which results in slightly obstructed sightlines at the intersection. The corridor runs directly in front of a residence as it approaches the crossing with Fish Flats Rd.

Section 11: East Branch Trail to Fish Flats Rd.



Photo D: Example of ponding water and buggy rutting

Opportunities

A major opportunity exists for this section, in that the Clear Lake Authority owns the corridor. With acquisition being a significant challenge in trail development, the section can more readily be improved and developed than many others. Multiple potential partners can be coordinated to advance trail development and create consistency with the existing East Branch Trail. With the exception of the crossing of State Highway 89 and Sportsmans Rd., the other road crossings are at-grade, eliminating the need for the earthwork improvements of an above or below-grade crossing. The treadway remains clear of vegetation or major standing incidents. Improving the trail by paving it with crushed stone surfacing would signal that the trail is open for public use and an experience similar to other rail-trails can be expected.

Barriers

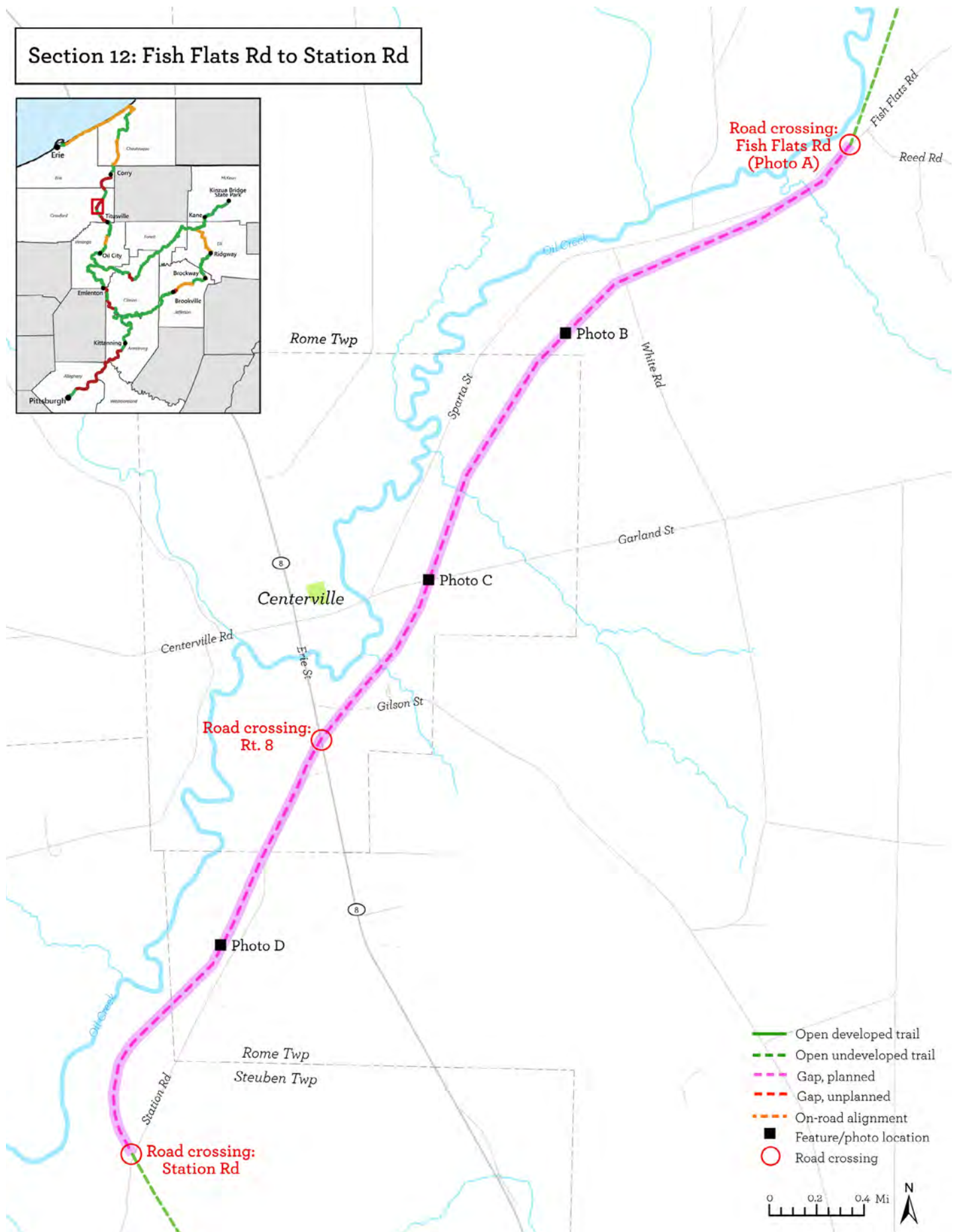
While the potential development of the trail benefits from a willing landowner, the Clear Lake Authority lacks the overall capacity to improve the corridor to a level consistent with the existing East Branch Trail. A number of potential partners are willing to cooperate and support the Clear Lake Authority, but the actual details of this arrangement are not concrete. The Sportsman Rd. bridge is the largest piece of infrastructure on this section. Although it appears sound, a more detailed inspection is necessary.

Connecting the existing East Branch Trail with this section requires crossing State Highway 89. Some roadway signage exists noting bicycle crossing, but further improvements need to be explored and engineered for this intersection.

Though the Clear Lake Authority owns this corridor, the local Amish community who use it for transportation may oppose the improvement of the trail for recreational use. Outreach in the area should be sensitive and take these concerns seriously. Outreach to the Buffalo Valley Rail-trail in Union County should be made to better understand how they approached working with the plain sect communities.



Section 12: Fish Flats Rd to Station Rd



Section 12: Fish Flats Rd. to Station Rd.

County(s): Crawford County, PA	Status: Gap, Planned	Distance: 4.1 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 20, 21a
Project Partners: Clear Lake Authority, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Tri-County Snowblazers, Oil Region Alliance, Crawford County Planning			Cost Estimate: 20: \$350,882 - \$428,856 21a: \$205,242 - \$250,851	



Photo A: Fish Flats Road at corridor crossing.



Photo B: Grown-in corridor between Garland St. and White Rd.

Field Notes

The corridor intersects with Fish Flats Rd. at roughly a 45 degree angle with very little elevation change.

Over the next .4 miles, the corridor is passable, though much narrower than the section north of Fish Flats Rd. Through this stretch, the open corridor is 8-10' with greater tree canopy cover. ATV and horse and buggy wheel marks were observed. Continuing beyond the .4 mile mark on the corridor is not possible; access is gated approaching a residence that crosses the corridor with a shed/outbuilding lying directly on top of the corridor. Southwest of this outbuilding, the corridor appeared very overgrown.

.3 miles beyond the encroaching outbuilding, the corridor crosses White Rd., another low-volume, unpaved road. From White Rd. looking northeast the corridor was very overgrown with a mix of wild grasses, various other plants including Queen Anne's Lace and yarrow, and adolescent hardwoods such as Basswood / American Linden and Elm. Looking southwest, the corridor is even denser with no recognizable treadway remaining.

About .4 miles from Garland St. (Rt. 1022) the corridor is mostly open, though the corridor frequented with downed trees and groundcover reaching 24" tall. A residence sits alongside the corridor as it meets Garland St. Opposite of the residence is an aged brick building looking to have been a warehouse or machine shop. Access to the corridor across Garland St. is gated and signed as private property and appears to be used for farming and possibly livestock containment. The land adjacent to the corridor slopes downward toward the East Branch Oil Creek.

A .6 mile stretch sits between Garland St. and Erie St. (Rt. 8). On Erie St., a number of residences sit close to the corridor with one residence using the corridor as a driveway that is marked as private property. Since either end of this .6 mile piece was posted, a closer observation of corridor and treadway conditions were not possible. At Erie St., a Rural Minor Arterial, the corridor crosses at a diagonal at a section where the posted speed limit is 55 mph. It is a flat section of two-lane roadway with a wide shoulder and generally good sightlines. From Erie Rd. looking northeast, the corridor

Section 12: Fish Flats Rd. to Station Rd.



Photo C: Looking south from Garland St. towards gated-off corridor

Field Notes, cont.

runs along the edge of a groomed residential yard with a thin treeline dividing the neighboring yard. Looking to the southwest, the corridor is completely obstructed by a thicker treeline and residences.

For the next 1.5 miles, the corridor is not passable. In most cases, the corridor is indistinguishable from its surroundings. At various points from Tryonville St. (T860), the corridor is visible but crosses within 25' of residences. Continuing further, Tryonville St. turns into Station Rd., a low-volume local road. From Station Rd., glimpses of the corridor show more residential encroachment with a number of outbuildings lying directly on the corridor. Low vegetation covers the treadway and chain restricts access from this point.

Opportunities

Along with the preceding section, the Clear Lake Authority owns this corridor. By having one landowner of this corridor, multiple landowner negotiations would not be necessary. With the exception of Erie Rd. and Garland St, the road crossings in this section are at grade and occur on low-volume roads.

A potential connection to Centerville exists from the corridor. While Centerville is a very small settlement, it features a general store that offers refreshments and sundries.

Barriers

While the Clear Lake Authority has documented ownership of the corridor through this section, there are numerous landowner encroachments. Challenging the landowners long standing adverse uses of the right-of-way may be difficult. Resolution of these issues may require considerable time and outside legal representation, equating to additional costs and delays in development.

Beyond these noted encroachments, the actual corridor is much denser than the preceding and succeeding sections. Heavy clearing, grubbing, and compacting would be

Section 12: Fish Flats Rd. to Station Rd.



Photo D: Between Centerville and Station Rd., the corridor becomes completely overgrown and indistinguishable.

Barriers, cont.

required before more superficial improvements could take place.

Development capacity of the Clear Lake Authority is a challenge with this section, likely more so than the preceding section as it has more physical impediments to the corridor.

As with other sections of this assessment, special consideration should be given to higher volume road crossings. In this section, the crossing of Erie Rd. warrants this consideration and design.

Interim Routing

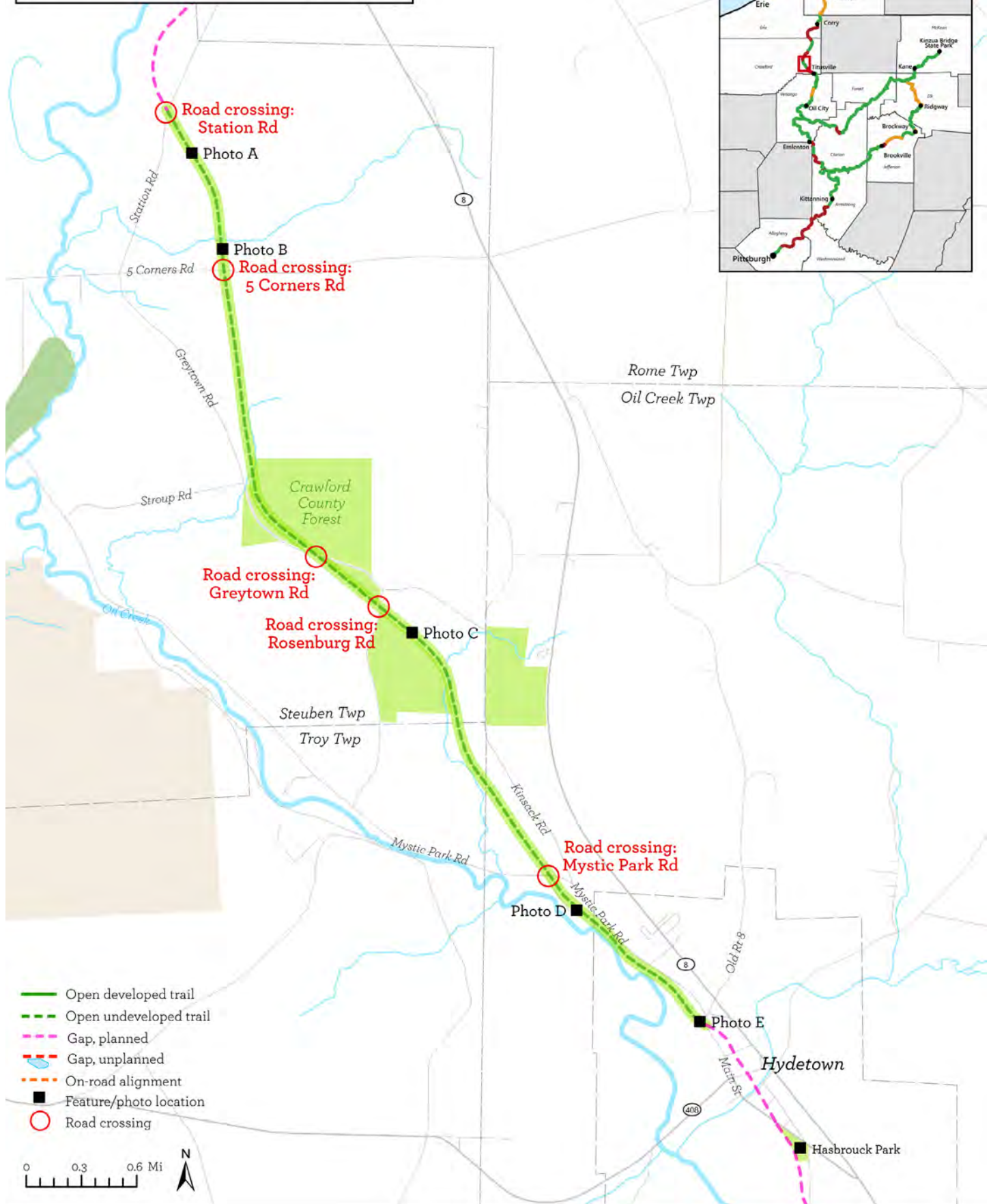
As this section develops, it is possible to re-route trail users to a temporary alignment using the low-volume, mostly unpaved local roads which intersect the corridor.

Fish Flats Rd. can be used and connects to White Rd. White Rd. intersects Garland St. which trail users can travel to access the light amenities in Centerville. Erie Rd. going into or out of Centerville is a higher volume roadway, but features good sightlines and lower speed limits until just before the corridor crossing near Tryonville Rd. Both Tryonville Rd. and its continuation into Station Rd. are suitable interim alignments.

To avoid Centerville and most of the Erie Rd. stretch, the alignment could continue on White Rd. to Recks Rd / Gilson St., which the corridor crosses very close to the Erie Rd. intersection with Tryonville St.

The user experience of this alignment would be different than a fully off-road rail-trail, but not dramatically different enough that trail users would not engage with this section.

Section 13: Station Rd to Hydetown



Section 13: Station Rd. to Hydetown

County(s): Crawford County, PA	Status: Open, Undeveloped	Distance: 5.1 Miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 21b
Project Partners: Clear Lake Authority, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Tri-County Snowblazers, Oil Region Alliance, Crawford County Planning, Titusville Renaissance, Titusville Redevelopment Authority				Cost Estimate: \$638,893 - \$780,869



Photo A: Corridor is very open as it approaches Station Rd.



Photo B: There are some wet, muddy spots along the length of the corridor.

Field Notes

Section 13 follows the corridor from Station Rd. into Hydetown, largely uninterrupted. At Station Rd., the corridor runs adjacent to a residence within a thinly buffered treeline for 500'. Though it is open and discernible from its surroundings, an unmarked dirt drive also runs parallel to the corridor that may be more feasible to use.

Besides this 500' section, the remaining 5 miles are passable and in generally good repair. The landscape can be characterized as a low, level valley pocketed with apparent wetlands. The majority of the treadway surface features good compaction and a smooth finish. In a few spots, larger base material has risen to the surface level. Treadway width is quite narrow, dwindling to 4-5' for much of the section. A causeway was built to carry the rail line, and for these stretches, the width can reach 15'. Some low-growing vegetation is present on the treadway. Immature deciduous hardwoods and shrubs are present on both sides of the corridor, many only reaching a few inches in diameter. Sumac, birch, and other species that thrive in damp soils were observed. Occasionally, older hardwoods and conifers were spotted growing just outside the corridor. A high number of downed trees cross the corridor that will need to be removed.

The entirety of this section showed signs of motorized vehicle use. While the signs of motorized vehicle use were observed, the treadway did not seem to suffer from deep rutting or lasting damage. Due to the corridor's proximity to apparent wetlands, the corridor had frequent instances of ponding water. In a number of spots, the ponding completely engulfed the corridor with no option other than to travel through the standing water. Though large, wide, and up to 8" deep, the surface below the water felt solid.

Over the 5 mile section, the corridor crosses marked roads 5 times. From the north, the first is Five Corners Rd. (Rt. 1020) a Rural Major Collector. The former rail line crossed below the roadway and it is necessary to climb and descend a steep, rocky chute to cross the road. Sightlines are relatively clear and the crossing is perpendicular. The next two crossings are of low-volume, unpaved roads at Greytown Rd. and Rosenberg Rd. Vegetation reaches within a few feet of the road resulting in abbreviated sightlines for motorists. Mystic Park

Section 13: Station Rd. to Hydetown



Photo C: Some puddles are deep and cover the entire corridor.



Photo D Corridor narrows and has overhanging vegetation in some spots as it nears Hydetown, but is passable.

Field Notes, cont.

Rd. is a Rural Minor Collector that the corridor crosses at grade on the way into Hydetown. A final crossing of Hydetown's Main St. brings the alignment into Hasbrouck Park, concluding this section. Just north of Hydetown, the corridor runs close to Oil Creek.

Opportunities

This section falls under the ownership of the Clear Lake Authority, potentially making the landowner negotiations more simple than in other sections.

The immature trees that grow in the corridor are small enough to be easily removed by scraping or even a crew of volunteers. In general, a maintenance push could dramatically open up this section of corridor quickly elevating the trail's status.

As the corridor is on a raised causeway, the trail user is afforded interesting views of the apparent wetlands as well as Oil Creek. This section's landscape is unique and could be marketed as a draw. Hydetown has a number of restaurants and a few small grocers that trail users would appreciate and patronize. Engaging Hydetown to assist with corridor improvements could position the town to benefit from visitor traffic. Trail parking in Hydetown with information panels would direct trail users into nearby businesses and interpretive panels explaining the hydrology of the surrounding landscape would add a sense of identity to this section.

Low-cost signage could be placed at access points along the trail to invite users. Though far from developed, increased trail traffic could result in raising awareness about the project overall and the potential return on future trail improvements.

Improving this section could bolster momentum for the entire length of the Clear Lake Authority-owned corridor. As section 21a has numerous physical impediments, showing success at either end would help put pressure to complete the middle section. Other development partners have noted the potential for this section. If these partners collectively work to improve this section it could serve as a proof of concept for future collaboration.

Section 13: Station Rd. to Hydetown

Barriers

Controlling hydrology on this section will be a challenge. The nearby apparent wetlands rise to treadway levels at points. Any drainage that was observed was dated and inadequate for the amount of water moving around the corridor.

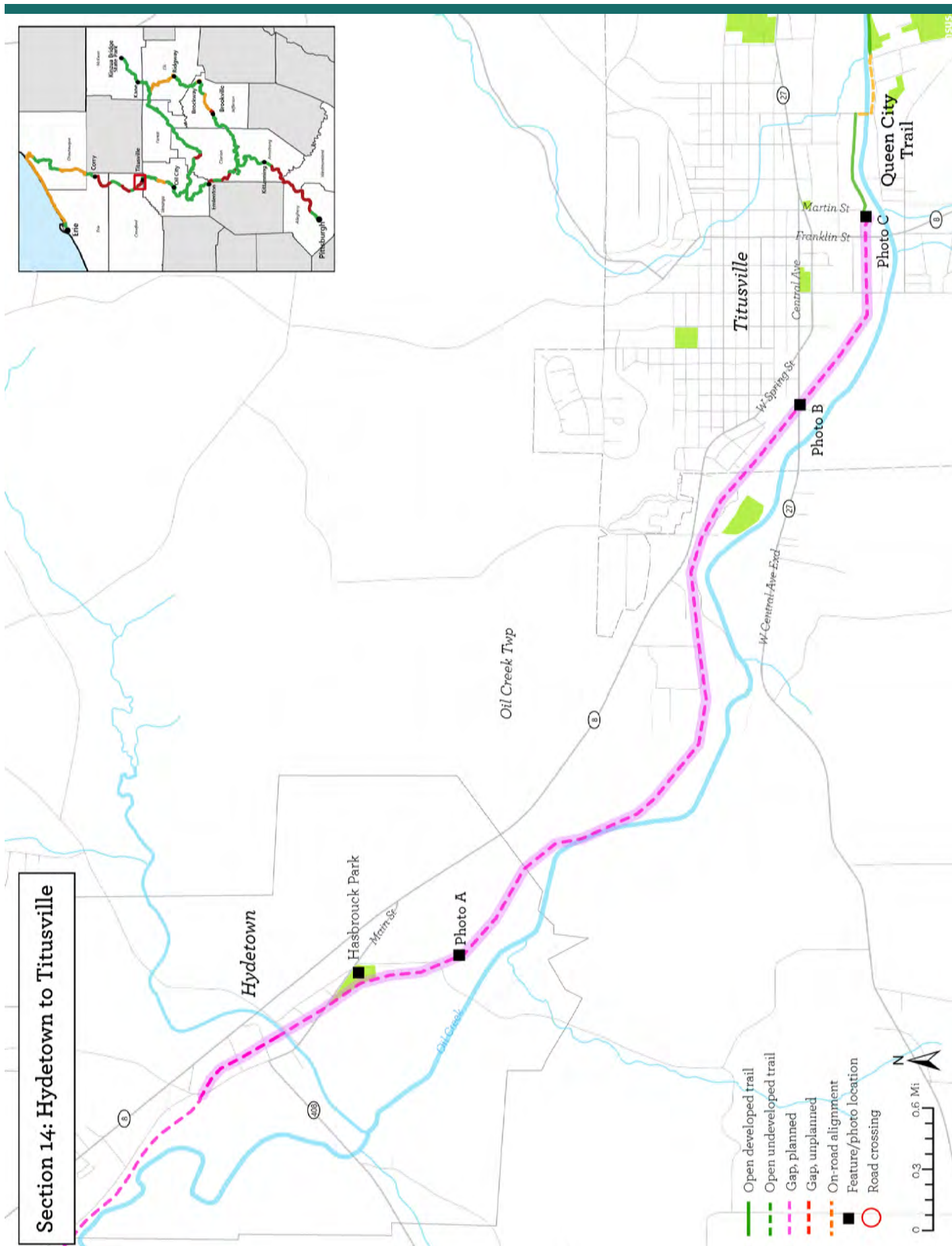
While some of the low-volume crossings are not too concerning, the grade change crossing Five Corners Rd. will require regrading and potential fill.

The development capacity of the Clear Lake Authority is in question for this section.



Photo E: Entrance to the corridor from Main St. in Hydetown

Section 14: Hydetown to Titusville



Section 14: Hydetown to Titusville

County(s): Crawford County, PA	Status: Gap, Planned	Distance: 3.75 miles	Acquisition Status Negotiations Need to Occur	Segments: 22
Project Partners: Clear Lake Authority, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Tri-County Snowblazers, Oil Region Alliance, Crawford County Planning, Titusville Renaissance, Clear Lake Authority, Titusville Redevelopment Authority, Enhance Titusville Inc.				Cost Estimate: \$550,068 - \$672,305

Field Notes

From Hydetown's Hasbrouck Park, the alignment continues along the former railroad corridor out of Hydetown Borough and towards Titusville. While the majority of the corridor in sections to the north is identifiable from the surrounding landscape, heading south from Hasbrouck Park, the corridor has been assimilated into the adjacent land uses.

Ownership of this section needs to be determined as parcel data is inconsistent with local knowledge. For 1.5 miles after leaving Hasbrouck Park, the corridor runs through an active quarry owned and operated by Hasbrouck Sand and Gravel. Imagery shows significant physical impediments on the corridor related to quarrying operations. The landscape otherwise is similar to upstream sections. Oil Creek sits in a valley roughly .5 mile wide. The surrounding wooded hillsides rise steeply with an elevation difference of approximately 500' between the streambed and hilltops.

Beyond the quarry, the corridor passes along a few light industrial and larger retail sites before crossing Kerr Mill Rd., an asphalt paved, but unmarked local road. The corridor then runs between a row of single-family residences and parcels owned by the City of Titusville.

After passing through the City of Titusville parcels, the proposed corridor becomes rail-with-trail, sharing space with the Oil Creek and Titusville (OC&T) Railroad, a tourist/excursion line. This shared alignment continues for 1 mile to S. Franklin St. (Rt. 8) in Titusville. About .8 miles from the beginning of the shared corridor, the alignment crosses W. Central Ave. (Rt. 27) at grade. Though the crossing is signed, it is not signalized. From the OC&T Railroad corridor, trail users would turn from S. Franklin St. to E. Mechanic St. to the trailhead of the Queen City Trail.



Photo A: Aerial view of corridor through Hasbrouck Sand and Gravel

Section 14: Hydetown to Titusville

Opportunities

Clarifying corridor ownership south of Hydetown could advance opportunities to continue the trail closer to Titusville.

This 3.75-mile section benefits from its proximity to both Hydetown and Titusville. Titusville is a medium-sized rural city with a population of roughly 5,500 residents. Developing the trail towards Hydetown can afford these residents with greater opportunities for recreation and transportation. Hydetown Elementary School sits directly next to the corridor. An improved trail would promote active transportation as well as an asset to physical education classes.

A potential partnership exists with the Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad. Sharing a corridor would bring additional visitors into the OC&T Railroad site and the unique experience of the excursion railroad would be attractive to trail users.

Barriers

Ownership for much of this section is in question. Title research will need to be undertaken to finalize this determination before continuing with trail development.

The expansive quarrying operation surrounds the corridor. This includes large deposits of sand and gravel, as well as previously quarried spaces that are now filled with water. It is unlikely that the trail could exist on the former corridor without significant movement of materials.

While some other sections of trail that feature physical obstructions have low-volume alternate alignments, this section does not. The corridor is bordered by Oil Creek on one side, with no established crossing before W. Central Ave. on the other. From Hydetown to Kerr Mill Rd., W. Spring St. is a wider roadway, with established shoulders and a 45 mph speed limit. The section of W. Spring St. from Kerr Mill Rd. into Titusville narrows to two lanes with no shoulders and frequent turning motorized traffic. Neither section of W. Spring St. is ideal for cyclists or pedestrians.



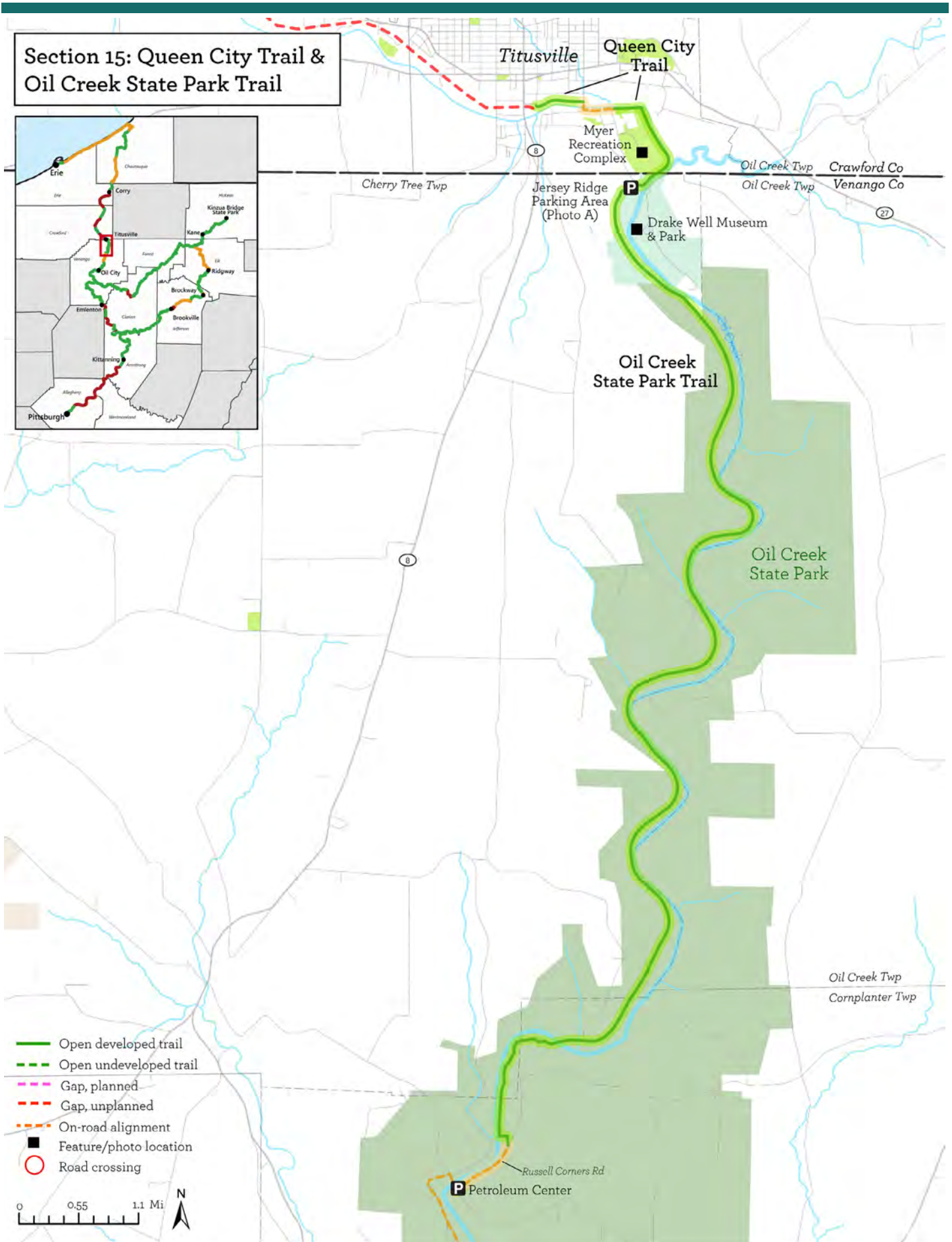
Photo B: Corridor crossing W Central Ave. (Rt. 27)



Photo C: New mural at Queen City Trail-trailhead



Section 15: Queen City Trail & Oil Creek State Park Trail



Section 15: Queen City Trail & Oil Creek State Park Trail

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Crawford County and Venango County, PA	Open, Developed/ On-Road	11 miles	Complete	23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28
Project Partners:			Cost Estimate:	
City of Titusville, Oil Creek State Park, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Oil			23: NA	26: NA
Region Alliance, Crawford County Planning, Titusville Renaissance, Titusville			24: NA	27: NA
Redevelopment Authority, Enhance Titusville, Inc.			25: NA	28: NA



Photo A: Erie-to-Pittsburgh signage at Queen City Trail (courtesy of Oil Region Alliance)

Field Notes

The Queen City Trail is an asphalt-paved, urban trail that uses a few short, on-road sections to connect users from S. Martin St. to the Ed Myers Sports Complex south of Titusville. At the S. Martin St. trailhead, informative signage and a new mural invite users to the trail. For the first .3 miles, the trail stays on the north shore of Oil Creek before crossing the creek on S. Brown Rd., a low-volume bridge. Trail-facing bike route signage, along with Erie to Pittsburgh Trail signage, guides users across the bridge. Continuing on the southern shore of Oil Creek, the trail shares the road with Bank St., an asphalt-paved, unmarked residential street. Less than .25 miles from the bridge, the trail moves off-road.

For the next mile, Oil Creek makes two tight curves, with the trail following closely. The Queen City Trail finishes at Drake Well Rd. Trail users have the opportunity to access the Ed Myers Complex from this point, or cross the creek to visit the Drake Well Museum. Interpretive exhibits educate the visitor on the birth of the oil industry with interactive models appealing to a wide age range.

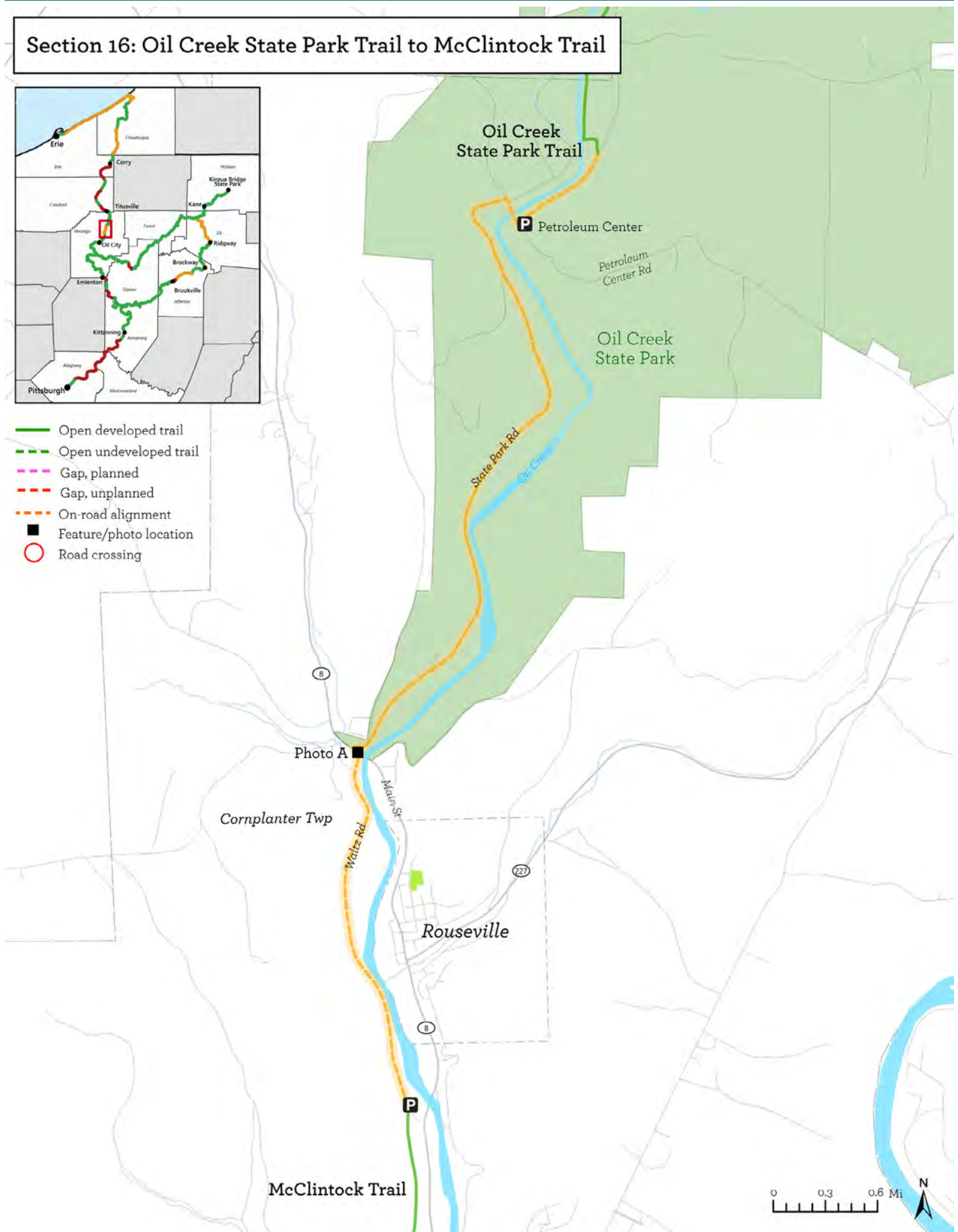
Crossing Drake Well Rd., the Queen City Trail becomes the Oil Creek State Park Trail. The Jersey Ridge Parking Area, a large trailhead with parking for over 20 vehicles and state park signage, greets the trail user. Seasonal restrooms and a bike fix-it station can also be found at the trailhead. The Oil Creek State Park Trail runs for the next 9 miles. It is asphalt-paved and surrounded by mature hardwood forest and offers frequent views of the creek. The surface is in good repair and features little elevation gain or loss.

At 9.5 miles from the northern terminus of the Oil Creek State Park Trail, the trail alignment merges with Russell Corners Rd. Continuing for .5 miles, Russell Corners Rd. ends at Petroleum Center. Petroleum Center features interpretive signage illustrating the storied history of this boomtown.

Section 16: Oil Creek State Park Trail to McClintock Trail



- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 16: Oil Creek State Park Trail to McClintock Trail

County(s): Venango County, PA	Status: On-road	Distance: 4.8 miles	Acquisition Status On-road Road; trail route utilizes public roads	Segments: 29, 30
Project Partners: Oil Creek State Park, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Oil Region Alliance, Oil Creek State Park, PA DCNR			Cost Estimate: 29: NA 30: NA	

Field Notes

Current route Section 15 begins at the southern terminus of the Oil Creek State Park Trail at Petroleum Center. The alignment immediately crosses Oil Creek via Petroleum Center Rd. then turns west and crosses the active Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad line.

Turning south, the alignment continues on State Park Rd. State Park Rd. then climbs steeply, reaching a grade of 7% and quickly descends. An elevation difference of 130’ occurs over the course of 1 mile.

State Park Rd. is a low-speed, asphalt-paved roadway in good repair. A centerline exists in some sections, but no marked shoulder is present. A number of informal roadside pull-off parking space dot State Park Rd. Some of these parking areas afford undeveloped access to Oil Creek, primarily for fishing.

3.1 miles from Petroleum Center, State Park Rd. intersects with Rt. 8. The alignment turns on Rt. 8 towards Oil Creek. Within 300’ and before crossing the creek, the trail turns right on Waltz Rd. This intersection consists of three turns in quick succession, but signage facing motorists and trail users is abundant and the intended route is clear. The rail station serving the Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad in Rynd Farm offers parking and restrooms on the opposite side of Oil Creek.

The Waltz Rd. stretch runs for 1.7 miles with scattered residences close to the road. Close to Rt. 8, Waltz Rd. is paved to begin, but turns to gravel. The gravel section is well-maintained with good compaction and no holes or washboarding. One hundred feet of elevation difference is spread over this stretch, with short rises reaching 3% grade. This on-road section concludes at the next crossing of the now Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad line.



Photo A: Rt. 8 and State Park Road intersection. Notice the Erie-to-Pittsburgh sign in the center of the photo

Section 16: Oil Creek State Park Trail to McClintock Trail

Potential Improvements	
	<p>The On Road portion from Petroleum Center to Rt. 8 has been on DCNR's Top Ten Trail Gaps list since that list was formalized in the 2014-2019 Pennsylvania Land And Water Trail Strategic Plan. The Bureau of State Parks has been working with Pashek+MTR, a landscape architecture firm, to develop alternative alignment proposals and cost estimates to move the trail off the road. The corridor faces significant challenges, including steep slopes, an active rail line and a highly variable waterway. In the Fall of 2019, a preliminary report was shared with key stakeholders and a final report with specific recommendations is expected to be released in the Spring of 2020. The creation of this new trail alignment would bring significant benefit to the communities of Titusville and Oil City and has the potential to become a showcase section of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.</p>





Section 17: McClintock Trail to Franklin

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Venango County, PA	On-Road/Open, Developed	11 miles	Complete/On-Road	31 - 39
Project Partners:		Cost Estimate:		
Oil Region Alliance, Allegheny Valley Trails Association, Oil City, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Oil Region Alliance		31: NA	35: NA	
		32: NA	36: NA	
		33: NA	37: NA	
		34: NA	38: NA	
			39: NA	

Field Notes

The McClintock Trail Phase II begins at Waltz Rd. and is an established, asphalt-paved trail that is best classified as rail-with-trail as it shares the same corridor as the active Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad. The McClintock runs for 1.4 miles alongside the rail line before crossing Seneca St. (Rt. 8) at a marked but unsignalized crossing. At this point, the rail line and trail cross Oil Creek using the same bridge, but with a combination of chain link fencing and concrete walls separating trail users from the rail line. 150' from the end of the bridge, the trail crosses the line and deviates back toward Seneca St. Both crossings occur in a .3 mile stretch.

The initial 1.4 mile stretch of the McClintock Trail travels through an area that is primarily a mix of commercial and light industrial land. Thin patches of treeline buffer the buildings and the trail.

Continuing the trail through Oil City introduces a unique alignment for the trail. Seneca St. is bidirectional for .4 miles to Duncomb St. This piece of Seneca St. is two-lane, low-speed traffic limited to 25 mph. Businesses line each side of Seneca St. and sidewalks exist for most of this stretch. Shared lane road markings announce to motorists that cyclists should be expected on the roadway. The lane width can accommodate improved on-road bicycle facilities according to PennDOT design guidance, but on-street parking close to Duncomb St. reduces the bicyclist's buffer.

At Duncomb St., Seneca St. becomes one-way and only carries southbound traffic at this point. Trail users heading north use Elm St., which runs parallel to Seneca, separated by a block. Seneca St. is well-marked with surface conditions in good repair. Both general bike route wayfinding signage and Erie to Pittsburgh Trail signage directs trail users onto Sycamore St. which continues behind the businesses located on Seneca St. The alignment then crosses Oil Creek on a shared railroad bridge with a physically separated lane. Shortly after crossing Oil Creek, the route turns and crosses the Allegheny River on Petroleum St. (Rt. 62.) This crossing is well-marked with the shoulder of the road striped as a bike lane. On the eastern side of the bridge, there is a protected sidewalk.



Photo A: McClintock Trail, end of rail-with-trail

Section 17: McClintock Trail to Franklin

Field Notes, cont.

Similarly to the Seneca St./Elm St. division, the route again become unidirectional. West/southwest traffic uses W. 1st St. while north/northeast traffic uses W. Front St. Consistent with the other sections through Oil City, this segment is well-marked using low-speed roads with a good surface condition. The split routes rejoin at Wyllis St. at the Oil City Marina.

Picking up the Samuel Justus Recreational Trail, the route hugs the Allegheny River for the next 5.5 miles downriver to the confluence of the Allegheny with French Creek in Franklin. The Samuel Justus Recreation Trail is asphalt-paved.

The Samuel Justus Recreational Trail finishes just across the Allegheny River from Franklin. A large parking area with restrooms and information kiosks is a popular trail access point for both the Samuel Justus Recreational Trail, as well as its continuation, the Allegheny River Trail.



Photo B: Crossing Oil Creek on shared bridge



Photo C: Oil City on-road; shared lane markings

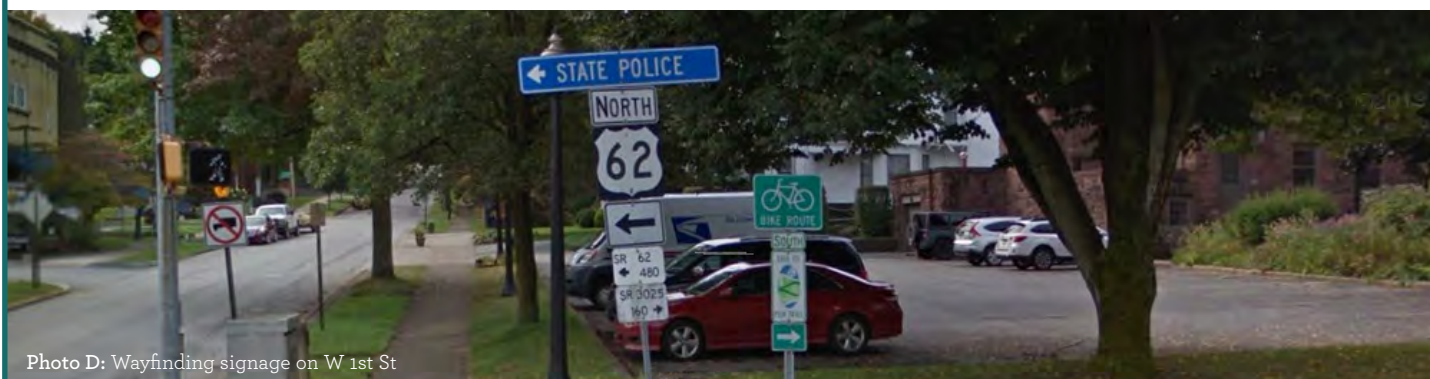
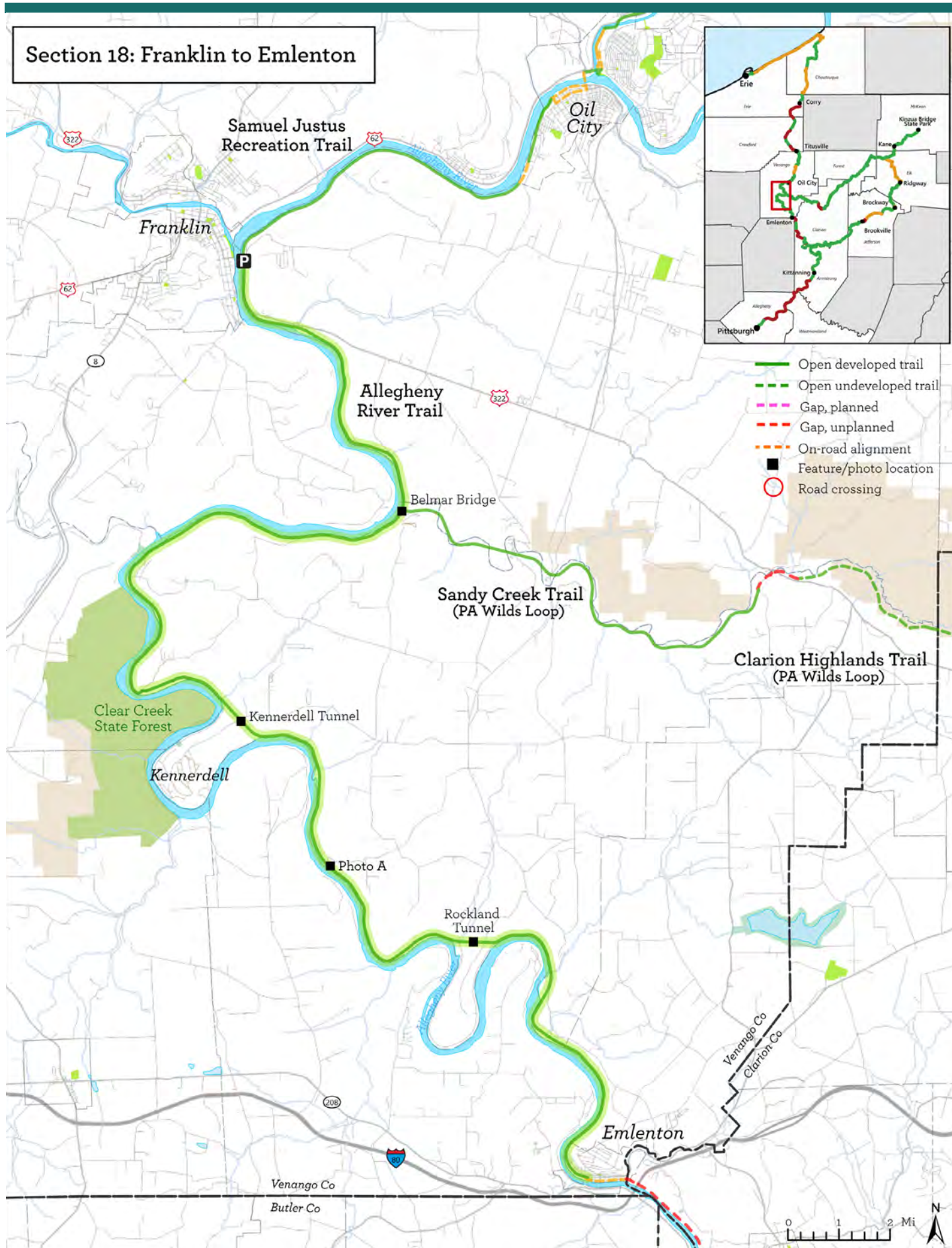


Photo D: Wayfinding signage on W 1st St



Section 18: Franklin to Emlenton



Section 18: Franklin to Emlenton

County(s): Venango County, PA	Status: Open, Developed	Distance: 27.2 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 40, 41, 42, 43
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Project Partners: Allegheny Valley Trails Association, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Oil Region Alliance	Cost Estimate: 40: NA 41: NA 42: NA 43: NA
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Photo A: Typical trail conditions along the Allegheny River Trail

Field Notes

The Samuel Justus Recreational Trail flows seamlessly into the Allegheny River Trail in Franklin. A large, well-developed parking area has capacity for 50 vehicles. In addition to restrooms, a picnic area is also located at the trailhead.

The Allegheny River Trail is asphalt-paved for almost all of its 27-plus miles. A short gravel section, about 13 miles from Franklin near Brandon, is the only exception. Surface conditions are in generally good repair over this section. In a few spots, tree roots have rippled the asphalt creating a short, washboard-like surface.

Trail users should expect a removed and remote experience. The trail follows the designated National Wild and Scenic Allegheny River with basically no elevation gain or loss. Adding to the immersive wild feel, there are no of amenities between the Franklin and the southern terminus in Emlenton. Resupply, restrooms, and benches can only be found at the trailheads.

Unique features along the trail include two tunnels and a high-grade bridge. The Rockland Tunnel (2,868') and the Kennerdell Tunnel (3,300') serve as attractions to the trail user, providing variety to the experience. Neither tunnel is lit, and, as they both bend slightly, are very dark. Interpretive signage can be found at the tunnels' portals. The Belmar Bridge at the mouth of Sandy Creek is an impressive structure that carries the Sandy Creek Trail across the Allegheny River. Trail users can connect to the Sandy Creek Trail via a wooden staircase.

The Allegheny River Trail's length, and the option to add more mileage via the Samuel Justus Trail, make it a destination for users seeking a developed rail-trail experience. A mix of cottages, some full-time residences, some seasonal, dot the trail. Many of these cottages are available to rent, providing potential overnight accommodations to trail users.

The Allegheny River Trail finishes in Emlenton. Emlenton has a number of restaurants and accommodations, as well the Pumping Jack Museum, an homage to its energy extraction history.

Section 18: Franklin to Emlenton

Potential Improvements

The Allegheny River Trail provides an experience that is consistent with many of the most popular rail-trails in the region. Inviting views, interesting infrastructure, a smooth, maintained surface all add up to make this trail accessible and enjoyable to a great range of abilities and ages.

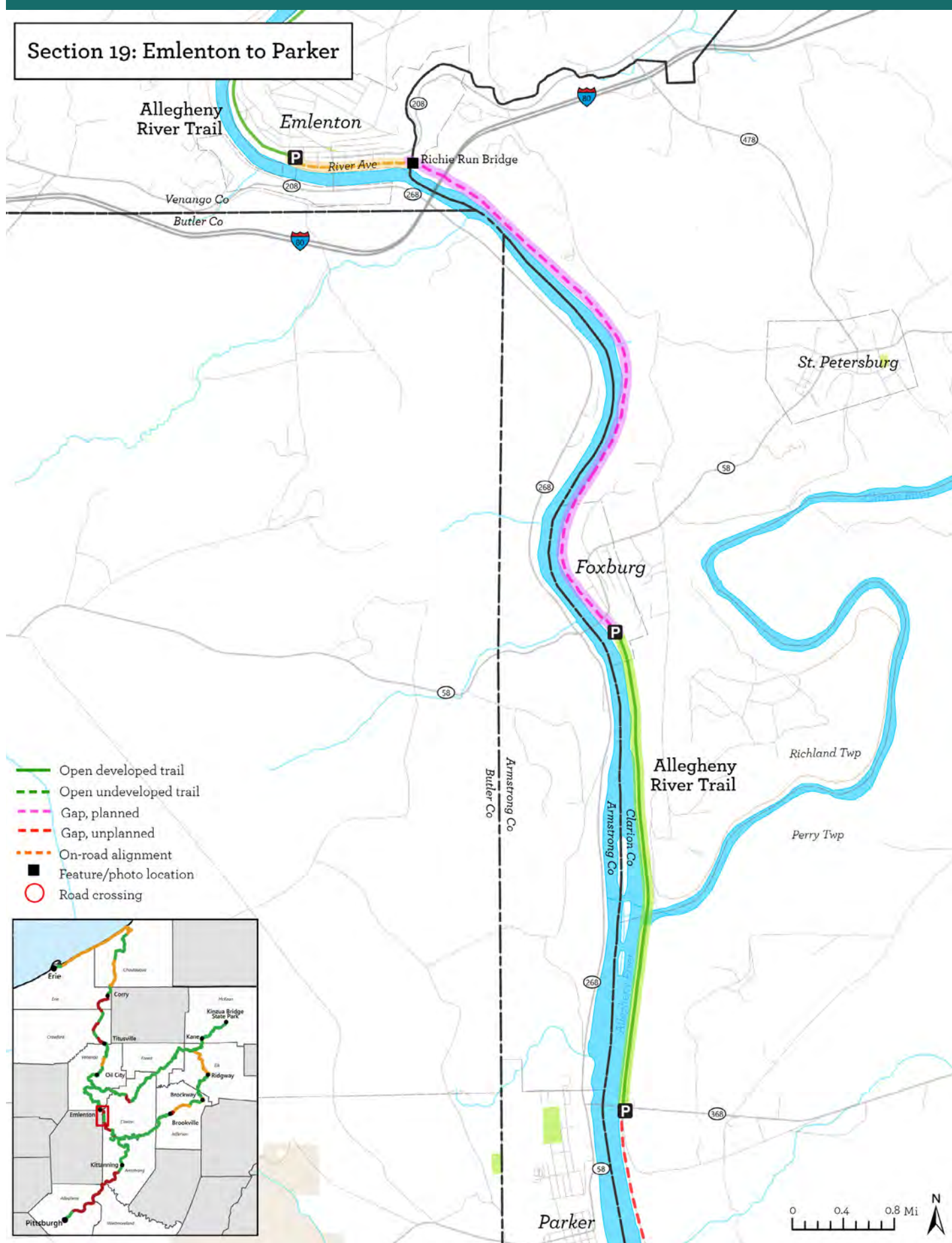
Restrooms, even portable units, are commonly identified as a necessity for trails of this length. Adding restrooms, benches, and picnic area will elevate the trail experience for most users.

Installing motion-activated lighting through the tunnels would create safer riding conditions through these features. The trail sections which suffer from root-growth could be resurfaced, or at least marked, to ensure bicyclists do not lose control over the bumps.

The greatest opportunity for this trail is the continuation of the trail beyond Emlenton.



Section 19: Emlenton to Parker



Section 19: Emlenton to Parker

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Venango County, PA Clarion County, PA	Gap, Planned/ Open, Developed	6.63 miles	Negotiations Ongoing / Complete	44, 45, 46, 47, 48
Project Partners:			Cost Estimate:	
Allegheny River Trail in Clarion , Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Allegheny Valley Trails Association, Armstrong Trails, North Country Trail Association			44: NA	47: \$139,938 - \$171,036
			45: \$28,427 - \$34,744	48: \$354,540 - \$433,327
			46: \$283,724 - \$346,773	

Field Notes

As the Allegheny River Trail ends in Emlenton, the alignment follows a short, .7 mile, on-road stretch using River Ave. The trail alignment turns left from River Ave. and reconnects to the historic rail corridor using 2nd St.

Picking up the rail corridor, the planned alignment immediately crosses Ritchie Run, elevated, over a large culvert. The Ritchie Run Bridge is a key piece of infrastructure on this stretch and in 2019 received a Greenways, Trails, and Recreation grant from PA's Commonwealth Finance Authority. Ritchie Run also serves as the jurisdictional boundary between Venango and Clarion Counties.

Following Ritchie Run, the corridor crosses under I-80. This section follows a contour roughly 30' above the water level of the Allegheny River. A wide floodplain sits below the corridor. On the steep hillside above the corridor, a mixed hardwood forest was observed. While access was granted close to the Emlenton end of this section, the remainder of the stretch towards Foxburg falls under a number of different private landowners and direct inspection was not possible. Local knowledge reports good surface compaction close to Emlenton. Nearing Foxburg, larger base material has risen to the top of the treadway creating an uneven surface. Some ponding water was observed from a distance, though actual drainage points need further investigating. A high tree canopy covered most of the treadway and little to no surface vegetation existed.

The treadway appeared to be 8-10' in width, though this was not confirmed for the whole section. No nearby roads are suitable for interim routing around this gap.

The Allegheny River Trail consists of the main stretch from Franklin to Emlenton, as well as an additional piece running from Foxburg to Parker. This 2.63 section is much like the longer section of the ART north of Emlenton, as both sections of trail are asphalt-paved and offer frequent glimpses of the Allegheny River. The nearby mixed hardwood landscape is consistent with the upriver section. 1 mile from the southern terminus, the trail crosses the Clarion River as it meets the Allegheny.



Photo A: Aerial view of Emlenton, start of undeveloped segment

Section 19: Emlenton to Parker

Opportunities

The Allegheny River Trail in Clarion is a sub-group of the Allegheny Valley Trails Association and operates with a geographical focus specific to this section. The presence of a local entity actively exploring development of this section is positive.

The development of this gap would provide residents in both Emlenton and Foxburg a safe, enjoyable opportunity to travel between towns by active transportation means. Foxburg is a unique town with a wine cellar and upscale chocolatier as well as a riverside banquet hall and restaurant. The Emlenton/Foxburg area is also a popular water-based recreation hub.

The local trail group is also exploring the development of trailhead facilities at the end of River Ave. This trailhead would feature a direct connection to the trail alignment.

Barriers

Landowner negotiations have been an ongoing challenge on this section. Several landowners hold parcels along this 4 mile stretch. Although there have been positive discussions with some of them on providing a means of legal access through the corridor, there hasn't been 100% buy-in from all of the property owners. Without 100% buy-in, the willing landowners are hesitant to invest time in negotiations.

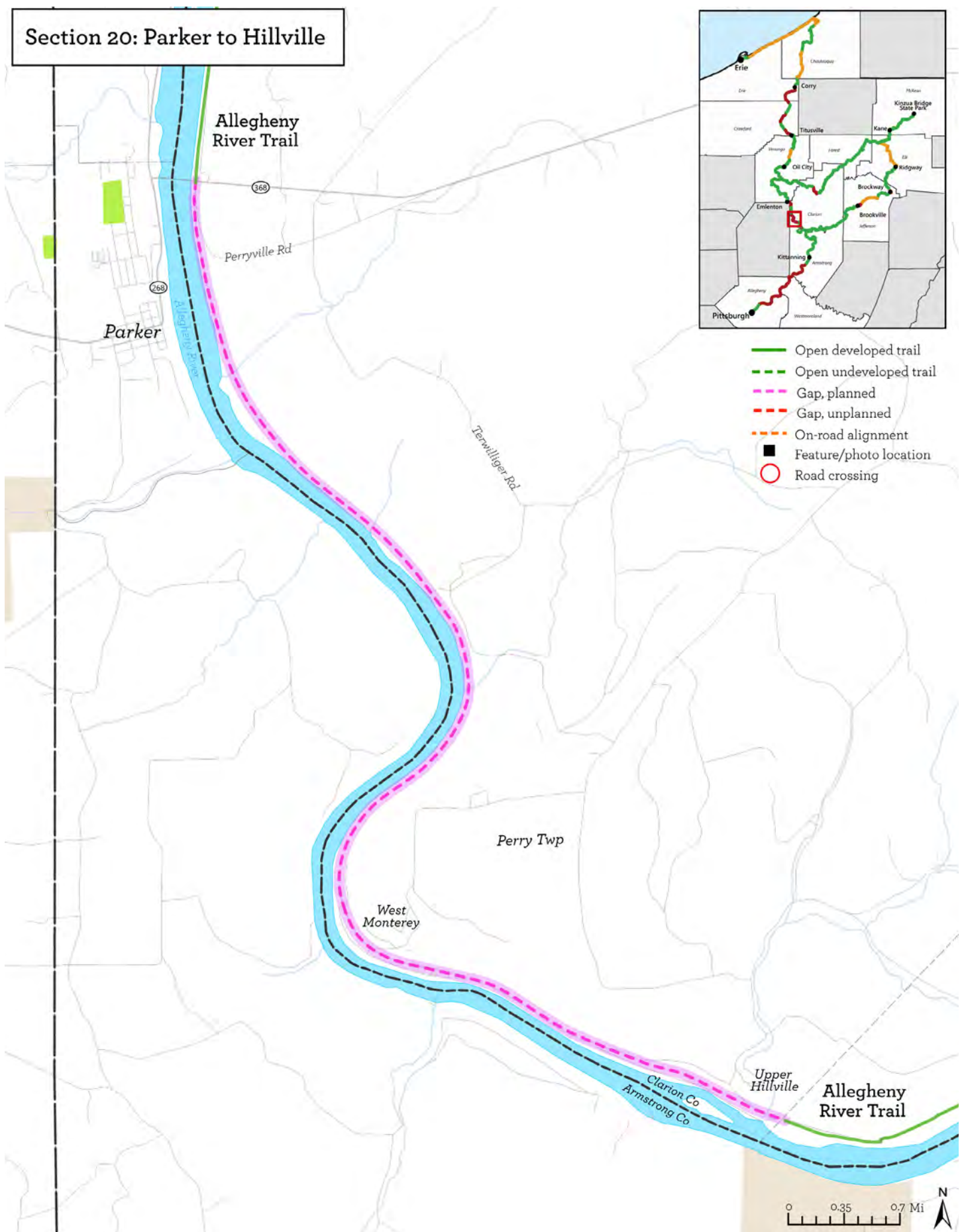
Recent research by the Allegheny River Trail in Clarion group has called into question the legal claim to ownership of the corridor by these landowners. Proceedings are underway to more clearly determine these claims.



Photo B: Aerial view of Foxburg showing alignment entering town



Section 20: Parker to Hillville



Section 20: Parker to Hillville

County(s): Clarion County, PA	Status: Gap, Planned	Distance: 6.48 miles	Acquisition Status Negotiations Need to Occur	Segments: 49, 50
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Project Partners:

Allegheny Valley Trails Association, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Armstrong Trails

Cost Estimate:

49: \$553,363 - \$676,332

50: \$321,245 - \$392,632

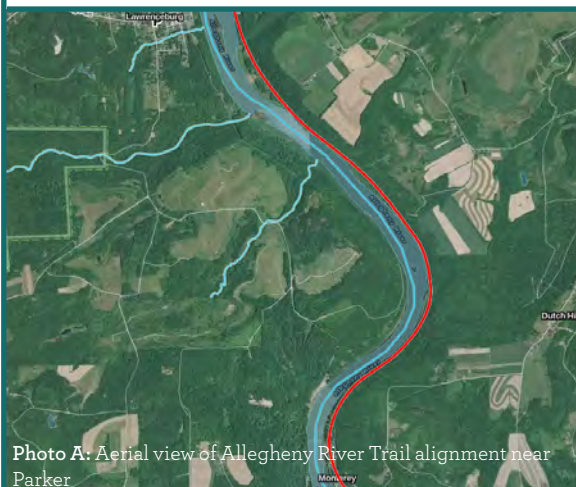


Photo A: Aerial view of Allegheny River Trail alignment near Parker

Field Notes

Section 20 is the proposed continuation of the Allegheny River Trail from Parker through West Monterey to Upper Hillville. Ownership of the former railroad corridor through this section is split between a number of different entities. As this is private property along the river, no direct investigation was possible. The remote nature and topography of this section means there are no suitable nearby roads for interim routing.

Aerial imagery confirms that the landscape here is very similar to other points along the Allegheny River Trail. If developed, the trail experience would be consistent as well.

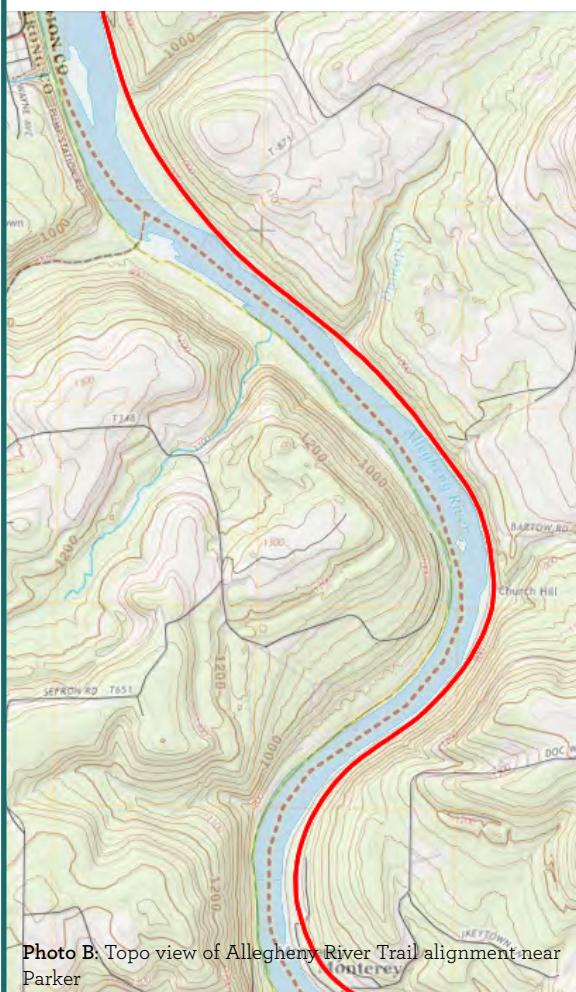


Photo B: Topo view of Allegheny River Trail alignment near Parker

Opportunities

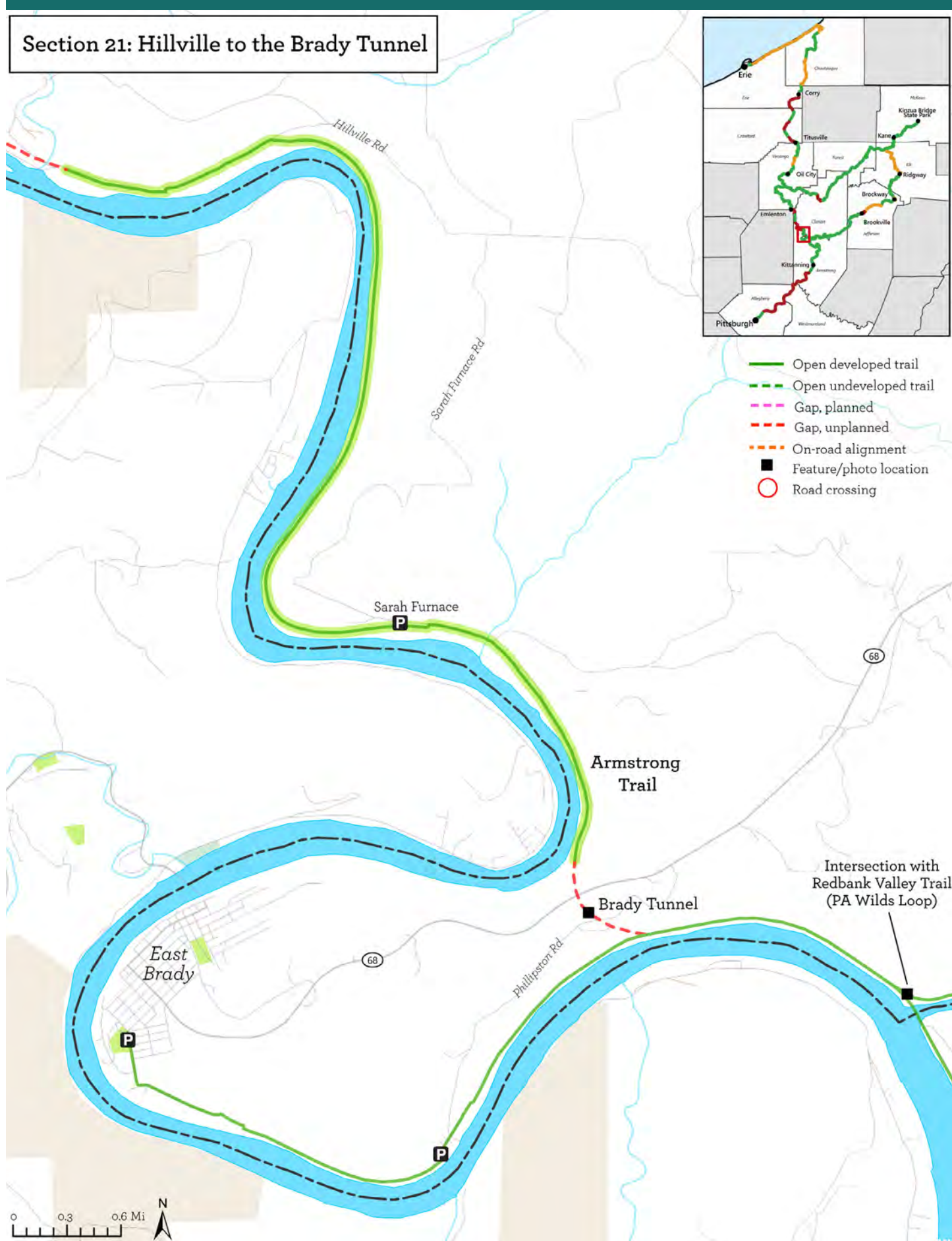
As of the Fall of 2019, Armstrong Trails has been working to complete the trail upriver from the northern end of the Brady Tunnel to Upper Hillville. It may be possible to leverage this momentum to push beyond Upper Hillville while the Allegheny Valley Trails Association continues to work downriver from Parker.

Although the right of way is privately held, the Allegheny Valley Trails Association could collaborate with Armstrong Trails to explore easement opportunities and present the trail's development as an asset for landowners along this section.

Barriers

The Allegheny Valley Trails Association is lacking in capacity to perform thorough title and deed research necessary to continue landowner negotiations. Without a clear understanding of ownership, trail development is stifled.

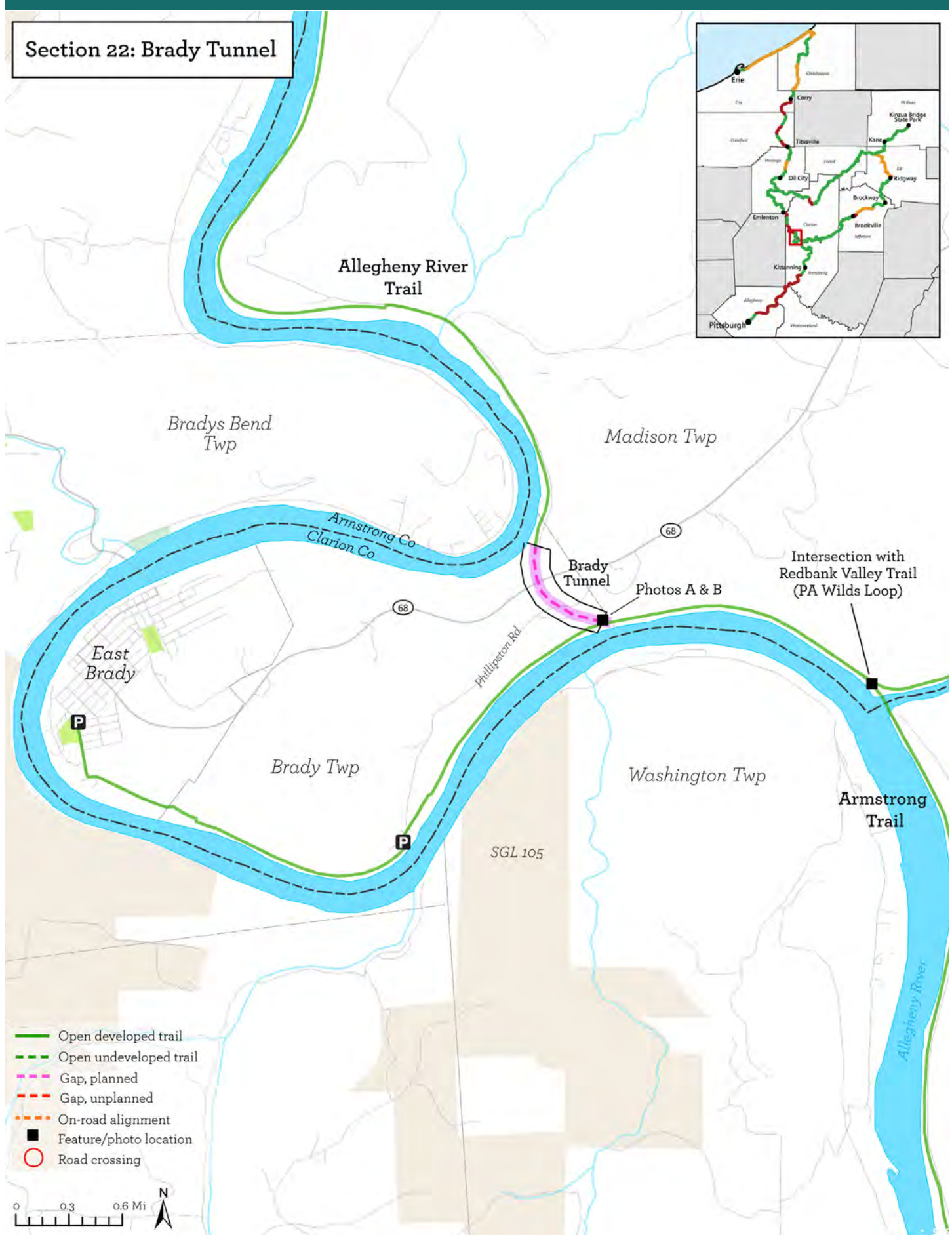
Section 21: Hillville to the Brady Tunnel



Section 21: Hillville to the Brady Tunnel

County(s): Clarion County, PA	Status: Open, Developed	Distance: 4.8 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 51, 52
Project Partners: Armstrong Trails, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Allegheny Valley Trails Association, Clarion County				Cost Estimate: 51: NA 52: NA
Field Notes				
<p>As of early 2019, Armstrong Trails has improved the 4.8 mile section from the northern portal of the Brady Tunnel to Upper Hillville. The valley through this section is relatively unchanged compared to the upriver sections of the Allegheny River Trail. The corridor has been resurfaced with crushed limestone and maintained to a consistent width of roughly 8'.</p> <p>Trailhead parking is accessible from Sarah Furnace Rd., though no additional amenities are offered at this location.</p> <p>Nearing the Brady Tunnel, the adjacent hillsides rise steeply from 850' to over 1,400'. Though inaccessible from the trail, a developed overlook at the top of the slope provides sweeping view of Brady's Bend.</p>				

Section 22: Brady Tunnel



Section 22: Brady Tunnel

County(s): Clarion County, PA	Status: Gap, Planned	Distance: .56 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 53
Project Partners: Armstrong Trails, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Clarion County			Cost Estimate: \$4,000,000 - \$10,000,000	

Field Notes

The Brady Tunnel is a major piece of railroad infrastructure that began undergoing rehabilitation in the Fall of 2019. The 2,468' tunnel itself dates back to 1913. As rail traffic increased along the Allegheny River, this tunnel was constructed with a 2' thick concrete liner with brickwork providing additional support at peak heights. The tunnel trims 5.36 curving miles from the original rail route.

The Brady Tunnel has been identified as a Top Ten Trail Gap by PA DCNR and was awarded a \$500k DCNR grant for Phase I improvements in 2019. In 2018 the project received \$829k for engineering and stabilization of the tunnel from DCNR. Armstrong Trails has applied for additional funding and is awaiting announcements which could help close the funding gap.

Original cost estimates for the tunnel's complete rehabilitation exceeded \$10 million. Armstrong Trails is taking a different design approach and is focusing on fixing key areas, cutting costs roughly in half.

Improvements include 750' of shotcrete for the northern portal, and 450' for the southern portal. Additionally, a large hole in the roof liner will also be repaired. Roof repairs are projected to be complete by the end of 2019.



Photo A: The Brady Tunnel, pre-improvements

Section 22: Brady Tunnel

Opportunities

This is a priority project that demonstrates the investment by multiple agencies and public parties to provide major improvements to the regional trail system. The investment in the Brady Tunnel should be leveraged throughout the corridor for additional projects.

Tunnels, bridges, viaducts and other iconic features serve as attractions to trail users. Similar examples of rehabilitated infrastructure exist on other long-distance, regional trails and become associative with the user experience.

Stalled landowner negotiations on the corridor north of East Brady facilitated the need to find options. The Brady Tunnel was the more feasible option for connection to the trail through this area.

Barriers

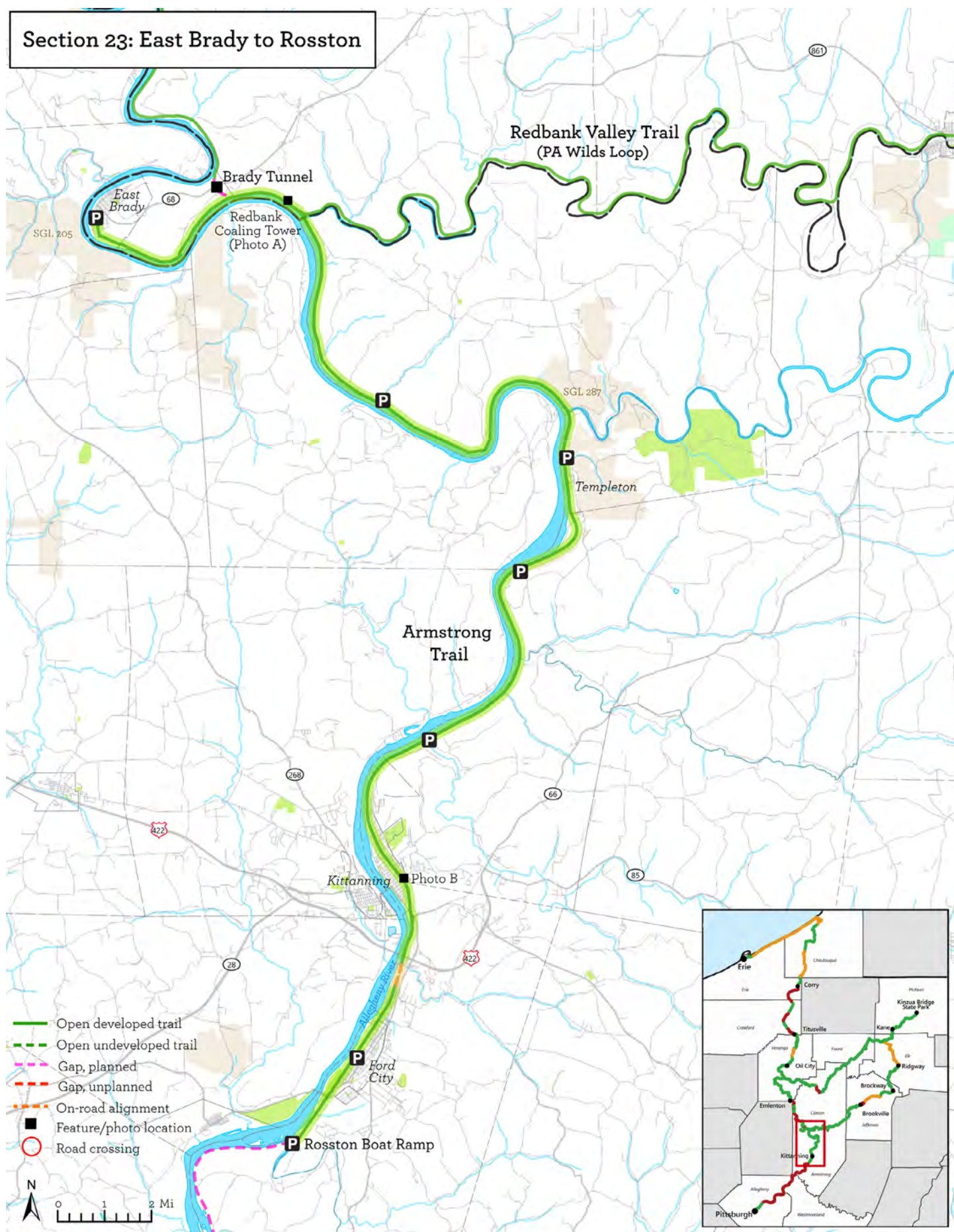
Being a multi-phase project, challenges can arise with funding, engineering, and construction schedules.



Photo B: Brady Tunnel interior, pre-improvements



Section 23: East Brady to Rosston



Section 23: East Brady to Rosston

County(s): Clarion County & Armstrong County, PA	Status: Open, Developed	Distance: 29.32 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 54-74, 189
Project Partners: Armstrong Trails, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance		Cost Estimate:		
		54: NA	62: NA	70: NA
		55: NA	63: NA	71: NA
		56: NA	64: NA	72: NA
		57: NA	65: NA	73: NA
		58: NA	66: NA	74: NA
		59: NA	67: NA	189: NA
		60: NA	68: NA	
		61: NA	69: NA	



Photo A: Redbank coaling tower on the Armstrong Trail

Field Notes

The Armstrong Trail's main stem runs from East Brady in the north to Rosston in the south. An established, regionally significant rail-trail, the Armstrong Trail follows the Allegheny River, running the length of Armstrong County.

A trailhead in East Brady has capacity for about 15 vehicles and sits adjacent to the borough maintenance facility along Shady Shores Dr. From the parking area, trail users continue on Shady Shores Dr., a course, gravel road, past a number of new riverfront residences. The Armstrong Trail becomes non-motorized at the end of Shady Shores Dr., turning to a crushed limestone surface. Shortly after, the alignment continues through Phillipston using this small community's roads. Parking is available in Phillipston as well. The Phillipston Turntable, a large piece of railroad infrastructure used to rotate locomotives, has received recent maintenance and is an interesting remnant of the trail's former use. 1.2 miles from Phillipston, the trail meets the southern portal of the Brady Tunnel.

Over the next 1.2 miles from Phillipston, the alignment passes another unique remnant of the railroad's industrial heritage. Between 1930 and 1957, the Redbank Coaling Tower resupplied passing steam locomotives with fuel. It is one of a very few remaining coaling towers from the steam train era. Beyond the coaling tower, the Armstrong Trail meets the Redbank Valley Trail before crossing over the Redbank Creek.

The trail passes the Lock and Dams #8 and #9, operated by the Pittsburgh District of the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as small settlements in Rimer, Mahoning, and Templeton on its way to Kittanning. This stretch is surfaced with crushed limestone and the landscape is wooded with steep hillsides rising above the river. Kittanning, the county seat for Armstrong County, is a town of 4,000

Section 23: East Brady to Rosston

Field Notes, cont.

residents. The asphalt-paved surface of the trail through Kittanning is in good repair. Wayfinding signage and ground markings are present through the town. A number of Kittanning roads cross the trail. Trail users encounter pavement markings and bollards at each road crossing.

4.0 miles south of Kittanning, the trail reaches the center of Ford City. Ford City is situated on a broad plain unlike many other parts of the corridor which feature steeply rising hillsides much closer to the river.

Parking is available in Kittanning and Ford City with easy access to the trail.

The trail concludes in Rosston, just 1.8 miles from the center of Ford City. Similar to Ford City, Rosston sits on a plain abutting the Allegheny River. A bridge over Crooked Creek has recently been redecked and improved for trail users.

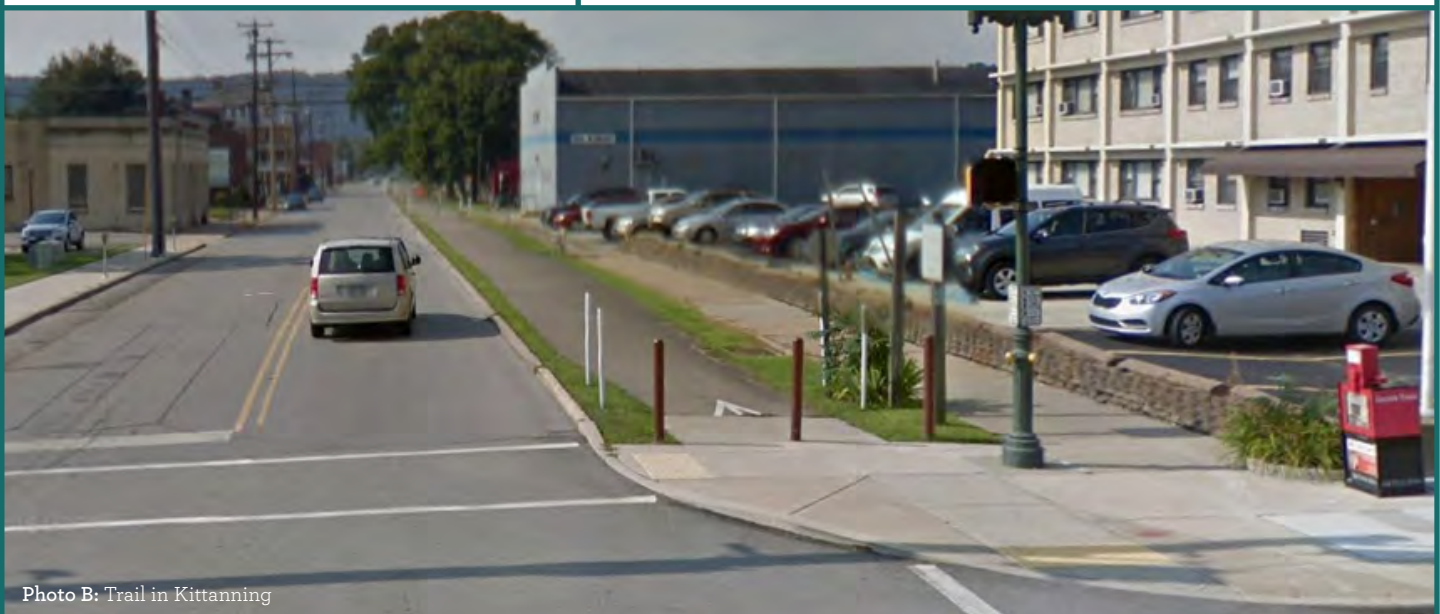
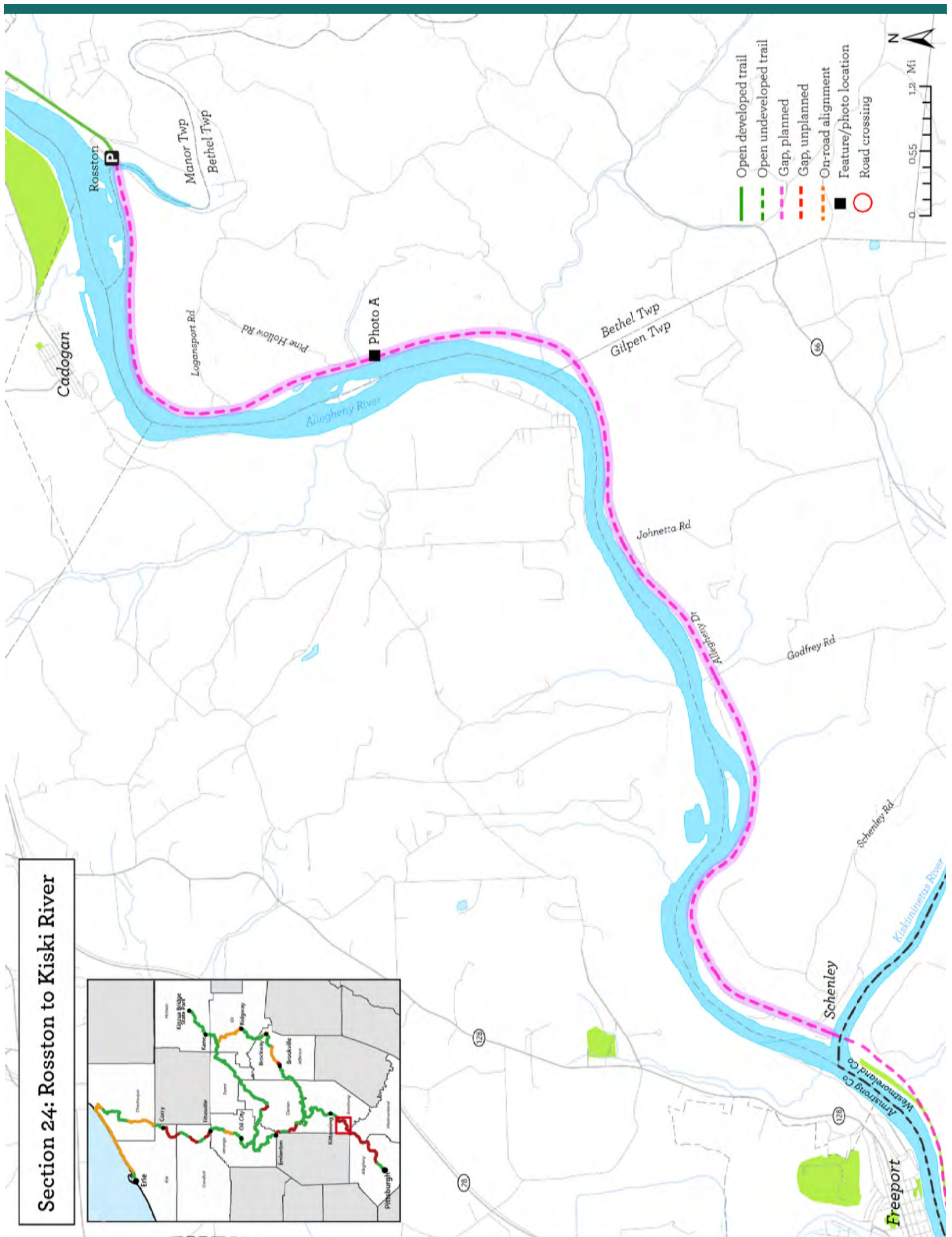


Photo B: Trail in Kittanning



Section 24: Rosston to Kiski River



Section 24: Rosston to Kiski River

County(s): Armstrong County, PA	Status: Gap, Planned	Distance: 10.02 miles	Acquisition Status Negotiations Need to Occur	Segments: 75-81
Project Partners: Armstrong Trails, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance		Cost Estimate:		
		75: \$292,773 - \$357,834	79: \$148,397 - \$181,374	
		76: \$283,813 - \$346,882	80: \$297,706 - \$363,862	
		77: \$42,104 - \$51,460	81: \$119,900 - \$146,545	
		78: \$171,681 - \$209,832		



Photo A: Aerial view, with Lock and Dam #6 visible on the Allegheny River

Field Notes

From Rosston, a 10-mile stretch continues downriver to Schenley at the junction of the Kiskiminetas and Allegheny Rivers.

This section of corridor provides an interesting case study in the development of rail-trails. It was filed for railbanking and the Allegheny Valley Land Trust then developed the corridor for trail. In 2011 the Kiski Junction Railroad reactivated the line to serve nearby mining operations.

Following the rail line reactivation, a dispute over compensation to ALVT led to litigation. This conflict led to the question of whether or not this section of corridor can be reestablished as a trail.

The corridor's classification as private property, along with its contentious history, prevented closer observation.

Reactivating this section for rail included new ballast, ties, and rail. Overall corridor maintenance is assumed and, until recently, an excursion train also operated on part of this stretch. Photographs of the reactivated corridor show base material in good repair.

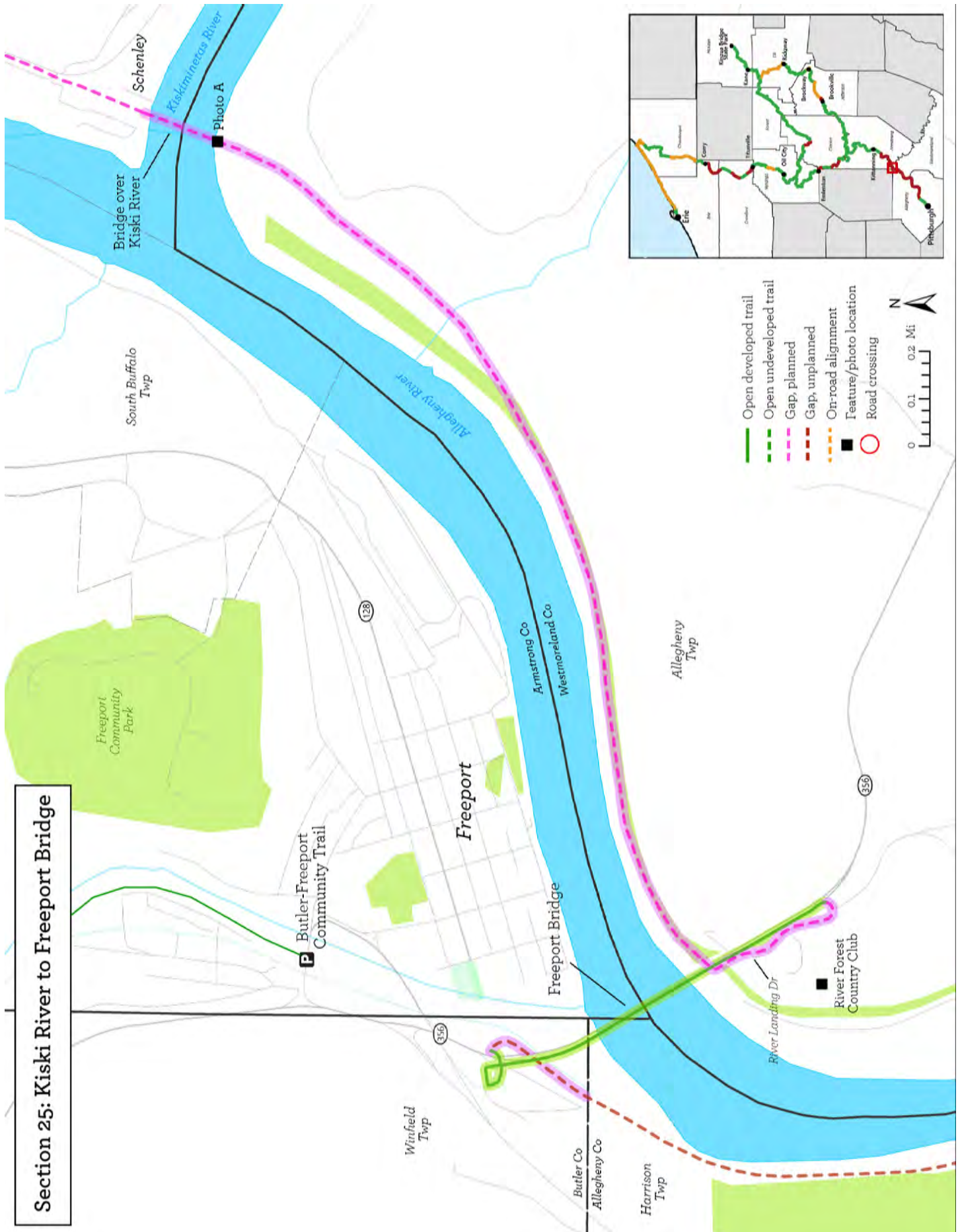
Opportunities

Mining operations in close proximity to this corridor facilitated reactivation of the railroad. Local knowledge notes the finite nature of the area's mines to produce coal. It is possible that this section will again become rail-trail, following cessation of mining activities.

The recent merger of the Allegheny Valley Land Trust with the Armstrong Rails to Trails Association to form Armstrong Trails could provide better footing for reopening negotiations with the Kiski Junction Railroad.

Groups working to develop the Tredway Trail in Allegheny Township on the opposite side of the Kiski River can collaborate with Armstrong Trails to support expansion from the south. The Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway group is also interested in this section, as they continue to pursue trail development along the Kiski River

Section 25: Kiski River to Freeport Bridge



Section 25: Kiski River to Freeport Bridge

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Armstrong County & Westmoreland County, PA	Gap, Planned / Open, Developed	2.71 miles	Negotiations Need to Occur / Complete	82-85
Project Partners:			Cost Estimate:	
Allegheny Township, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Main Line Canal Greenway, Westmoreland County, Allegheny Township, Armstrong Trails			82: NA	84: NA
			83: \$207,538 - \$253,657	85: NA

Field Notes

The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail alignment from Schenley crosses the Kiskiminetas River, locally known as the Kiski River, via an unused railroad bridge and intersects with an active Norfolk Southern rail line at grade.

As this bridge is a private crossing on an active railroad corridor, a close inspection was not possible. The bridge is roughly 700' long, as determined by aerial imagery and mapping. Local knowledge notes that the bridge no longer carries train traffic. The Kiski River is the jurisdictional boundary between Armstrong and Westmoreland County.

Heading downriver, a former stretch of Allegheny Valley Railroad continues for 1.5 miles. Ownership of this piece resides with the municipality of Allegheny Township.

From the corridor, the alignment turns and climbs River Landing Dr., a short, asphalt-paved road that provides access to residences as well as the River Forest Country Club.

Trail users would then cross the Freeport Bridge (Rt. 356) on a separated, multi-use sidewalk. Nearing the opposite end of the bridge, the sidewalk has wayfinding signage to direct users to the Butler Freeport Trail. The boundaries of Allegheny, Armstrong, and Butler County all converge at this point. A trailhead for the Butler Freeport Trail is a short distance from the end of the bridge.



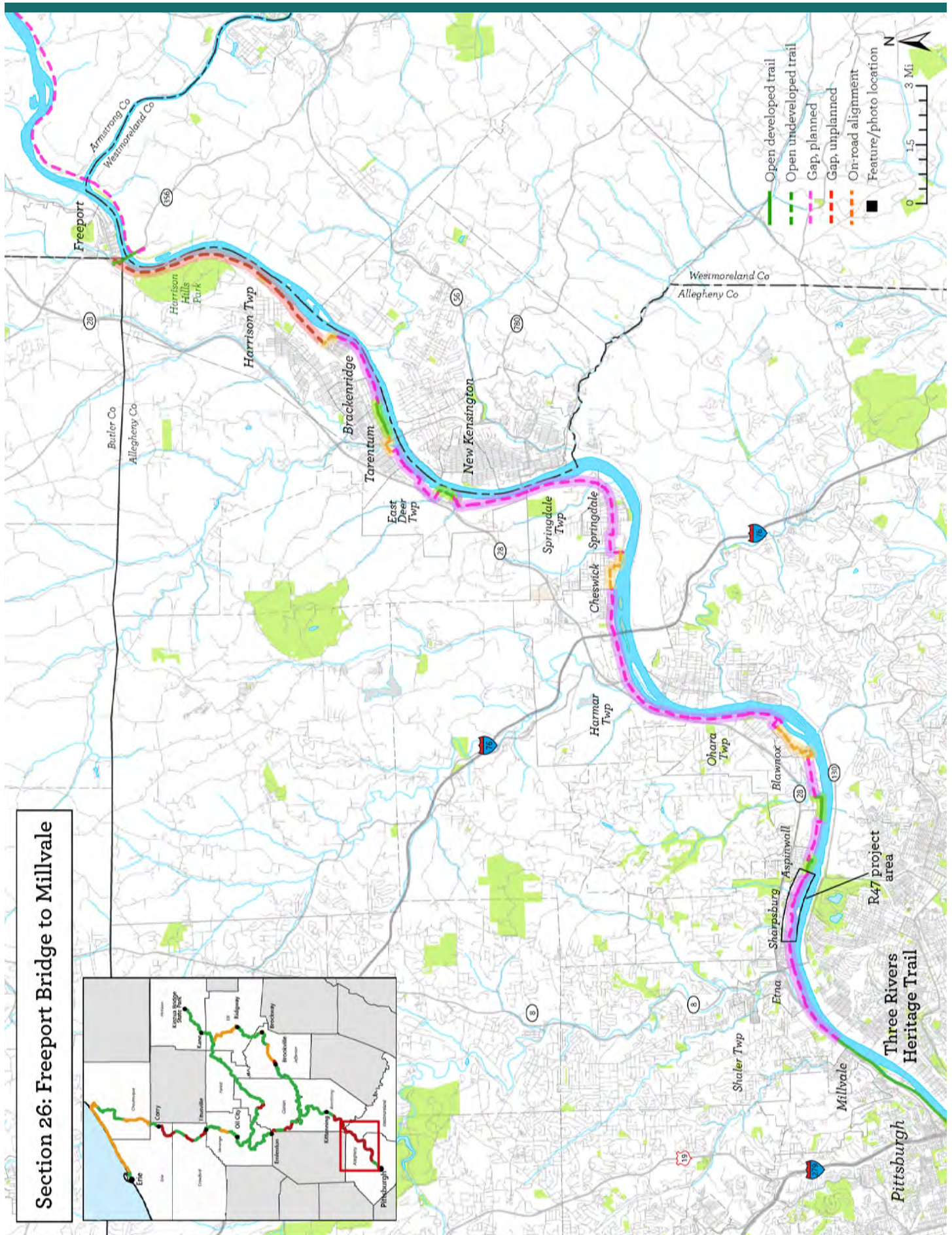
Photo A: Aerial view, confluence of the Allegheny and Kiski Rivers

Section 25: Kiski River to Freeport Bridge

	Opportunities
	<p>It has been noted that the railroad bridge crossing the Kiski River is no longer in use or suitable for train traffic. While the bridge can no longer hold trains, the bridge is intact and could be updated for bicyclist and pedestrian use.</p> <p>Allegheny Township is developing the former Allegheny Valley Corridor south of the Freeport Bridge on the Westmoreland County side of the river. This project is known as the Wynn and Clara Tredway Trail and currently features about 4 miles of completed, crushed-limestone trail. Allegheny Township is engaged in the trail development discussion and is exploring expansion from the Tredway Trail 1.5 miles north to Norfolk Southern line. Allegheny Township owns this 1.5 mile stretch, and has experience building trail. Developing between the Freeport Bridge and the bridge over the Kiski River is very feasible.</p> <p>The crossing of the Freeport Bridge could be marked with Erie to Pittsburgh Trail signage. Trail users of the Butler Freeport and Tredway Trails would become more aware of the local trail's position in the regional effort. Erie to Pittsburgh Trail signage can also be viewed by motorists crossing the Freeport Bridge, potentially increasing awareness of the trail.</p>
	Barriers
	<p>The bridge over the Kiski River is a significant piece of legacy rail infrastructure that will have to be thoroughly evaluated by an engineering team to determine suitability for trail.</p> <p>The active Norfolk Southern line that intersects the corridor at the end of the bridge over the Kiski River will be a major hurdle for connecting the northern portion of the trail to Allegheny County and Pittsburgh. Requests to create new, at-grade crossings of active rail lines have an extremely low probability of approval and Norfolk-Southern has been unwilling to come to the table to negotiate about trails in general. A concerted political effort will be required to create a new crossing, with a grade separated option most likely being the choice of the railroad. The ability to advance this project may hinge on all other gaps in the trail being completed before this negotiation can advance.</p>



Section 26: Freeport Bridge to Millvale



Section 26: Freeport Bridge to Millvale

County(s): Allegheny County, PA	Status: Gap, Planned/On-Road	Distance: 26.6 miles	Acquisition Status	Segments: 86-124
Project Partners: Friends of the Riverfront, Allegheny County		Cost Estimate: Refer to Allegheny County M&M Study for Segments 86 - 124		

Field Notes

South of the Rt. 356 Bridge, the proposed trail corridor would follow the Allegheny River until connecting with the existing Three Rivers Heritage Trail in the Borough of Millvale. The corridor in this section is a mix of potential on road and to be created trail connections in an extremely constrained corridor of Allegheny County. The industrial heritage and residential development patterns of the greater Pittsburgh area have for the most part already laid claim to any potential trail corridors along the river, necessitating extensive negotiations and creative problem solving to establish a trail right of way. These constraints include linear barriers such as an active Norfolk Southern rail line, Rt. 28, and Freeport Rd. Additionally, bridge infrastructure for several arterial road crossings, the Harmer interchange of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the PWSA Water Treatment facility, numerous larger industrial operations along the riverfront, and a significant number of commercial and residential interests are challenges for trail development. At the same time, Allegheny County leaders and residents understand the benefits of long-distance trails and have long pushed for a connection along the Allegheny River northward.

In 2018, Allegheny County and Friends of the Riverfront engaged a consulting firm to update the previous studies of this corridor, with a particular interest in identifying the sections where the only viable option for trail creation was to site a trail within the Norfolk Southern right of way. Norfolk Southern primarily uses this corridor for its national distribution customers and has excess track capacity due to the decrease in local clients. Design concepts for 4 focus areas (Segments 86-124) were released in the summer of 2018 and since that time the discussion focused on how to bring Norfolk Southern to the table to reach an agreement. Within the non-rail segments, Friends of the Riverfront is working with individual townships and boroughs to advance phases that a municipality has site control over. Each segment has its own challenges, but it begins to bring more attention to the areas that remain incomplete.

Potential Improvements

Riverfront 47 (R47) is a project focused on transforming a former industrial site into a recreational and cultural asset. The right of way through R47 is secured. Completing the section beginning at the Etna Borough Riverfront Park to R47 would give this corridor a significant boost. An existing service road connects the Etna Riverfront Park with the northern terminus of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail in Millvale. Users treat this service road as an informal continuation of the trail, so an agreement to legitimize the connection would be beneficial to all parties.



Section 27: Millvale to Point State Park

County(s): Allegheny County, PA	Status: Open, Developed	Distance: 4.48 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 125-131
Project Partners: Friends of the Riverfront, Allegheny County			Cost Estimate:	
			125: NA	129: NA
			126: NA	130: NA
			127: NA	131: NA
			128: NA	

Field Notes

The final section of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor uses more than 4 miles of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail from Millvale to Point State Park. The Three Rivers Heritage Trail is a collection of trails on both sides of each of Pittsburgh's rivers. To date, 24 miles of trail have been developed. The Three Rivers Heritage Trail is as active for transportation as it is for recreation; equally important for residents as visitors.

The trail surface varies throughout the system. For the first mile, the trail surface is crushed limestone as it runs through Millvale's Riverfront Park along the Allegheny River. Shortly after passing the Three Rivers Rowing Association facility, the alignment crosses the jurisdictional boundary into Pittsburgh and traverses an elevated, cantilevered, concrete structure for roughly 1500'. Along this stretch, the trail is in close proximity to active Norfolk Southern lines, though the rail lines are physically separated from the trail. Fencing is in place and the rail line sits on a causeway that rises up to 25' above the trail level.

Further downriver, the trail passes the historic Heinz plant and under the 16th St. Bridge, the Veteran's Bridge, and the Ft. Wayne Railroad Bridge. After the Ft. Wayne Railroad Bridge, the trail becomes a mix of aggregate-paved and concrete-paved sections. This area of Pittsburgh is known as the North Shore. Three identical bridges, at 9th, 7th, and 6th streets cross above the trail, with access via stairs and switchbacks to reach the bridge level. PNC Park and Heinz Field, two professional sports facilities, are accessible from the trail.

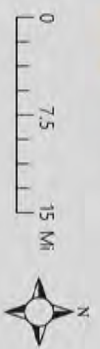
In order to reach Point State Park, trail users can traverse a number of ADA-accessible pathways to reach a promenade, then climb to the Fort Duquesne Bridge by way of a bicyclist and pedestrian-only switchback ramp. The Fort Duquesne Bridge carries the trail over the Allegheny River on a separated walkway about 10' wide.

Entering into the 36-acre Point State Park, trail users can take any number of desire lines to reach the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers. Downtown Pittsburgh is easily accessible from Point State Park. Additional trail connections exist from the park, most notably, the ability to continue for 150 miles on the Great Allegheny Passage to Cumberland, MD and 185 miles from Cumberland to Washington, D.C. on the C&O Canal. Therefore, the completion of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, combined with the Great Allegheny Passage and C&O, would give trail users of 600 miles of rail-trail recreation and transportation opportunities.

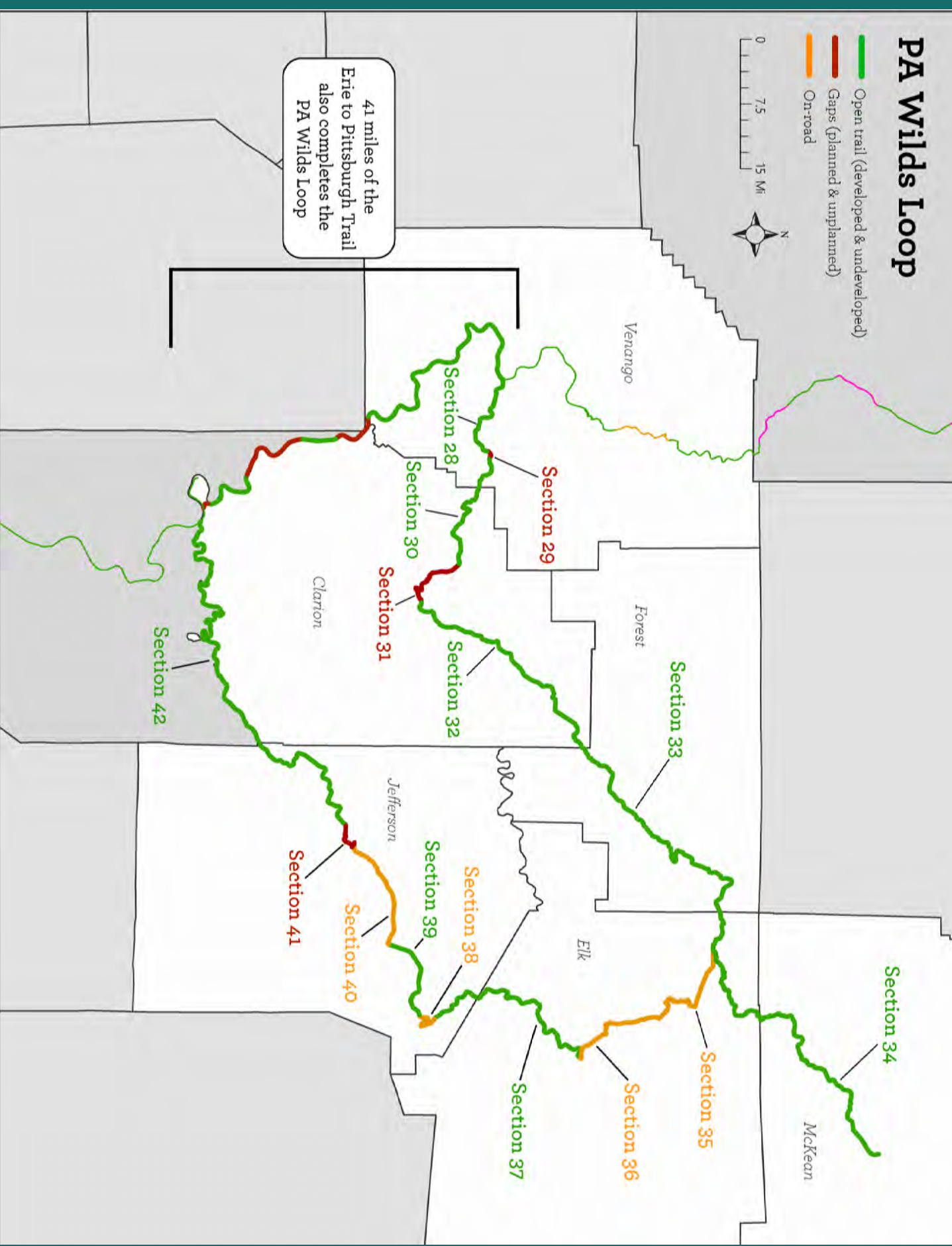


PA Wilds Loop

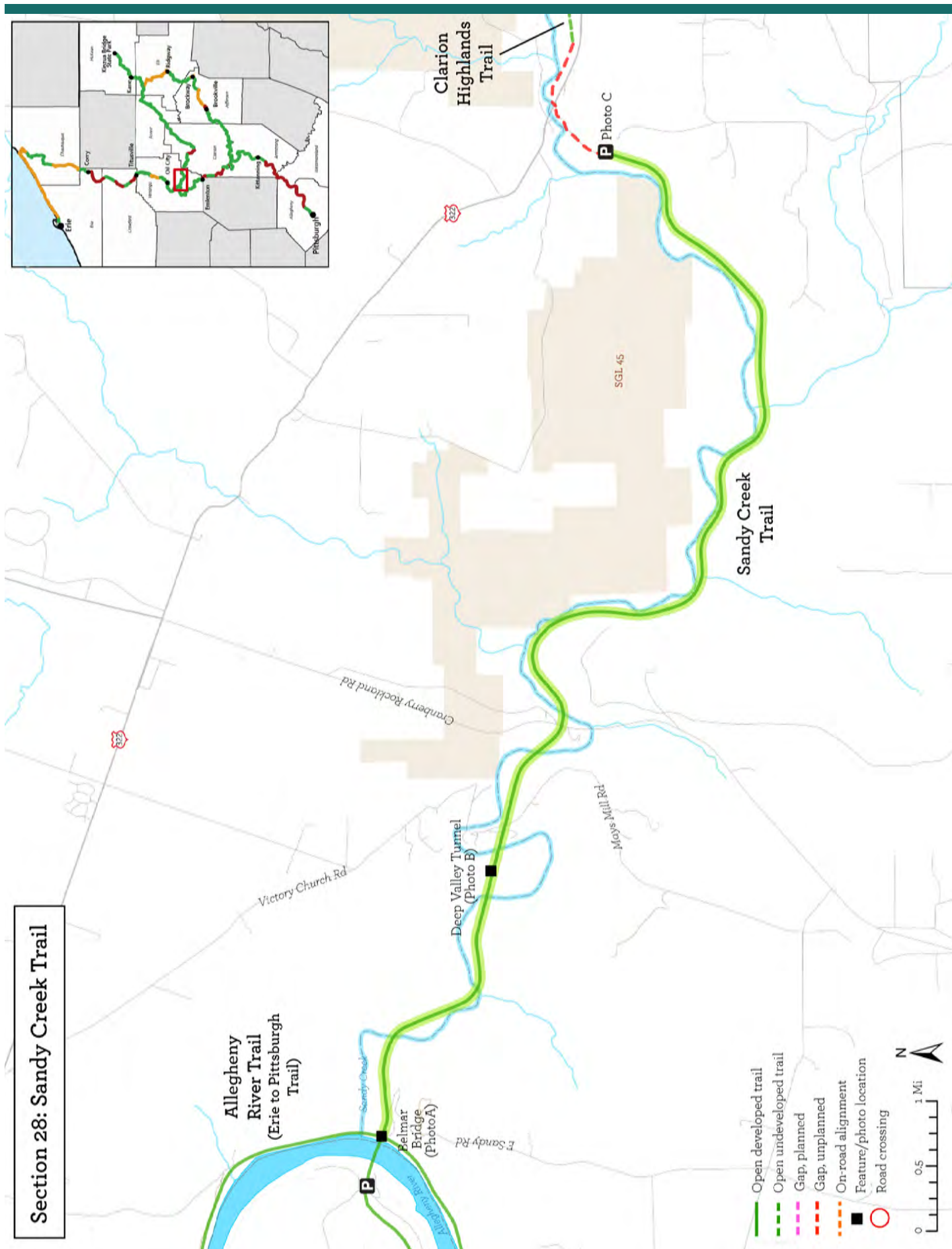
- Open trail (developed & undeveloped)
- Gaps (planned & unplanned)
- On-road



41 miles of the
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail
also completes the
PA Wilds Loop



Section 28: Sandy Creek Trail



Section 28: Sandy Creek Trail

County(s): Venango County, PA	Status: Open, Developed	Distance: 7.54 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 132
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Project Partners:
Allegheny Valley Trails Association, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance

Cost Estimate:
NA



Photo A: The Belmar Bridge crossing the Allegheny River



Photo B: Deep Valley Tunnel



Photo C: Sandy Creek Trail signage

Field Notes

The Sandy Creek Trail and the Allegheny River Trail is the northern junction of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the PA Wilds Loop. The Sandy Creek Trail is a developed trail 12 miles in length that connects Sandy Creek and East Sandy Creek on opposite sides of the Allegheny River. The examined section covers the 7.5 mile stretch to the east of the Allegheny River. Overall, this is a remote trail experience. An overnight, Adirondack shelter can be found near the municipality of Van. This section of trail does not cross through any towns or settlements.

This section begins as the Sandy Creek Trail crosses above the Allegheny River Trail on the Belmar Bridge in East Sandy. On the west side of the Allegheny River, a well-maintained parking area has capacity for roughly 20 vehicles and a short connector trail can be used to switch from one trail to the other. From this junction heading east, the Sandy Creek Trail trends slightly uphill through mixed hardwood forest patched with conifers.

The trail crosses the creek on wooden-decked bridges at 6 different places along this section and features the unlit, but short, 967' Deep Valley Tunnel.

Generally, the paved surface of the trail is in good repair with only a few instances of roots disrupting the pavement. This section was historically developed to carry two parallel rail lines with widths averaging 15' in many spots.

Potential Improvements

Part of the Sandy Creek Trail's appeal is its remote and wild-feeling surroundings. A few improvements, especially portable toilets, would make this trail even more approachable for users.

Section 29: Sandy Creek Trail to Clarion Highlands Trail

SGL 45

322

Cranberry Twp
Rockland Twp

Torklin Hill Rd

Clarion Highlands
Trail

Photo A

Photo B

322

Sandy Creek
Trail

SGL 45



- Open developed trail
- Open undeveloped trail
- Gap, planned
- Gap, unplanned
- On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 29: Sandy Creek Trail to Clarion Highlands Trail

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Owner/Manager:	Segments:
Venango County, PA	Gap, Unplanned	0.82 miles	On-road	133, 134, 135
Project Partners: Allegheny Valley Trails Association, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance			Cost Estimate:	
			133: \$58,498 - \$71,498	
			134: \$3,638 - \$4,446	
			135: \$49,212 - \$60,148	



Photo A: Rt. 322 between Tarklin Hill Rd and the Clarion Highlands Trail

Field Notes

The gap between the Sandy Creek Trail and the Clarion Highlands Trail is short but logistically-challenging. As of 2019, using the abandoned rail corridor from the end of the Sandy Creek Trail to Rt. 322 is not feasible due to private property issues so other potential alignments were explored.

The Sandy Creek Trail ends on Tarklin Hill Rd., a low-volume, dead-end road that intersects with Rt. 322. It is .43 miles from the Sandy Creek Trail parking lot to the highway. At Rt. 322, the two immediately-evident options are to go straight across the road and construct a trail that would connect to the Clarion Highlands Trail, or travel on-road for approximately .4 miles.

On the northern side of Rt. 322, directly across from Tarklin Hill Rd., the land is swampy and densely populated with apparent wetland grasses and shrubs. It was quickly determined that building a trail in that area that would connect to the Clarion Highlands Trail is likely a cost-prohibitive option due to the topography and environmental factors. The alternative is to travel along Rt. 322 for .4 miles, then cross the road at the Clarion Highlands Trail junction.

Rt. 322 referenced in this section is a two-lane, Rural Principal Arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 45 mph. Sightlines at the junction of the highway and Tarklin Hill Rd. are fair, but not ideal. A detached outbuilding partially blocks the eastbound-motorists' sightline. At the opposite junction, where the highway meets the Clarion Highlands Trail, westbound vehicular traffic descends a long, bending hill. The entrance to the Clarion Highlands Trail is buffered by a treeline that obstructs the sightline.

Rt. 322 was last repaved in 2000 and the asphalt surface shows frequent checking and cracking, especially at the shoulder. Shoulder widths, however, are better than average, with 5-6' of pavement separating the white line and the guardrail.

Section 29: Sandy Creek Trail to Clarion Highlands Trail



Photo B: Entrance to Clarion Highlands Trail

Opportunities

This section represents a short gap that has established trail on each end. The Sandy Creek Trail is more developed and maintained, but connecting the two could result in improvements on the Clarion Highlands Trail in this section.

The Venango County Chamber of Commerce’s Be Here program highlights outdoor recreation as a technique for resident attraction. Partnering with the Chamber could lead to new ways to gain more exposure for the potential of closing this gap.

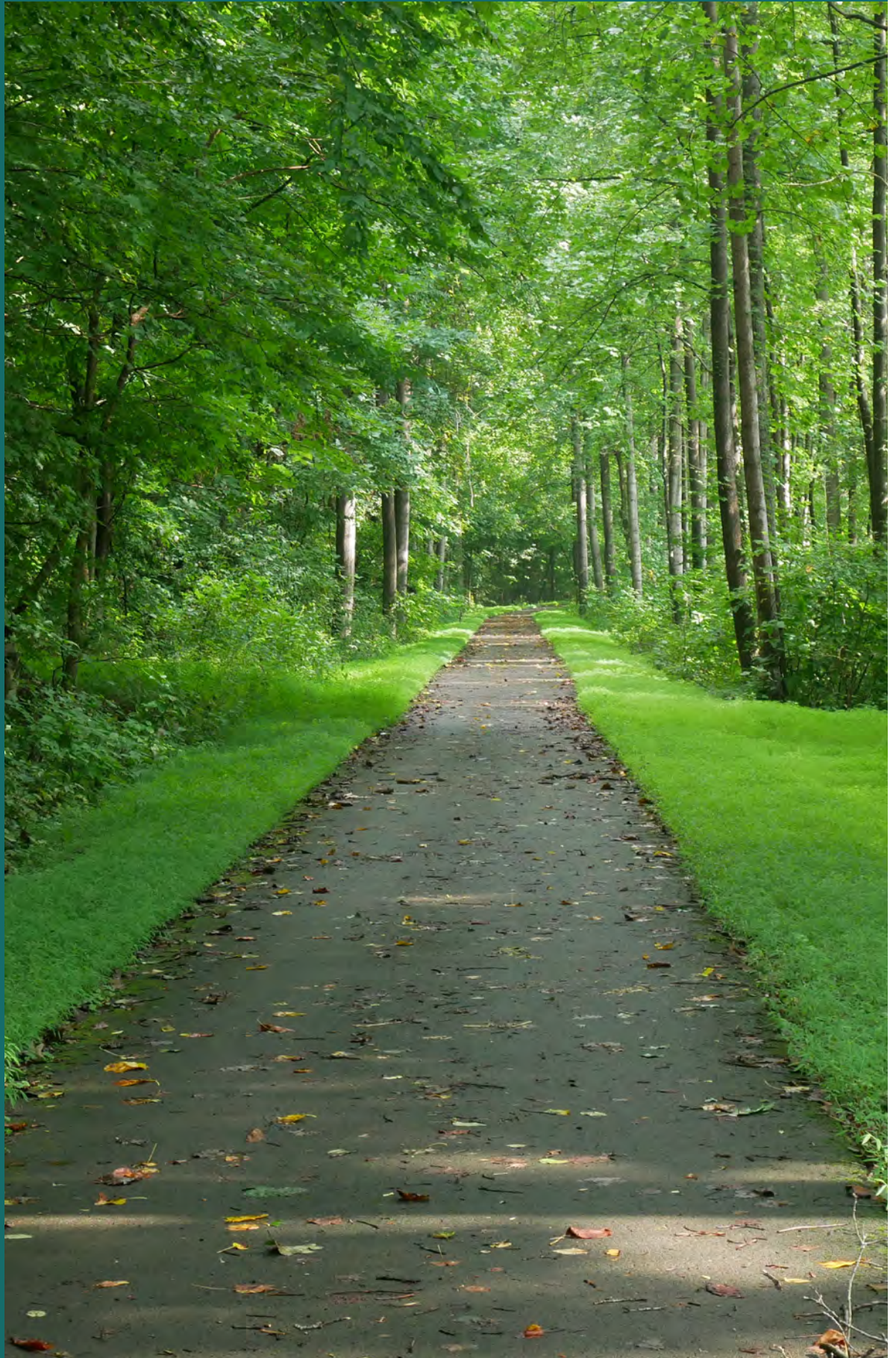
Interim improvements to Rt. 322 could result in a safer usage of this connection. Bicyclists May Use Full Lane signs on the roadway would alert motorists to trail users potentially on the roadway.

Barriers

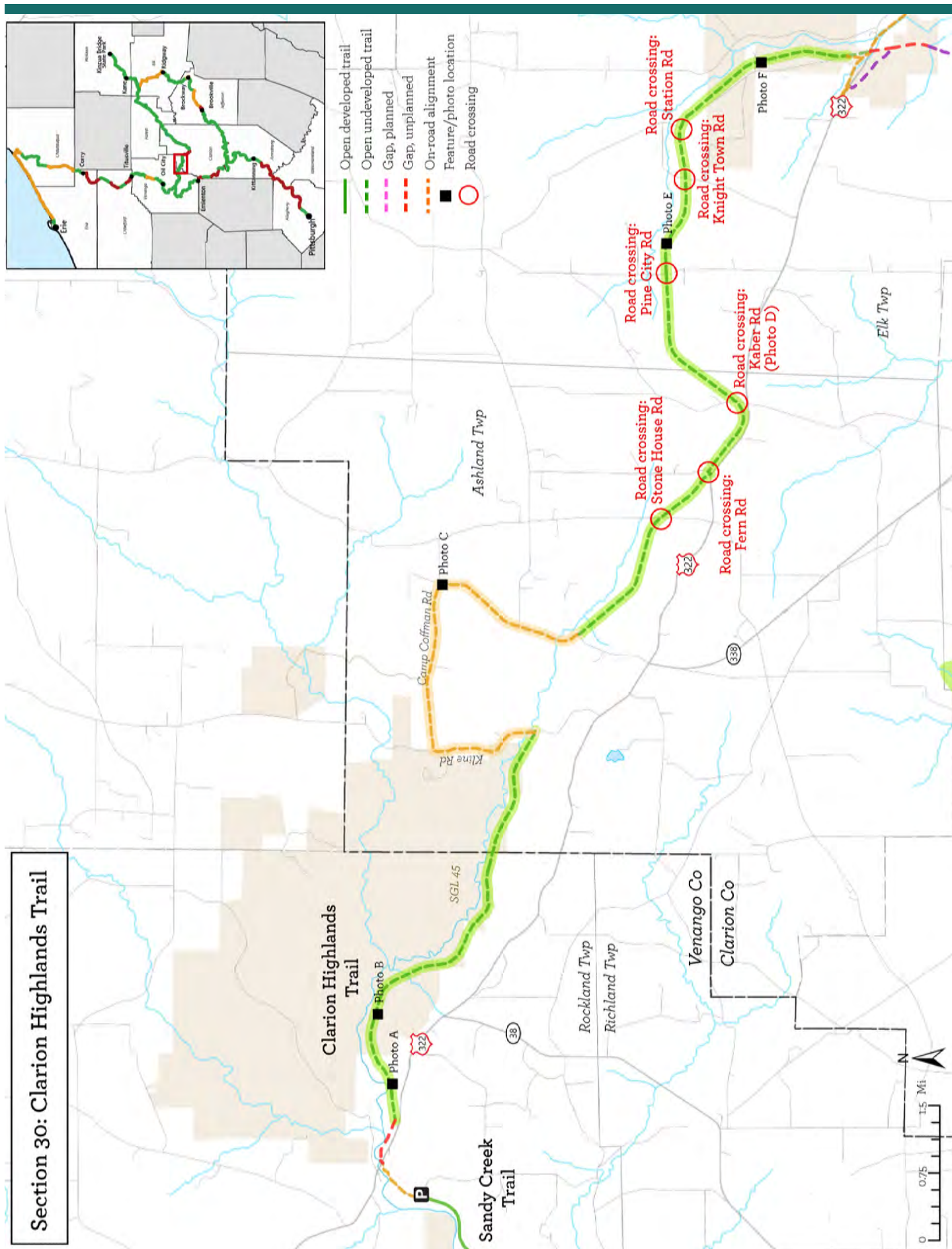
Private property acquisition/easement issues prove to be a major hurdle for this section. The corridor is still largely intact and continuing the Sandy Creek Trail to the crossing of Rt. 322 is the most seamless option for crossing the highway.

Land unsuitable for traditional trail development exists opposite of Tarklin Rd.

Rt. 322 is not ideal for a trail connection at this location. The experience of riding on a highway with traffic moving in excess of 45 mph is not attractive to most riders interested in a separated rail-trail facility.



Section 30: Clarion Highlands Trail



Section 30: Clarion Highlands Trail

County(s): Venango County & Clarion County, PA	Status: Open, Undeveloped	Distance: 14.51 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 136, 137, 138, 139, 140
Project Partners: Allegheny Valley Trails Association		Cost Estimate: 136: \$527,078 - \$644,206 139: \$695,016 - \$849,464 137: NA 140: \$219,326 - \$268,065 138: \$492,715 - \$602,207		



Photo A: Western end of the trail near Rt. 322



Photo D: Kaber Rd. crossing

Field Notes

The Clarion Highlands Trail is owned and operated by the Allegheny Valley Trails Association. It also is used as the alignment for the North Country Trail.

The trail begins on the northern side of Rt. 322, one mile from the terminus of the Sandy Creek Trail. It looks like a nondescript gravel road devoid of an official parking area or signage. Its surface is a mix of packed dirt and gravel as it travels 3.9 miles through a forested landscape in State Game Lands 45 before intersecting with Kline Rd. The road has grass growing in the middle, and some wet areas. There is evidence of oil drilling in the Game Lands, with rigs sitting within a few feet of the trail in some instances. There is also signage indicating that the trail may be used as an access for the oil company, though in most areas, it did not show evidence of much motorized vehicle use.

At Kline Rd., trail users must detour on-road for 3.65 miles to avoid a section of rail corridor that is on private property and not open to the public. The preferred on-road alignment follows Kline Rd. north for just under a mile, then turns right onto Camp Coffman Rd. Camp Coffman Rd. bends around to the right and intersects the Clarion Highlands Trail again. Both Kline Rd. and Camp Coffman Rd. have very low traffic volume, and moderate elevation change with one long hill on Kline Rd. The surface is a mix of well-worn pavement and gravel.

There is a small gravel pull-off big enough for just a couple vehicles at the Camp Coffman Rd. intersection with the Clarion Highlands Trail. In the 5 miles between Camp Coffman Rd. and the trail’s terminus at Station Rd., there are 6 road crossings, all of which are low-volume roads. None of them have crosswalk striping or motorist-facing signage. At Fern Rd., the trail rises steeply at a grade of 10-15% for about 350 feet to meet the road, then descends in a similar manner back to meet the rail grade. At Kaber Rd., the road is below-grade and there is another steep descent and ascent at the crossing similar to that at Fern Rd., though considerably shorter (~100 feet). Both of these steeper sections were somewhat

Section 30: Clarion Highlands Trail



Photo E: Drainage improvements needed



Photo F: Corridor between Station Rd. and the Game Lands parking lot

Field Notes, cont.

washed-out. At Pine City Rd., there are a couple truck trailers at the edge of and encroaching upon the trail corridor. The trail between Camp Coffman Rd. and Station Rd. seems more heavily-used, with less vegetation growth on the trail itself.

As it crosses and parallels Station Rd., its character changes and it becomes more grown-in, grassy and wet for 1.75 miles before it terminates at the Game Lands 63 parking lot. There are several small (1-2 foot wide) stream crossings and it is muddy in some spots.

Potential Improvements

Better signage at trailheads and the improvement of parking areas at Rt. 322 and Camp Coffman Rd. would make the Clarion Highlands Trail more attractive to users.

Improvement of the trail surface at road crossings where the grade steepens and there are washed-out areas would provide a safer experience for cyclists. Drainage issues throughout the entire length of trail should also be addressed.

Wayfinding signage for trail users and motorist-facing signage on Kline Rd. and Camp Coffman Rd. would provide a safer, easier on-road detour.

The section from the Station Rd. crossing to the Game Lands parking area off Station Rd. needs significant improvements to remediate the wet, muddy areas and stream crossings. It could also use regular vegetation management and widening of the trail corridor.

Section 30: Clarion Highlands Trail

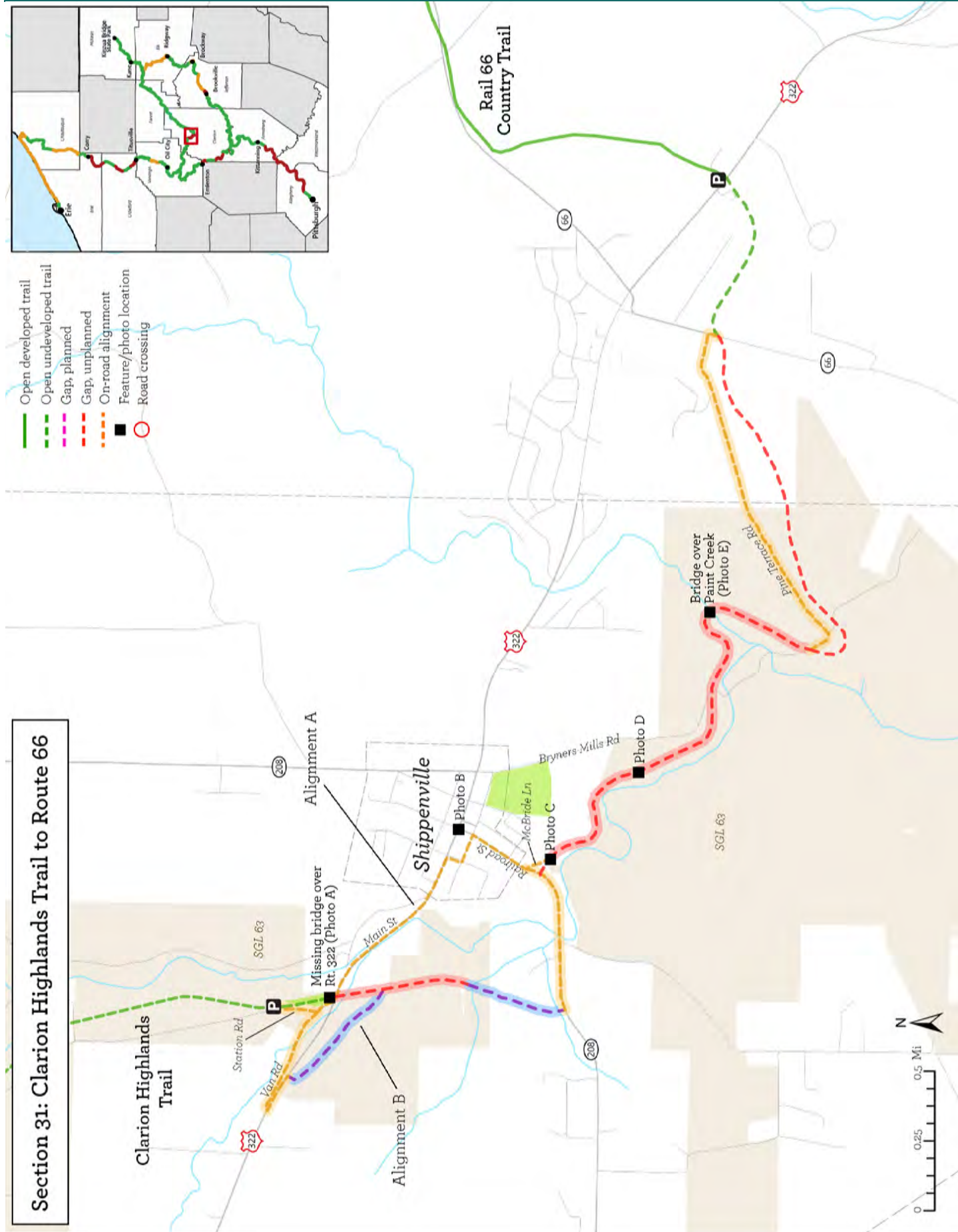


Photo B: Evidence of motorized vehicles using the corridor



Photo C: On-road section at Camp Coffman Rd

Section 31: Clarion Highlands Trail to Route 66



Section 31: Clarion Highlands Trail to Route 66

County(s): Clarion County, PA	Status: Gap, Unplanned	Distance: Alignment A: Alignment B:	Acquisition Status Negotiations Need to Occur	Segments: 141a, 141b, 141c, 142a, 142b, 143a, 143b, 143c, 144a, 144b
Project Partners: N/A	Cost Estimate: 141a: \$26,405 - \$32,273 141b: NA 141c: NA	142a: NA 142b: NA 143a: \$71,508 - \$87,399	143b: \$49,878 - \$60,962 143c: NA 144a: \$436,545 - \$533,555	144b: NA

Field Notes

From the Clarion Highlands Trail parking area off Station Rd., the corridor continues southward towards Rt. 322 (Rural Principal Arterial). It is grown-in in some locations, with numerous trees down, but passable. It ends abruptly at a drop-off to Rt. 322 where the bridge crossing the valley has been removed and the highway now traverses. The continuation of the rail line on the other side of this gorge is approximately 100' above the valley floor, with a steep grade ascending to its height. As this missing bridge presents a significant barrier to the continued use of the former Penn Central rail corridor from the Clarion Highlands Trail across Rt. 322, alternative options were explored.

For the section between Rt. 322 and Rt. 208 (Rural Minor Arterial) in Shippenville, two potential alternative options became apparent.

Alignment A: This potential alignment follows roads from the Station Rd. State Game Lands 63 parking lot through Shippenville to Rt. 208, where it picks the rail corridor back up and continues east. From Station Rd., the alignment stays left on Black Rd. to intersect with Rt. 322, where it then travels eastward on the shoulder 0.8 miles to the Rt. 208 intersection. The shoulder of this stretch of Rt. 322 is about two feet wide. There is moderate to high traffic volume, with speed limits of 55 mph until it enters Shippenville, where it drops to 35 mph. In Shippenville, cyclists would turn left on Rt. 208/Railroad St to reconnect with the old rail corridor approximately 0.3 miles south of town. The speed limit on this section of Rt. 208 is 35 mph, and a moderate traffic volume was observed.

Alignment B: To eliminate most of the on-road stretch, there is potential to use a short section of the North Country Trail through State Game Lands 63 on the southern side of Rt. 322 to connect to the Penn Central rail line just past the missing bridge. From the Station Rd. parking lot, cyclists would travel down Station Rd. and make a right onto Black Rd., traveling westbound on Black Rd. for approximately 0.4 mile before intersecting with Rt. 322. Cyclists would then need to cross the highway and travel eastbound for about 0.1 mile to the State Game Lands/North Country Trail parking lot on the southern side of the highway. From here, the North Country Trail appears to travel on doubletrack for 0.5 mile eastward before intersecting with the former rail corridor, but at the time of this study (fall 2019), inspection of the trail beyond what was visible from the parking area hasn't been done. The North



Photo B: Rt. 322 and Rt. 208 Intersection in Shippenville

Section 31: Clarion Highlands Trail to Route 66



Photo C: Entering the corridor from McBride Ln.



Photo D: Typical trail conditions west of Paint Creek

Field Notes, cont.

Country Trail then follows the Penn Central rail line for about 0.6 mile to its intersection with Rt. 208. Cyclists would then need to travel about 0.5 mile on Rt. 208 to meet up with the Knox and Kane rail grade to continue along the trail.

From Rt. 208, the alignment follows the abandoned Knox and Kane line, which crosses Rt. 208 0.3 mile south of Shippenville. From Rt. 208, the corridor is only accessible via McBride Lane, a small dead-end residential street. The corridor travels through State Game Lands 63 and is passable throughout most of its length, though is somewhat overgrown with grasses in some spots and has many trees down. It passes over Paint Creek via a wooden truss bridge. Upon a casual inspection, the bridge's superstructure appears to be solid, but the decking is rotting and there are wide gaps between the boards. The corridor crosses the gravel Bryners Mills Rd. three different times as it serpentine its way eastward, then parallels Pine Terrace Rd. Just east of the Game Lands boundary the corridor becomes much less well-defined and it eventually peters out before reaching Rt. 66 (Rural Principal Arterial)..

An on-road detour on Pine Terrace Rd. would eliminate some ownership challenges and the lack of clear corridor east of the Game Lands boundary. Approximately 1.4 miles from Rt. 66, trail users would leave the rail grade and travel a short distance on Bryners Mills Rd. before turning onto Pine Terrace Rd. and following it for 1.2 miles to Rt. 66. Pine Terrace Rd. is a low-volume township road that ends in the Game Lands.

Opportunities

Aside from the missing bridge over Rt. 322 and a short section just west of Rt. 66, most of the corridor is relatively clear and would only require minor brush cutting and treadway improvements. In addition, most of the corridor is on public lands already, so there are fewer landowners to deal with.

The Rail 66 Country Trail group is energetic and active, and may be able to build strong momentum to complete this section.

Barriers

The missing bridge over Rt. 322 makes the crossing of the highway more complicated, requiring either an at-grade crossing and on-road. The on-road route through Shippenville is on busy roads and presents a safety challenge. Use of the North Country Trail alignment from the parking area to Rt. 208 would be dependent upon the restrictions of the trail's right of way agreement.

Section 31: Clarion Highlands Trail to Route 66



Photo A: Missing bridge over Rt. 322

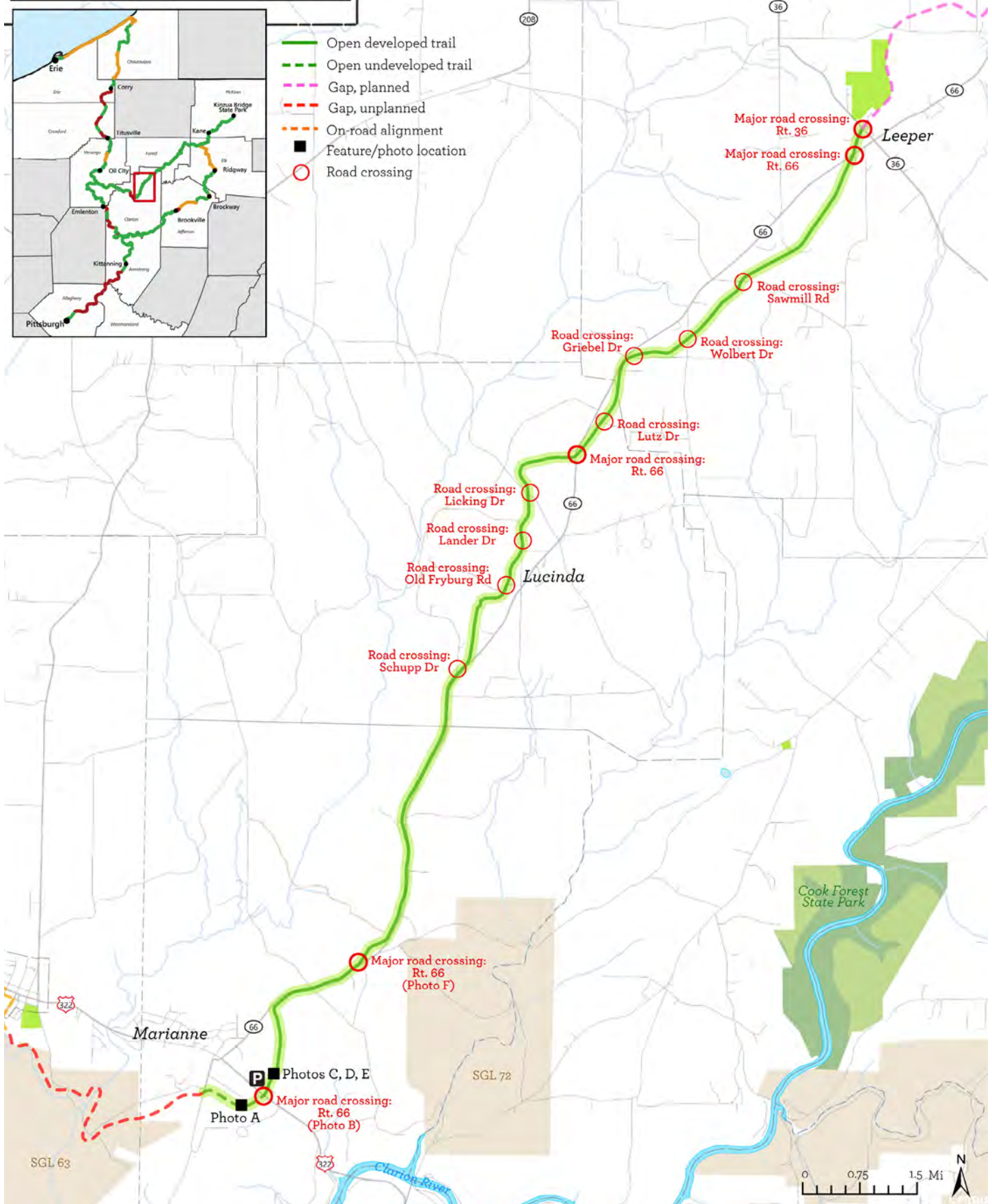


Photo E: Paint Creek trestle bridge

Section 32: Route 66 to Leeper



- Open developed trail
- - - Open undeveloped trail
- - - Gap, planned
- - - Gap, unplanned
- - - On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 32: Route 66 to Leeper

County(s): Clarion County, PA	Status: Gap, Proposed/Open, Developed	Distance: 12.91 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 145, 146
Project Partners: Rail 66 Country Trail, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Headwaters Charitable Trust			Cost Estimate: 145: \$88,016 - \$107,575 146: NA	



Photo A: Unimproved corridor between Rt. 66 and Rt. 32

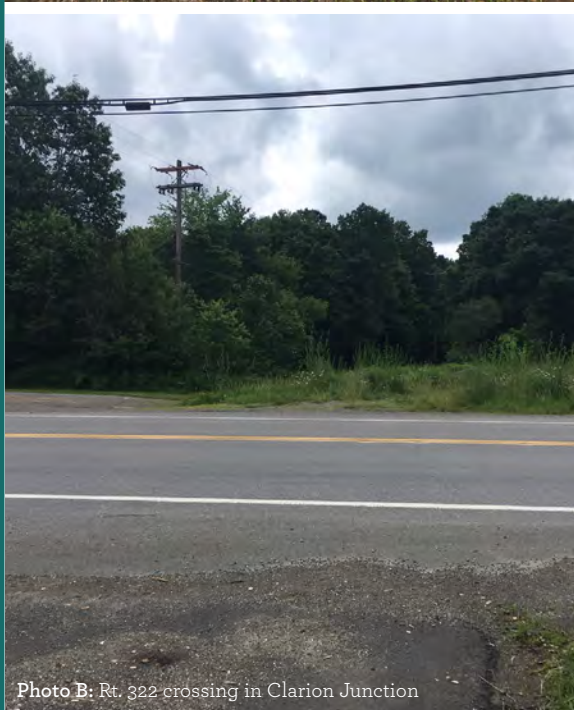


Photo B: Rt. 322 crossing in Clarion Junction

Field Notes

In 2011, Johnson, Mirmiran, and Thompson undertook a detailed study, prepared for Clarion, Elk, Forest, and McKean Counties, of the Knox and Kane corridor. The resulting document is the Knox & Kane Feasibility Study. Overall, the study highlights the potential of developing the Knox and Kane corridor as a continuous rail trail. The 74-mile corridor is owned by the Headwaters Charitable Trust (HCT). HCT holds agreements with a number of groups interested in championing the trail building effort.

The treadway and key infrastructures remain intact for much of this corridor. Corridor widths are generally within the 8-10' range. Though necessary for the rehabilitation process, a detailed inspection of the trestles and culverts was not in the scope of the 2011 assessment.

The Rail 66 Country Trail is one of the trail development groups working with HCT, focused on developing the Knox and Kane Trail in Clarion County from Clarion Junction to the Forest County line.

Mile marker 0 for the Rail 66 Country Trail lies at the corridor's intersection with Rt. 66 in Shippenville. The trail is undeveloped between Rt 66. and Rt. 322.

At Rt. 66., the corridor sits 5-6' below the road grade. It is likely that this crossing was originally at-grade, but the roadway has increased in height over time. The corridor heading north is mostly intact. Pools of standing water exist on the treadway on this .6 mile stretch but the ground is otherwise compact and free of vegetation. A thin tree line separates the corridor from adjacent warehouses and industrial buildings.

The tree line buffer disappears nearing Rt. 322. Roadside businesses, utilities, and advertising signage limit sightlines at the junction of the corridor at Rt. 322. The highway at this point is a two-lane Urban Principal Arterial posted to 45 mph. The corridor crossing is perpendicular to the roadway.

On the opposite side of Rt. 322, a trailhead parking area has capacity for 12 vehicles and features a prominent Rail 66 Country Trail sign. From this trailhead, the asphalt-paved portion of the Rail 66 Country

Section 32: Route 66 to Leeper



Photo C: Rail 66 trailhead signage

Field Notes, cont.

Trail extends currently to Leeper, 12.26 miles to the north. The treadway pavement is in good repair and 10' wide in most places. The trail parallels Rt. 66 for much of its alignment. 1.5 miles from Clarion Junction, the trail crosses Rt. 66 at a diagonal. Bollards and small stop signs alert trail users of the crossing. Sightlines are poor for southbound motorists and frequent truck traffic exists at this point. Rt. 66 here is a Rural Minor Arterial with a speed limit of 55 mph.

The trail passes through wooded, agricultural and residential areas. Traversing the farmed and residential areas, little to no tree canopy exists. Surrounding topography is relatively flat, wide, and broad. 7.5 miles from Clarion Junction, another trailhead exists at the former Lucinda train station. Conditions remain consistent to the terminus of the paved portion in Leeper.

Potential Improvements

The paved portion of the Rail 66 Country Trail crosses Rt. 66 three times on this section. Since Rt. 66 is a high-speed highway with consistent truck traffic, each crossing should be evaluated and improved to create a clear and safe transition. Small businesses along the trail have begun to market to trail users. Ice cream and farm stands are two examples of this approach. A new brewery, accessible directly from the trail, is under construction as well.



Photo D: Rail 66 Country Trail near Clarion Junction

Section 32: Route 66 to Leeper



Photo E: Rail 66 trail barriers

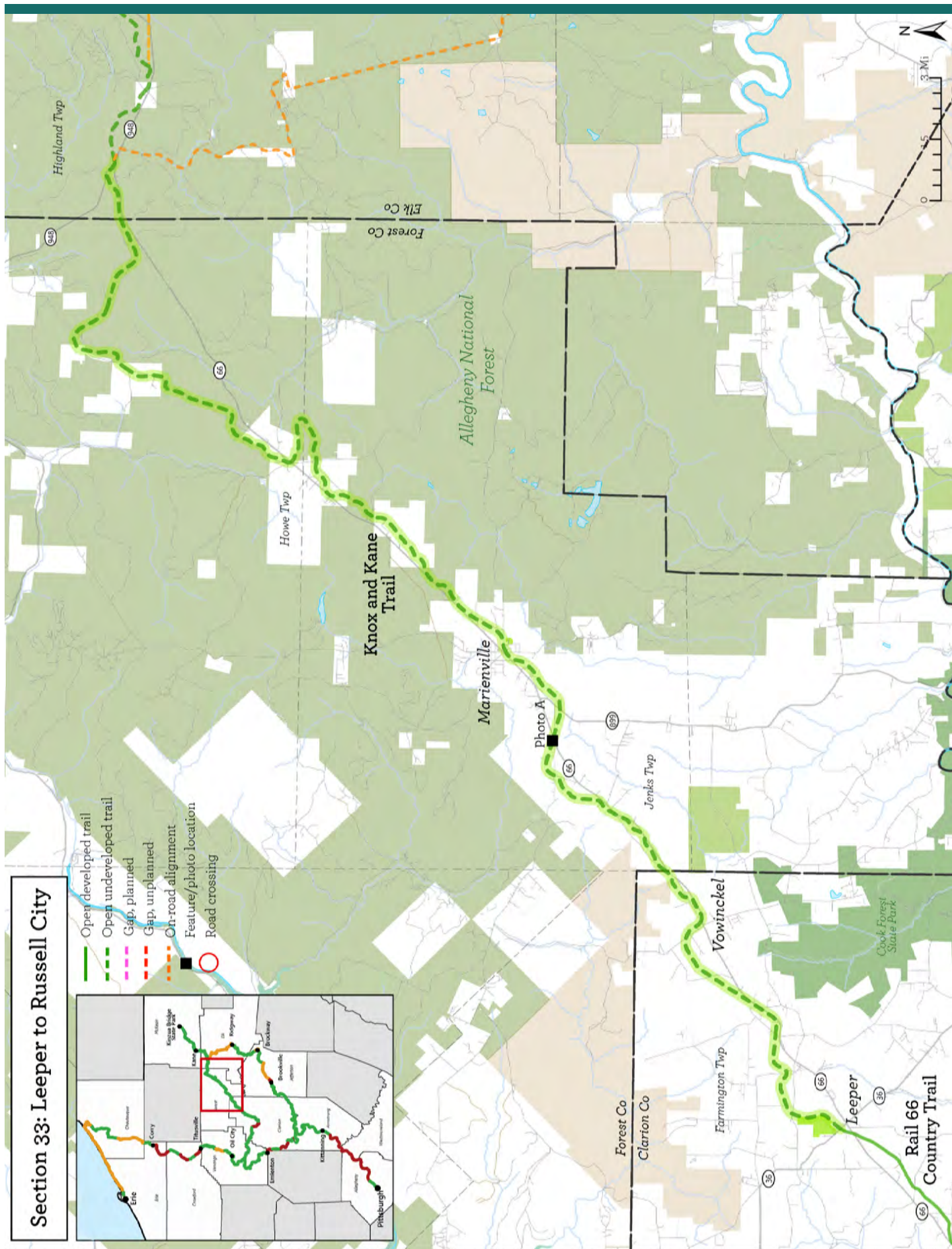


Photo F: Rail 66 crossing Rt. 66

Section 33: Leeper to Russell City



- Open developed trail
- Open undeveloped trail
- Gap, planned
- Gap, unplanned
- On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 33: Leeper to Russell City

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Clarion County, Forest County, & Elk County, PA	Open, Undeveloped	33.06 miles	Complete	147-159
Project Partners:	Cost Estimate:	151: \$78,362 - \$95,776	156: \$558,967 - \$683,181	
Headwaters Charitable Trust,	147: \$391,125 - \$478,042	152: \$221,764 - \$271,045	157: \$318,701 - \$389,523	
Jenks Township	148: \$441,523 - \$539,640	153: \$542,653 - \$663,242	158: \$450,191 - \$550,234	
	149: \$179,759 - \$219,706	154: \$229,126 - \$280,043	159: \$233,487 - \$285,373	
	150: \$535,370 - \$654,341	155: \$273,936 - \$334,810		

Field Notes

In 2011, Johnson, Mirmiran, and Thompson undertook a detailed study, prepared for Clarion, Elk, Forest, and McKean Counties, of the Knox and Kane corridor. The resulting document is the Knox & Kane Feasibility Study. Overall, the study highlights the potential of developing the Knox and Kane corridor as a continuous rail trail. The 74-mile corridor is owned by the Headwaters Charitable Trust (HCT). HCT holds agreements with a number of groups interested in championing the trail building effort.

The treadway and key infrastructures remain intact for much of this corridor. Corridor widths are generally within the 8 - 10' range. Though necessary for the rehabilitation process, a detailed inspection of the trestles and culverts was not in the scope of the 2011 assessment.

The Rail 66 Country Trail is one of the trail development groups working with HCT, focused on developing the Knox and Kane Trail in Clarion County from Clarion Junction to the Forest County line.

In 2019, Pennsylvania DCNR awarded the Rail 66 Country Trail a grant of \$400,000. This funding will go towards surface paving and other improvements on the 8 miles of corridor from Leeper to the Forest County line.

The development of the trail will link the communities of Vowinckel, Jenks Township and Marienville with Leeper, Snydersburg and Lucinda to the south. Other small settlements exist along the corridor from Leeper north. Marienville serves as a gateway community to the Allegheny National Forest, which the corridor runs through for nearly 19 miles on this section.

Approaching Forest County, the corridor changes course from a predominantly northward orientation and heads in an easterly direction. Russell City concludes this section. The Knox and Kane corridor continues northward from Russell City, but the overall PA Wilds corridor alignment turns south.

Local knowledge notes frequent ATV usage throughout the corridor.



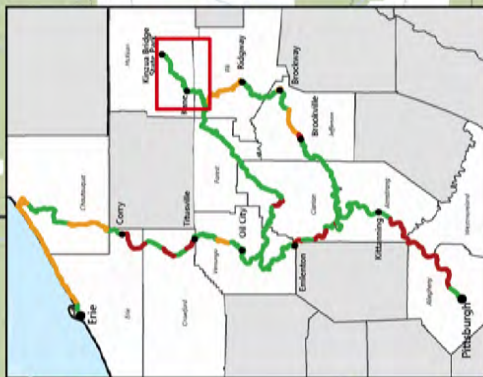
Photo A: Undeveloped corridor crossing Rt. 66 in Jenks Twp

Section 33: Leeper to Russell City

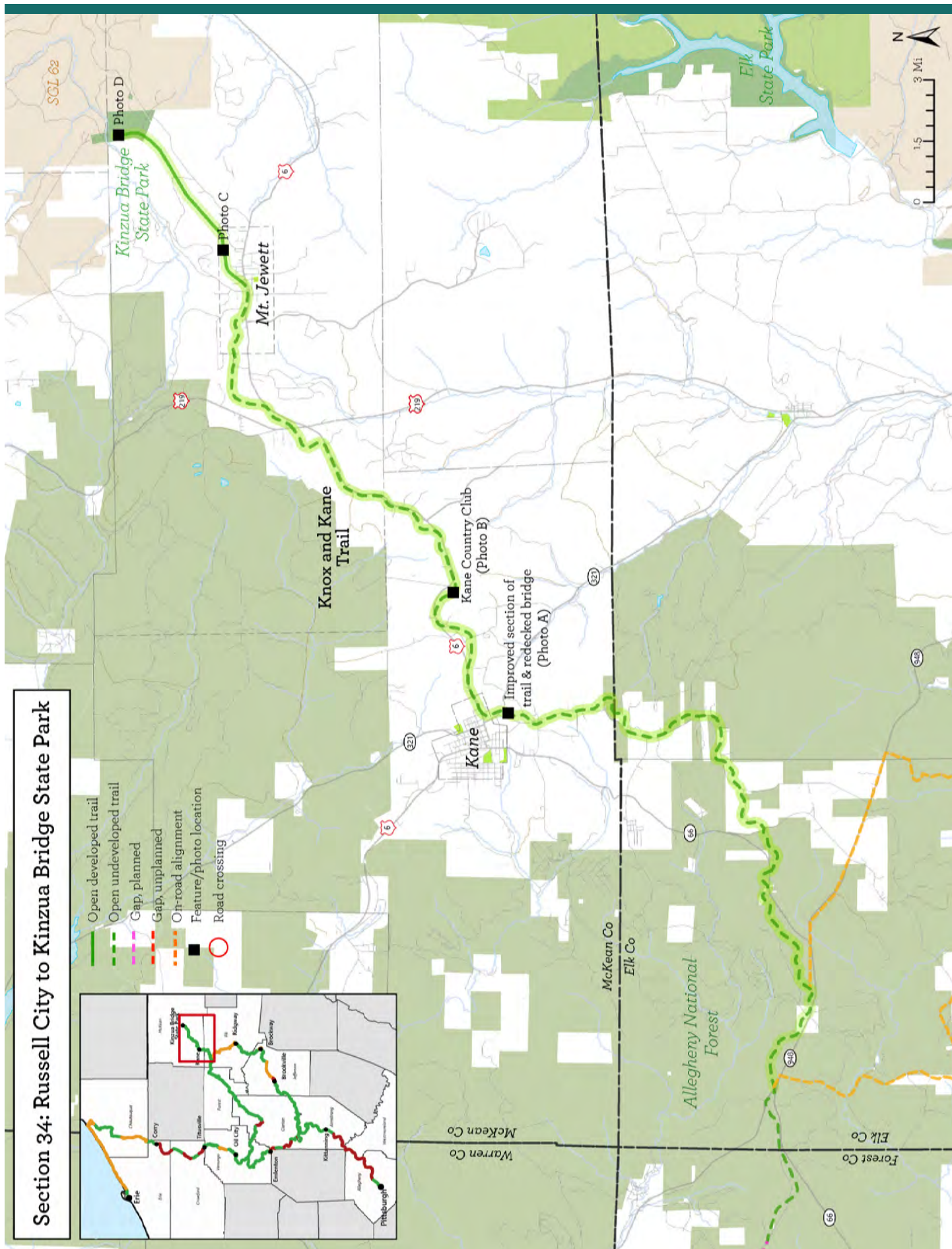
	Opportunities
	<p>Single ownership of the right of way is the greatest asset of this 74-mile corridor. Though it is owned by a single entity, a number of different groups are working to develop the trail locally. Trail groups throughout the corridor are convening, looking to share services, and leverage projects. These discussions are being facilitated by Headwaters Charitable Trust.</p> <p>The numerous small towns along the corridor should also work together on collective branding, creating a unique destination corridor. Signage could help add to this collaboration. On other trails, as well as park systems, a ‘passport’ system with a unique reward has been used to encourage trail users to stop and visit spaces they may have otherwise overlooked.</p>
	Barriers
	<p>The corridor’s infrastructure assets can also be challenges, especially with the historic trestle bridges. Each of these will require inspection and trail-focused design for user safety.</p> <p>With 78 road crossings, a strategy should be outlined as to how to manage the requirements for each crossing. Crossings that require PennDOT maintenance agreements will require more time and attention than some rural trail groups typically have.</p> <p>Close coordination and communication with neighboring landowners should be exercised to address concerns over trail development. The access lanes crossing the corridor will likely need to be negotiated.</p>



Section 34: Russell City to Kinzua Bridge State Park



- Open developed trail
- Open undeveloped trail
- Gap, planned
- Gap, unplanned
- On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 34: Russell City to Kinzua Bridge SP

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Forest County, Elk County, and McKean County, PA	Open, Undeveloped/ Open, Developed	33.06 miles	Completed	160-169
Project Partners:		Cost Estimate:		
Trail Association of the McKean / Elk Divide, Mt. Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail Club, Headwaters Charitable Trust		160: \$446,068 - \$545,194	165: \$55,998 - \$68,442	
		161: \$277,224 - \$338,830	166: \$432,270 - \$528,330	
		162: \$87,648 - \$107,125	167: \$648,580 - \$792,709	
		163: \$451,338 - \$551,635	168: \$492,805 - \$602,317	
		164: \$354,150 - \$432,850	169: \$529,305 - \$646,928	



Photo A: Recently redecked bridge over BPRR



Photo B: Mt. Jewett section of Knox & Kane Trail

Field Notes

In 2011, Johnson, Mirmiran, and Thompson undertook a detailed study, prepared for Clarion, Elk, Forest, and McKean Counties, of the Knox and Kane corridor. The resulting document is the Knox & Kane Feasibility Study. Overall, the study highlights the potential of developing the Knox and Kane corridor as a continuous rail trail. The 74-mile corridor is owned by the Headwaters Charitable Trust (HCT). HCT holds agreements with a number of groups interested in championing the trail building effort.

The treadway and key infrastructures remain intact for much of this corridor. Corridor widths are generally within the 8 - 10' range. Though necessary for the rehabilitation process, a detailed inspection of the trestles and culverts was not in the scope of the 2011 assessment.

This section is a continuation of the Knox and Kane corridor from Russell City to the Kinzua Bridge. In the context of the PA Wilds corridor alignment however, this section serves as a spur to the proposed regional loop.

A general store that caters largely to ATV trail users can be found in Russell City. A few private residences line Rt. 66 through Russell City.

The corridor winds through the densely wooded Allegheny National Forest for 6 miles before crossing into McKean County. The corridor then traverses a number of farmed inholdings south of Kane. Closer to the borough of Kane, residential development becomes more common.

The Trail Association of the McKean/Elk Divide (TAMED) is leading trail developments from Russell City to Lantz Corners. In 2019, TAMED installed new decking on a key bridge over an active Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad (BPRR) line south of Kane's high school and resurfaced a section of the treadway. The borough of Kane has planned routes to connect the trail further into the central

Section 34: Russell City to Kinzua Bridge SP



Photo C: Kinzua Bridge



Photo D: Knox & Kane corridor through country club

Field Notes, cont.

business district. From Y St. in Kane, a spur along former rail corridor leads to the future Kane Trailhead and Welcome Center.

Moving east from Kane, the alignment parallels the southern side of Rt. 6. An elevated wooden trestle, up to 25' above the road level runs for about 800'. This trestle will need further inspection and improvements before it can carry trail users. Biddle Rd. Extension, parallel to the trestle, provides a suitable interim alignment. Notably, the corridor passes directly through the Kane Country Club 2.7 miles east of Kane.

Further along Rt. 6, the corridor enters Lantz Corners. The Mt. Jewett to Kinzua Bridge trail club has recently cleared and graded the section of the corridor from Rt.6 towards Mt. Jewett. The 4.5-mile section of the trail from Mt. Jewett to Kinzua Bridge has been improved and features a maintained crushed limestone surface. MJ2KB signs, along with signs noting prohibited uses, have been posted along this stretch. Parking is available in Mt. Jewett and the trail from this point heads north deviating from Rt. 6.

Parking is available in an overflow lot in Kinzua Bridge State Park with close access to the trail. The park is a highly visited attraction, and the main parking area can often be at capacity.

Opportunities

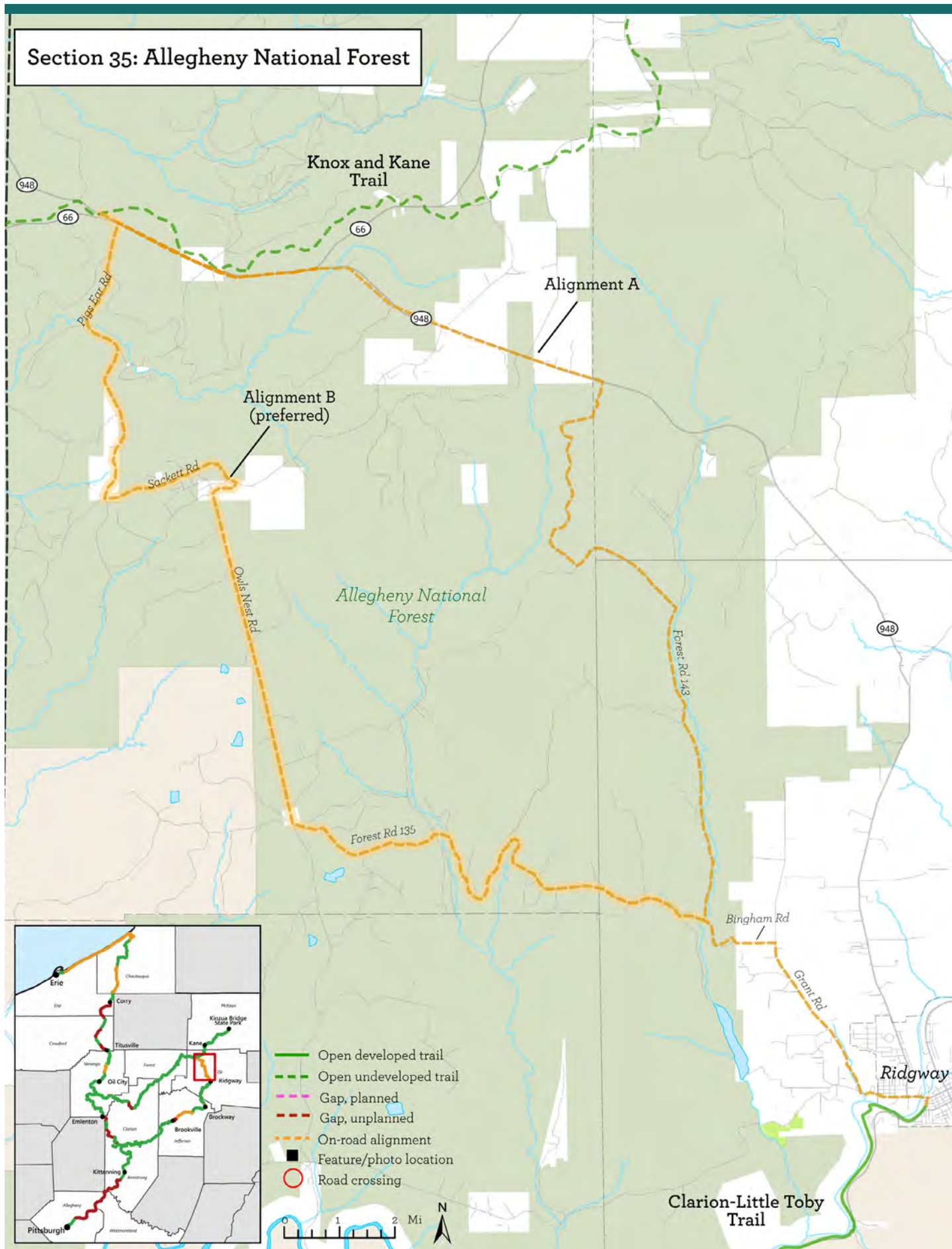
TAMED and the MJ2KB group are highly engaged in furthering trail development on this section of the corridor. The borough of Kane is quickly positioning itself as a recreational hub with a number of new dining establishments as well as a brewery. Shared lane markings on Rt. 6 through Kane raise the visibility that alternative transportation is a consideration. The Mt. Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail Club is also regularly maintaining trail, approaching potential members and investigating connections. Both groups communicate regularly on trail development process.

Kinzua Bridge State Park is a major destination, with over 150,000 visitors in the first nine months of 2019, according to the Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau. While the trail runs through the park, DCNR does not own the actual corridor. There is a loose agreement between the trail club and the park with regard to maintenance which should be formalized in the future to establish roles and responsibilities.

Section 34: Russell City to Kinzua Bridge SP

	<div data-bbox="690 275 867 317">Barriers</div> <div data-bbox="690 342 1510 583"><p>The trail receives public support and attention in Kane but continued outreach and coordination with adjacent landowners should be conducted to ensure positive relationships are fostered and maintained. The Kane Country Club is in active opposition to the trail and has placed physical obstacles on the corridor as it enters the club. Negotiations related to this stretch will be a challenge.</p></div> <div data-bbox="690 621 1510 863"><p>Kinzua Bridge State Park has noted some difficulties with trail users using the main parking facilities for all day use. While typically only an issue on special occasions, it is essential for the Mt. Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail Club to maintain a positive relationship with the park. Establishing a formal agreement with the PADCNR Bureau of State Parks is crucial and can help to alleviate the issues the park has concerns around.</p></div>
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Section 35: Allegheny National Forest



Section 35: Allegheny National Forest

County(s): Elk County, PA	Status: On-Road	Distance: Alignment A: 14.26 miles Alignment B: 18 miles	Acquisition Status On-road	Segments: 170, 171
Project Partners: Allegheny National Forest			Cost Estimate: 170: NA 171: NA	

Field Notes

To connect the Knox and Kane corridor from the Russell City area to the Clarion-Little Toby Trail, it is necessary to make use of the extensive existing gravel road network of the Allegheny National Forest (ANF). For the purposes of this study, two potential alignments were explored.

Alignment A follows Rt. 948 for almost 5 miles before cyclists would make a right turn onto Forest Road 129. Rt. 948 is moderately busy, with consistent shoulder widths of about 2'. The posted speed limit is 55 mph and significant truck traffic was noted. This alignment then follows gravel forestry roads 129 and 143 for 9.5 miles to Bingham Rd. These roads were in generally fair condition, with some significant potholes noted. Headed south, total elevation gain from the intersection with the Knox and Kane corridor to Bingham Rd. is about 550'.

Alignment B would cross Rt. 948 from the Knox and Kane corridor and immediately jump on the gravel Pigs Ear Rd. to the small village of Four Corners, a community nestled in a small square of private land within the Allegheny National Forest. Here, cyclists would follow Sackett Rd. eastward for a little over a mile before making a right turn at Owls Nest Rd. Owls Nest Rd. is relatively straight and flat with good sight lines. The route would then turn left onto Forest Road 135, which descends into and ascends out of two small creek valleys on its way towards Ridgway. Forest Road 135 intersects with Bingham Rd. and becomes asphalt-paved at the border of the Allegheny National Forest. This alignment would make use of 18 miles of gravel roads, and has significantly more elevation change than Alignment A with 1,300' total elevation gain headed in a southerly direction. However, it would keep riders off the busy Rt. 948, and the roads in this section of the forest were generally in better condition. For this reason, the study recommends adopting this alignment as the preferred alternative.

Potential Improvements

Regardless of which alignment is chosen as the primary alignment for the PA Wilds Loop, signage both to help cyclists with wayfinding and to alert motorists of the potential for bikes on the roadway would be useful.

If Alignment B is chosen as the official route, a short spur trail of the Knox and Kane could connect through National Forest land to Rt. 948 from the rail corridor to allow for a perpendicular crossing of the highway to Pigs Ear Rd. Road stripping and motorist-facing signage to alert vehicles to potential pedestrian traffic would increase the safety of this crossing.

Regular maintenance of the gravel forest roads would ensure that cyclists have the best possible experience in the ANF.



Section 36: Allegheny National Forest to Ridgway

County(s): Elk County, PA	Status: On-Road	Distance: 3.65 miles	Acquisition Status On-road	Segments: 172, 173
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Project Partners:

Allegheny National Forest, Tricounty Rails to Trails, Ridgway Borough, Ridgway Township, PennDOT

Cost Estimate:

172: NA

173: NA

Field Notes

Upon leaving the Allegheny National Forest, the potential alignment continues on-road south into Ridgway to the beginning of the Clarion-Little Toby Trail. Forest Road 135 turns into paved Bingham Rd., which is a low volume residential street. From Bingham Rd., the route would follow Grant Rd. (Rural Minor Collector) for 2.2 miles, predominantly downhill, heading into Ridgway proper. The road surface is in decent condition with the shoulder width varying from about 1-2 feet and a posted speed limit of 35 mph. We observed a moderate traffic volume. Once in Ridgway, cyclists would follow Rt. 948/Main St. (Rural Minor Collector) in an eastward direction for almost a mile before making a right turn on Water Street and intersecting with the Clarion-Little Toby Trail. The speed limit in the town of Ridgway is 25 mph.

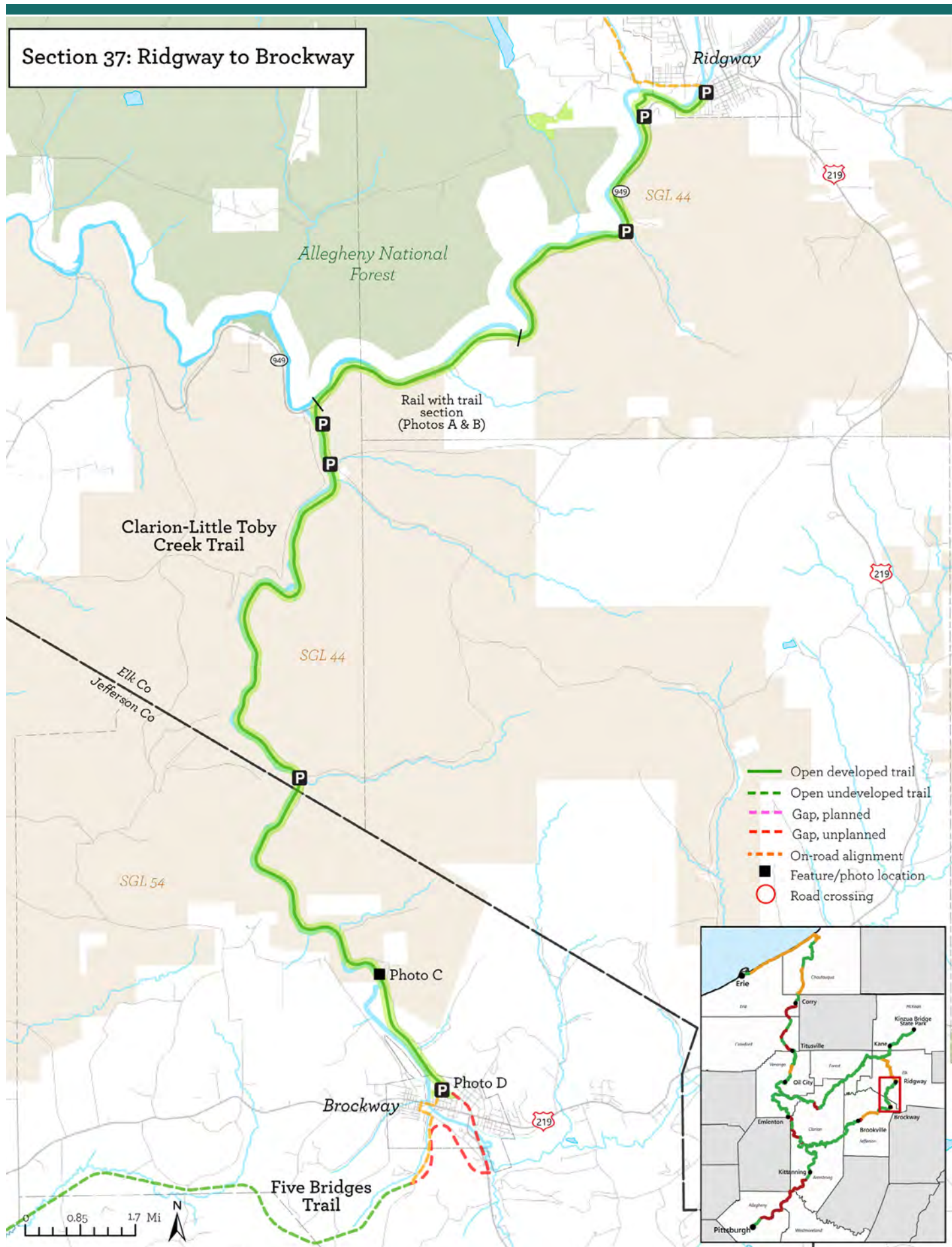
Potential Improvements

Cyclists navigating this on-road connection would benefit from wayfinding signage from the Allegheny National Forest to the Clarion-Little Toby Trail parking area in Ridgway. Since Ridgway provides significant amenities, wayfinding signage from the trailhead into the central business district would be beneficial. For the safety of bicyclists, share-the-road and other signage to alert motorists to their presence is recommended. In downtown Ridgway, a bike lane or sharrows on Main St. could be implemented and would act as reinforced wayfinding for cyclists, an acknowledgment of their presence and an extra reminder to motorists to watch out for non-motorized traffic.



Photo A: Main St. at Grant Rd., looking toward the ANF

Section 37: Ridgway to Brockway



Section 37: Ridgway to Brockway

County(s): Elk County & Jefferson County, PA	Status: Open, Developed	Distance: 18.36 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 174, 175
Project Partners: Tricounty Rails to Trails, Brockway Borough, Ridgway Borough				Cost Estimate: 174: NA 175: NA



Photo A: Rail-with-trail section on Clarion-Little Toby Trail



Photo B: Entrance to Clarion-Little Toby Trail from Brockway end



Photo C: Rail-with-trail section on Clarion-Little Toby Trail

Field Notes

The Clarion-Little Toby Creek Trail begins in Ridgway and stretches just over 18 miles southward to Brockway, mostly through State Game Lands 44. The first 8 miles are flanked by Rt. 949 and the Clarion River. The landscape is mostly forested, and the trail runs through a gorge of rock formations with rhododendron and mountain laurel groves.

About 8 miles south of Ridgway, a rail-with-trail section begins. For 1.8 miles, the trail shares the corridor with the active Buffalo and Pittsburgh (BPRR) rail line. At the beginning and end of the rail-with-trail section, fencing and signage alerts trail users to stay off the tracks and use caution.

In the middle of the section, there is only occasional signage, with no physical barrier between the trail and tracks. The rail-with-trail section ends as both rail and trail pass under Rt. 949, but the tracks cross the Little Toby Creek to the western side while the trail stays on the east.

The trail surface is crushed limestone throughout its length and is a relatively consistent flat grade. The surface is in good repair, though it would benefit from re-establishing the crown of the trail to shed water more efficiently. There are no road crossings on the Clarion-Little Toby Trail

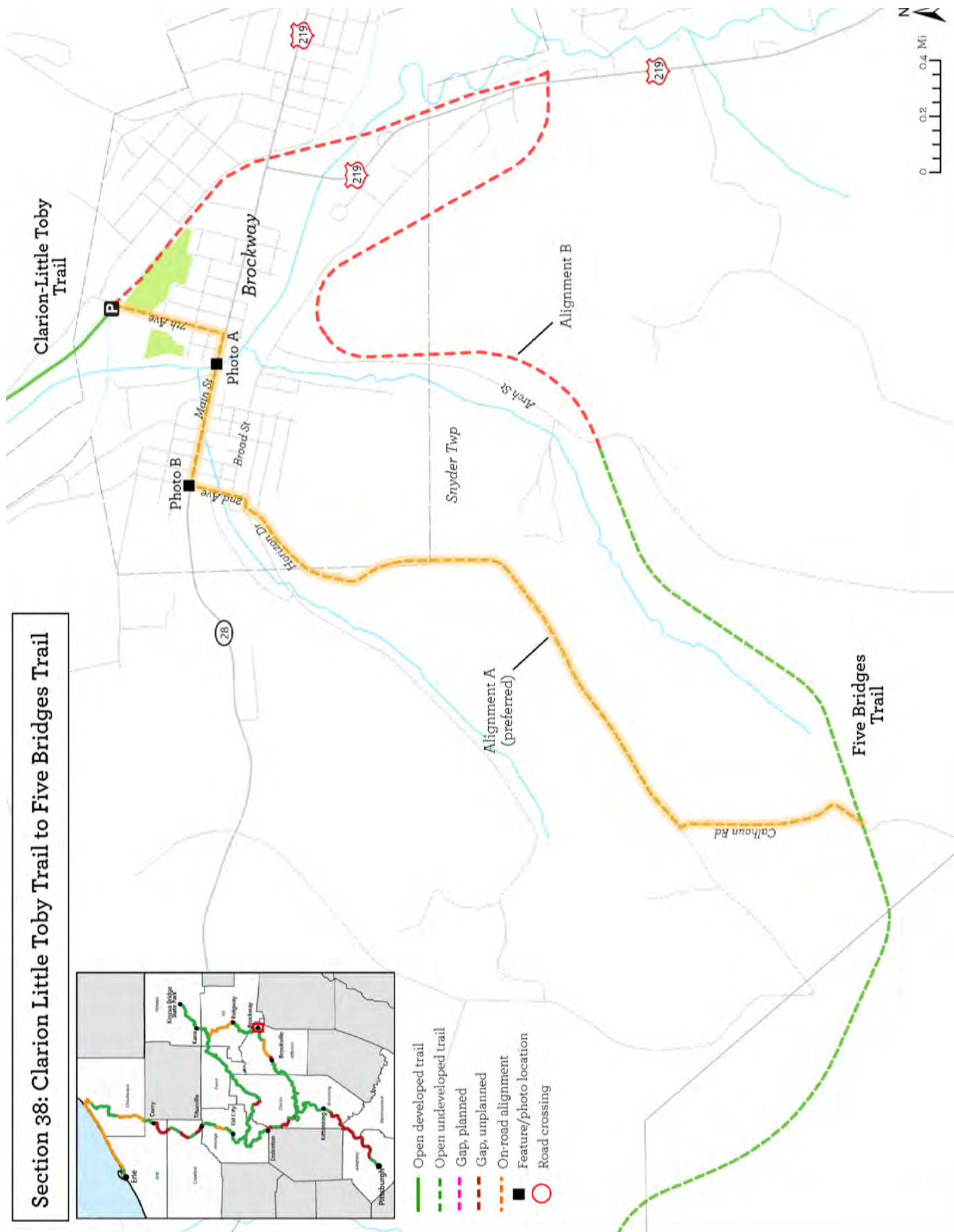


Photo D: Typical CLTT conditions

Section 38: Clarion Little Toby Trail to Five Bridges Trail



- Open developed trail
- Open undeveloped trail
- Gap, planned
- Gap, unplanned
- On-road alignment
- Feature/photo location
- Road crossing



Section 38: Clarion-Little Toby Trail to Five Bridges Trail

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Jefferson County, PA	On-road	2.7 miles	On-Road	176, 177, 178
Project Partners: Borough of Brockway, Snyder Township, Tricounty Rails to Trails		Cost Estimate: 176: \$166,050 - \$202,950 177: \$126,477 - \$154,583 178: \$105,629 - \$129,102		



Photo A: Rt.28/Main St. in Brockway looking westward



Photo B: View of 2nd Ave. from Main St.

Field Notes

The Clarion-Little Toby Trail's southernmost trailhead abuts a sports field complex on the northern end of Brockway, and it is roughly 3 miles to the beginning of the Five Bridges Trail on Arch St. (Rural Minor Collector), at the southern end of town. However, the Five Bridges Trail ends abruptly where a rail bridge once spanned the roadway, and the only access is up a steep, washed out embankment. As development of this access point to a standard that would be safe for all users would be cost-prohibitive and likely not feasible due to the terrain, other options to connect the Clarion-Little Toby Trail to the Five Bridges Trail should be investigated.

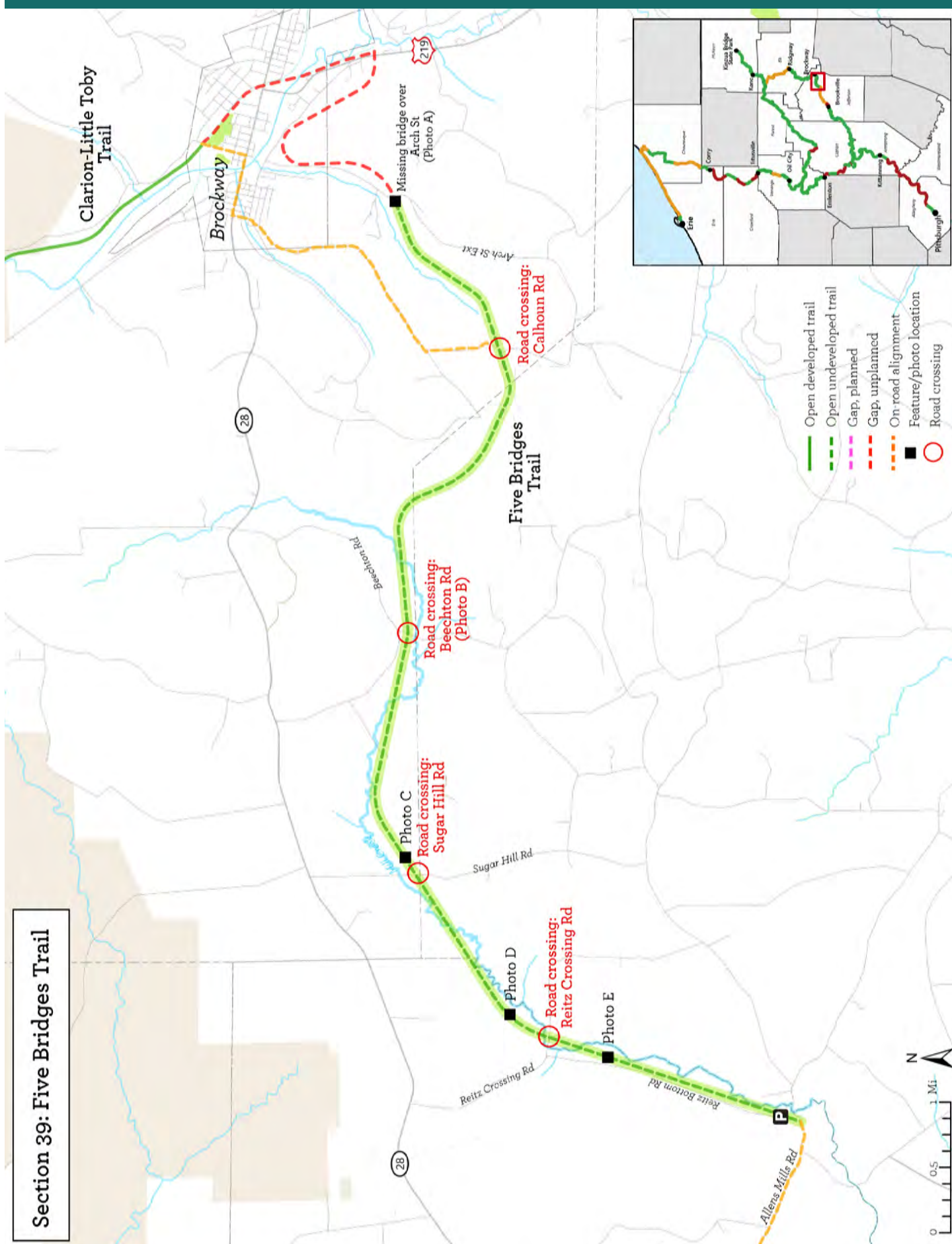
Alignment A: Short-term, the most viable option is to develop an on-road route from the Clarion-Little Toby trailhead through Brockway and to Calhoun Rd., accessing the Five Bridges Trail about one mile south of Arch St. to bypass the steep embankment. From the Clarion-Little Toby trailhead, bicyclists would travel south on 7th Avenue for .3 miles before turning right onto Rt. 28/Main St. (Rural Minor Arterial). As its main thoroughfare, this is one of the more heavily-trafficked roads through town, but the speed limit is 25 mph within the borough, and there is ample roadway for bikes and cars to coexist. Cyclists would travel about 0.4 miles on Main St., then turn left onto 2nd Ave. and shortly thereafter, stay left onto Horizon Dr., a small township road. After 1.4 miles, it intersects with Calhoun Dr., another low-volume township road, which intersects with the Five Bridges Trail 0.2 mile later.

Alignment B: There is future potential to take some or all of this connection off-road via the abandoned Pittsburgh & Shawmut rail grade. The main barrier is the missing bridge over Arch St., which could be rebuilt to continue the Five Bridges Trail towards Brockway. However, no further investigation of the feasibility of using this rail corridor through town has been done as of fall 2019.

Potential Improvements

Brockway already has some signage directing trail users from the Clarion-Little Toby Trail to the Five Bridges Trail, but it is inconsistent, and additional signage is necessary for easier wayfinding. A dedicated bike lane, sharrows, and share the road signage would help alert motorists to bicycle traffic on the route, as well as reinforce the wayfinding signage directing cyclists.

Section 39: Five Bridges Trail



Section 39: Five Bridges Trail

County(s): Jefferson County, PA	Status: Open, Undeveloped	Distance: 7.65 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 179
Project Partners: Tricounty Rails to Trails			Cost Estimate: \$1,033,286 - \$1,262,905	



Photo A: Missing bridge over Arch St.



Photo B: Beechton Rd. crossing, illustrative of typical road crossing conditions.



Photo C: Typical trail conditions

Field Notes

Though the Five Bridges Trail map shows the trail continuing past Arch St. (Rural Minor Collector) towards Brockway, the northern end of the trail terminates abruptly at Arch St. where a rail bridge once spanned the small valley through which the road travels. There is no parking area at this end, and the only connection to Arch Street is a steep, washed out dirt path that drops off onto the road at the bottom. The road also curves before and after this access, creating a safety hazard for those attempting to get to and from the trail from the road. As of fall 2019, there is no other way to access the trail from Brockway besides a hike-a-bike up this embankment (see Section 36 for details on potential solutions to this issue).

From Arch St., the trail heads southwest through a variety of habitats including forests and marshlands, providing opportunities for bird and wildlife observation. The treadway is for the most part 8-10 feet wide and crushed stone with grass growing up in the middle. There are wet spots and obvious drainage issues intermittently along the trail's length. As its name suggests, the trail features five bridges over small creeks. These bridges were all constructed in 2012, and appear to be in good condition. There are 4 road crossings, none of which are signed from either the trail user's or motorist's perspective, but all of which are relatively low-volume back roads.

Signage at each entrance and road crossing that looks like traditional posted signs alerts against hunting, trapping, fishing, or motorized vehicle use. Clarification of these signs would help indicate that they are not intended to deter non-motorized trail users.

The southern end of the Five Bridges Trail terminates in a small gravel parking area along Reitz Bottom Road.

Section 39: Five Bridges Trail



Photo D: Marshlands can be viewed from many spots along the trail.



Photo E: Some wet spots throughout the trail's length were observed.

Potential Improvements

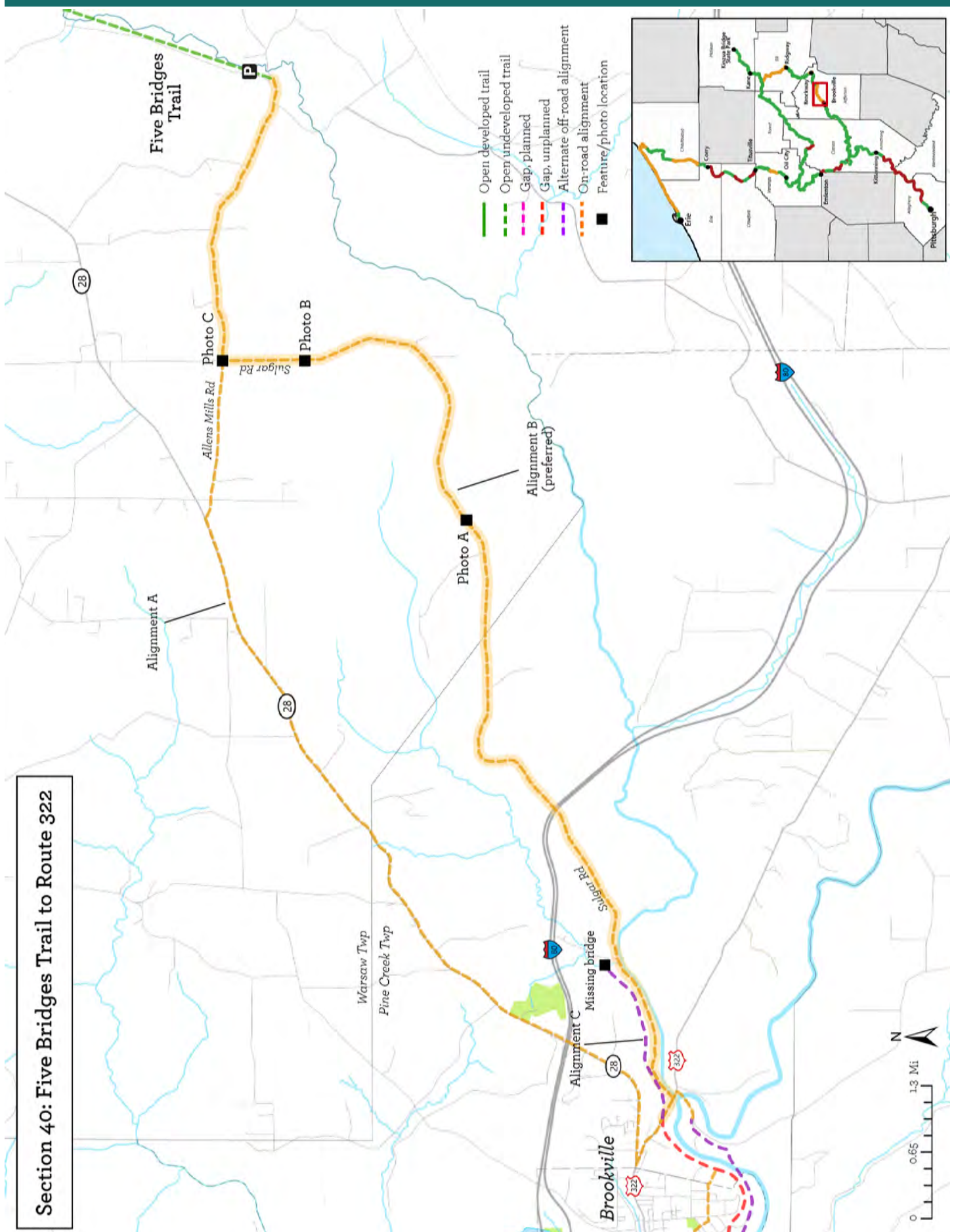
At the northern end, a connection to the trail from Brockway needs to be implemented, whether it is an alternate on-road option or an eventual off-road continuation of the trail into town. See Section 36 for more details.

Addressing the drainage issues causing muddy sections of trail along its length would go a long way towards improving the trail experience.

Road striping and signage for both trail users and motorists at each road crossing would improve the safety of these crossings. Improved signage for trail users at trailheads would induce a more welcoming atmosphere for those unfamiliar with the area.



Section 40: Five Bridges Trail to Route 322



Section 40: Five Bridges Trail to Route 322

County(s):	Status:	Distance:	Acquisition Status	Segments:
Jefferson County, PA	On-Road	Primary Alignment: 8.36 miles Alternate Alignment: 10.3 miles	On-road	180, 181, 182, 183
Project Partners:		Cost Estimate:		
Redbank Valley Trail Association, Warsaw Township, Pine Creek Township, Tricounty Rails to Trails		180: NA 181: NA	182: NA 183: NA	



Photo A: Typical conditions on Sulgar Rd just north of its crossing over I-80

Field Notes

From the Five Bridges Trail parking area along Reitz Bottom Rd., the alignment heads west on Allens Mills Rd. (Rural Major Collector), which has moderate traffic volumes and elevation change with about 350 feet of gain over 3.4 miles. Sight distance for motorists is limited at times due to road dips and slight curves, but the shoulder is smooth and free of debris. The road was recently resurfaced and is in good condition.

The proposed on-road alignment (Alignment A) then heads south for 6 miles on Rt. 28 (Rural Minor Arterial), which we observed to have relatively high traffic volumes and limited sight distance in some spots. The shoulder ranges from 2-3 feet wide varying from smooth to cracked surfacing. Rt. 28 trends downhill from Allens Mills Rd. to Brookville. Rt. 28 passes under I-80 at an interchange just northeast of Brookville, presenting a safety concern with multiple lanes exiting and entering the highway, and no stoplights. In Brookville, Rt. 28 intersects with Rt. 322 at a 45-degree angle and at a crest in Rt. 322 (Rural Minor Arterial), limiting sight lines. From here, the proposed alignment would turn left and follow Rt. 322 east.

Alternate Alignment B: Deeming Rt. 28 less than ideal for cyclist traffic, potential alternate options to connect Rt. 322 with the Five Bridges Trail at Allens Mill Rd. were examined. The preferred option was Sulgar Rd., which runs parallel to Rt. 28 about 1.5 miles to the east and passes through a mix of woods and farmland. The surface ranges from asphalt-paved to packed dirt, and traffic volume is very low. It is about 8 miles from Allens Mills Road to Rt. 322, and while there is more elevation change than on Rt. 28, it is a much safer and more enjoyable on-road option. It crosses I-80 on a bridge above grade. This assessment deems Sulgar Rd. the preferred option to connect the Five Bridges Trail to Brookville.

Alternate Alignment C: An inactive rail grade paralleling Sulgar Rd. was also examined as an alternative to Rt. 28. The rail grade is located on the western side of Sulgar Rd, but the discovery of a large valley once spanned by a significant rail bridge that is no longer in place led to the determination that this alignment would be cost prohibitive.

Section 40: Five Bridges Trail to Route 322



Photo B: Sulgar Rd. near intersection with Allens Mills Rd.

Potential Improvements

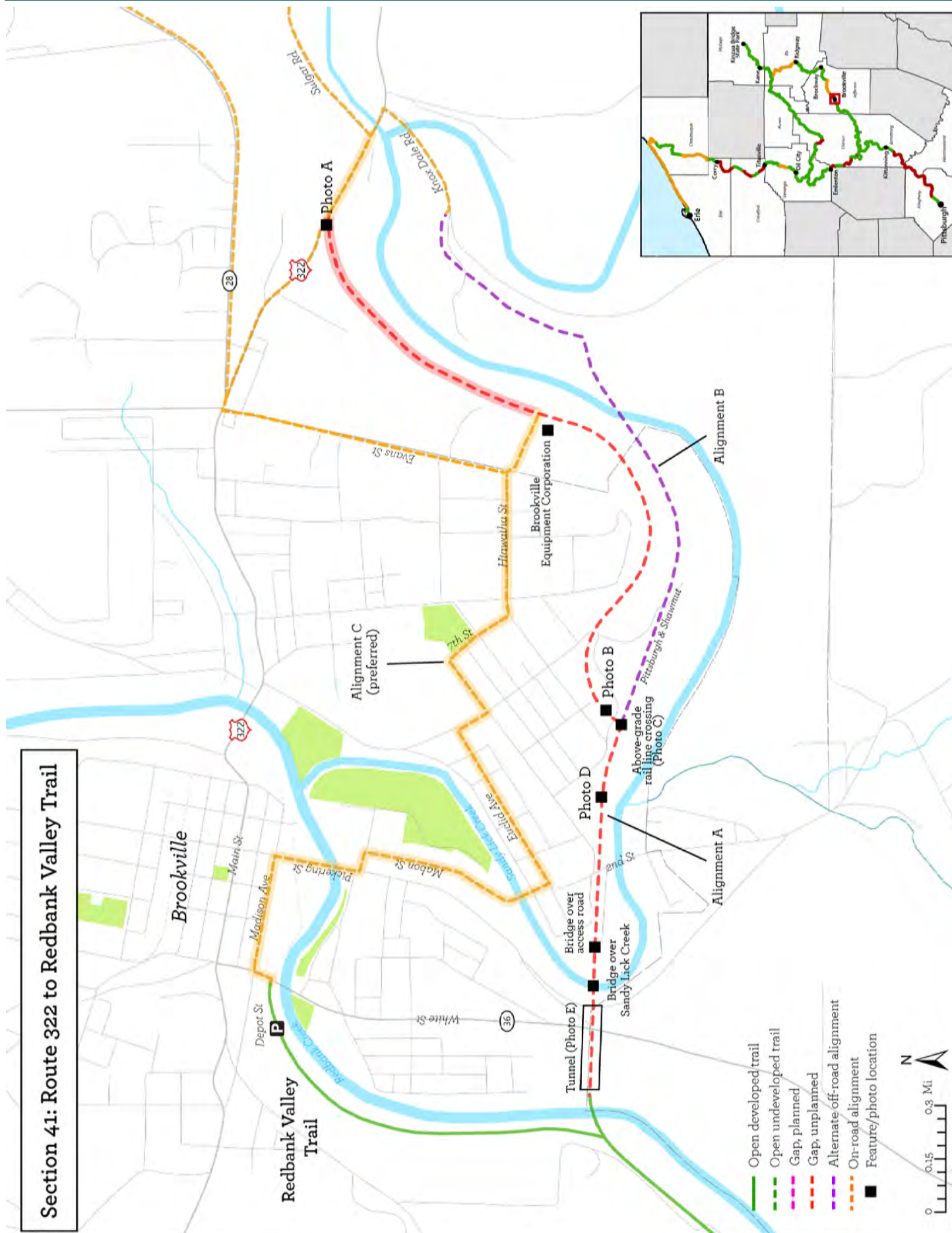
Sharrows and signage on both Rt. 28 or Sulgar Rd. and Allens Mills Rd. would help alert motorists to bicycle traffic, and wayfinding signage for the on-road alignment would help cyclists with navigation.



Photo C: Allens Mills Rd. looking west at its intersection with Sulgar Rd.



Section 41: Route 322 to Redbank Valley Trail



Section 41: Route 322 to Redbank Valley Trail

County(s): Jefferson County, PA	Status: Gap, Unplanned	Distance: Alignment A: 2.75 miles Alignment B: 2.94 miles Alignment C: 3.34 miles	Acquisition Status Negotiations need to occur	Segments: 183, 184, 185, 186
Project Partners: Redbank Valley Trails Association	Cost Estimate: 183: NA 184: NA	185a: \$79,890 - \$97,644 185b: \$102,888 - \$125,752 185c: NA	185d: NA 185e: NA 185f: \$161,183 - \$197,001	186: NA

Field Notes

The original proposed trail alignment (**Alignment A**) follows Rt. 322 for .41 miles from the intersection with Rt. 28 to an active spur rail corridor that is being used by the Brookville Equipment Corporation, a manufacturer of locomotives, streetcars and mining machinery. The Rt. 322 end of the rail line is a large packed dirt and gravel lot with two tracks leading southward towards the factory. The two tracks turn into many as they near the factory, and a plethora of buildings and small access roads dot the landscape.

The intended alignment follows this rail line for 1.35 miles before it intersects with the abandoned Pittsburgh & Shawmut line. However, observations revealed that these two rail lines do not intersect at-grade. The active rail line crosses over the Pittsburgh & Shawmut on a bridge about 50' above the abandoned corridor, and the two are separated by a steep scree slope and moderately thick vegetation.

Heading west into Brookville, the abandoned Pittsburgh & Shawmut line looks passable, though grasses and small shrubs and trees are beginning to encroach the corridor. Ballast and some railroad ties still exist on the treadway itself, which is about 8' wide. However, some vegetation removal would have to be done to take advantage of its full width.

At 2nd St. (Rural Minor Collector), the former rail corridor crosses the road at grade and through the middle of a long gravel parking lot next to what appears to be a former railway station. On the western end of the parking lot, a bridge blockaded by a Jersey barrier carries the corridor over an access road for an industrial area. The bridge's decking remains rail ties with large gaps in between each tie, though the tracks have been removed. From a cursory glance, the structure appeared to be solid. About 250' further, another bridge about 180' in length traverses Sandy Lick Creek, and it appears to be in similar condition. Further professional assessment of the structural integrity of these bridges would be required.

Just beyond that bridge, a tunnel of approximately 900' in length provides a potential connection to the existing Redbank Trail. However, the tunnel is in disrepair, with large chunks of crumbling ceiling amassing in piles on the interior, and standing water on the

Photo A: Rail line looking south towards Brookville

Section 41: Route 322 to Redbank Valley Trail



Photo B: Rail line looking north towards Brookville Equipment Corporation from Lincoln St.

Field Notes, cont.

treadway. The western end of the tunnel connects with the existing Redbank Trail.

Alternate Alignment B: Upon discovery of the difference in grade between the two rail corridors, we did examine the potential of alternate off-road routes to get from the Pittsburgh & Shawmut line to Rt. 322. Passing the intersection of the active line, the Pittsburgh & Shawmut line does continue eastward, and there may be potential to connect from it to Knox Dale Road (Rural Major Collector), which intersects with Rt. 322 almost directly across from Sulgar Rd. However, the status of this section of rail line is unknown, as there are still tracks in place. Additionally, while aerial imagery suggests there may be a workable connection to Knox Dale Rd., the true feasibility of this option remains unknown, as no further investigation into ownership was completed.

Alternate Alignment C: Several major physical barriers and right-of-way ownership concerns on the rail grade through Brookville make development of an off-road trail through town cost prohibitive. An on-road alternative through town on low-volume side streets could be determined, though for the purpose of this study, specific options were not investigated on the ground. However, a potential route was identified based on aerial imagery and online maps. Ideally, this route would begin at the existing Redbank Valley Trail trailhead on Depot St. and connect to the short line railway being used by the Brookville Equipment Corporation (see section map). If rail-with-trail could be developed on the 0.8-mile section between the manufacturer's headquarters off of Hiawatha St. to the Rt. 322 intersection, this is the recommended alignment to connect the Redbank Valley Trail to Sulgar Rd. If rail-with-trail on this section is not feasible, an on-road connection to Rt. 322 and then to Sulgar Rd. will need to be determined.

Opportunities

Providing a connection from the Redbank Trail through the town of Brookville and across Rt. 322 greatly amplifies the potential of a much longer trail network in this region, and it is a key piece of the PA Wilds Loop.

Because of its connection to the existing trail, it may be easier to leverage the support of the Redbank Valley Trails Association as well as other trail volunteers.

Extending the Redbank Trail through the town of Brookville would provide an opportunity for bicyclists to engage with and

Section 41: Route 322 to Redbank Valley Trail



Photo C: Tunnel in disrepair, as seen from Redbank Valley Trail

Opportunities, cont.

patronize local businesses, amplifying the town as a destination for recreation-based tourism.

An on-road alignment through town could be the solution for the costly and complicated physical barriers to using the former rail corridor on the southern end of town. Most of the streets are relatively low-traffic, and inviting trail users to directly pass small businesses would encourage patronage and the integration of bicyclists into the community.

Barriers

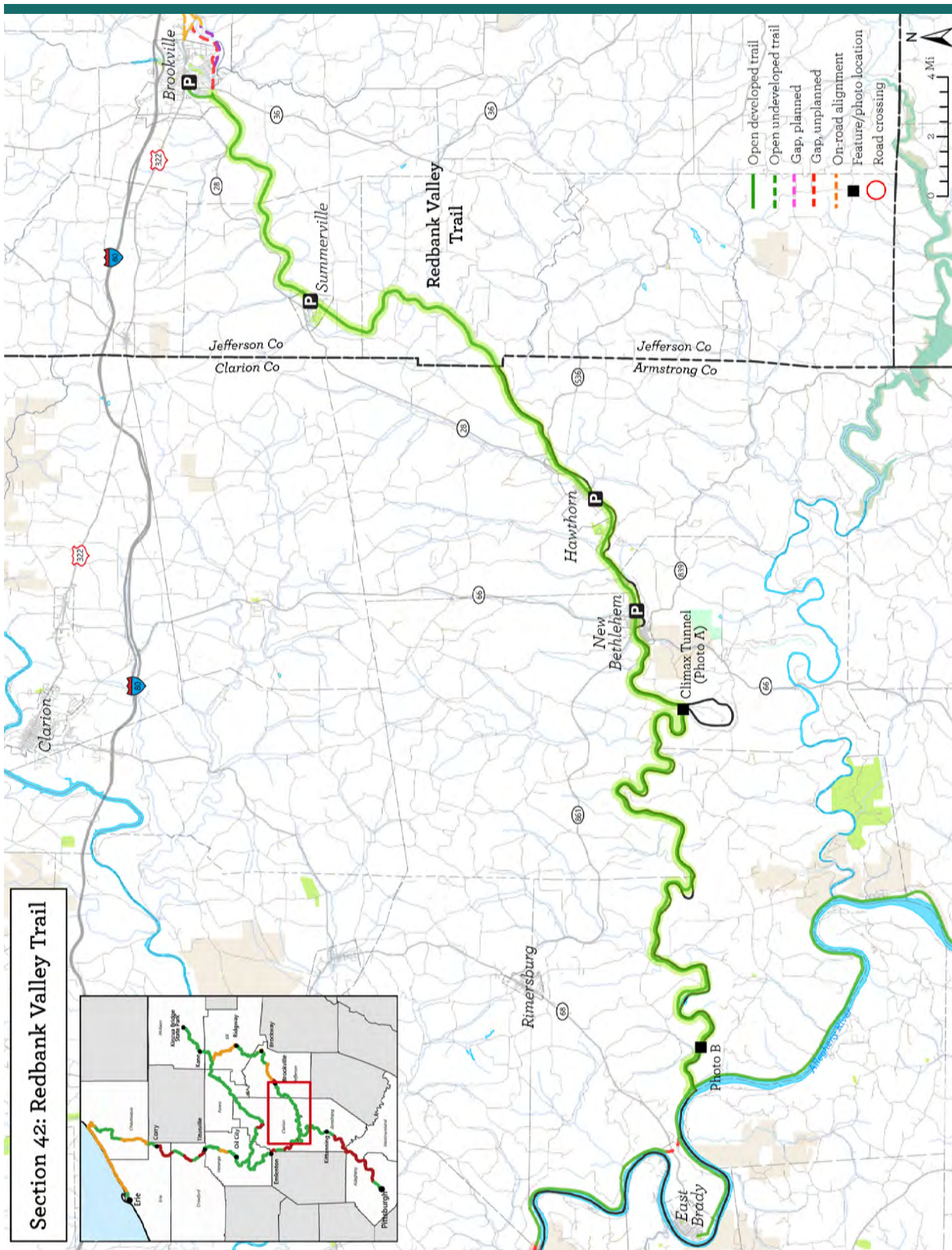
Crossing Rt. 322 presents a significant safety challenge, as this stretch of highway is high-traffic with large trucks, and has only a narrow shoulder.

The situation surrounding the active rail line past Brookville Equipment Corporation and whether or not rail-with-trail would be an option is unknown.

The grade change between the active rail line and the abandoned Pittsburgh & Shawmut line would require extensive engineering and costs to create a rideable trail traversing the two.

Two railroad bridges on the western end of this section would require thorough inspections and rehab, and the tunnel to connect to the Redbank Trail would require extensive and costly rehab before it was usable for the public.

Despite an active Redbank Valley Trails group, there is no active champion for this section and the extension of the Redbank Trail through town.



Section 42: Redbank Valley Trail

County(s): Jefferson County & Clarion County, PA	Status: Open, Developed	Distance: 41.15 miles	Acquisition Status Complete	Segments: 187, 188
Project Partners: Redbank Valley Trails Association, Armstrong Trails			Cost Estimate: 187: NA 188: NA	



Photo A: The Climax Tunnel

Field Notes

The Redbank Valley Trail and the Armstrong Trail form the southern connection of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the PA Wilds Loop. The Redbank Valley Trail runs just over 41 miles from the town of Brookville to the Armstrong Trail just southeast of East Brady. The trailhead at Brookville has parking for 10-15 cars, an information kiosk and portable toilets.

The surface of the trail throughout its length is crushed limestone, with grades of 1% or less, with the exception of a road crossing at Middle Run Rd where a bridge was removed and a steep (9-11%) ramp took its place. The Redbank Valley Trail travels alongside Redbank Creek through a mostly forested landscape, crossing many bridges and through 2 tunnels. It passes through the towns of Summerville, Hawthorn, and New Bethlehem.

In spring 2018, rehabilitation of the Climax Tunnel was completed, closing a long-standing gap to open the continuous 41 miles of trail. Unfortunately, in July 2019, a flood washed out a historic stone arch bridge at Mile 19, just west of New Bethlehem, creating another gap. According to the Redbank Valley Trails website, as of December 2019 there is a detour path to make the gap passable, but the on-site detour is subject to flooding. The Redbank Valley Trails Association is also recommending a 3.3-mile on-road detour using Lumber and Heasley Roads. The trail group has been undertaking fundraising efforts since the washout to replace the culvert with a new structure to restore the trail to the original right-of-way.



Photo B: New covered bridge on the Redbank Valley Trail

Potential Improvements

The most obvious improvement as of fall 2019 is to fix the washed-out bridge over Long Run as well as potentially extend the trail north through Brookville.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of the report was to analyze the conditions, capacity and readiness of projects on the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and PA Wilds Loop to move towards development. Ideally, a strategy would focus on developing segments contiguous to existing open, developed trail. While in some cases that is an applicable route to pursue, our assessment of the corridors placed additional emphasis on projects that can move forward quickly. The completion of these projects would build momentum throughout their respective corridors to overcome development issues holding projects back, attract additional users and increase the economic impact the trails bring to these regions.

The projects that rose to the top of list all had common elements, including: clear ownership status, a lack of major design and construction challenges and either have existing organizational capacity or capacity needs that could be filled by PEC to manage the project's development. The following projects, listed numerically by segments and shown on the accompanying map, meet the criteria to be considered high priority and ready to move forward.

Corry Junction Greenway Trail (Segments 8/9)

In our assessment, the Corry Junction Greenway Trail was classified as Open, Undeveloped. The trail was constructed years ago but, due to a lack of maintenance, is more akin to an undeveloped trail experience. This could easily be remedied by implementing a routine maintenance program and other easy, relatively affordable improvements, outlined in the Section Assessment. There is currently positive energy in Corry, as evidenced by several new health and community initiatives, to leverage with support from PEC to see these improvements through. A key requirement will be to develop a sustainability plan for trail improvements.

East Branch Trail (Segments 19/20)

With clear ownership of the right-of-way, the opportunity exists to add a six-mile extension to the East Branch Trail. The project has no major structure challenges, the corridor is in suitable shape and ready to be developed. While the Clear Lake Authority controls the right-of-way, they do not have the internal capacity to take on the develop of the trail. The opportunity to partner with PEC and other organizations to move the project forward exists.

Oil Creek State Park Trail (Segment 29)

The expected (Spring 2020) completion of a study commissioned by Pennsylvania's DCNR will determine the trail's final alignment and provide the opportunity to move this high-value section of trail off-road. Completion of this 3-mile portion of trail in Oil Creek State Park would link existing trails creating a 50-mile section of the trail system, the longest contiguous piece to date. This would boost the potential economic impact on Oil City and Titusville.

Brady Tunnel (Segment 53)

The Brady Tunnel is the most expensive piece of infrastructure on the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor. There have been considerable investments made to date and phased work is ongoing to rehabilitate the structure. Continuing to advance these efforts will ensure the tunnel receives the improvements it needs to serve the needs of the community for another century. The completion of a challenging, major infrastructure project can serve as a catalyst to close other gaps in the corridor, as demonstrated by the opening of the Big Savage Tunnel on the Great Allegheny Passage.

Three Rivers Heritage Trail (Segments 118-123)

The challenge of rights-of-way, active railroads and other impediments limit the readiness of many segments of the trail in Allegheny County. The R47 and Etna Riverfront Park segments represent the best opportunity to demonstrate progress in this constrained corridor. The ability to advance these projects will help build the public support for the more difficult sections further upriver.

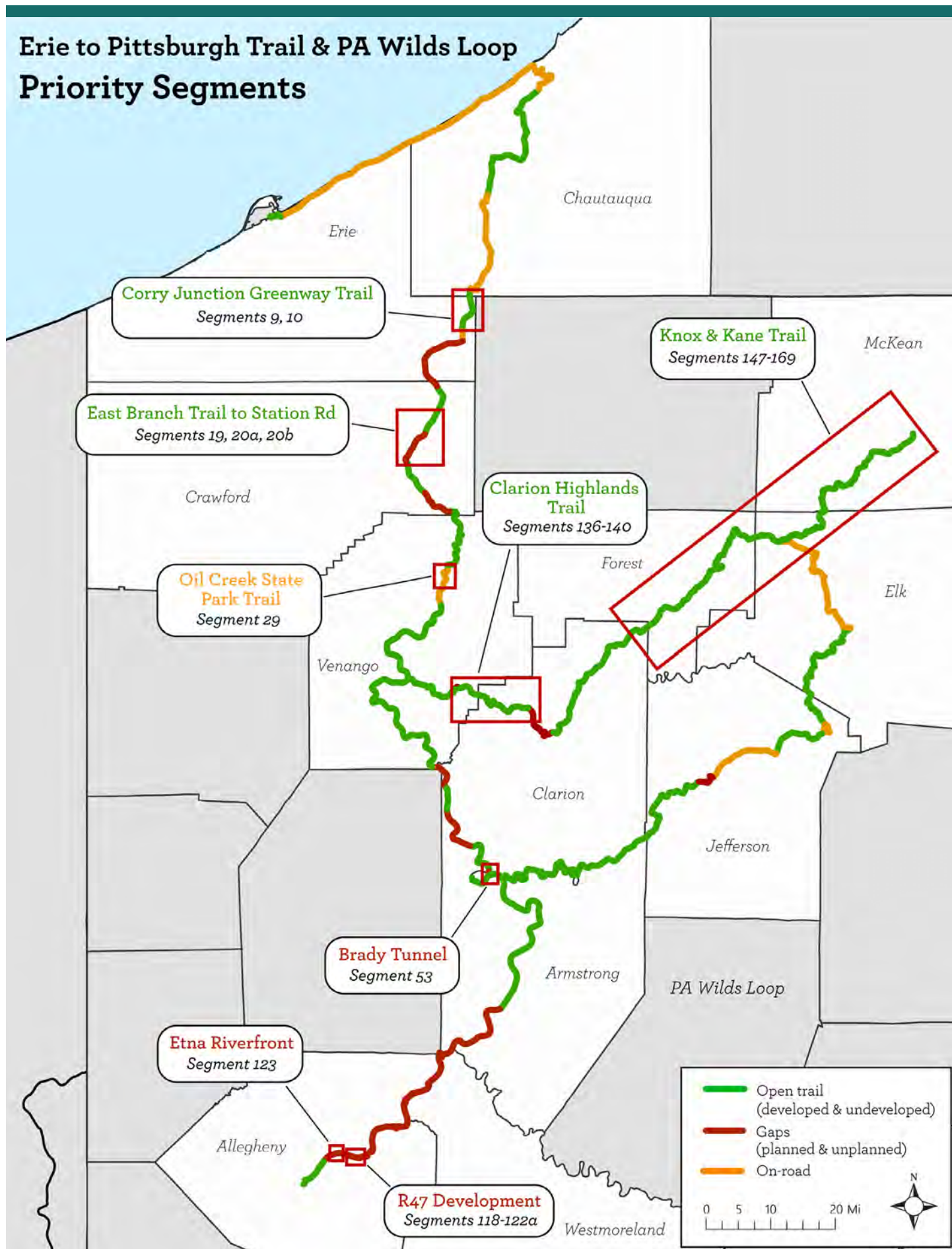
Clarion Highlands Trail (Segments 136-140)

The current conditions of the Clarion Highlands Trail segments aren't indicative of the types of experiences rail trail users generally seek. While there is not a trail champion in place to advance the project, The Clarion Highlands Trail represents a significant opportunity to spark more trail momentum.

Knox and Kane Trail (Segments 147-169)

The Knox and Kane Trail is a project around which a significant amount of energy developed in 2019. With a concerted effort to keep that progress going, the Knox and Kane will develop into the highlight of the PA Wilds. Since Headwaters Charitable Trust purchasing the complete 74-mile right of way in 2017, the biggest need is capacity as the trail passes through some very remote areas without community resources to tap into.

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail & PA Wilds Loop Priority Segments



Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Recommendations

Sect.	Seg. #	Section Name	Segment Name	Miles	Trail Name
6	8	Corry Junction Greenway Trail	Clymer to Pennsylvania State Line	0.99	Corry Junction Greenway Trail
6	9		Pennsylvania Line to North Center Street	4.83	
11	19	East Branch Trail to Fish Flats Rd	Route 89/East Branch Trail to Fish Flats Road	3.54	East Branch Trail
12	20	Fish Flats Rd to Station Rd	Fish Flats Road to Route 8	2.60	
16	23	Oil Creek State Park Trail to McClintock Trail	Petroleum Center to Route 8	3.12	Oil Creek State Park Trail
20	49	Parker to Hillville	Parker to Monterey Road	4.10	Allegheny River Trail
20	50		Monterey Road to Upper Hillville	2.38	
22	53	Brady Tunnel	Brady Tunnel	0.56	Armstrong Trail
26	118	Freeport to Millvale	Allegheny Valley RR to Ohara Twp Line	0.16	Three Rivers Heritage Trail
26	119		Ohara Twp Line to Green Belt	0.21	
26	120		Green Belt to Sharpsburg Line	0.18	
26	121		Sharpsburg Line to Waterworks Rd	0.20	
26	122		Waterworks Rd to 62nd St Bridge	1.13	
26	123		Etna - 62nd St Bridge to Shaler Twp Line	0.70	

Pennsylvania Wilds Loop Recommendations

Sect.	Seg. #	Section Name	Segment Name	Miles	Trail Name
30	136	Clarion Highlands Trail	Clarion Highlands Trail from 322	3.90	Clarion Highlands Trail
30	138		Kline Road and Camp Coffman Road	3.65	
30	139		Camp Coffman Road to Station Road	5.15	
30	140		Station Road to Game Lands Parking Lot	1.62	
33	147	Leeper to Russell City - Knox & Kane	Leeper to Crown	2.90	Rail 66 Country Trail
33	148		Crown to Vowinkel	3.27	
33	149		Vowinkel to Forest County Line	1.33	
33	150		Forest County Line to Route 66	3.97	
33	151		Route 66 to Route 899	0.58	Knox to Kane Trail
33	152		Route 889 to Marienville	1.64	
33	153		Marienville to Penoke	4.02	
33	154		Penoke to Byromtown	1.70	
33	155		Byromtown to Route 66	2.03	
33	156		Route 66 to Watson Farm	4.14	
33	157		Watson Farm to Sheffield Junction	2.36	
33	158		Sheffield Junction to Route 948	3.33	
34	159		Route 948 to Kinzua Spur	1.73	
34	160		Russell City to Route 66	3.30	
34	161		Route 66 to Carlson	2.05	
34	162		Carlson to Jones Township Line	0.65	
34	163	Russell City to Kinzua Bridge - Knox & Kane	Forest County Line to McKean County Line	3.34	
34	164		McKean County Line to Kane	2.62	
34	165		Route 321 to Biddle Street	0.41	
34	166		Biddle Street to Route 6	3.20	
34	167		Route 6 to Lantz Corners	4.80	
34	168		Lantz Corners to Mt Jewett	3.65	
34	169		Mt Jewett to Kinzua Bridge	3.92	

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APPENDIX A: COUNTY RESOLUTIONS

Bill No. 11067-19

MOTION OF THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Supporting both the 175 miles of existing trail and the completion of 95 miles of additional trails in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor in order to achieve the 270 mile vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, and encouraging our neighboring counties to do the same.

WHEREAS, a connected system of multi-purpose trails has been proposed linking Erie and Pittsburgh through Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Armstrong, Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties in Pennsylvania; and Chautauqua County in New York; and

WHEREAS, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance is an alliance of non-profit organizations, local municipalities, supporters, and advocates affiliated with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor, and its members are leading the charge to complete missing segments of the trail corridor with a vision of a system of non-motorized, multi-use trails and local connectors linking Erie to Pittsburgh through the experience of small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural areas, tied to regional trails and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the completed trail system is identified as a priority goal of the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan, compiled by the Northwest Commission, and is identified as a Major Greenway focal area with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and other agencies have committed to complete non-motorized options for transportation and recreation; and

WHEREAS, completing this trail network is considered a significant opportunity for developing a regional destination asset; and

WHEREAS, to meet this goal, 95 new miles of trails need to be completed to reach the alignment's proposed 270 miles; and

WHEREAS, the trails linking Erie and Pittsburgh, by offering both residents and tourists access to natural, cultural, and historical sites, will bring health and economic benefits to counties, municipalities, and businesses in the region including revenues to local economies, healthcare savings, and enhanced real estate values; and

WHEREAS, Allegheny County is one of 7 counties in Pennsylvania in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor; and

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS MOVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Hereby supports the 175 miles of existing trail and completing 95 miles of trails in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor in order to achieve the 270 mile vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance and encourages our neighboring Counties to do the same.

IT IS FURTHER MOVED THAT

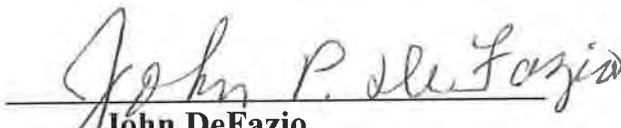
That certified copies of this Motion shall be forwarded to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

PRIMARY SPONSOR: COUNCIL MEMBER PALMIERE


CO-SPONSORS:

Enacted in Council, this 7th day of May, 2019,

Council Agenda No. 16067-15.



John DeFazio
President of Council

Attest: 

Jared Barker
Chief Clerk

Armstrong County Resolution #2019-19

In Support of Completing 270 Miles of Trail Linking Erie to Pittsburgh

Whereas, a connected system of multi-purpose trails has been proposed linking Erie and Pittsburgh through Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Armstrong, Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties in Pennsylvania; and Chautauqua County in New York; and

Whereas, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance is an alliance of non-profit organizations, local municipalities, supporters, and advocates affiliated with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor, and its members are leading the charge to complete missing segments of the trail corridor; and

Whereas, the completed trail system is identified as a priority goal of the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan, compiled by the Northwest Commission, Armstrong County Greenways Plan and is identified as a Major Greenway focal area with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and

Whereas, the trails linking Erie and Pittsburgh, by offering both residents and tourists access to natural, cultural, and historical sites, will bring health and economic benefits to counties, municipalities, and businesses in the region including revenues to local economies, healthcare savings, and enhanced real estate values; and

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the County of Armstrong hereby supports the 175 miles of existing trail and completing 95 miles of trails in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor in order to achieve the 270-mile vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance and encourages our neighboring Counties to do the same; and

Be It Further Resolved, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

Adopted this 4TH day of April, 2019.



ATTEST:


Aaron S. Poole, Chief Administrator

ARMSTRONG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS


Pat Fabian, Chairman


Jason Renshaw, Vice Chairman


George J. Skamai, Secretary



Resolution #9 of 2019

In Support of Completing 270 Miles of Trail Linking Erie to Pittsburgh

WHEREAS, a connected system of multi-purpose trails has been proposed linking Erie and Pittsburgh through Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Armstrong, Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties in Pennsylvania; and Chautauqua County in New York; and

WHEREAS, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance is an alliance of non-profit organizations, local municipalities, supporters, and advocates affiliated with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor, and its members are leading the charge to complete missing segments of the trail corridor with a vision of a system of non-motorized, multi-use trails and local connectors linking Erie to Pittsburgh through the experience of small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural areas, tied to regional trails and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the completed trail system is identified as a priority goal of the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan, compiled by the Northwest Commission, and is identified as a Major Greenway focal area with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and other agencies have committed to complete non-motorized options for transportation and recreation; and

WHEREAS, completing this trail network is considered a significant opportunity for developing a regional destination asset; and

WHEREAS, to meet this goal, 95 new miles of trails need to be completed to reach the alignment's proposed 270 miles; and

WHEREAS, the trails linking Erie and Pittsburgh, by offering both residents and tourists access to natural, cultural, and historical sites, will bring health and economic benefits to counties, municipalities, and businesses in the region including revenues to local economies, healthcare savings, and enhanced real estate values; and



WHEREAS, The County of Clarion is one of 7 counties in Pennsylvania in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Clarion hereby supports the 175 miles of existing trail and completing 95 miles of trails in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor in order to achieve the 270 mile vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance and encourages our neighboring Counties to do the same.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Corporate Seal of Clarion County on this date March 27, 2019.

Clarion County Board of Commissioners

Theodore W. Tharan, Chair

Wayne R. Brosius

C. Edward Heasley

Attest:

Taylor Best, Chief Clerk



Francis F. Weiderspahn, Jr
Chairman
John M. Amato
Vice-Chairman
John Christopher Soff
Secretary/Treasurer

Commissioners Office

903 Diamond Park
Courthouse
Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335

Gina Chatfield
Chief Clerk
Keith A. Button
Solicitor

RESOLUTION No. 4 of 2019

In support of Completing 270 Miles of Trail Linking Erie to Pittsburgh

WHEREAS, a connected system of multi-purpose trails has been proposed linking Erie and Pittsburgh through Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Armstrong, Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties in Pennsylvania; and Chautauqua County in New York; and

WHEREAS, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance is an alliance of non-profit organizations, local municipalities, supporters, and advocates affiliated with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor, and its members are leading the charge to complete missing segments of the trail corridor with a vision of a system of non-motorized, multi-use trails and location connectors linking Erie to Pittsburgh through the experience of small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural areas, tied to regional trails and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the completed trail system is identified as a priority goal of the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan, compiled by the Northwest Commission, and is identified as a Major Greenway focal area with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and other agencies have committed to complete non-motorized option for transportation and recreation; and

WHEREAS, completing this trail network is considered a significant opportunity for developing a regional destination asset; and

WHEREAS, to meet this goal, 95 new miles of trails need to be completed to reach the alignment's proposed 270 miles; and

WHEREAS, the trails linking Erie and Pittsburgh, by offering both residents and tourists access to natural, cultural, and historical sites, will bring health and economic benefits to counties, municipalities, and businesses in the region including revenues to local economies, healthcare savings, and enhanced real estate values; and

WHEREAS, the County of Crawford is one of seven counties in Pennsylvania in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor is comprised of numerous local trail segments which are maintained by the entities who own the property or organizations that have a vested interest in the long-term maintenance of the trail, and

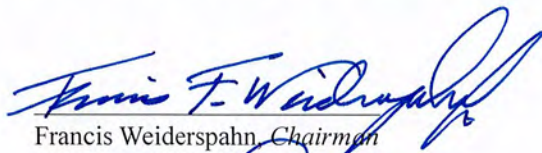
WHEREAS, the ownership and maintenance of trail segments is not the responsibility of Crawford County or the eight municipalities in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor unless authorized said entity;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Crawford Board of Commissioners hereby support the 175 miles of existing trail and completing 95 miles of trails in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor in order to achieve the 270-mile vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance and encourages our neighboring counties to do the same.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Corporate Seal of Crawford County on this date April 24, 2019.

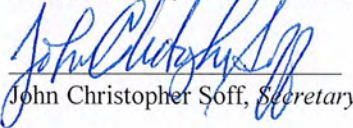
CRAWFORD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Francis Weiderspahn, *Chairman*



John M. Amato, *Vice-Chairman*



John Christopher Soff, *Secretary*



ATTEST:



Gina Chatfield, *Chief Clerk*

RESOLUTION NUMBER 7, 2019
In Support of Completing 270 Miles of Trail Linking Erie to Pittsburgh

WHEREAS, a connected system of multi-purpose trails has been proposed linking Erie and Pittsburgh through Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Armstrong, Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties in Pennsylvania; and Chautauqua County in New York; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, an alliance of non-profit organizations, local municipalities, supporters, and advocates affiliated with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor, are leading the charge to complete missing segments of the trail corridor with a vision of a system of non-motorized, multi-use trails and local connectors linking Erie to Pittsburgh through the experience of small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural areas, tied to regional trails and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the completed trail system is identified as a priority goal of the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan, compiled by the Northwest Commission, and is identified as a Major Greenway focal area with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and other agencies have committed to complete non-motorized options for transportation and recreation; and

WHEREAS, completing this trail network is considered a significant opportunity for developing a regional destination asset; and

WHEREAS, to meet this goal, 95 new miles of trails need to be completed to reach the alignment's proposed 270 miles; and

WHEREAS, the trails linking Erie and Pittsburgh, by offering both residents and tourists access to natural, cultural, and historical sites, will bring health and economic benefits to counties, municipalities, and businesses in the region including revenues to local economies, healthcare savings, and enhanced real estate values; and

WHEREAS, The County of Erie is one of seven counties in Pennsylvania in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Erie hereby supports the 175 miles of existing trail and completing 95 miles of trails in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor in order to achieve the 270 mile vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance and encourages our neighboring Counties to do the same.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Pennsylvania Departments of Conservation and Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 7, 2019
In Support of Completing 270 Miles of Trail Linking Erie to Pittsburgh

On the motion of Mr. Anderson, seconded by Dr. Foust, this resolution was passed on this 19th day of March, 2019 by a vote of 7 to 0.



Fiore Leone, Chairman
Erie County Council

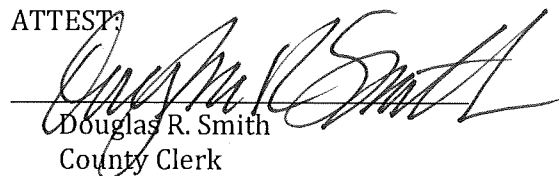
APPROVED BY:



Kathy Dahlkemper,
County Executive

Date: 3/20/19

ATTEST:



Douglas R. Smith
County Clerk

Date: March 19, 2019



VENANGO COUNTY

1174 Elk Street, P.O. Box 831
Franklin, PA 16323
Telephone: 814/432-9512
Fax: 814/432-4741

Commissioners
Timothy S. Brooks
Vincent L. Witherup
Albert Abramovic

Solicitor
Richard Winkler

Chief Clerk
Michelle A. Hartle

PROCLAMATION

In Support of Completing 270 Miles of Trail Linking Erie to Pittsburgh

WHEREAS, a connected system of multi-purpose trails has been proposed linking Erie and Pittsburgh through Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Armstrong, Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties in Pennsylvania; and Chautauqua County in New York; and

WHEREAS, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance is an alliance of non-profit organizations, local municipalities, supporters, and advocates affiliated with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor, and its members are leading the charge to complete missing segments of the trail corridor with a vision of a system of non-motorized, multi-use trails and local connectors linking Erie to Pittsburgh through the experience of small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural areas, tied to regional trails and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the completed trail system is identified as a priority goal of the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan, compiled by the Northwest Commission, and is identified as a Major Greenway focal area with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and other agencies have committed to complete non-motorized options for transportation and recreation; and

WHEREAS, completing this trail network is considered a significant opportunity for developing a regional destination asset; and

WHEREAS, to meet this goal, 95 new miles of trails need to be completed to reach the alignment's proposed 270 miles; and

WHEREAS, the trails linking Erie and Pittsburgh, by offering both residents and tourists access to natural, cultural, and historical sites, will bring health and economic benefits to counties, municipalities, and businesses in the region including revenues to local economies, healthcare savings, and enhanced real estate values; and

WHEREAS, The County of Venango is one of seven counties in Pennsylvania in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor; and

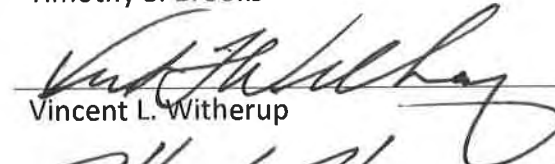
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that the County of Venango, hereby supports the 175 miles of existing trail and completing 95 miles of trails in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor in order to achieve the 270 mile vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance and encourages our neighboring Counties to do the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have caused the seal of Venango County to be affixed this 12th day of March, 2019.

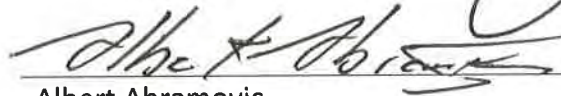
VENANGO COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Timothy S. Brooks

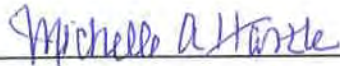


Vincent L. Witherup



Albert Abramovic

ATTEST:



Michelle A. Hartle

Chief Clerk/County Administrator

Resolution #R-14-2019

In Support of Completing 270 Miles of Trail Linking Erie to Pittsburgh

WHEREAS, a connected system of multi-purpose trails has been proposed linking Erie and Pittsburgh through Erie, Crawford, Venango, Clarion, Armstrong, Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties in Pennsylvania; and Chautauqua County in New York; and

WHEREAS, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance is an alliance of non-profit organizations, local municipalities, supporters, and advocates affiliated with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor, and its members are leading the charge to complete missing segments of the trail corridor with a vision of a system of non-motorized, multi-use trails and local connectors linking Erie to Pittsburgh through the experience of small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural areas, tied to regional trails and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the completed trail system is identified as a priority goal of the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan, compiled by the Northwest Commission, and is identified as a Major Greenway focal area with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and other agencies have committed to complete non-motorized options for transportation and recreation; and

WHEREAS, completing this trail network is considered a significant opportunity for developing a regional destination asset; and

WHEREAS, to meet this goal, 95 new miles of trails need to be completed to reach the alignment's proposed 270 miles; and

WHEREAS, the trails linking Erie and Pittsburgh, by offering both residents and tourists access to natural, cultural, and historical sites, will bring health and economic benefits to counties, municipalities, and businesses in the region including revenues to local economies, healthcare savings, and enhanced real estate values; and

WHEREAS, The County of Westmoreland is one of 7 counties in Pennsylvania in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Westmoreland hereby supports the 175 miles of existing trail and completing 95 miles of trails in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail corridor in order to achieve the 270 mile vision of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance and encourages our neighboring Counties to do the same.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Corporate Seal of Westmoreland County on this date May 2, 2019.


COUNTY OF WESTMORELAND


Gina Cerilli, Esquire, Chairman

5/2/19
Date


Ted Kopas

5/2/19
Date


Charles W. Anderson

5/2/19
Date

Attest: 

Chief Clerk

APPENDIX B: PREVIOUS PLANS

Plan or study	County or Region	Date	Sponsor
Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan	Northwestern PA	2009	NW Regional Planning Commission
Northwest Planning Commission Strategis Plan	Northwestern PA	2010	NW Regional Planning Commission
Regional Action Strategy	North Central PA	2008	North Central Planning Commission
Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan	Southwestern PA	2016	Southwestern PA Commission
Regional Active Transportation Plan	Armstrong & Allegheny	2018	Southwestern PA Commission
Erie County Comprehensive Plan: Community Facilities and Utilities Plan	Erie	2003	Erie County Dept. of Planning
Erie County 2030 Transportation Plan	Erie	2008	Erie County Dept. of Planning
Erie County Greenways and Trails Plan	Erie	2010	Northwest PA Planning Commission
Erie County Rail-trail Feasibility Study	Erie	2001	
Western NY Strategic Plan	Western NY	2011	Western NY Regional Economic Development Council
Chautauqua County, New York Greenways Plan	Chautauqua	2012	Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Economic Development
Chautauqua 20/20 Comprehensive Plan	Chautauqua	2011	Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Economic Development
Cultivating Crawford Growing a Community	Crawford	2014	Crawford County Planning Commission
Venango County 2004 Comprehensive Development Plan Executive Summary	Venango	2005	Venango County Regional Planning Commission
Venango County Comprehensive Recreation, Parks & Open Space Plan	Venango	2010	Venango County Regional Planning Commission
Clarion County Comprehensive Plan	Clarion	2004	Clarion County Planning Commission
Clarion County Greenways Plan: A Component of the Northwest PA Greenways Plan	Clarion	2010	Northwest PA Planning Commission
Clarion County Comprehensive Plan Volume I Citizen Involvement and Vision Building	Clarion	1999	Clarion County Planning Commission
Armstrong County Comprehensive Plan	Armstrong	2005	Armstrong County Department of Planning and Development
Armstrong County Comprehensive Recreation, Park, Open Space & Greenway Plan	Armstrong	2009	Armstrong County Department of Planning and Development
Allegheny Places	Allegheny	2008	Allegheny County Economic Development; Allegheny County
Active Allegheny	Allegheny	2010	Allegheny County Economic Development; Allegheny County
Forest County Comprehensive Plan	Forest	2013	Forest County Conservation District and Planning Commission

Plan or Study	County or Region	Date	Sponsor
Elk County 1999 Update of the 1968 Comprehensive Plan	Elk	1999	Elk County Planning Commission
Oil Region National Heritage Area Management Plan	Western PA region	2015	Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry and Tourism
McKean County Comprehensive Plan	McKean	2007	McKean County Planning Commission
Jefferson County Comprehensive Plan Update - Recreation and Tourism Strategy	Jefferson	2018	Jefferson County Planning Commission
A Recreation Plan for the State Parks and State Forests in the Pennsylvania Wild	McKean, Elk, Forest, Jefferson	2006	Model site recommendation
Destination: Allegheny Valley Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan	Allegheny	2013	Spingdale, Harmar, Cheswick
Lumber Heritage Region Management Action Plan	Western and Central PA region	2016	
PA Rt. 6 Bicycle Master Plan Design Guide	Corridor, regional	2016	PennDOT
Erie to Pittsburgh A Vision for a Developing Trail Network	EPT corridor wide	2007	PA DCNR, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, NPS RTCA
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail (Between Titusville and Parker, Pa.) 2013 User Survey and Economic Impact Analysis	Central EPT corridor	2013	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Organizational Analysis of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance	EPT corridor wide	2015	Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance Strategic Plan 2018	EPT corridor wide	2018	Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance
Seaway Trail Pennsylvania Corridor Management Plan	Erie	2005	Erie County Dept. of Planning
Bayfront Parkway Multi-use Trail	Erie	2017	PennDOT
New York Statewide Trails Plan	NY, Statewide	2008	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
East Branch Trail extension Feasibility Study	Erie, Crawford	2013	Clear Lake Authority
Oil Creek State Park Bike Trail Preliminary Design	Venango	2003	Oil Heritage Region, Inc.
Titusville Trail Expansion Study	Crawford	2018	Titusville Redevelopment Authority
Community Trails Initiative 2018 Update	Allegheny	2018	Friends of the Riverfront
Feasibility Study for Community Trails Initiative Multi-municipal Trails and Greenways Development Partnership	Allegheny	2011	Friends of the Riverfront
Knox & Kane Rail-trail Feasibility Study	Clarion, Elk Forest, McKean	2011	Clarion, Elk Forest, McKean
Clarion/Little Toby Rail-with-Trail Feasibility Study	Elk	2005	Elk County
Piney Branch Trail and Brookville to Brockway Rail to Trail Feasibility Study	Elk, Jefferson	2003	
Jefferson County Recreation and Tourism Strategy	Jefferson	2018	Jefferson County Planning Commission

APPENDIX C: TRAIL TRIP EXAMPLE

TRAIL TRIP



Armstrong and Redbank Valley Trails



Industrial
Heartland
Trails
COALITION



Just an hour northeast of Pittsburgh, the Armstrong Trail follows the wide and placid Allegheny River, 2017 Pennsylvania River of the Year. The adjoining Redbank Valley Trail follows Redbank Creek for a remote, wooded experience. This is a no frills trail trip with all the thrills: stunning views, great trails, tunnels, and historic communities.



The Armstrong and Redbank Valley Trails are part of the larger Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition. Learn more at: www.ihearttrails.org.

TRAIL INFO:

Allow 2- 3 days to complete the full itinerary (one way), or pick and choose sections.

Armstrong Trail: 30 miles crushed limestone, typical grade 1-2%. Note: Mile markers reflect the alignment of the original Allegheny Valley Railroad.

Redbank Valley Trail: 41.5 miles crushed limestone, typical grade less than 1%.

The trails are remote between locales. Carry provisions and a bike kit for maximum enjoyment. There are no bike shops or rentals, but **Paul's Auto Parts** in Kittanning accommodates most brands with parts and service.

Most stops listed are reachable by bike. Those that require a vehicle are noted in the excursions section.



Along the way

Begin on the Armstrong Trail at the **Kittanning YMCA** (parking permitted) and pedal north toward **East Brady** (24 miles), your end point for the day. If you'd rather start in downtown Kittanning



(adds a mile), landmarks include the **Armstrong County Courthouse**, which sits above the town, and the **Kittanning Citizens Bridge** at the other end of Market Street. Walk down to the river and stroll **Kittanning Riverfront Park**.

Head downstream and you'll see the "Beauty in the Park," a massive Cottonwood tree. The adjacent N. Water Street includes a mix of historic homes and churches.

Staple eateries are **Dizzy Lizzie's** (breakfast all day) and **Downtown Bar & Grill**. If you're in town outside of standard business hours, there's always **Sheetz** (convenience store). They recently added to their menu a soft serve ice cream bar with milk from Galliker's Dairy.

Back on the trail, you'll encounter a side trip opportunity at about mile 47.5. The **Cowanshannock Trail** (walking or biking) follows a creek by the same name. You'll experience a bit more grade here, but will find it well worth it when you reach the

cascading Buttermilk Falls. There's no sign marking the falls, so simply make your way down to the creek by foot when you spot them.



The next site along the Armstrong Trail is the retaining wall for the [Monticello Furnace](#), a reminder of the area's industrial heritage. Bike a few more miles to hit a special spot. A

Little Free Library at mile 52.5 carries children's books and is surrounded by wetlands. Keep your eyes peeled for wildlife and also for the short nature trail just steps from the library. This area makes a great turnaround spot for families with children or anyone wanting a shorter ride.

Next up is **Templeton**, home to 325 people. Pause here to use the porta potty near the boat ramp. It's one of few facilities between here and East Brady.



The following stretch of trail offers a number of river views and passes through residential areas. After Allegheny Lock & Dam 9, you'll encounter the junction to Redbank Valley Trail, which goes east to **Brookville** (41.5 miles). You'll also be entering the Armstrong Trail's Railroad Heritage Area. Relics include a gigantic coaling tower that looms over the trail, the old Brady Tunnel, and a train turntable.

East Brady is just another couple of miles away. Follow the signs in the village of Phillipston to keep to the trail, and then share the road along some new housing until you reach the



East Brady Riverfront Park. Follow the bike route along charming Purdum Street to get into town. The [Old Bank Deli & Coffee Shoppe](#) bakes their own bread and donuts, stocks locally-made pierogies and sauces, and carries [Kevin's Meats](#) products. (Kevin's is an area business located trail-side in Kittanning.)

Arrive in East Brady in August and you're likely to see [David Jones Farm's](#) sweet corn stand across the street from the Old Bank. We taste-tested the seasonal treat and heartily recommend it! For lodging, bike about three miles on Seybertown Road to the [Cogley House B & No B](#). There's no breakfast served, but you can get a full breakfast at the [Plaza Pantry](#) (next to the Family Dollar) on your way back into town.

Day 2

Backtrack to the Redbank Valley Trail—a trail with 14 bridges and three tunnels—and make your way 20 miles east to **New Bethlehem** (pronounced “New Bethlem” locally). You've biked nearly 50 miles in two days. You deserve some pie! [Evermoore's Restaurant](#), one of several in town, is known for its cream pies and also has a full restaurant menu. New Bethlehem is a quiet little town, perhaps just what you need. You can walk down to **Gumtown Park** to enjoy the creek and then pick up a six-pack at [Key Beverage](#) before calling it a night. Lodging options include the [Hunter's Moon Lodge](#), just south of the Climax Tunnel (before reaching town), and [Brick House B&B](#), north of town. Both are easily accessible from the trail.

Up for yet another day? Bike another 21 miles north to **Brookville**, a charming county seat. The “musts” here are [Opera House Café](#), the [Courthouse Grill](#), [Dan Smith's Candy Company](#), and [Buff's Ice Cream](#) (across Redbank Creek). We hope you're hungry! Walk it off by exploring town and stopping into the [Jefferson County History Center](#). The gracious volunteers and rotating exhibits will make you glad you stopped in.



Excursions

Have a Car? Consider visiting these spots on your trip:

From East Brady, take a short jaunt to the [Brady's Bend](#) scenic overlook. [Outlook Inn](#) next to the overlook is locally known for its burgers and hand-cut fries.

Drive 30 minutes northwest to **Foxburg** for wine, dining, segways, and more. At this point you'll be along the Allegheny River Trail.

The [Gold Eagle Inn & Restaurant](#) near Brookville offers an updated vintage motor lodge and traditional fare (with a number of gluten-free options).



Brady's Bend

APPENDIX D: OUTDOOR TOWNS PROGRAM

OUTDOOR TOWNS TOOLKIT



www.outdoortowns.org

An Outdoor Town is a place that uses natural assets to bring people together and revitalize economies. Use this toolkit to explore the seven steps to transform your community into an Outdoor Town.

Guiding Principles For Outdoor Towns:

Parks, trails, rivers, lakes and forests are **valuable resources** that are the basis of a healthy Outdoor Town and economy. They should be **protected and enhanced**.

The **community is responsible** for creating and implementing its own Outdoor Town Vision and Action Plan

Success depends on **Leadership, Teamwork** and **Partnerships**.



pennsylvania environmental council



The 7 Steps

1 Organize an Action Team

Organize members of the local community passionate about making your community more attractive and accommodating for outdoor recreation.

2 Identify Partners and Resources

Review any existing plans that may have laid the groundwork for you. Engage prospective partners that can provide assistance or funding.

3 Assess Your Community and Create a Vision

Community members stand to benefit the most from your efforts, so gathering their input and gaining their support is key to success.

4 Set Priorities and Create an Action Plan

Report back to your community about the input you have gathered and build consensus for choosing priority improvements.

5 Implement Your Action Plan

Project by project, work on implementing your plan. Continue to hold regular meetings of your Action Team to work through tasks and issues.

6 Celebrate Success!

Not just at the end of a project, but all the way along. This builds awareness for what you have achieved and support to take on the next project!

7 Track Results and Set Next Priorities

Keeping track of what you have accomplished, and what hasn't worked so well, informs how you work in the future.

APPENDIX E: STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE



Erie to Pittsburgh Trail & PA Wilds Loop gap feasibility study Stakeholder Interview questionnaire

The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the PA Wilds Loop corridor are developing networks of multi-use trails, destination corridors and community assets. Completed segments of the corridor exist in each of the counties through which they travel attracting thousands of visitors every year. But gaps remain in the system for various reasons including acquisition problems, lack of funding, major infrastructure obstacles or no champion group building trail. PEC has received funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission to conduct a feasibility assessment on uncompleted sections of these corridors, the focus of which will be to determine the needs of the sections where there has not been organizational capacity to undertake a detailed study.

About You:

1. Name _____
2. What is your role with the trail project? (elected official, volunteer, government employee, trail/recreation professional, Trail Group Board Member)

Do you have any direct involvement with a trail group or organization and, if so, what organization/trail project?

How long have you been connected to the trail or involved?

3. Are you aware PEC is conducting an Appalachian Regional Commission funded feasibility assessment of completing the gaps in the system with an interest in pursuing additional funding for development?

About the Project:

4. Is there a gap in the trail system near you and is there a group currently working to complete it or a champion that would like to work on it?

5. Is there a trail project on the corridor that, if completed, would advance other trail projects of the EPT or PA WILDS Loop?

6. How do you or your group/organization impact the creation, maintenance and/or operation of the trail system?

7. For a trail to be considered complete and open for use to the public, what elements do you believe need to be present?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finished, compacted surface | <input type="checkbox"/> Rideable surface (packed earth, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parking areas | <input type="checkbox"/> At least <input type="text"/> continuous miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connected to larger trail system | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic, routine maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connected to town – goods & services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restrooms | |

8. As trail projects move forward from planning to development, issues of ownership, management and maintenance must be addressed. What ownership model do you feel is best equipped to own, manage and maintain these trail facilities?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Profit/Volunteer based	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multi-Municipal Partnership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Municipally Owned -County Level	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Profit & Municipal Partnerships

Other:

9. How do you envision funding the trail system's maintenance and operation?

10. Are there other issues of importance that need to be considered?

11. What do you consider the biggest obstacle to the trail's continued development?

12. What do you consider the biggest opportunity to the trail's continued development?

13. Do you sense there is consensus amongst the general public to complete the trail(s)? Also, at the municipal or county level?

14. Would you support the creation or expansion of Hotel Tax for the purpose supporting public trails?

15. Do you believe the completion of critical gaps will have a direct effect on increasing economic impact?

16. Do you know of any trail groups, municipal bodies or organizations not currently involved you feel should be involved in the trail's continued development/operation?

17. Other comments or suggestions



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