

OUTDOOR  
ECONOMY



York County  
Economic Alliance

# York County's Outdoor Economy

*Silas Chamberlin, PhD*

*VP, Economic & Community Development*

*York County Economic Alliance*



# York County Economic Alliance

- + The York County Economic Alliance is a 123-year old organization focused on economic development and business support.
- + Part Chamber of Commerce and part Economic Development Corporation
- + Services include economic development financing, business attraction and retention, strategic development, workforce development, and talent attraction
- + Administration of multiple county authorities, including Industrial Development, Redevelopment, and Land Bank authorities



# York County Economic Alliance



## YoCo STRONG RESTART FUND

YoCo CHIRP (COVID-19 HOSPITALITY  
INDUSTRY RECOVERY PROGRAM)

**\$29.9 MILLION** DISBURSED **1,917** TOTAL RECIPIENTS

Awarded to  
**173**  
NONPROFITS

Awarded to  
**1,744**  
SMALL BUSINESSES

Average grant amount: \$15,600

**34%** of the businesses owned  
by Persons of Color.

**38%** of the businesses owned  
by Women.

**7%** of the businesses owned  
by Veterans.



By The  
Numbers  
2021-2022

## FINANCING PROJECTS CLOSED



WellSpan Health  
**\$ 521,635,000**  
GASP LOAN AMOUNT



Republic Services, Inc.  
**\$ 95,000,000**  
YCIDA LOAN AMOUNT



The York Water Company  
**\$ 25,370,000**  
YCIDA LOAN AMOUNT

## Four Next Generation Farmer Loans

**\$ 1,961,000**  
YCIDA LOAN AMOUNT



Family First Health  
**\$ 1,900,000**  
GASP LOAN AMOUNT

## State Incentives Awarded to Multiple YoCo Companies

**\$ 656,121**



Prince Street Cafe, LLC  
**\$ 200,000**  
YCEDC LOAN AMOUNT

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

140 business  
financing and  
assistance inquiries

43 site selection  
inquiries

30 prospect site  
visits/meetings

3 businesses  
relocated to YoCo



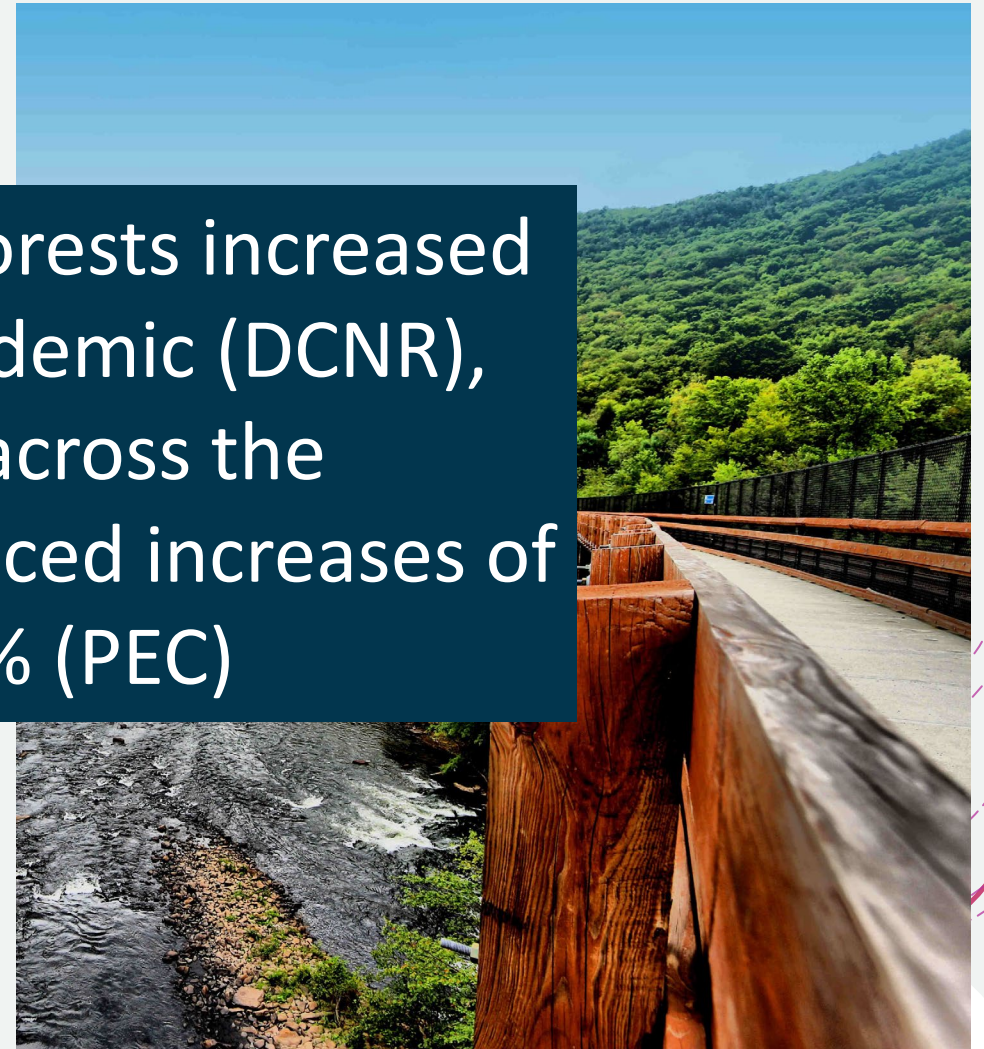
**\$ 666,953,750**  
TOTAL FINANCING  
AND INCENTIVES

**527**  
TOTAL JOBS RETAINED  
AND CREATED

# PA's Outdoor Economy Infrastructure

- + **Public Lands.** 4 million acres of state parks, forests and game lands with geographic dispersion throughout the state
- + **Water.** 86,000 lakes
- + **Trails.** 12,000 rail trails
- + **Local Parks**
- + **And more.** 20+ ski resorts; 665 golf courses; 6,000 miles snowmobiling trails; 9 ATV parks and at least 1,000 miles of public ATV trails

Use of state parks and forests increased by 27% during the pandemic (DCNR), while many trails across the commonwealth experienced increases of more than 200% (PEC)



# PA's Outdoor Economy

- + **Economic Impact.** \$29 billion of overall economic impact
  - + BEA Core Economy: \$11.8 billion or 1.5% of GDP (Nathan has updated figures for you!)
- + **Business Creation.** 7,730 businesses directly supporting the outdoor economy
- + **Employment.** 251,000 jobs generating \$8.6 billion in salary and wages
- + **Tax Revenue.** \$1.9 billion in state and local taxes
- + **Comparative Value.** Visitation to PA's state forests alone generates nearly \$400 million in consumer spending—three times the economic value derived from the sale of natural resources on those lands, including oil and gas



# PA's Outdoor Economy

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ECONOMY

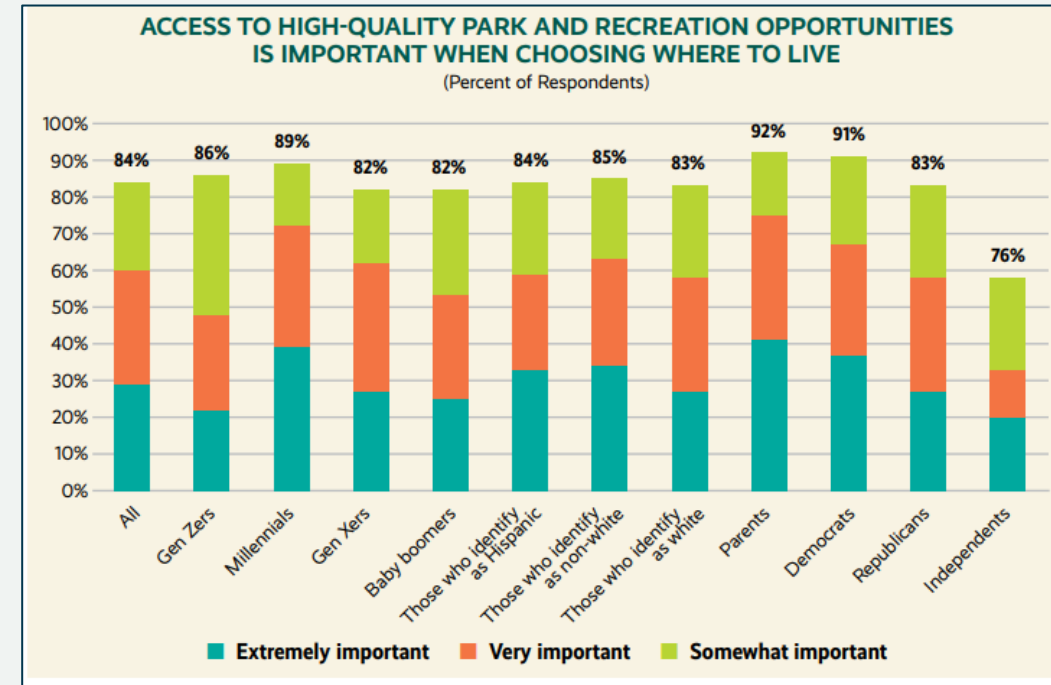


# Outdoor Economy Paradigm Shift

**Talent and Business Attraction.** Talent attraction will be the competitive issue of the next decade. Regions that offer high-quality of life, access to open space, and walkable, historic communities will succeed.

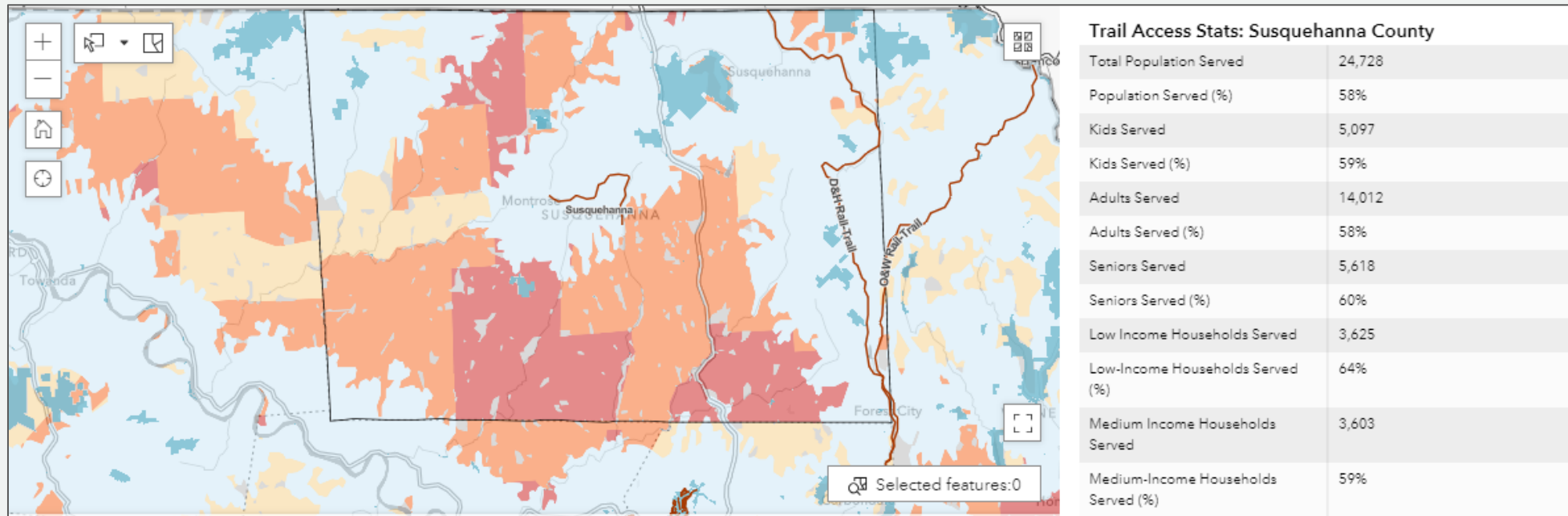
- + Access to bike/walking paths is consistently a top 3 consideration for home buyers (National Realtors) across demographics (NRPA)
- + 50% of recent college graduates say “place” is more important than job in their career search (HBJ)
- + 76% of corporate executives consider “quality of life” amenities, such as trails and parks, to be “very important” to site selection—on par with energy costs, market access, and the corporate tax rate (NRPA)

- + **Widespread Adoption:** 88% of PA’s economic development professionals consider fostering the outdoor economy to be “very important” in achieving their mission (York College)



# Outdoor Economy Paradigm Shift

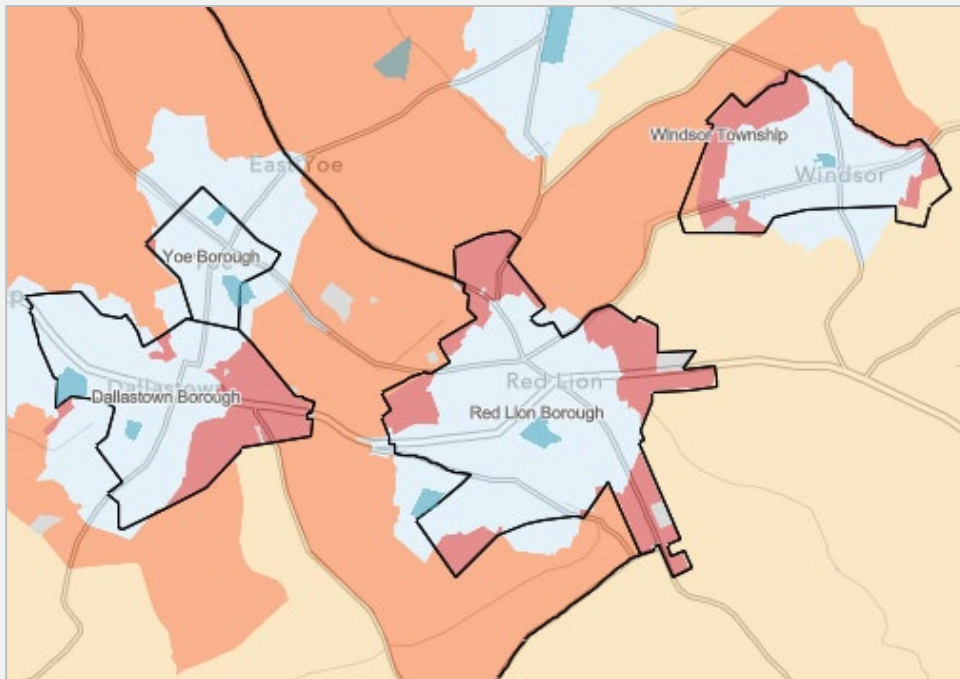
- + **Equity.** In the last three years, issues of racial equity and socio-demographic disparity have come to the forefront, creating the opportunity and the imperative to pivot our work to engage new audiences and communities.
- + PA DCNR, the Trust for Public Land, and WeConservePA produced a [dynamic mapping tool](#) that identifies parts of every county that currently have the least access to trails and parks.





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# York County's Outdoor Economy

- + 5,240 York County residents are employed in the outdoor economy—a 14% increase since 2010. More than real estate, insurance, and financial services—combined.
- + These stats do not include the restaurants, lodging, and other services that derive a portion of their revenue from outdoor visitors
- + York County's three state park units host 2 million visits every year (pre-COVID), generate \$44 million in consumer spending, and sustain 420 jobs
- + Through CARES and ARPA, York County Commissioners invested more than \$1.4 million in conservation projects and organizations



# Outdoor Economy Ecosystem



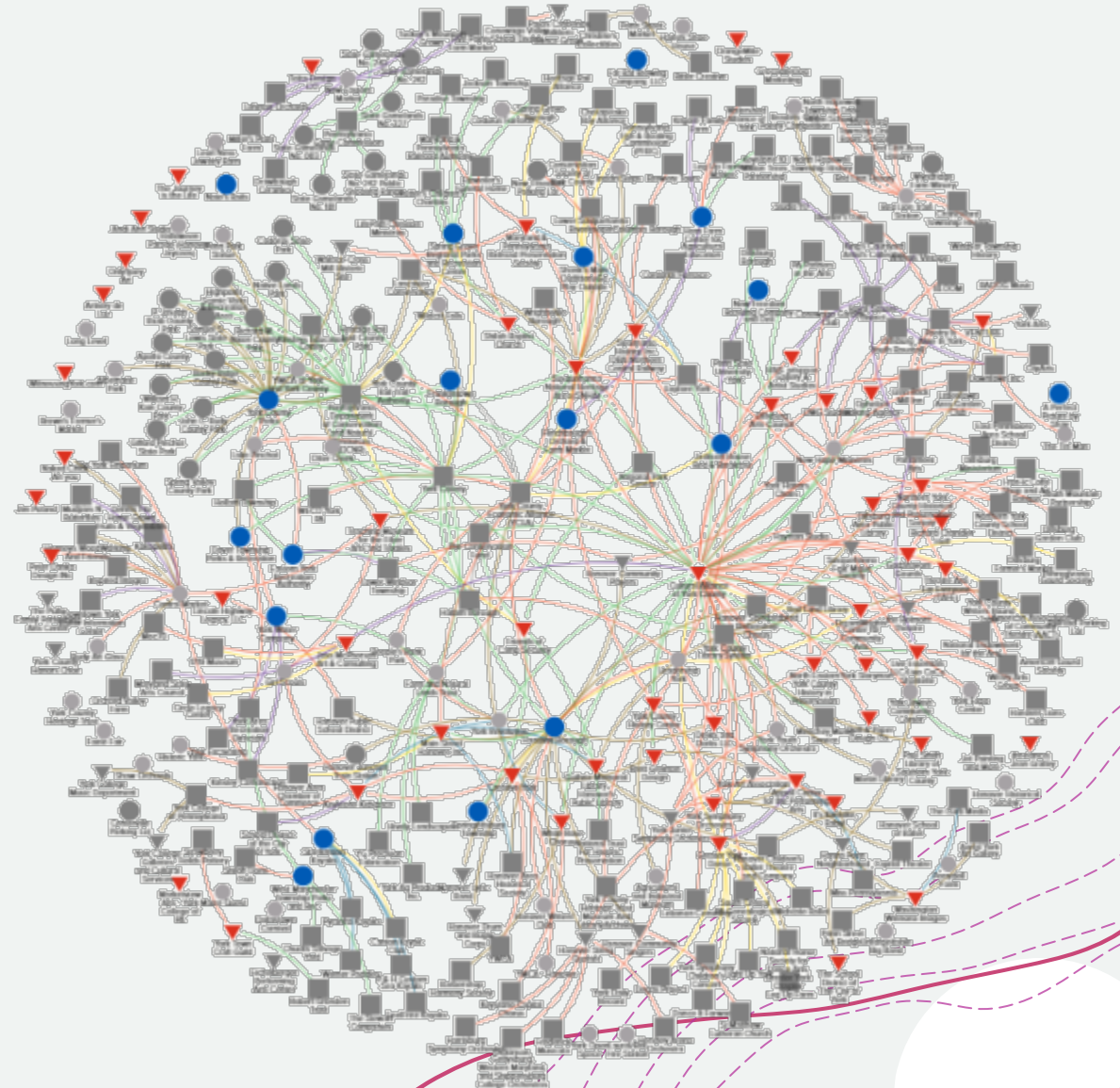
**YORK COUNTY'S DATA PROFILE**

The following chart explores economic and demographic data for York County and six comparable communities, chosen for their relative similarities to York in characteristics like population size, growth, median household income, and/or median home value. Each of the profiled communities has a dedicated public funding source for supporting quality of life amenities throughout their counties. In the sections that follow, the linkages between the presence of these funding mechanisms and economic growth is explored, in particular as it relates to employment within the creative and outdoor sectors.

These sectors are composed of diverse industries, including performing arts, museums and heritage sites, arts education, design and architecture, film and television, sounds and radio, publishers and software design, golf and skiing facilities, marinas, campgrounds, recreational goods retail, and more (full list included in the appendix).

	York County, PA	Allegheny County, PA	Davidson County, TN	Washington County, MD	St. Bernard Parish, LA	Santa Barbara County, CA	Seneca County, NY
Associated Metro Area	York City	Pittsburgh	Nashville	Hagerstown	New Orleans	Santa Barbara	Flint
Population (2018)	449,078	1,218,045	694,144	101,049	47,244	446,499	409,813
Pop Change (2010-18)	3.30%	-0.80%	10.80%	2.30%	28.30%	3.20%	-4.50%
Median HH Income	\$68,940	\$62,320	\$62,315	\$63,510	\$47,873	\$78,925	\$56,269
Median Home Value	\$183,300	\$161,600	\$267,400	\$221,700	\$192,600	\$910,300	\$110,500
Life Expectancy	78	77	77	76	75	81	75
Farmers Markets	9	23	14	4	1	13	6
Libraries/Museums	10	101	39	14	3	44	30
Creative/Outdoor Sector Share of Total Employment (2010)	4%	6%	3%	4%	13%	6%	4%
Creative/Outdoor Sector Share of Total Employment (2020)	9%	8%	7%	4%	9%	8%	4%
Creative/Outdoor Sector Employment (2020)	8,358	50,221	32,039	2,376	511	16,000	4,677
Sector Employment Change (2010-2020)	33.80%	19.30%	46.60%	13.30%	-16.30%	36.20%	-4.50%

IMPACT / CASE STUDIES 18






# York County Economic Action Plan

- + The York County Economic Action Plan was adopted by the County Commissioners in December 2020 as part of the county's comprehensive plan
- + The EAP pivots our county's economic development strategy to emphasize **people-focused** and **place-based** initiatives, including:
  - + Promoting investment in outdoor infrastructure, including parks, trails, and open space
  - + Building the capacity for placemaking countywide
  - + Rededicating resources to the county's 36 historic boroughs
  - + Documenting the economic impact of the outdoor and cultural economies
- + The EAP made the outdoor economy and the programs that support it integral parts of York County's economic development strategy, supported by our civic, business, and political leadership



**STRATEGY 2**  **IMPROVE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AROUND YORK COUNTY'S OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ASSETS**

Investments in trails, public spaces, and other outdoor recreational amenities can improve economic growth and community vibrancy. For example, the York County Opens Space and Land Preservation Program was recently created to preserve and protect open space to meet benchmark goals outlined in the County Comprehensive Plan. This program includes a grant opportunity to help municipalities and nonprofits acquire lands for active and passive recreation opportunities throughout York County. In addition, York and Lancaster Counties were designated in 2019 as the Susquehanna National Heritage Area, which has implications for recreational, cultural, and economic development.

The Susquehanna Riverlands Landscape Initiative in the river corridor communities has a strong economic development component. And the York County Trail Towns Program launched this year with the goal of encouraging Heritage Rail Trail users to venture into the surrounding towns to patronize local businesses. Initiatives like these help improve physical connectivity between York County's natural assets and the communities that surround them, through efforts like wayfinding, marketing, business support, and infrastructure development.

**ACTION STEPS**  
**IMMEDIATE (0-6 MONTHS)**

1. As part of a unified marketing and promotion campaign across the county and region, demonstrate the economic benefits of investments in outdoor recreation.
2. Assess the accessibility of York County recreation assets.
  - Study the biking and walking network in York County.
  - Audit parks for age-friendliness.
3. Continue investing in the Codorus Creek Beautification Initiative.
  - Better marketing and publications explaining what is happening with the Codorus project to highlight public spaces and connect the county. Photography and drones could help with the marketing and spreading the word.
  - Support the Codorus Corridor Program, a six-week enrichment program created by the General Authority, Buchart Horn, and the National Council on Aging. Continue to develop ambassadors, as well as the Council on Aging commitment to match a senior and a student.
4. Review and update the bike and pedestrian plan for York County.
  - Prioritize biking and walking connections between the city and adjacent municipalities, especially where the gaps are already known. This requires buy-in from municipalities and leadership from the county level.
  - Relaunch the bikeshare system.
  - Expand the recommendations coming out of the Trail Towns plan to other boroughs.
5. Engage funders to catalyze economic opportunities in communities along recreational trails.
  - Encourage and amplify festivals and events along trails for communities seeking to increase foot traffic.
  - Add capacity to volunteer-based historical societies to strengthen tourism offerings.
  - Address blight in communities along trails, with investment in businesses (e.g., mom/pop shops, bike shops, cafes).
6. Work with educational institutions to organize more youth engagement, including continuing and expanding bike education in schools, organizing youth day trips to county and state parks (as well as extended stays), and utilizing camping facilities for character building sessions.

**SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)**

**YORK COUNTY**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

61



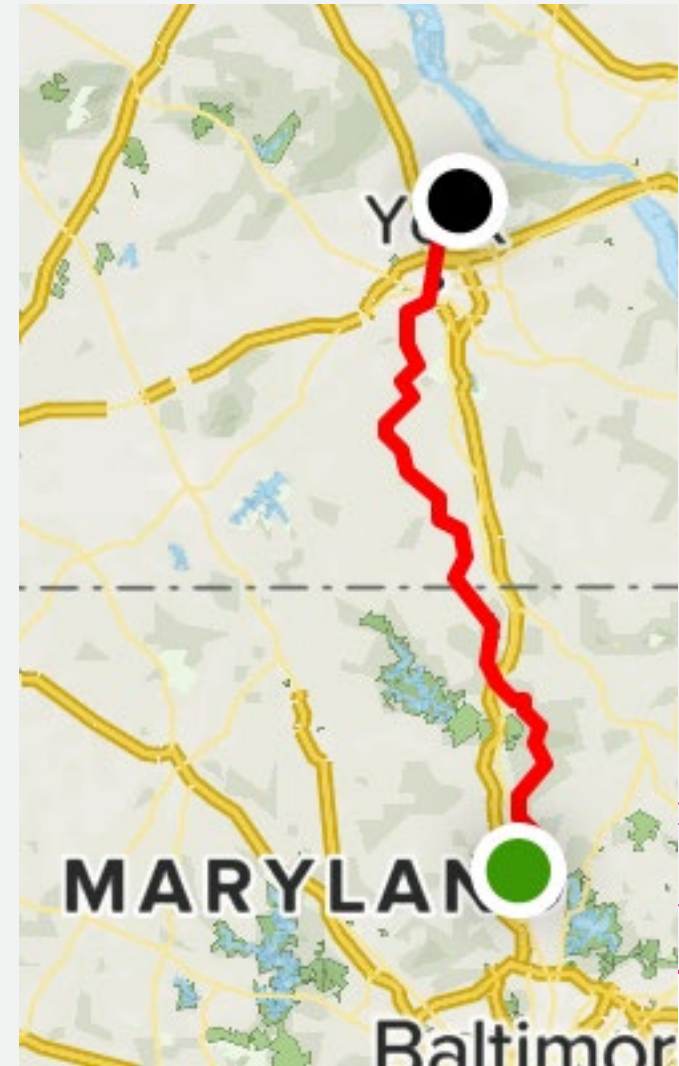
YORK COUNTY

**TRAIL**

— **TOWNS** —

# York County Trail Towns

- + 26-mile multi-use rail trail connecting passing through southern York County and connecting to the outskirts of Baltimore via the NCR Trail
- + Owned and maintained by the County of York's Parks Department; constructed by the York County Rail Trail Authority over a period of 30+ years
- + 2015 Pennsylvania Trail of the Year



# York County Trail Towns

## AN ECONOMIC SPLASH

On average, **daily trail users spend \$18 at local businesses**, which climbs to **\$124 for overnight visitors**.



The **YORK COUNTY  
HERITAGE RAIL  
TRAIL** averages  
**263,856 visitors  
each year, who:**

Make Average  
Daily Purchases

**\$13.76**

(Consistent increase  
from approximately  
\$6.00 in 1999)

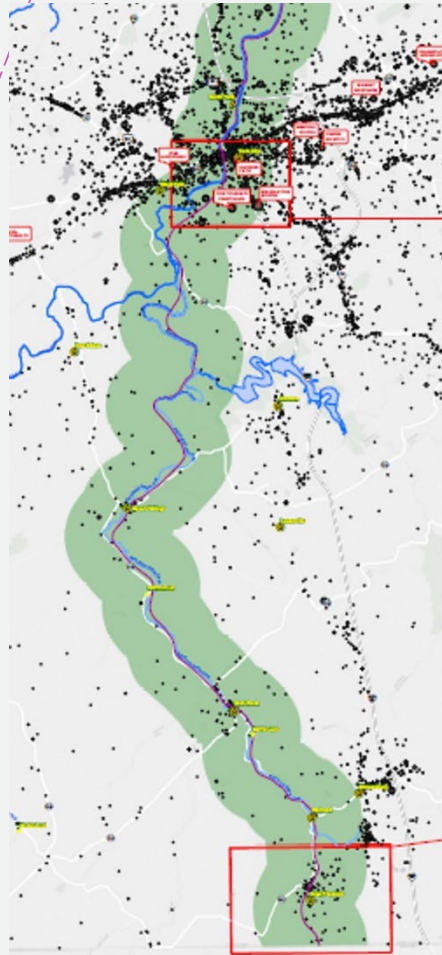
Are part of estimated  
**Annual  
Consumable  
Spending of  
\$2.4 million**

Purchase Overnight  
Accommodations  
at an average expenditure  
**\$113  
per night**

But...we also learned that consumer spending has actually been in decline and that some residents—primarily our Black and Latinx communities—considered the trail to be unwelcoming.



# York County Trail Towns



**30%** of York County's businesses and **17%** of all jobs are located within a **one-mile** bike ride of the York Heritage Rail Trail



# York County Trail Towns

- + Founded in June 2020, our program is now active in 7 communities leveraging trails and the outdoors for economic opportunity
- + More than \$1.2 million raised from PA DCED and private sources
- + A holistic approach that considers placemaking investments, coordinated programming and marketing, advocacy, municipal engagement, and grants to businesses
- + Primary goals include increasing patronage, extending time spent in each town, increasing new trail-friendly businesses, increase awareness about York's outdoor economy

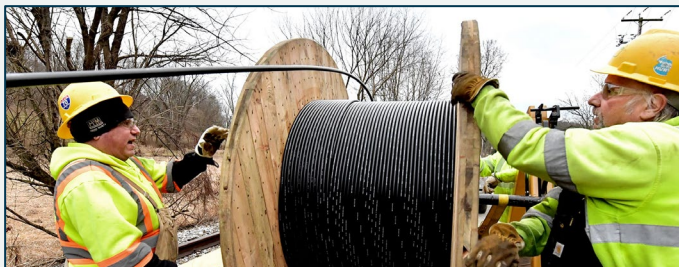
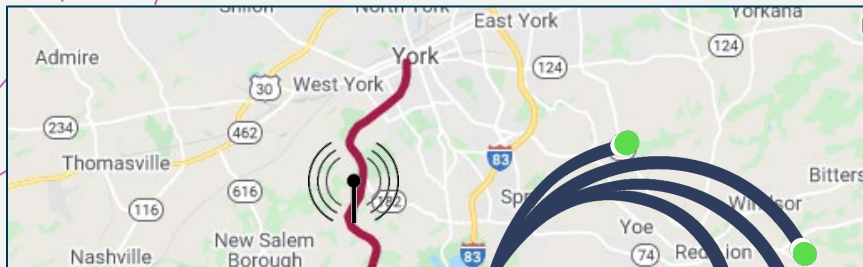


# York County Trail Towns

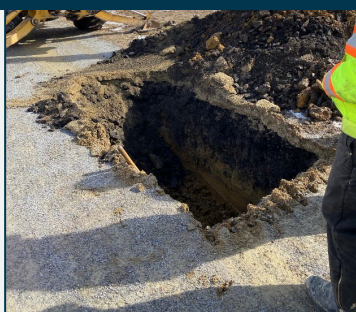
- + Trail Towns alignment with other YCEA initiatives, including the **BLOOM Business Empowerment Center**
- + \$49,000 in grants to 24 small business to expand inventory, improve signage, enhance marketing or otherwise invest in making their business trail friendly.
  - + More than 50% of grants made to businesses owned by women or people of color
- + BLOOM CDFI is now capitalized at \$6.7 million and will make financing available small businesses.
  - + Priority given to BIPOC and women-owned business and businesses located in LMI census tracts, including most Trail Towns



# YoCo Fiber Broadband Project



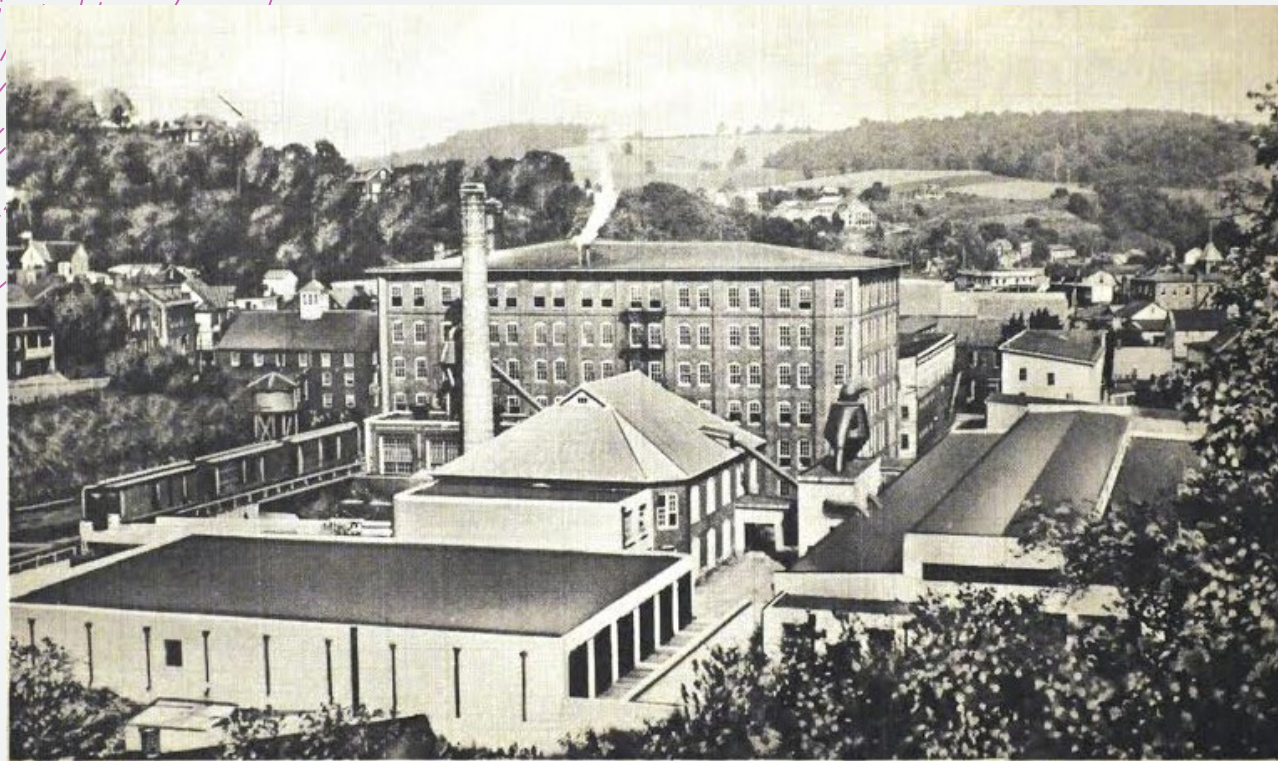
Estimated savings of \$4-6 million in engineering and construction costs. No acquisition or easement costs.



# ADVENTURE

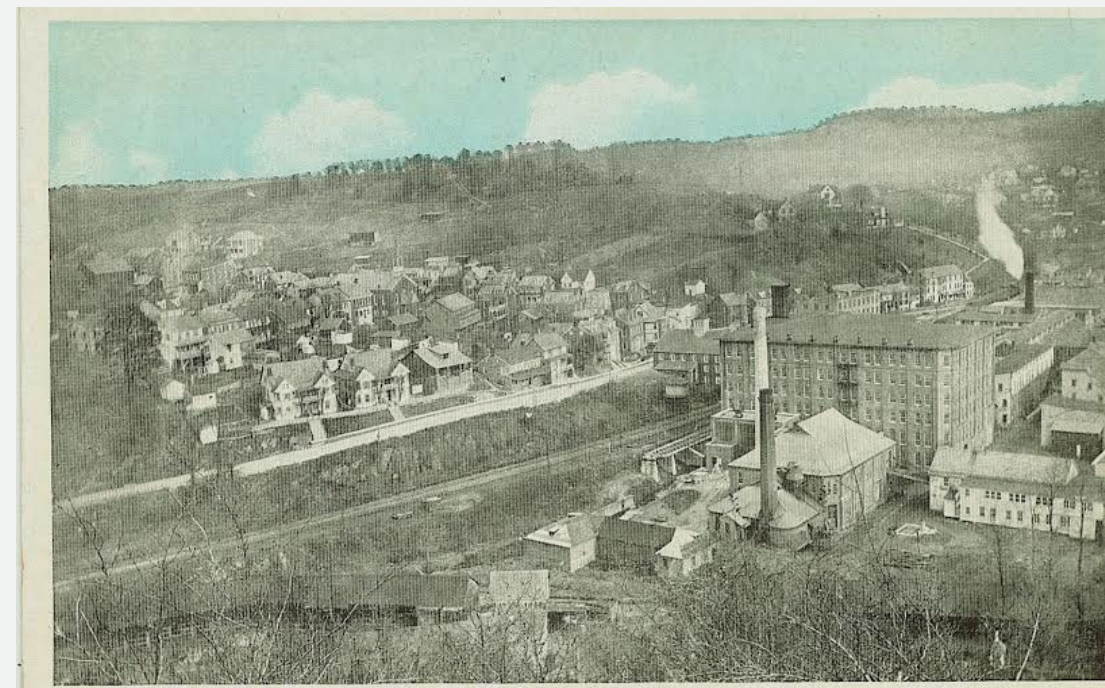
# Ruins Hall

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ECONOMY



ENTERPRISE FURNITURE COMPANY, GLEN ROCK, PA.

D-2987



GENERAL VIEW OF GLEN ROCK, PA. NO. 2.

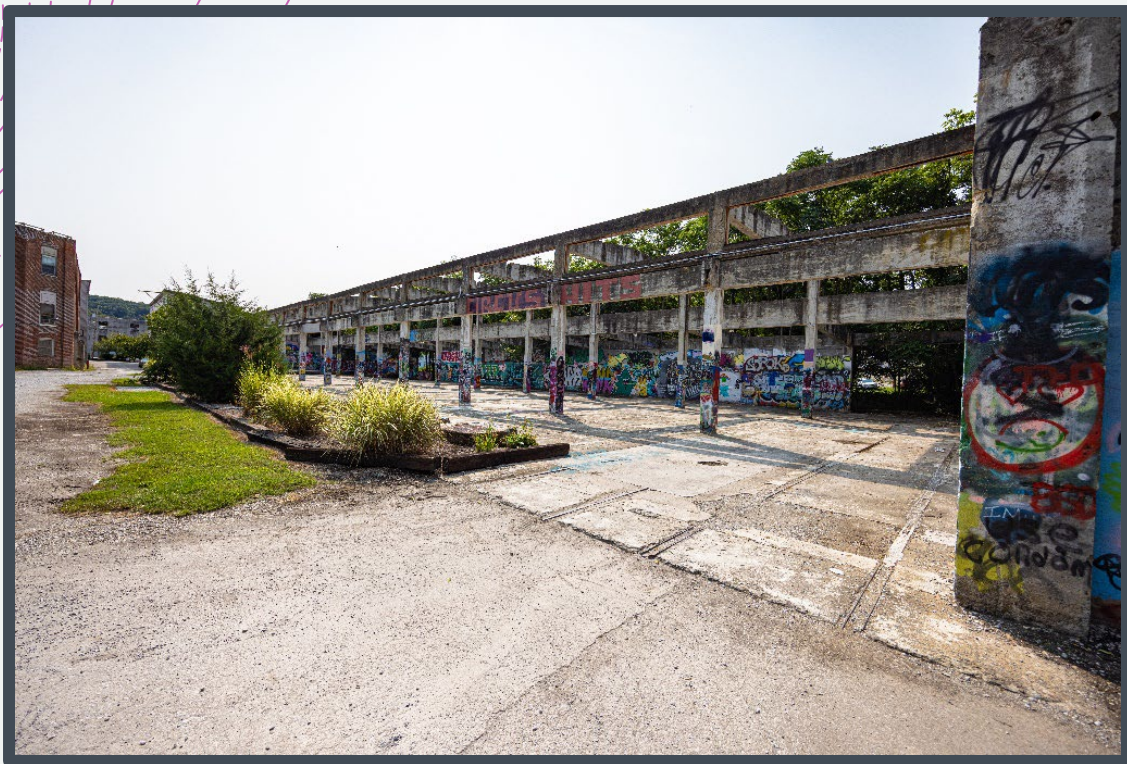
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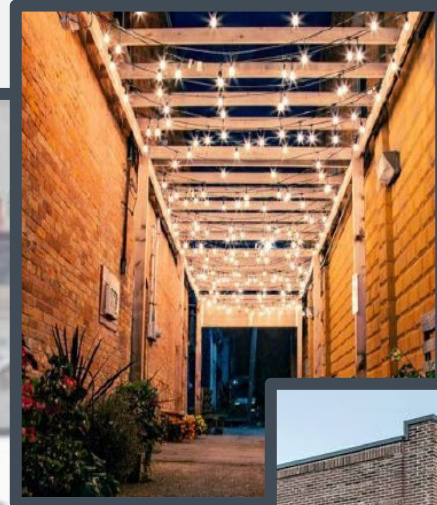
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# Ruins Hall

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ECONOMY







**\$1,000,000 RACP for Ruins Hall  
announced in October 2022**



**CODORUS  
GREENWAY**

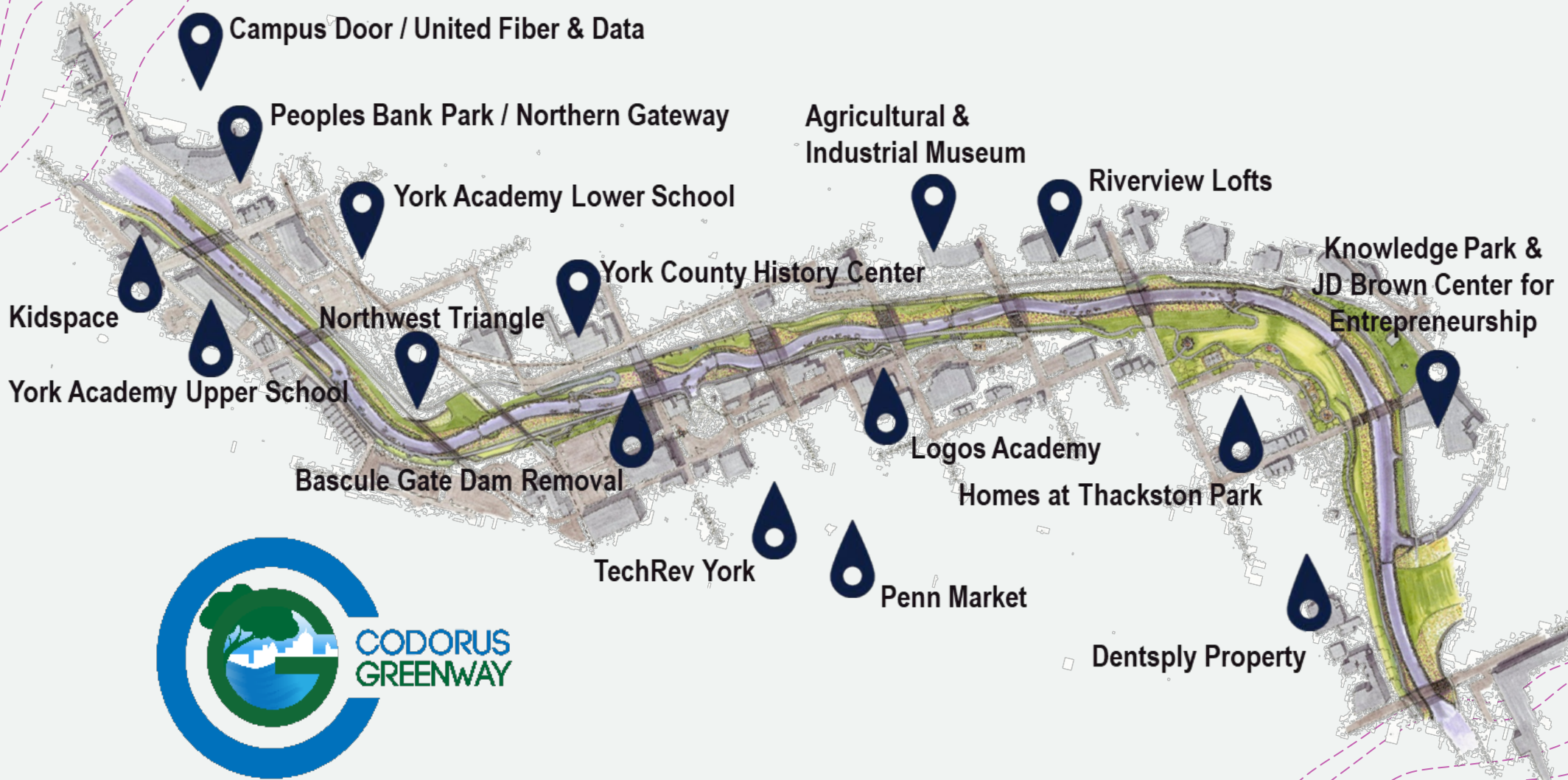
# Codorus Greenway

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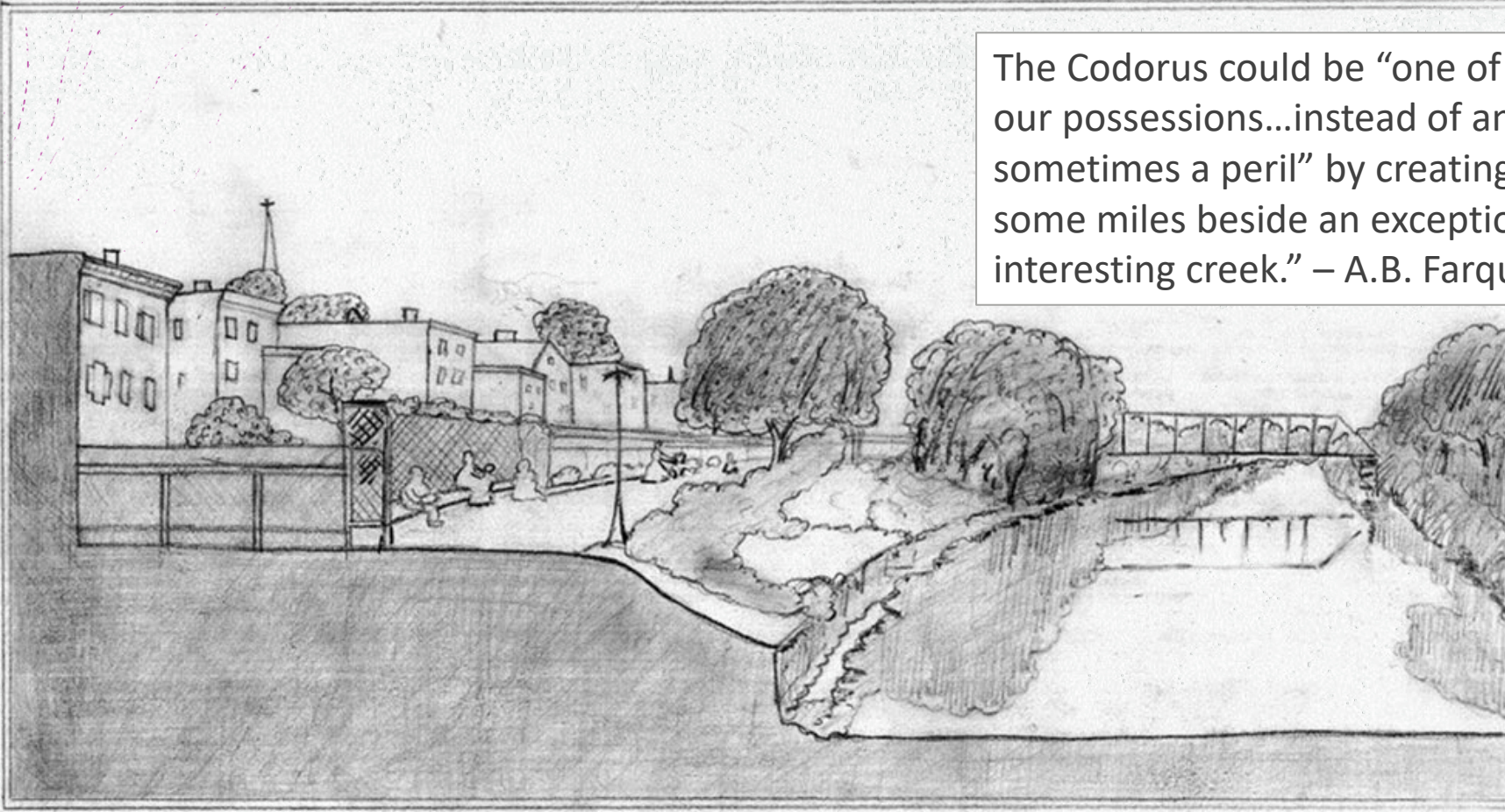
# Codorus Greenway

OUTDOOR  
ECONOMY



# Codorus Greenway

The Codorus could be “one of the most attractive of our possessions...instead of an ugly sewer and sometimes a peril” by creating a “charming walk of some miles beside an exceptionally beautiful and interesting creek.” – A.B. Farquhar



CODORUS CREEK PROMENADE

YORK, PA.

SKETCH TO ACCOMPANY REPORT OF OLMSTED BROTHERS, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

COPY OF PRINT NO. 6.

# Codorus Greenway

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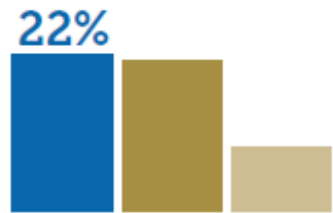




# Codorus Greenway

■ Project Area\*  
■ York City  
■ York County

\*Census blocks within  
one-quarter mile



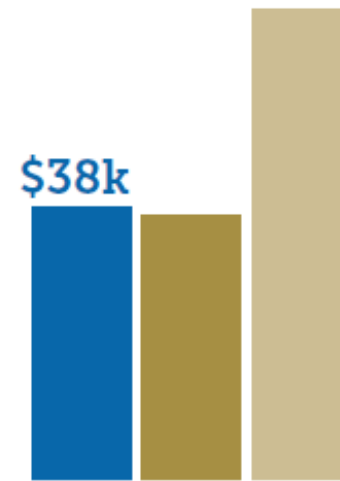
Less than  
high school  
education



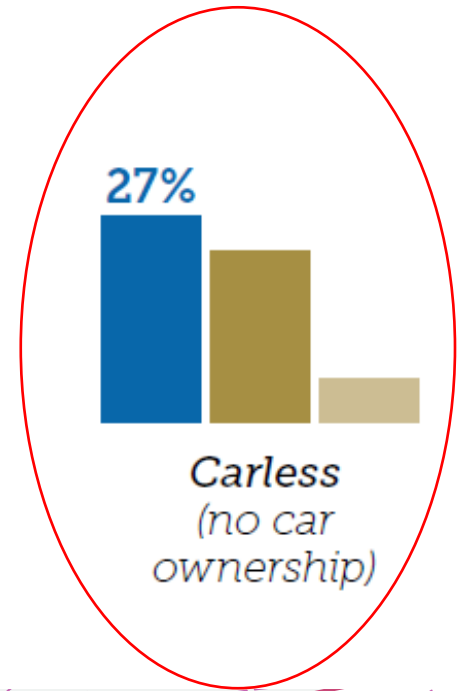
Renters  
(no home  
ownership)



Poverty  
(below 2x  
poverty  
level)



Median  
income  
(2019  
dollars)



Carless  
(no car  
ownership)

# Codorus Greenway

- Estimated annual pollutant reductions for overall project:
  - Sediment Reduction: 646,000 lbs./year (16% of York County's overall sediment load)
  - Phosphorous Reduction: 1,776 lbs./year
  - Nitrogen Reduction: 13,323 lbs./year

**Estimated \$190 million in benefit over 20 years**

Table 1. Total Undiscounted Benefits over 20 years of Operation

CATEGORY	MONETARY VALUE (In 2020 dollars)
Safety Benefits	\$73,200,000
	\$69,000
	\$11,740,000
Economic Competitiveness	\$688,200
State of Good Repair	\$89,700
Maintenance Costs	\$(2,600,000)
Residual Value	\$10,000,000
<b>TOTAL BENEFITS (UNDISCOUNTED)</b>	<b>\$93,240,000</b>

\* not including construction jobs, stormwater benefits, increased real estate values

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