



Lawrenceburg, Indiana River Town Review

Fresh Eyes on Enhancing Tourism & Outdoor Recreation in your Community



Round 2, Spring 2021

Ohio River Recreation Trail Team



NPS RTCA

RIVERS, TRAILS & CONSERVATION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

www.nps.gov/rtca



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Introduction

Ohio River Recreation Trail (ORRT)

The work of the volunteer-led Ohio River Recreation Trail steering committee is to create a 274-mile land and waterway self-guided adventure trail that connects people to opportunities for outdoor adventure, recreation, and discovery on and along the Ohio River from Portsmouth, Ohio to West Point, Kentucky. It will serve to promote tourism and economic development; facilitate education about the valley’s unique history, culture, and beauty; promote environmental awareness and safety; and encourage respect for lands and waters.

Vision: The Ohio River is an accessible and welcoming recreation corridor with vibrant river towns connected by land and water trails.

Mission: Facilitate world-class outdoor adventure opportunities through partnerships that promote healthy recreation, education, stewardship, and economic development for Ohio River communities.



River Town Review (RTR)

A team of professional planners from the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), leaders from the ORRT, the Lewis and Clark Geotourism project, and volunteers from outdoor recreation user groups work with engaged leaders to capture the benefits of outdoor recreation and tourism along the Ohio River. Their combined experience and skills provide a free assessment of the community recreation resources, facilitate a community input process, and prepare a summary of their findings for the community. The RTR helps communities see the possibilities and identify potential actions they can pursue to add sustainable recreational opportunities to their communities that connect with the Ohio River.

City of Lawrenceburg RTR Planning Process

(The details of the planning process can be found in Appendix A.)

One Dearborn, Inc. the local economic development organization serving Dearborn County requested a River Town Review by the ORRT Team to provide “Fresh Eyes on Enhancing Tourism & Outdoor Recreation in their Community.” The request was approved in 2020 for the second round of RTRs in the spring of 2021.

The RTR Team reviewed materials provided by the community contact and conducted a desktop review of the community’s internet presence. Several RTR Team members visited the community and met with key stakeholders. It was intended to be an in-person, several-day long visit, but plans were modified due to COVID-19 restrictions. The team then hosted a virtual community input workshop on May 18, 2021, that included a SWOT analysis and brainstorming of ideas for enhancing outdoor recreation in the City of Lawrenceburg. The participants were asked to help prioritize the ideas generated into short-term and long-term goals for the

community to pursue. The RTR Team reviewed and analyzed the community input to create recommendations for this report.

Desktop Reviews

(The detailed results of Desk Top Reviews can be found in Appendix B.)

Process/Results

Four volunteers spent about one hour each online to see what they could find out about the City of Lawrenceburg as if they were thinking of visiting for a day or overnight. They looked at outdoor recreation opportunities, parks, lodging, restaurants, breweries/wineries, historical sites, attractions, events, and connection to the Ohio River.

Reviewers found the primary community attractions include the local parks, numerous events - including music and farmers market, the bike share program, shopping, and eating at the many unique restaurants. The Southeast Indiana tourism website (www.visitsoutheastindiana.com) included an outdoor recreation component for Dearborn County and lists the marinas in the area, though it does not give amenity details for kayakers or boaters. There was not much information about the Ohio River Scenic Byway.

Recommendations:

- Focus Lawrenceburg’s websites on its adjacency to the Ohio River to emphasize it as a regional attraction. Illustrate what visitors can do on or near the river.
- Market the Dearborn Trail and encourage biking between downtown Lawrenceburg and downtown Aurora to attract more outdoor adventure enthusiasts to visit Dearborn County for longer periods of time.
- Include information about the Ohio River Scenic Byway. Although it is primarily a driving route it can be an important connection between river towns and focuses more attention on the Ohio River.
- Add a description and link about the Ohio River Recreational Trail on all relevant web sites and social media sites to help promote the Ohio River as a destination corridor.

In summary, the RTR Team found that the Lawrenceburg/Aurora/Dearborn County related web sites and crowdsourcing sites give a good summation of the businesses and events happening in the communities and sometimes along the Ohio River.

Walkability & Bikeability Scores for Lawrenceburg

Walk Score & Bike Score measure the walkability/bikeability of any address using a patented system which analyzes hundreds of walking and biking routes to nearby amenities. Points are awarded based on the distance to amenities in each category.

- Walkability Score for Lawrenceburg – **55 Somewhat Walkable**

Bikeability Score for Lawrenceburg – **58 Bikeable**

Please visit www.walkscore.com for more information

Walk Score
90-100 Walkers Paradise
70 -89 Very Walkable
50 -69 Somewhat Walkable
25 -49 Mostly Car Dependent
0 – 24 Car Dependent

Bike Score
90-100 Bikers Paradise
70 -89 Very Bikeable
50 -69 Bikeable
0 - 49 Somewhat Bikeable



Dearborn Trail in Lawrenceburg

Community Visit

Community Visit details can be found in Appendix B.

Community Experiences

Three members of RTR Team visited Lawrenceburg to experience the community on April 15, 2021.

Some of the key things that the RTR Team liked about their community experience in Lawrenceburg were:

- Small town feeling and calm pace of life
- Very walkable and bikeable downtown area
- Overall signage in the downtown area is consistent and not overbearing
- Streetscape amenities along Walnut and High Streets, such as light and sign poles, were tasteful and aesthetically pleasing
- Ample parking in downtown with plenty of street parking
- Unique clocktower memorial
- Riverwalk (Dearborn Trail) with excellent signage regarding historical aspects of the community including flooding, businesses, local families, and the Underground Railroad.

- Some of the key things that the RTR Team would encourage the community to improve are:

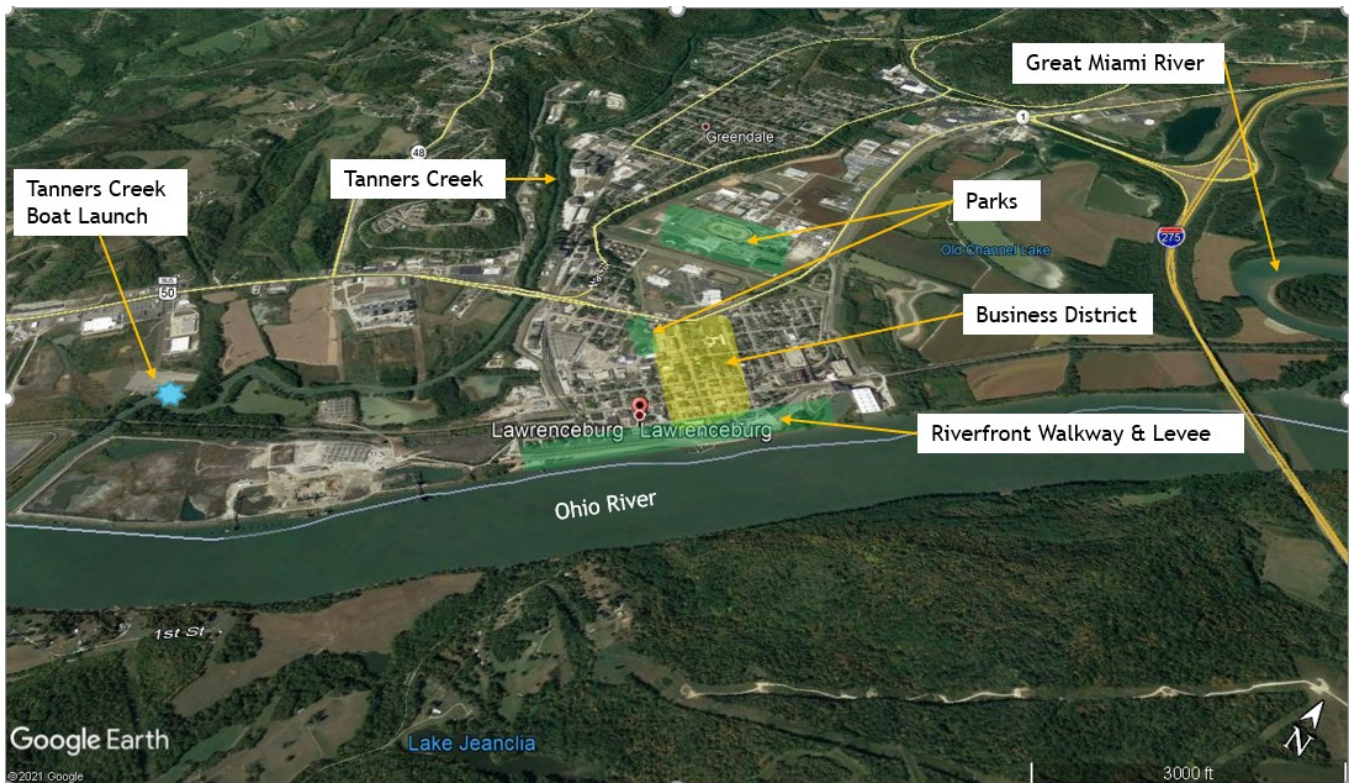
Promoting what visitors can do on the river by:

- Providing welcoming and wayfinding signage along the river for boaters and paddlers
- Promoting the river for outdoor adventure recreation
- Providing wayfinding signage and transient docking facilities at the river to encourage boaters and paddlers to explore Lawrenceburg
- Providing camping opportunities for through paddlers and boaters
- Providing a designated canoe and kayak access point close to downtown, perhaps near the existing trailhead parking lot
- Be sure to include ORRT information on trailhead kiosks or information boards near river
- Include signage that indicates how far things are by time (a 5-minute walk to the downtown)

Place more emphasis on bicycling by:

- Adding additional bike racks
- Providing signage for bike lanes and sharing the road

- Creating and mapping bike routes, loops, or connections to important destinations
 - Planning for future repairs and upgrades to Dearborn Trail and Riverwalk – IE: 2-10-year Plan
 - Benches, interpretive signage, and site amenities all have an expected life cycle. Be prepared to reinvest in this wonderful infrastructure, including the interpretive signage that discusses the river and Lawrenceburg’s history with it.
 - Placing wayfinding signage along US 50 to identify location of Ohio River and the Dearborn Trail
 - Engaging the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail and its auto tour signage.
- <https://lewisandclark.travel/>



Community Input

The detailed results can be found in Appendix B.

Virtual Workshop

The RTR Team hosted and facilitated a virtual workshop for the City of Lawrenceburg on May 18, 2020. Nine local community members participated in the workshop via Zoom. The Desktop Review and Community Visit findings were shared by the RTR Team for discussion. The participants were asked to share their thoughts by entering their ideas through the virtual workshop using an online platform called Mural. The participants then prioritized those ideas using Mural’s voting system. This virtual workshop assisted the RTR Team to better understand what is important to the community and where the special places are in the Lawrenceburg area.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The workshop participants identified the following as the primary considerations for each of the categories of SWOT Analysis for Lawrenceburg and Dearborn County area. The list identifies the higher priority items selected from all of the ideas generated during the SWOT Analysis for all four categories. Please refer to Appendix B – Lawrenceburg RTR Documents to review all of the ideas generated from the SWOT Analysis.


STRENGTHS

- Tanners Creek boating access
- Walkable downtown with plenty of retail and restaurant options
- Dearborn Trail and connection to Aurora
- Robust festivals
- Historical buildings
- Riverwatch Restaurant (On a floating barge with docking for motor boaters to enjoy during the summer season and walkable to downtown)

WEAKNESSES

- Financial Resources
- Consistent flooding
- No transient docking
- Lack of primitive camping
- Lack of bike racks
- Lack of wayfinding signage
- Levee separates downtown from river view and awareness

OPPORTUNITIES

- Build canoe and kayak ramp near downtown
- Add camping area near downtown
- Complete the Riverfront Trail Connector-Linking Greendale Trail to end of levee at the Casino 
- Historic buildings tour
- Improve wayfinding signage
- Expand River Cities Bike Share Program
- Add more bike amenities

THREATS

- Lack of funding for riverfront development
- Lack of community support and understanding
- Climate change increasing flooding events
- Environmental issues at former power plant
- Loss of casino revenues
- Traffic congestion of U.S. 50

Brainstorming Ideas

The participants were led through an exercise to identify ideas to consider pursuing to improve or create recreation assets and tourism opportunities in the Lawrenceburg area. The following lists identify some of the higher priority short-term and long-term items selected from all the ideas generated during the brainstorming exercise. These lists also include ideas to consider from the workshop participants homework exercise.

SHORT TERM IDEAS

- Marketing program for all of the River Cities
- Canoe and Kayak ramp near Riverwatch floating restaurant
- Designated canoe and kayak launch on Ohio River or Tanners Creek
- Paddle and pedal event for Lawrenceburg and Aurora
- Aligning tourism marketing with river town identity

LONG TERM IDEAS

- Improve trail connections
- Create a transient boat dock near downtown
- Opportunity phased development at the AEP site with riverfront connections
- Attracting a shop near the river where boaters and paddlers can get ice, bait, gas, etc.
- Encourage recreational Artscape's to be placed on the Dearborn Trail that's viewable from the City/River



Walnut Street – Downtown Lawrenceburg

A perfect day for a visitor in Lawrenceburg is....

As a homework assignment to help identify what makes the Lawrenceburg Area a special place, the RTR Team asked the workshop participants to describe a perfect day for a visitor in the community. Some of the common items identified were exploring downtown Lawrenceburg's numerous shops and restaurants, biking the Dearborn Trail to Aurora and back via the River Cities Bike Share Program, kayaking on the river by using the Tanners Creek boat ramp, and ending the day enjoying one of the many free events in downtown Lawrenceburg. Please refer to Appendix B – Dearborn County RTR Documents to review all of the stories submitted.



River Cities Bike Share Program in Lawrenceburg

River Town Review Executive Summary

A brief summary of RTR observations from the River Town Review.

(All the details that were gathered are located in Appendix B.)

The RTR Team looked at the internet presence of the City of Lawrenceburg and visited the community to experience what the community has to offer. They found that Lawrenceburg is the county seat for Dearborn County, Indiana and has a vibrant downtown with shops, professional offices, Ivy Tech Community College, Lawrenceburg Event Center / Double Tree Hotel, Hollywood Casino, Lawrenceburg Civic Park, and multiple restaurants just a short walk from the Ohio River. At the “foot” of Walnut Street, sits a beautiful veterans memorial clocktower anchoring Lawrenceburg’s “main street” to the Ohio River. This clocktower sits atop a bike pedestrian bridge and is part of an earthen levee system protecting the downtown area from flooding. This levee also supports the Dearborn Trail / river-walk a multi-purpose trail paralleling the river’s edge. While the levee serves to protect the downtown from seasonal flooding, it also presents a visual barrier - both from downtown towards the river and the river into downtown. The existing Dearborn Trail connecting Lawrenceburg to Aurora is a major recreation attraction with excellent views of the Ohio River from the trail.

A Connecting Vision for the City of Lawrenceburg

(In general what RTR suggests)

The City of Lawrenceburg participated in the River Town Review process because it wishes to further enhance its river town destination potential to benefit existing residents and businesses. The city would like to attract new investments and increase outdoor recreation tourism. The following suggestions for the City of Lawrenceburg are based on what the RTR Team observed and learned from the community. These items ought to be explored, brainstormed, and action steps should be created by the community.

The RTR team believes the future of Lawrenceburg should include improvements to CONNECT:

- to and with the Ohio River Recreation Trail.
- the parks, neighborhoods, schools, and the historic business district with safe sidewalks and trails.
- a comprehensive wayfinding signage system to guide visitors to the recreation and business assets in the community and the region.
- with more support facilities, overnight accommodations, restrooms with showers and other amenities for various user groups.
- with the development of outdoor recreation events.
- with adjoining communities for events, promotions, and destination river town connections.
- paddlers and bring in visitors to an annual paddle/pedal event.
- with the creation of more transient docking for motor boating users, with a sidewalk to the downtown business district and public restroom facilities.
- and encourage local businesses to seek a Bicycle Friendly Business designation and continue to expand cycling opportunities/facilities.
- and create tent camping, restrooms/showers and secure equipment storage for paddlers and bicyclists at one of the community's waterfront parks.
- and continue to enhance the historic business district and create memorable places for civic events, attracting visitors, residents, and businesses.

These efforts will provide a multitude of benefits for the city, residents and the visiting public as the community will become a viable Ohio River Recreation Trail gateway - increasing tourism, business opportunities, and quality of life for residents.

River Town Review Recommendations

The following specific recommendations are based on all information gathered by the RTR Team.

Desktop Reviews

- The social media platform designs and content need to attract and accommodate river-oriented businesses and recreation opportunities.
- Add the events schedule on the Ohio River Recreation Trail website.
- Consider placing more emphasis on the Dearborn Trail connecting two river towns as an attraction for outdoor recreation enthusiasts to visit and stay longer.
- Add photos of the recreation assets on the websites, provide more links to adjoining attractions and recreation facilities, including Tanners Creek Boat Ramp.

- Consider adding a description and link to the Ohio River Recreation Trail on all of the relevant websites and social media sites to help cross promote the Ohio River as a destination corridor for outdoor recreation.
- Continue to emphasize Lawrenceburg's unique location on the Ohio River and what that means for connecting communities, recreation, multi-day destination trips, river history and influence on what Lawrenceburg is!

Walkability/Bikability

- Encourage local business to seek a Bicycle Friendly Business designation www.bikeleague.org/business
- Create and adopt a joint Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan for the cities of Lawrenceburg & Greendale that complies with the Indiana Department of Transportation standards for a Bike Ped Master Plan. Plan and evaluate how to connect all of the parks, neighborhoods, and schools to the business district with sidewalks and trails. Once a Bike Ped Master Plan is adopted by a community and submitted to the state DOT any future state highway improvements will need to consider and potentially include the sidewalk or trail needs of the community. (See Appendix C List of Resources, Dept. of Transportation Bike & Pedestrian Planning, Indiana weblink for more information).
- Support and explore a regional & county wide trails plan that includes bicycle touring opportunities that connect the City of Lawrenceburg to other cities in the county and region. STRAVA Heat Maps can provide background on where cyclist are currently riding in the region. (See Appendix C for link.)
- There are a number of items that a community can do to improve bikeability. (See Appendix C List of Resources, Bikeability Checklist.)
- Explore opportunities to designate easy on road bike routes or create protected bike lanes where it can be done. Create pop-up temporary bike lanes so people can see the possibilities.
- Hold events that feature the opportunities to be more bikeable/walkable - temporarily close streets for Walk and Roll or Saturday strolls. Activate those closed streets with events, vendors, partners.

Immediate Action Items (Low Hanging Fruit):

- Update ORRT Digital Guide with local businesses/services
 - <https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/digital-guide>
- Partner with the ORRT organization:
 - <https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/become-a-partner>
- Enroll in the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Community Partner Program
 - <https://lewisandclark.travel/partner-community-program/>
- Utilize the photographs from the community visit by the professional photographers, Joe Wolek and John Nation in future outdoor recreation information website updates.
- Review the priority SWOT results and brainstorming ideas to see if there is anything that can be done immediately or that may add benefit to projects already in process
- Building on the strengths identified during our session – have proper signage to the Tanner Creek boating access. Create a bike route or trail to the boating access. At the access, make sure there is an information kiosk with directions to town or the Dearborn Trail. Include information about the Ohio River, ORRT, and other recreation assets.
- Your robust festivals should include activities on or around the Ohio River. Include a recreational component or demonstration in your festivals.

- Consider more programming to engage residents and visitors in recreation. A bike ride to Aurora with the high school football team. A walk along the river with the mayor.
- Add bike racks near service facilities in the city to welcome the cycling community. Consider installing charging stations for electric bikes and bicycle repair stations in the downtown area, Dearborn Trail and at parks along cycling routes.
- Schedule a pop-up event or a meet up group to walk and/or bike the riverfront area and its connections to downtown to discuss the questions and ideas in this RTR with others to get more input and develop support
- Include outdoor recreation, the Ohio River, and connections to other communities in your CVB info AND local residents' information.

Short Term Ideas to Pursue:

- Joint tourism/marketing effort with other Ohio River Cities. A Regional Cluster with Lawrenceburg, Aurora, Greendale, Rising Sun, Petersburg, Boone County, Ky etc. Jointly promoting cluster recreational assets.
- Create an annual paddle/pedal event with neighboring communities utilizing the Dearborn Trail
- Explore options to expand the online marketing of the many recreation assets in the community and the county.
- Consider placing more emphasis on what visitors can do on the river in Lawrenceburg.
 - Provide welcoming signage along the river for transient boaters and paddlers.
 - Provide wayfinding signage at the river to encourage boaters and paddlers to explore downtown Lawrenceburg.
 - Provide wayfinding signage along US 50 directing visitors to the Ohio River and the Dearborn Trail
 - Promote the river for outdoor adventure recreation.
- Consider placing more emphasis on bicycling in and around Lawrenceburg by:
 - Providing additional bike racks
 - Providing signage for bike lanes and share the road infrastructure.
 - Develop some “loop routes” or safe routes that connect points of interest. Create a “passport” to encourage residents and visitors to walk, bike and engage with local sites and businesses (or a scavenger hunt)
- Engage local participation in the ORSCANCO River Sweep efforts

Long Term Ideas to Pursue:

- Create transit dock facilities (Up to 12 hours) convenient to and linked to the historic downtown area. This will encourage motor boaters to stop and explore Lawrenceburg.
- Explore creating a designated canoe/kayak launch on the Ohio that is close to the downtown area.
- Create lockable storage facilities for the bicycles, boats, kayaks, and canoes while visitors shop and eat!
- Consider any long-range planning and how to connect to other trails and communities in the county, in the state or across the river.
- Plan for future repairs and upgrades to Dearborn Trail and its support amenities. (IE: 2-10-year Plan)
 - Benches, interpretive signage, and site amenities all have an expected life cycle. Be prepared to reinvest in this wonderful infrastructure.

- Explore options to link the Lawrenceburg and Greendale levee trails and a linkage to Tanner’s Creek Boat Launch with technical planning assistance from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. To apply for assistance please visit the website at www.np.gov/rtca
- Explore new US Bike Route opportunities in the region to connect with the existing US Bike Routes in Indiana
- Develop a great, outdoor, active event or race that showcases Lawrenceburg’s outdoor resources, local food, and craft beer/ whiskey. Opportunity to create a multi river town event. (Lawrenceburg, Aurora, Rising Sun & Kentucky river towns)
- Explore grant funding opportunities to improve recreation facilities in Lawrenceburg thru the Land & Water Conservation Fund and the US Economic Development Administration – Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Competitive Tourism Grants. See Appendix C for a list of Grants and Funding Opportunities.
- Work with other River Towns upstream and downstream to explore multi-day trips or long-distance destination tourism.

Additional Ideas to Consider:

- Consider engaging the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail and including its auto tour signage <https://lewisandclark.travel/>
- Tell Your Story – Every community has a unique history. Explore ways to create memorable experiences in your community and on the trails that link to your community.
 - Highlight the history and cultural assets of the community. (Websites, signage, walking tour routes, etc.)
- Explore the opportunities for river towns to secure riverfront development funds as destination attractions thru the state and federal funding sources.

Classic Trip Opportunities

- Paddle/Pedal Event to showcase outdoor recreation on the Ohio River and the Dearborn Trail.
- River trip from Tanners Creek Boat Lunch to Aurora and Rising Sun
- Great Miami River trip to the Lawrenceburg Riverfront and to the Tanners Creek Boat Lunch

Appendix A - River Town Review Planning Process

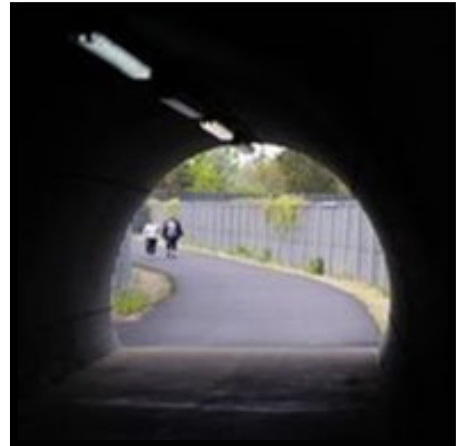
The RTR Team has summarized and created an outline for the steps of the ORRT RTR planning process with a virtual community input workshop. Appendix A contains the summaries of The Request Process, Pre-workshop Tasks, Workshop Tasks and Post Workshop Tasks.

Appendix B - Documentation from River Town Reviews

The RTR Team has compiled all of the information received from the workshop participants for further reference in this document. Appendix B contains the data from the Desktop Reviews, Visitor Assessments, SWOT Analysis, Brainstorming Ideas, Homework, Comments, A Perfect Day in Lawrenceburg/Dearborn County Stories, and other information collected during the RTR process.

Appendix C - List of Resources for Communities

The RTR Team has compiled a list of resources for communities to seek additional information in the following categories: Outdoor Recreation & Adventure Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Maintaining Small Town Character, Grants and Funding Opportunities, Organizations and Community Assistance Programs. Please refer to Appendix C -List of Resources for Communities for a complete listing with website links.



Photos of the Lawrenceburg Area by John Nation and Joe Wolek



Appendix A

River Town Review Virtual Planning Process

The following steps outline the Ohio River Recreation Trail River Town Review planning process with a virtual community input workshop.

The Request

- **River Town Review Request** – A river town community submits a letter requesting a River Town Review to the Ohio River Recreation Trail Team. Details about requesting assistance can be found at [Ohio River Recreation Trail](#). The river town communities are selected based on meeting the criteria identified on the website.
- **Community Participation Requirements** – If selected, the community agrees to provide a contact person, list of key community members to participate in the RTR workshop, list of community assets, map identifying the location of the recreation facilities, host a tour of the community with the RTR Team and promote/encourage participation in the virtual community input workshop.
- **The ORRT River Town Review Team selects** communities, notifies them, schedules the River Town Review Workshop, and engages the community contact in the pre-workshop planning process.

Pre-Workshop Tasks

- **Desk Top Review** - The River Town Review Team will explore the internet presence of the community through a desk top review by several volunteers. They will be exploring the community assets, determining if they have the information necessary to plan an outdoor recreation adventure in the community (Recreation activities, lodging, restaurants, entertainment, etc.) and preparing a summary of their findings.
- **Community Visit & Assessment** – RTR Team members and outdoor recreation volunteers visit the community, explore the recreation assets, participate in a tour with local officials, interview people about the community recreation facilities and prepare a summary of their findings.
- **Prepare RTR Working Agenda & Presentations** – RTR Team identifies presenters and prepares information for the workshop.
- **RTR team and community leads** meet for a pre-workshop confirmation review and recruit people for participation in the workshop.

Workshop Tasks

- **Virtual Community Input Workshop** – (COVID Travel Restrictions) The RTR Team facilitates a virtual meeting to share what the fresh eyes have seen and hear from the community. The Team presents opportunities for the community partner with Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail and increase their local businesses exposure on the ORRT Digital Guide. The team gathers community input/ideas through a SWOT Analysis, participants prioritize SWOT ideas, & participants Brainstorm ideas to enhance recreation and tourism in the community. After the workshop the RTR Team collects and distributes the prioritized SWOT Analysis Ideas, the Brainstorming ideas captured during the virtual meeting and sends

the data to the meeting participants. The virtual meeting includes power point presentations and interactive online polling.

- **Workshop Participants Homework** – The workshop participants are asked to review the prioritized SWOT ideas and the list of brainstorming ideas generated during the workshop. They are asked to identify their top three short-term and long-term ideas to pursue from the lists, visit websites and describe a what a perfect day for a visitor in my community is. This information is returned to the RTR Team to be reviewed and analyzed as additional input to consider for recommendations.

Post Workshop Tasks

- **Report Out** – The RTR Team assembles all of the information collected from the desktop reviews, site visits, and community input to prepare a summary of recommendations. The collected data and a List of Resources for Communities are included as appendix items with the summary.
- **RTR Team and all RTR communities** convene for a River Town Review Summit to share challenges, successes and ideas for future collaboration.

Templates have been created to help record the information, document the procedures, and guide the River Town Review process.

Lawrenceburg, Indiana

River Town Review

Appendix B: Background & Supporting Materials



Ohio River Recreation Trail Team
River Town Review

A Collaboration of:
Ohio River Recreation Trail Partners
Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Experience
National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation
Assistance Program

Summary Report Prepared by:
Andrea Irland
Russell Clark
Helen Siewers
Michael Shilling

Fresh Eyes on Enhancing Tourism & Outdoor Recreation in your Community



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Application Letter



Monday, August 17, 2020

National Park Service

Attn: Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Field Staff Mr. Russell Clark and Mrs. Andrea Irland
russell_clark@nps.gov and andrea_irland.nps.gov

Re: Letter requesting River Town Review assistance for Dearborn County, Indiana region

To Whom It May Concern,

Our organization, One Dearborn, Inc., is the central economic development office for Dearborn County, Indiana. We play several roles including attracting and retaining new business, leading quality of place projects, supporting efforts to grow population in our county and the state, and advocating for more housing options in order to meet the workforce demands of our existing employers and those who may come in the future.

I am writing this letter of interest on behalf of Dearborn County Convention Visitors & Tourism Bureau, City of Lawrenceburg, and Main Street Aurora to express the desire of these stakeholders to work as a unified region in the River Town Review.

Why do our communities want this review?

The Ohio River is a magnificent natural resource which is closely tied to the identity, history and future of Dearborn County and its river cities, Lawrenceburg and Aurora. Although the river impacts many aspects of residents' lives – providing a public water source and means of commerce – it may not currently be achieving its full potential for outdoor recreation.

Dearborn County is a place known to locals and visitors for year-round recreation. Perfect North Slopes ski area, located along tributary Tanners Creek, brings hundreds of thousands of visitors to the county annually. Hollywood Casino Lawrenceburg, a riverboat on the Ohio, provides hundreds of jobs and supplemental local tax revenue. Hillforest Mansion Victorian House Museum is a historic home built on a hillside providing a panoramic view of the river's bend at Aurora.

But direct enjoyment of the river for recreation may be limited by Lawrenceburg's flood protection river levee as well as few accessible ramps along the river for kayakers and canoers to put in and pull out. A need for housing in our county and cities may be creatively addressed with residences offering direct access to the river and unique, picturesque views. The health benefits of added outdoor recreation opportunities cannot be understated. Of course, Dearborn County's above-

One Dearborn, Inc. • 500 Industrial Drive, Suite 2110 • Lawrenceburg, IN 47025



average reliance on its tourism economy could directly benefit from better amenities and marketing of the United States' 10th longest river.

There may be other shortcomings in need of investigation and solutions. One Dearborn, Inc., the Dearborn County Convention Visitors & Tourism Bureau and cities of Lawrenceburg and Aurora – the latter three existing partners in the Ohio River Recreation Trail – submit this request together in a spirit of partnership. We hope to initiate a conversation with the National Park Service and Ohio River Recreation Trail River Town Review program's experts to determine if the program can help achieve the overarching goal of taking Ohio River recreation in Dearborn County to the next level.

Your expert analysis and recommendations will allow our county and river cities to identify these challenges and opportunities, then provide recommendations toward overcoming and achieving them.

What are your anticipated outcomes?

Our region believes the River Town Review program could better inform local planning efforts as it pertains to downtown redevelopment, infrastructure management, housing and marketing.

The Lawrenceburg Redevelopment Commission is currently executing a downtown business attraction and marketing plan with Cincinnati-based consultant Urban Fast Forward. Findings and recommendations of the River Town Review's professional planners may lend deeper perspective and better inform the LRC's efforts.

Similarly, the City of Aurora has an active Main Street Aurora organization which organizes events and marketing supportive of small businesses in the historic downtown. City leaders also have stated a desire to grow population in the city's limited footprint, with some of the best opportunities perhaps along the river or its tributary Hogan Creek.

In 2020, One Dearborn engaged Ohio River Recreation Trail steering committee member Jack Sutton, an local resident, to conduct a county-wide trails assessment. This recently completed report may be a jumping off point for a potential county-wide trails strategic plan. With arguably the county's best trail, the Dearborn Trail between Lawrenceburg and Aurora, along the banks of the Ohio River, this program's findings could better inform any trails strategic plan.

There could also be great value in sharing and learning between Ohio River communities. A regional partnership in this program as proposed in this letter is nod to that. A partnership between Aurora and Lawrenceburg led to creation of the Dearborn Trail for walking and biking recreation. The potential may exist for a "water trail" between the cities. On a larger scale, with Cincinnati

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upstream and Rising Sun downstream, what synergistic opportunities might we cooperatively identify? We agree that the 2021 River Town Review Summit event can identify such opportunities.

Our local stakeholders would also hope to learn about funding and grant opportunities to support water recreation. This program's experts may be able to share this knowledge and identify which opportunities make the most sense for various projects.

What are your communities' biggest assets?

The Ohio River and its tributaries – Tanners Creek, Hogan Creek, Laughery Creek – are significant natural resources. Many assets and opportunities rest along these waterways in Dearborn County.

Historic downtown business districts are an enormous piece of Dearborn County's future growth and success. Downtown Lawrenceburg has received much investment by the City of Lawrenceburg over the past two decades with Lawrenceburg Main Street supporting businesses in various ways. A new \$6 million Lawrenceburg Civic Park is just a few hundred feet from the Ohio River, though buffered by the river levee.

Aurora's downtown also boasts a number of small businesses, similarly supported by Main Street Aurora. There is no levee hill blocking views and easy access to the river, meaning the city is more flood-prone. Yet Aurora proudly embraces its identity as a river city. Lesko Park and its walking path are a popular spot for visitors to get a panoramic view of the river. Aurora has also introduced a new park, Gabbard Riverfront Park, just a stone's throw from the water's edge.

The Dearborn Trail is a major asset in promoting outdoor recreation and providing an exercise venue for the public in warmer months. It runs atop Lawrenceburg's river levee, then follows an active railroad south to Aurora, where walkers, runners and bicyclists are greeted by the newer Aurora Dog Park.

An economic asset on the Ohio River is the site of the decommissioned AEP Tanners Creek Power Plant in Lawrenceburg. This 725-acre site has been proposed for Indiana's fourth inland port. Existing infrastructure from the power plant – these include pilons in the river and railway – and being within the Cincinnati metropolitan area lend credence to the idea. The site is currently under contract to be sold to Ports of Indiana. A brownfield redevelopment company is in the process of closing various coal fly ash landfills.

Other related or outdoor recreation assets in Dearborn County include the aforementioned tributaries, Lawrenceburg Speedway, Riverwatch Restaurant on the Ohio River in Lawrenceburg, Perfect North Slopes ski area, the Oxbow wildlife conservation area, a handful of boat marinas and orchards.

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Who will be the main contact to work with the River Town Review Team?

Mike Perleberg, Director of Marketing and Community Projects with One Dearborn, Inc., will serve as the main local contact for the River Town Review Team as it pertains to this regional group. One Dearborn is a 501c6 non-profit organization designated as the local economic development organization (LEDO) in Dearborn County.

Founded in 2017, One Dearborn engaged local county, city and town stakeholders from across the county to create the Dearborn County Regional Economic Development Action Plan (link: www.1dearborn.org/reports). Using existing community plans and stakeholder input, shared opportunities and challenges were identified and prioritized in determining the report's Big 8 Economic Development Drivers. Among the Big 8 drivers are downtown redevelopment, tourism & culture, and trail connectivity – three areas which the River Town Review program may focus its analysis and recommendations.

Perleberg has been a member of the Dearborn County community for 13 years. Professionally, he served as the local news director of Lawrenceburg-based radio station Eagle Country 99.3 (WSCH), developing relationships with various public officials and non-profit leaders and a firm understanding of challenges and opportunities within various municipalities. He joined One Dearborn in October 2019 to launch a new career advancing economic development initiatives such as business attraction, business retention, housing, and marketing/branding of the county. His work in community development includes supporting the Sutton trails report, rural broadband, and enhancing communication between non-profits.

Contact information: Mike Perleberg
Phone: 513-256-1843
Email: mperleberg@1dearborn.org

Who will be invited to participate?

Aurora:

Mark Drury, Mayor of Aurora
Derek Walker, Aurora City Manager
Nancy Fahey Tuner, Director, Main Street Aurora
Members of Aurora City Council
Members of Aurora Park Board
Members of Main Street Aurora Board of Directors

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Lawrenceburg:

Kelly Mollaun, Mayor of Lawrenceburg
Guinevere Emery, City of Lawrenceburg Communications Director
Bryan Messmore, Lawrenceburg Redevelopment Director
Kathleen Norris, Urban Fast Forward – city consultant
Michelle Cone, Director, Lawrenceburg Main Street
Members of Lawrenceburg City Council
Members of Lawrenceburg Parks & Playgrounds Board

Dearborn County Convention Visitors & Tourism Bureau (DCCVTB):

Debbie Smith, Executive Director, DCCVTB
Board members of DCCVTB

One Dearborn:

Terri Randall, President and CEO
Mike Perleberg, Director of Marketing and Community Projects
Jack Sutton, trails consultant to One Dearborn

Others:

Mark McCormack, Director, Dearborn County Planning & Zoning
Meg Poehlman, Executive Administrator, Oxbow, Inc.

Does your town agree to provide information, stakeholder participation and host meetings, if selected?

One Dearborn has engaged key stakeholders in Aurora, Lawrenceburg and at DCCVTB about River Town Review. The two-page River Town Review overview document was provided to those stakeholders to ensure they had a general understanding of the program and information which will be needed by the review team. Properly informed of the program, each community and organization pledged support for a regional partnership to submit this letter of intent.

Through our current and past work as the LEDO for Dearborn County, One Dearborn is equipped to provide various strategic plans, maps, marketing materials, historical context, and other information to the review team as needed.

One Dearborn can run point to coordinate and communicate meeting dates, deadlines and other important information between city and DCCVTB contacts and the review team. We maintain a respected and friendly relationship with these local stakeholders.

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Small to medium-sized meetings are frequently hosted by One Dearborn. The organization has an office conveniently located at Ivy Tech Community College's Lawrenceburg Lakefront Campus capable of hosting small gatherings of up to 10 people with audio and visual capabilities. Ivy Tech also makes large classrooms available to One Dearborn for larger meetings. The cities of Aurora and Lawrenceburg and DCCVTB also have their respective meeting spaces which could be available. If necessary or more convenient, One Dearborn does maintain a Zoom premium account for hosting virtual video conferences with up to 100 participants which we would offer for purposed of the River Town Review.

Thank you for consideration the addition of the Lawrenceburg-Aurora Ohio River Region to the National Park Service and Ohio River Recreation Trail River Town Review program in 2020. While there are many assets, events and trends bringing citizens to have a closer relationship with our portion of the Ohio River, we believe more can be done to fully tap into the unique opportunities the river provides for safe, responsible and enjoyable outdoor recreation and tourism.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Perleberg".

Mike Perleberg
Director of Marketing and Community Projects
One Dearborn, Inc.
500 Industrial Drive, Suite 2110, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025
513-256-1843
mperleberg@1dearborn.org

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Digital Desktop Review for Lawrenceburg

Four volunteers spent about one hour each on-line to see what they could find out about Lawrenceburg as if they were thinking of visiting for a day or overnight – lodging, restaurants, breweries/wineries, historical sites, attractions, events, outdoor recreation opportunities, etc.

Overall Feedback from reviewers...

Team Review Summary

Dearborn County, IN
ORRT Team Summary Review
5/4/2021

As of May 4, 2021, four individuals have completed Desk Top Reviews for Dearborn County / Lawrenceburg/Aurora. Team members included a representative from Thomas More University, and volunteers of the ORRT.

The following is a high-level summary of the findings

www.Dearborncounty.org

Primarily a government function web site with limited links to recreation. Recreation tab at the top of the page but only links to Dearborn County parks. Does use a picture of Perfect North Slopes as the header. No apparent links to other recreation or tourism on the page.

www.visitsoutheastindiana.com

This web site is well done and highlights shopping, gaming, racing, dining, and lodging front and center on the opening page with lots of visually engaging pictures.

Under the “Things to Do list” at the bottom of the page, there is the “*Outdoor Recreation link*”. It appears Dearborn County has quite the number of outdoor activities and opportunities including cycling, golf, skiing, boating, Oxbow, Inc., Dearborn Trail, and the bike share program.

The “Fun on the Water” link goes to the Marina listings.



- There are 10 local marinas listed, however there are no links to their web or FB sites and no mention of the amenities they offer such as launch ramp availability, restrooms, overnight accommodations, distances to amenities, transient dockage, etc. Might be good to have a vicinity map showing their locations.
- Adding links to Ohio River information, i.e., stage, velocity, water quality, fishing tournaments, regattas, riverfront festivals, etc. might be helpful for out-of-town boaters.
- It might also be nice to provide copy specifically welcoming and inviting boaters to come to Dearborn County/Lawrenceburg/ Aurora, In.

<https://www.thinklawrenceburg.com> -

This is a broad ranging website that includes tabs for residents, local government, Business, Lawrenceburg Main Street, and visitors.

- The “Visitors” tab opens with quick links at the top to area attractions, festivals, parks, and the Dearborn County Tourism website.
- Main Street tab at the top connects to business district website that includes a calendar of events, links to restaurants. However, the Ohio River is not referenced as an attraction or amenity on the edge of town.
- Bike share details are under the Dearborn Trails link. There may be value in elevating the bike share program to the attractions page.

<https://aurora.in.us/main-street-who-we-are.html> -

This is also a broad ranging website that includes tabs for government services, Main Street Aurora, parks and recreation, economic development as well as business services in the community. The “Who We Are” page is very bright with images showing its historical connection to the Ohio River.

- Parks and recreation tab on top has links to the parks, Aurora Recreation Community Center, the bike share program, marinas, and groups together golf, skiing, hunting, and fishing.
 - Parks has big bright pictures of each park and those along the river include the river as a central theme. Dearborn trail is included with pictures showing it in multiple seasons
 - Bike Share program has link to the website and details about where to rent a bike and detailed information about how to do it.

<https://visitindiana.com/things-to-do/54713-dearborn-county-convention-visitor-and-tourism-bureau> -

State tourism website with a link to visitsoutheastindiana.com. Very general with google map and highlighted links to dining and lodging

Social Media Platforms Visited included:

www.Yelp.com

www.Tripadvisor.com

www.facebook.com

Desk Top Review – D. Rutter

- Prior to visiting a River Town, the "Visitors" should review the application submitted for a River Town Review and make notes of any important information.
- Review of social media, websites, articles, and existing tourism information. Look for connections to the river and outdoor recreation.
 - Dearborncounty.org – Primarily a government function page with limited links to recreation. Recreation tab at the top of the page but only links to Dearborn County parks. Does use a picture of Perfect North Slopes as the header. No apparent links to other recreation or tourism on the page.
 - Visitsoutheastindiana.com – Shopping, gaming, racing, dining, and lodging front and center on the page. Lots of pictures and visually engaging. Load time was very slow for the site and pages.
 - Link in small print on the bottom for outdoor recreation. This page highlights the bike share program in the image, but aspect ratio of the picture is not maintained resulting in a distorted image. Descriptions for cycling, golf, skiing, Oxbow, Inc., and water with links to some. The water link lists the marinas and contact information. Might be good to have a map showing their locations.
 - I would encourage a description and link to the ORRT website
 - <https://visitindiana.com/things-to-do/54713-dearborn-county-convention-visitor-and-tourism-bureau> - State tourism website with a link to visitsoutheastindiana.com. Very general with google map and highlighted links to dining and lodging
 - <https://www.thinklanceburg.com> - Broad ranging website that includes tabs for residents, local government, Business, Lawrenceburg Main Street, and visitors.
 - Visitor's tab opens with quick links at the top to area attractions, festivals, parks, and the Dearborn County Tourism website. No difference between Attractions and Major Area Attractions. Also provides a nice introduction to the community and its history. The history is the first place I have seen any mention of the river.
 - Main Street tab at the top connects to business district website that includes a calendar of events, links to restaurants. Wouldn't know there is a river on the edge of town from this. No links to the trail or bike share program. River is not listed as an attraction.
 - Bike share details are under the Dearborn Trails link. I would recommend elevating the bike share program to the attractions page.
 - <https://aurora.in.us/main-street-who-we-are.html> - Main page is very bright with images showing its historical connection to the river.
 - Parks and recreation tab on top has links to the parks, Aurora Recreation Community Center, the bike share program, marinas, and groups together golf, skiing, hunting, and fishing.
 - Parks has big bright pictures of each park and those along the river include the river as a central theme. Dearborn trail is included with pictures showing it in multiple seasons
 - Bike Share program has link to the website and details about where to rent a bike and detailed information about how to do it.
 - The hunting and fishing information is limited but has a link to IDNR. However, that takes the user to a statewide site. Now I am no longer connected to Dearborn County and don't have any idea where I could hunt or fish.

- Dearborn County – Southeast Indiana Facebook page – Seems to be kept fresh with new posts every few days.
 - Videos show cycling
 - Posts include lots of local updates on events and many posts regarding Perfect North Slopes
 - Posts on river flooding closing portions of the Dearborn Trail
 - Many photos that include the river
- Dearborn County Southeast Indiana Instagram – Not sure who is running this account but many posts by Dearborn county parks. Very few people under the age of 35 use Facebook for anything other than keeping up with family. Instagram is used much more along with snapchat and TikTok. These are the platforms to be creating content if you want to reach them. They also watch very little TV. Not much on the river.

Desk Top Review – J. Schulte

Desktop Review, Dearborn County, Lawrenceburg, and Aurora Indiana

This review has been conducted to assess the availability of information to those planning to participate in an adventure on and along the Ohio River Recreational Trail.

The Ohio River Recreational Trail has been developed to provide opportunities for adventurers to safely plan and enjoy the majesty of the Ohio River and the towns and people that call this amazing resource home. The backbone of the Ohio River Recreation Trail is the Digital Guide to the Ohio River. This guide is a focused resource for those interested in participating in an Ohio River-oriented experience. But like any information resource, it is only as good as the information it contains. The Digital Guide provides an amazing amount of “static” information such as locations of boat ramps, towns, tributaries, etc., but it is also a host site for links to communities and businesses located along the trail to support their economies and promote economic growth. As such, ORRT volunteer staff undertake evaluations of available on-line information sources to assess the availability of river-oriented information to support River Trail participants, particularly from the riverside/river-use perspective.

Ideally, community websites would provide information that would welcome boaters, be they power boaters or paddlers, to come and explore their communities (and support their economies). The amenities needed so boaters can safely stop, moor, or otherwise secure their boat, then spend time exploring your community, consists of the following:

1. Marinas and transient dockage information for powerboats
2. Beaches, landings, haul-out areas or dedicated and secure launch facilities for paddle craft, i.e., canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddle boards
3. Public restroom location and availability
4. Readily available and accurate information on the location and distances to local amenities, i.e., shops, restaurants, stores, medical services, etc.
5. Locations of campgrounds and other local overnight accommodations
6. Current listings and locations for community events
7. Again, the Ohio River Digital Guide is a host site for links to communities and businesses located along the ORRT to support their economies and promote economic growth. Social media content

that provides the above referenced information will undoubtedly be attractive to the Ohio River boating community.

It is from the boating community perspective that the content found on the following websites has been evaluated.

Information Sources Reviewed:

- a. <https://visitindiana.com/things-to-do/54713-dearborn-county-convention-visitor-and-tourism-bureau>
- b. <https://www.thinklawrenceburg.com/government/>
- c. <https://aurora.in.us/main-street-who-we-are.html>

Overall Assessment

The Dearborn County, Lawrenceburg, Aurora area has a lot to offer Ohio River Recreational Trail users. However, consideration needs to be given to social media platform designs and content to attract and accommodate river-oriented business.

Website Information and Presentation

Dearborn County <https://visitindiana.com/things-to-do/54713-dearborn-county-convention-visitor-and-tourism-bureau>

This website presents visitor information specifically for Dearborn County. Working through the Things to Do list, I focused on the Outdoor Recreation link. Dearborn County has quite the litany of outdoor activities and opportunities. One link, Fun on the Water, took me to the Marina listings.

- There are 10 local marinas listed, however there are no links to their web or FB sites and no mention of the amenities they offer such as launch ramp availability, restrooms, overnight accommodations, distances to amenities, transient dockage, etc.
- I could not find a reference or statement regarding the fact that Dearborn County has 7.4 miles of frontage on the Ohio River
- There were no links to Ohio River information, i.e., stage, velocity, water quality, fishing tournaments, regattas, riverfront festivals, etc.
- Did not see any copy specifically welcoming and inviting boaters to come to Dearborn County/Lawrenceburg/ Aurora, In.

City of Lawrenceburg <https://www.thinklawrenceburg.com>

On this site I navigated to the Attractions link and found only one Ohio River oriented link, Tanners Creek boat ramp. However, upon reading the ramp description, I found what I believe are gross inaccuracies in the description, “offers transient docking available for boats up to 70 ft in length along with slips.”. Having personally used this ramp for many, many years I am unaware of any docking facilities on Tanners Creek other than those at the boat ramp, which are to accommodate launching activities only. And while a FB link is listed, neither it nor the fishing tournament schedule link are functional.

Continuing to the Parks and Recreation link, I went to the Dearborn Trails description only to find the “For more information” link not functional.

I found no information on the “Veterans Park” or the area at the end of Walnut Street as a good Ohio River viewpoint, nor was there any mention of Riverwatch restaurant and dockage.

I also went to the Fall Fest link only to find the links for both parties listed to be non-functional.

City of Aurora: <https://aurora.in.us/main-street-who-we-are.html>

The City of Aurora's website is "quaint". And knowing all the boat-oriented access via Hidden Harbor and the Hogan Creek marina complex I found no open invitation for boaters to come to Aurora and enjoy the day or weekend. Aurora does have a dedicated paddle craft launch facility at Waterways Park, but no other information regarding amenities, other than mention of a shelter, is provided for this location. Aurora does have a Local Marinas page but only one marina has a link associated with it. Other facilities that are listed have links or FB pages (and Aurora Harbor is now Hidden Harbor, LLC).

Of the three websites reviewed, this is the only site that references fishing and the Ohio river.

While Dearborn Trail is listed on the Parks link, it has no narrative.

Summary

While the Dearborn/Lawrenceburg/Aurora area has a tremendous amount to offer visitors, their social media offerings could benefit them greatly by embracing a river-centric viewpoint. As the use and popularity of the Ohio River Recreation Trail grows, we will continue to work with river communities to enhance their visibility to the ORRT user community.

Desk Top Review – J. Sutton

Dearborn County, IN
Sutton Review
5/4/2021

www.Dearborncounty.org

This web site is traditional web site serving county government services. Its primary purpose is to assist residents with utilizing county wide public services. The recreation tab is dedicated to the local county park system.

www.visitsoutheastindiana.com

This web site has a bright and cheerful opening page that focuses on Hollywood Casino, the racetrack, Hillforest, dining and lodging. There is a "Things to Do list" tab at the bottom of the page, with an "*Outdoor Recreation link*". Perfect Ski Slopes is prominently displayed at the top of the page. Does this photo change out during the summer? There is a "Bike Southeast Indiana" pdf brochure providing general tourism info. But it does not offer recommended rides or routes and has limited information on the Dearborn Trail.

<https://www.thinklawrenceburg.com> -

This web site is a combination government services web site and tourism / main street type web site. It has an abundant amount of information and is easy to navigate. It has extremely attractive photographs! Aside from several aerial photographs, it is not clear just how close downtown Lawrenceburg is to the Ohio River. This seems

like a missed opportunity. The Attractions link under the Visitors link does not identify the Ohio River nor the Levee Walk / Verdin Bell Clock Tower at the end of Walnut Street as an attraction.

<https://aurora.in.us/main-street-who-we-are.html> -

This is also a broad ranging website that includes tabs for government services, Main Street Aurora, parks and recreation, economic development as well as business services in the community. The “Who We Are” page is welcoming with an image showing the Michael Balzer painting of the Aurora Riverfront. This immediately tells the visitor the Aurora is a “River Town”! The park and recreation tab is comprehensive and has helpful photos of each park. While there is mention of a canoe launch at Waterways Park, it might be nice to add a photo of the launch with kayaks and canoes in use.

Overall Findings of Desk Top Review – Suggestions to Consider

Overall, the Lawrenceburg/Aurora/Dearborn County related web sites and crowdsourcing sites give a good summation of the businesses and events happening in the communities and sometimes along the Ohio River. The websites are modern and appealing.

Suggestions to consider include:

Consider placing more emphasis on what you can do on and adjacent to the Ohio River. With respect to the web sites and web pages geared toward the City of Lawrenceburg, more emphasis could focus on Lawrenceburg being immediately adjacent to the river. While it is mentioned somewhat, the River is not featured as a regional attraction.

With respect to Aurora, more emphasis could focus on the existing amenities associated with the River including the canoe and kayak launch at Waterways Park and the numerous marinas in and near Aurora. From an “out of town” paddler or boater’s point of view, this type of information is not easily found on the Aurora Website.

On all web sites and social media platforms- Consider placing more emphasis on the Dearborn Trail and its proximity to the Ohio River. With over 5 miles of Dearborn Trail connecting two beautiful Indiana River Towns, this presents a wonderful opportunity to attract more outdoor adventure enthusiasts to visit Dearborn County for a weekend or even longer.

Finally, we would encourage a description and link to the Ohio River Recreation Trail

<https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/> on all relevant web sites and social media sites to help cross promote the Ohio River as a destination corridor.

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Desk Top Review – Woeste

Look at one social media site: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. How many followers? What is the most recent post? How often updated? Are there photos? Any events?

- Facebook page: Dearborn County – Southeast Indiana
- 16,487 followers
- Repost about reopening valet for the Hollywood Casino Lawrenceburg
- Updated every couple of days
- Yes, there are a ton of photos
- Upcoming events that were reposted:
 - Dillsboro Homecoming Festival
 - Lawrenceburg Civic Park: Music on the River
- No new events, but there were a ton of past events such as the Fall Haul, Corks and Cookies, etc.

Visit the town’s website

Find one positive story from a news source (newspaper, tv, magazine, blog, etc.)

- <https://www.eaglecountryonline.com/news/local-news/purdue-university-extension-to-host-inaugural-agriculture-outlook/>

Find one story about Covid impacts and how it is affecting the town

- <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/indiana/dearborn-county>

Look at crowdsourced site for reviews (trip advisor, yelp, etc.) What is consistently reviewed well or makes the top ten list?

- TripAdvisor: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g37259-Lawrenceburg_Indiana-Vacations.html
 - Reviews say that the Dearborn County area is full of nature, recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, kayaking, etc., great views of the Ohio River, historical sites, great eateries, local shops, Perfect North Slopes within a few miles, and the small local appeal.

If you were planning a trip with your friends....

What is one significant historical or cultural event that took place in the town that you would share?

- One significant historical event or site that took place in the town that is of interest would be to go to the Veraestau Historic Site. This historic building was built in 1838 and stands beautifully with its

massive architectural history. It overlooks a long stretch of the Ohio River and has huge trees that are elegant in style.

Where would you stay? Where would you eat?

- I would stay at one of the high rated hotels such as the Double Tree or Comfort Inn. I would eat at one of the local restaurants or pizza places in town. The reviews on pizza were very good in this area!

What tourist attraction would you want to visit?

- A tourist attraction I would want to visit is Perfect North Slopes. They had many different ski and snowboarding slopes, bunny hills for kids or beginners, and snow tubing.

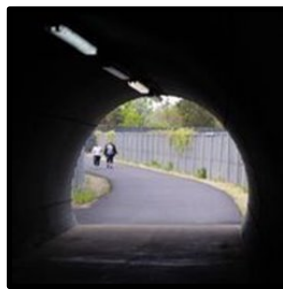
What outdoor recreation would you do?

- An outdoor recreation activity I would do is to find a park. I would want to visit a local park and go fishing, kayaking, hiking, and experience nature in a peaceful environment.





Community Visit Photos



Photographs provided by Joe Wolek and John Nation



Lawrenceburg River Town Review Visitor Assessment

Several members of RTR Team visited Lawrenceburg to experience the community. Some of the members also have paddled the rivers to experience the local recreation resources. The following documents are the summaries of individual RTR Team members visits.

Purpose

The River Town Review Visitor Assessment is a "fresh set of eyes" taking an objective look at your existing conditions and asset inventory as a visitor would see it in relation to the Ohio River Recreation Trail and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Lawrenceburg - Visitor Assessment Summary

Assessment team – David Rutter, Jerry Schulte & Jack Sutton

Date: Thursday April 15, 2021

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Weather – Partly cloudy & cool – 55 degrees.

River Connections & Access

Lawrenceburg is the county seat for Dearborn County, Indiana and has a vibrant downtown with shops, professional offices, Ivy Tech Community College, Lawrenceburg Event Center / Double Tree Hotel, Hollywood Casino, and multiple restaurants just a short walk from the Ohio River. At the “foot” of Walnut Street, sits a beautiful veterans memorial clocktower anchoring Lawrenceburg’s “main street” to the Ohio River. This clocktower sits atop a bike pedestrian bridge and is part of an earthen levee system protecting the downtown area from flooding. This levee also supports the Dearborn Trail / river-walk a multi-purpose trail paralleling the river’s edge. While the levee serves to protect the downtown from seasonal flooding, it also presents a visual barrier - both from downtown towards the river and the river into downtown.

The Dearborn Trail provides beautiful vistas of the Ohio River and the wooded hillsides of Boone County, Kentucky. There are benches, light standards and interpretive signage located along the levee portion of the trail creating a comfortable and inviting setting for visitors. There is a trailhead facility located

approximately ¼ mile downstream from the Clocktower and includes public restrooms, shelter, and parking.

The Riverwatch Restaurant (open during the boating season only) is located on a floating barge along the river and is accessed via walkways from Walnut Street and the Dearborn Trail. Riverwatch also includes docking facilities for boaters who wish to enjoy a meal and a cool beverage during the season.

From a transient boater or paddlers' point of view, access from the river into downtown Lawrenceburg is limited. While there are mooring facilities at the Riverwatch Restaurant, they appear to be for restaurant customers only. There are no designated access points along the river near downtown. During our visit, we did not notice wayfinding or welcome signs to greet boaters or paddlers from the river. **In fact, there is no sign to let boaters know what community is behind the levee.** The riverside bank of the levee armored with standard rip rap to prevent erosion.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Downtown Lawrenceburg is very walkable. There is a full complement of sidewalks along the streets and the crosswalks, ADA curb cuts, and site amenities are clean, safe, and inviting. The corner of Walnut Street and High Street is the “entertainment” center of downtown Lawrenceburg with one bike rack and areas for outdoor dining. The City of Lawrenceburg has recently developed a new city park at the intersection of High Street and Short Street proving a venue for weekly summer concerts, relaxing seating area and a small spray ground for young children. The park is well designed from a landscape architectural point of view with outstanding detailing of its hardscape, softscape and site amenity features.

Most of the downtown Lawrenceburg has slow moving traffic, making bicycling on the streets a relatively comfortable experience for most bike riders. There is a bike pedestrian tunnel under US 50 near Arch Street providing a safe connection between the Lawrenceburg Community School Corporation campus and the downtown Lawrenceburg street grid. We did not however, see many bike support facilities such as signage for bike lanes and bike racks. The River City Bike Share program is based both in Lawrenceburg and Aurora and provides bike rental opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Cyclops Bicycle shop is located near the corner of High Street and Vine Street.

One of Lawrenceburg's most valuable public recreation assets is the Dearborn Trail. This trail provides a safe walking and bicycling experience and connects the cities of Lawrenceburg and Aurora via an uninterrupted paved multi-use trail.

Signage, Wayfinding and Site Amenities

Overall signage in the downtown area is consistent and not overbearing – no sign clutter. Entry into Lawrenceburg along US 50 has directional signage indicating “Historic Downtown Lawrenceburg” at the intersection with Walnut Street. We did not see wayfinding type signage indicating direction to river or the Dearborn Trail. West of downtown there is clear signage along US 50 indicating the location of the Tanner's Creek Boat Ramp.

Streetscape amenities along Walnut and High Streets such as streetlights, signposts, utility poles, flag holders and event banners were tasteful and in relatively good condition. Some interpretive signage and site amenities along the ‘river walk’ were showing age and looked a bit “tired”.

One unique aspect about downtown Lawrenceburg is the clocktower memorial and the “river walk” (Dearborn Trail) with its commemorative plaques and interpretive signage. There are several markers, plaques highlighting the historical aspect of the community including flooding history, businesses, local families, and the Underground Railroad.

Parking

There is ample parking in the downtown area including off street parking and a public parking garage.

Overall Observations and Suggestions

Lawrenceburg leaders should be proud of their town and its amenities. The business district is clean and welcoming, and the Dearborn Trail / river-walk is an outstanding asset for the community. Opportunities and ideas to consider include:

- Consider placing more emphasis on what visitors can do on the river in Lawrenceburg.
 - Provide welcoming signage along the river for transient boaters and paddlers.
 - Provide wayfinding signage at the river to encourage boaters and paddlers to explore downtown Lawrenceburg.
 - Promote the river for outdoor adventure recreation.
 - Provide a designated canoe / kayak access point close to downtown.
 - Perhaps near Trailhead parking lot with shelter and restrooms
 - Provide primitive camping area for “through” paddlers and bicyclists.
- Consider placing more emphasis on bicycling in and around Lawrenceburg by:
 - Providing additional bike racks
 - Providing signage for bike lanes and share the road infrastructure
- Consider providing temporary docking facilities (up to 12 hours) to encourage boaters to stop and explore Lawrenceburg.
- Plan for future repairs and upgrades to Dearborn Trail / river-walk – IE: 2-10-year Plan
 - Benches, interpretive signage, and site amenities all have an expected life cycle. Be prepared to reinvest in this wonderful infrastructure, including the interpretive signage that discusses the river and Lawrenceburg’s history with the river etc.
- Consider placing wayfinding signage along US 50 to identify location of Ohio River and the Dearborn Trail.
- Consider engaging the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail <https://lewisandclark.travel/> and its auto tour signage.



Community Meeting

RIVER TOWN REVIEW

Lawrenceburg, IN

May 18, 2021

Agenda

- 9:30 – 9:35 Welcome
- 9:35 – 9:45 Big Picture
Ohio River/ORRT/LECL
RTR process
LECL Geotourism Site & ORRT Digital Guide
- 9:45 – 10:30 Tell us about your town
Strengths
Weaknesses
Opportunities
Threats
- 10:30 – 10:50 Brainstorming
- 10:50 – 11:00 Questions, Wrap up, Next Steps



Participants

Community Participants

Mike Perleberg: mperleberg@1dearborn.org
Debbie Smith: dsmith@visitsoutheastindiana.com
Guinevere Emery: gemery@lawrenceburg.in.gov
Bryan Messmore: bmessmore@lawrenceburg.in.gov
Kendal Miller: kendal@enjoyrisingsun.com
Jon Seymour: jon@oxbowinc.org
Hailey Woods: Hwoods@hwcengineering.com

Team Participants

Brewster Rhoads: brewohio@gmail.com
Jack Sutton: jsutton677@gmail.com
David Wicks: dwicks1@gmail.com
Derek Schimmel:
d.schimmel@solimarinternational.com
Andrea Irland: Andrea_Irland@nps.gov
Russell Clark: Russell_Clark@nps.gov
Helen Siewers: Helen_Siewers@nps.gov
Michael Shilling: Michael_Schilling@npd.gov

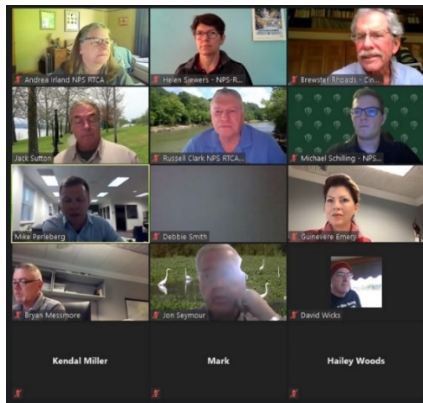




SWOT Analysis

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats

These are the results of the River Town Review conducted via Zoom for Lawrenceburg, Indiana, on May 18, 2021. Participants listed the entries via Post-It-Notes in the Mural software. The Images below show the zoom meeting participants and the results of the ideas entered for each of the four categories of the SWOT Analysis. The table on next page lists all of the ideas in each of the categories for your information.



River Town Review: SWOT Analysis

Lawrenceburg, Dearborn County, Indiana

Double-click to create a new note to record each of your ideas separately
To enlarge your text, click on your note, then click on "A+" in the toolbar

Strengths

Strengths: Riverfront, Dearborn Tr...

Opportunities

Weaknesses

Threats

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats – Continued

Lawrenceburg, IN SWOT Analysis Results 5/18/21

Mural Whiteboard Comments



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Dearborn Trail</p> <p>Riverwatch</p> <p>Tanners Creek Boat Ramp</p> <p>Levee Walk</p> <p>Civic Park</p> <p>the technical collage</p> <p>Downtown Restaurants</p> <p>Ohio River</p> <p>Tanners Creek and Great Miami River tributaries</p> <p>Bike and Hike trail</p> <p>Oxbow and the natural areas adjacent to it. It is a huge natural area</p> <p>Multiple eateries</p> <p>Archaeological History</p> <p>Walkable</p> <p>Great public spaces downtown</p> <p>Music on the River and other downtown events</p> <p>multiple historical buildings</p> <p>River</p> <p>Robust Festivals</p> <p>Bike Share Program</p> <p>Civic Park</p> <p>Riverfront</p> <p>Riverwatch Floating Restaurant</p> <p>Tanners Creek Boating access</p> <p>Tourism promotions</p> <p>Downtown Event Center</p> <p>Vibrant downtown</p> <p>Destination edibles</p> <p>Proximity to river cities</p> <p>Bike trail through Lawrenceburg</p>	<p>Lack of Bike Racks</p> <p>Levee separates downtown business district from river view/awareness</p> <p>Easier access to the river for kayaking</p> <p>Wayfinding signage</p> <p>Lack of space for new development</p> <p>Consistent Flooding</p> <p>docking system</p> <p>Lack of Kayak access to river for downtown</p> <p>Lack of connection of Trail to Tanner's Creek boat ramp</p> <p>Visual connection to River from the Downtown due to the LEVEE.</p> <p>lack of primitive camping</p> <p>Little signage from River to downtown</p>	<p>Connections to Hamilton County for Bikes and pedestrians</p> <p>Need to highlight river access points</p> <p>Need better courtesy docks</p> <p>Connecting Lawrenceburg Levee Trail to Greendale Levee</p> <p>Two defined bike paths through Lawrenceburg</p> <p>Connect Bike Trail to Tanner's Creek</p> <p>Ohio River Recreation Trail</p> <p>Direct downtown visitor to Oxbow</p> <p>Visible links from Riverfront on the Trail to Downtown district thru artscapes</p> <p>More Transient Dockage close to downtown</p> <p>Murals visible from Whiskey River Apartments, Trail and Downtown with connection to River</p> <p>More awareness of importance of outdoor recreation due to pandemic</p> <p>improved trails and roads in the Oxbow</p> <p>More shopping</p> <p>Camping area close to downtown</p> <p>Kayak livery</p> <p>new logo as a way finding sign that included Ariel view of River</p> <p>Build canoe & kayak access ramp close to downtown</p> <p>Main Street will launch a digital downtown history tour in June</p> <p>More amenities to promote biking</p> <p>healthcare</p> <p>housing</p> <p>kayak docking in the Oxbow</p> <p>education</p> <p>Trail connectivity</p> <p>involvement of local schools in the river</p> <p>Connectivity within the photo with the City logo on it</p> <p>Promote River as an asset for downtown Lawrenceburg</p> <p>More events on the Dearborn Trail</p> <p>Add bike trails thru small communities</p> <p>Downtown business attraction</p> <p>Ability to expand River Cities Bike Share Program</p> <p>Historic buildings guided tour</p> <p>kayak race from Aurora to Lawrenceburg</p> <p>Highlighting promotions for professional BASS FISHING Tournaments</p> <p>Docks to be able to receive BB Riverboat/other riverboats so visitors can dock and enjoy the town by visiting restaurants and shopping</p> <p>New housing downtown</p> <p>City of Lawrenceburg is pursuing a Riverfront Dock system as a priority moving forward.</p> <p>Mayor, Administration are all on board for legacy project.</p> <p>Ensure this area is included on Heritage Trail Plan thru IDDC</p> <p>Current transportation mural to be installed by 6-15-21 to include river options by Christian Dallas in downtown</p> <p>Biking event between L'burg & Aurora</p> <p>River City Historical Connection</p> <p>Need a Kayak Canoe Rental Program</p> <p>Triathlon/biathlon</p>	<p>Riverfront Development Planning is key area with current momentum.</p> <p>Need to partner with Hollywood Casino more for riverfront engagement.</p> <p>Climate change increasing flooding</p> <p>New major landfill being built just up river</p> <p>Loss of casino revenues</p> <p>Current Pergola Swings to be installed</p> <p>Apathy</p> <p>Dollars available for outdoor recreation</p> <p>the perception that the Ohio River is dangerous and polluted.</p> <p>Trash and debris along riverfront and riverbank</p> <p>Environmental issues at former power plant</p> <p>Lack of local organization to advocate for and promote trails/parks/recreation</p> <p>Change averse leadership</p> <p>funding</p> <p>lack of community support/ understanding</p> <p>US 50 Traffic / congestion</p> <p>Work with Downtown Business Owners and encourage them to have retail on the lower level, living on top floors</p> <p>Flooding</p> <p>Complexities of Army Core of Engineers and Lawrenceburg Conservancy District,</p> <p>complexities of railroad that hinder trail expansion in one area</p> <p>not enough funding available for riverfront development</p> <p>Stagnant timeline for AEP property for future development</p> <p>Need to ensure that river towns have an opportunity for riverfront development funds thru the state from a tourism aspect with significant ROI and destination attraction opportunities.</p>



Community Brainstorming Ideas

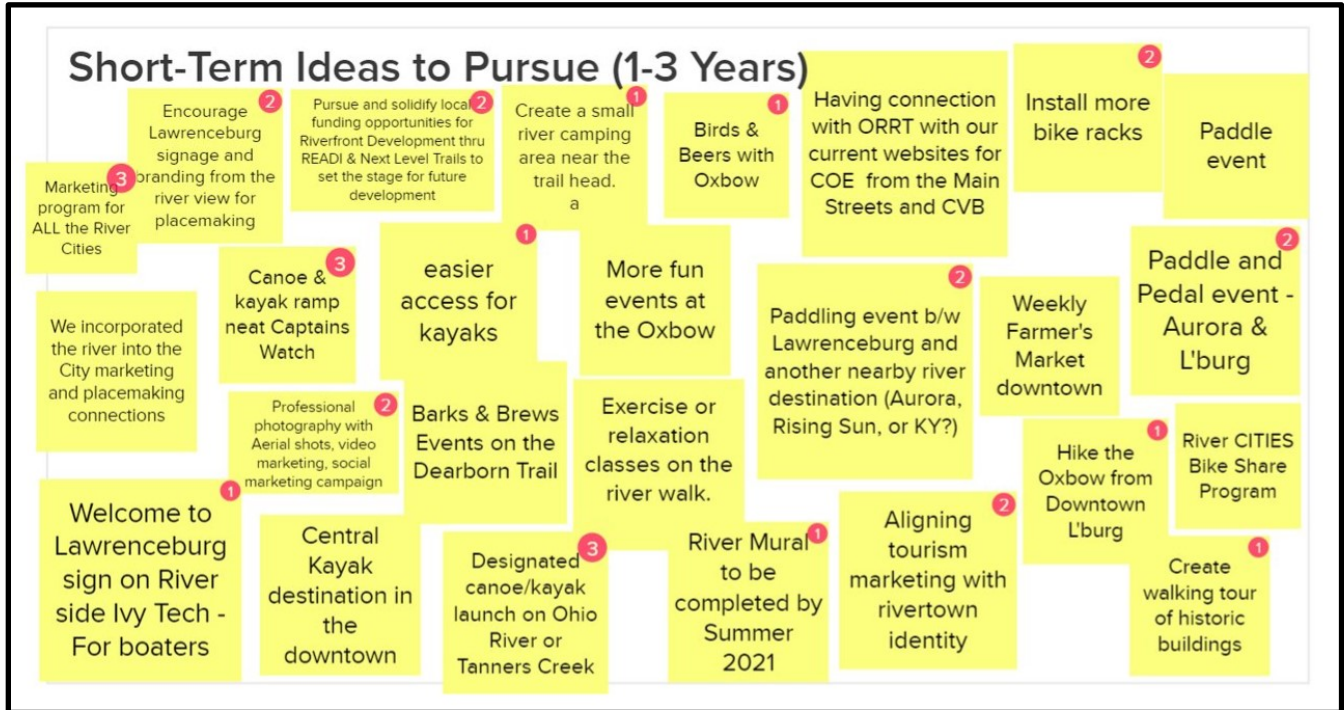
The following list of brainstorming ideas were compiled from the Mural Post-It-Notes input from the May 18, 2021 meeting participants. The highlighted ideas were identified as priority items by the participants.

Lawrenceburg, IN Brainstorming Goals Results 5/18/2021

Mural Whiteboard Comments

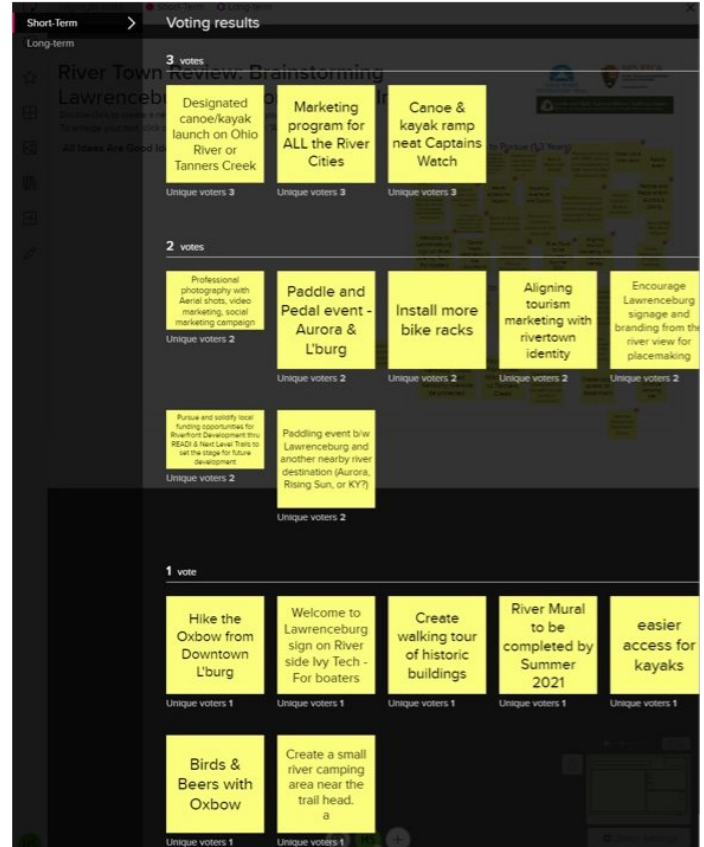
Padding event b/w Lawrenceburg and another nearby river destination (Aurora, Rising Sun, or KY?)
Professional photography with Aerial shots, video marketing, social marketing campaign
Transient Boat Dock downtown
Build primitive camping site
Welcome to Lawrenceburg sign on River side Ivy Tech - For boaters
Canoe & kayak ramp neat Captains Watch
Seek to preserve the viewshed across the river in Kentucky. Could the wooded Kentucky riverside be protected
Designated canoe/kayak launch on Ohio River or Tanners Creek
Install more bike racks
Paddle and Pedal event - Aurora & L'burg
Weekly Farmer's Market downtown
AEP power plant as new park
Kayak trips from Great Miami River to Tanners Creek
Luring a shop on or near the river where boaters/paddlers can get ice, bait, gas, etc.
Create kayak access on Great Miami
Paddle event
easier access for kayaks
Solar Farm at AEP Plant
Aligning tourism marketing with rivertown identity
Encourage recreational artscapes to be placed on the Dearborn Trail that's viewable from the City and on the River
Encourage Lawrenceburg signage and branding from the river view for placemaking
Hike the Oxbow from Downtown L'burg
Create walking tour of historic buildings
Create canoe/kayak rental program
Birds & Beers with Oxbow
More fun events at the Oxbow
Exercise or relaxation classes on the river walk.
Improve way finding to connect the gaps in the Dearborn Trail - Along street grid
Make the trail connections easy
Create a small river camping area near the trail head. a
Opportunity for phased development at the AEP site with riverfront connections
Having connection with ORRT with our current websites for COE from the Main Streets and CVB
Barks & Brews Events on the Dearborn Trail
Central Kayak destination in the downtown
We incorporated the river into the City marketing and placemaking connections
River Mural to be completed by Summer 2021
Pursue and solidify local funding opportunities for Riverfront Development thru READI & Next Level
Trails to set the stage for future development
River CITIES Bike Share Program
Marketing program for ALL the River Cities
There is power in linking these three rivertowns together in shared events.

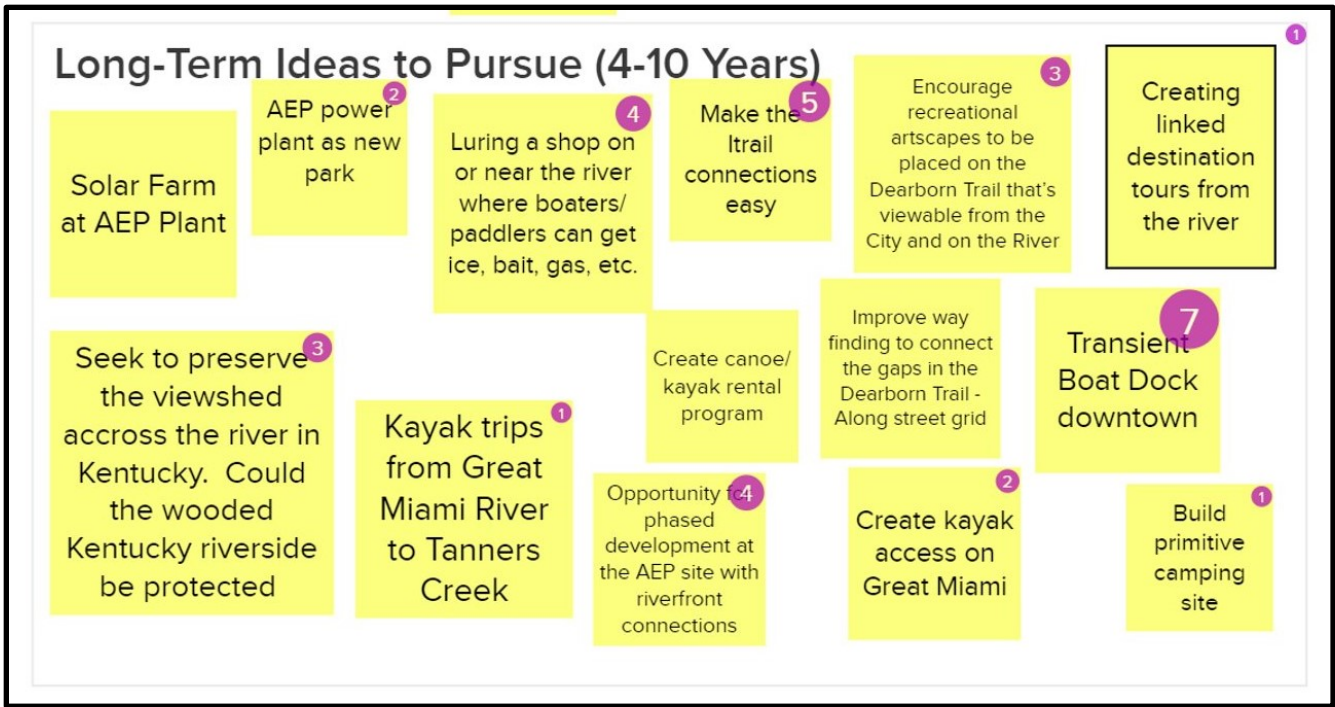
Brainstorming Ideas – Continued



Mural Board Brainstorming Ideas Input Results – Short-Term Ideas for Lawrenceburg

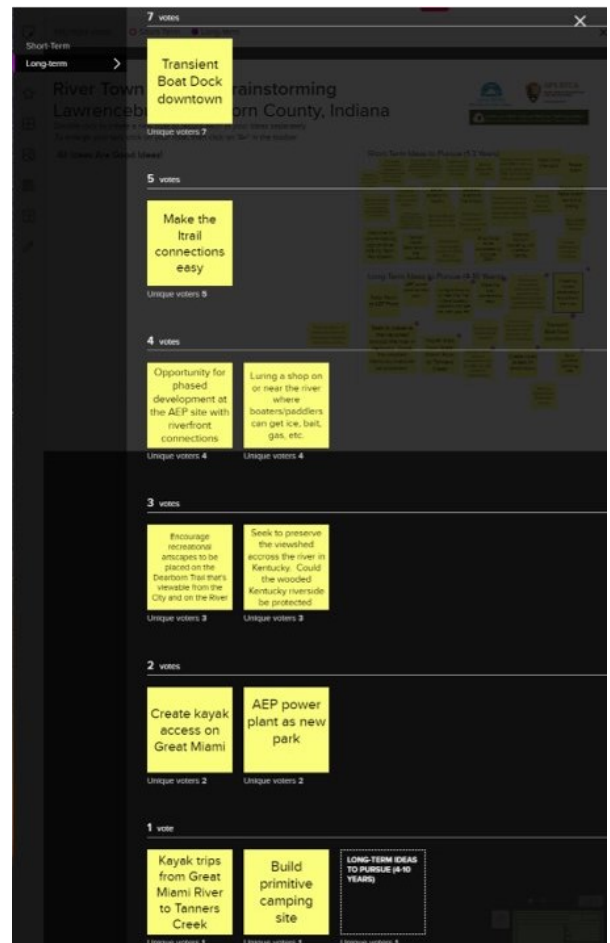
Polling Results to Prioritize Short-Term Ideas for Lawrenceburg





Mural Board Brainstorming Ideas Input Results – Long-Term Ideas for Lawrenceburg

Polling Results to Prioritize Long-Term Ideas for Lawrenceburg



Polling Results to Prioritize Long-Term Ideas for Lawrenceburg



Homework & Comments

Post Aurora River Town Review Workshop, an action item homework assignment was sent home with the participants encouraging them to provide feedback on the following prompts:

- We invite YOU to look at your town with fresh eyes!
- Note other ideas or opportunities that occur to you!
- What other contacts could be valuable partners?
- Visit the three websites
- Describe a perfect day for a visitor in your community

A Perfect Day

Describe a perfect day for a visitor in your community

- I would welcome a visitor to stay at the Hilton Doubletree hotel – either side provides a great view of the Ohio River or Lawrenceburg. They should grab breakfast and a cup of coffee at the nearby Funny

Farm Coffee Shop on High Street. From there, they would rent a bike from the River Cities Bike Share and pedal down the Dearborn Trail to Aurora and back. They could spend the rest of their morning visiting a few of the shops and boutiques in downtown Lawrenceburg, or the Lawrenceburg Farmers Market if it is a Saturday morning. A good lunch spot is Proof 124 next to the Lawrenceburg Civics Park, where kids can have fun at the splash pad while mom and dad enjoy a meal and drinks. After lunch, they take their kayaks to the Tanners Creek Boat Ramp and paddle up Tanners Creek and back to the Ohio River for a couple hours. After cleaning up back at their hotel room, they should attend Music on the River, Movies in the Park, or another of the free evening events often happening downtown.



Contacts

Organization Websites

Ohio River Recreation Trail	https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/
ORRT Digital Guide	https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/digital-guide
Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Experience	https://lewisandclark.travel/
NPS Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance	https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm

Contact Information

Andrea Irland	National Park Service	Andrea_Irland@nps.gov
Russell Clark	National Park Service	Russell_Clark@nps.gov
Brewster Rhoads	ORRT Co-Chair	brewohio@gmail.com
Jack Sutton	ORRT Co-Chair	jsutton677@gmail.com
David Wicks	ORRT Co-Chair	dwicks1@gmail.com
Derek Schimmel	Lewis & Clark Geotourism	d.schimmel@solimarinternational.com





Ohio River Recreation Trail – River Town Review

Fresh Eyes on Enhancing Tourism & Outdoor Recreation in your Community

List of Resources for Communities

As communities explore new opportunities to enhance outdoor recreation and tourism, the following list provides assessment tools, recommendations, guidelines and funding sources. This list of resources is the beginning of a journey to seek more information and it is not to be considered an all-encompassing list.

Table of Contents		
I.	Outdoor Recreation & Adventure Tourism	R1
	Trail Towns & River Towns	
	Community Walkability & Bikeability	
	DOT Bike & Pedestrian Planning	
	Bicycle Touring	
	Paddling	
	River Safety	
II.	Sustainable Tourism	R3
III.	Maintaining Small Town Character	R4
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V.	Organizations	R6
VI.	Community Assistance Programs	R7

I. Outdoor Recreation & Adventure Tourism

Trail Town & River Town Resources

Trail Town Program: [Certified Network - Trail Town Program \(trailtowns.org\)](http://trailtowns.org) and [Trail Town Guide](#)

Outdoor Towns: [Toolkit](#) and [Resource Library \(townsandtrailstoolkit.com\)](http://townsandtrailstoolkit.com)

[Trail Towns - Northern Forest Canoe Trail](#)

[Trail Towns - Huron River National Water Trail \(huronriverwatertrail.org\)](http://huronriverwatertrail.org)

[Kitsap Peninsula Water Trails Paddle Routes - Kitsap Peninsula Water Trails](#)

[Pennsylvania Environmental Council's River Town Program](#)

[Monongahela River Towns](#)

[River Towns Program | Susquehanna Greenway](#)

[RiverTowns Program — Tennessee RiverLine \(tnriverline.org\)](http://tnriverline.org)

[River Towns Program | Susquehanna Greenway](#)

[Resources - River Network](#)



Trail Town & River Town Resources ... continued

Kentucky Trail Towns Guide & Workbook

[Kentucky Trail Towns v1.0 \(kentuckytourism.com\)](#)

[Kentucky Trail Town Program Workbook \(kentuckytourism.com\)](#)

Destinations International – Variables Workbook

[DNEXT Online Diagnostic Tool Workbook 2017](#)

Community Walkability & Bikeability

Walkability Score [Get Your Walk Score](#)

Bikeability Score [Bike Score Methodology \(walkscore.com\)](#)

Walkability & Bikeability Assessment Tools

National Walkability Index [Smart Location Mapping | Smart Growth | US EPA](#)

[Healthy Communities: The Walkability Assessment Tool \(udel.edu\)](#)

[Walkability Assessment Tool | Planning for Complete Communities in Delaware \(completecommunitiesde.org\)](#)

Bikeability Checklist [bikechecklist1.ai \(epa.gov\)](#)

Departments of Transportation Bike & Pedestrian Planning

Indiana [INDOT: Bicycle & Pedestrian Program](#)

Kentucky [Bike Walk Kentucky | KYTC](#)

Ohio [Bike & Walk | Ohio Department of Transportation](#)

Public Bike Repair Station (Examples)

[Public Bike Repair Stand | Bicycle Repair Station | CycleSafe](#)

[Bike Repair Stations and Bike Pump Stations | Duo-Gard \(duo-gard.com\)](#)

Bike Rack (Examples)

[Bollard Post Bike Racks - Park Warehouse](#)

[Racer Bike Rack - The Park Catalog](#)

Mountain Biking

International Mountain Bicycling Association [Trail Accelerator Grants | IMBA](#)

Bicycle Touring

US Bike Route System [U.S. Bicycle Route System \(USBRS\) | Adventure Cycling Association](#)

Indiana Bicycle Suitability Map [LRP BicycleSuitabilityMap.pdf](#)

Kentucky Bike Routes [On Road Bicycle Routes and Events | KYTC](#)

Ohio US Bike Routes [Create A Map | ODOT TIMS \(state.oh.us\)](#)

Long Distance Cycling Routes: Economic Impacts, Best Practices, and Marketing Strategies [\(usu.edu\)](#)

Warm Showers [Home | Warmshowers.org](#)

Bicycle Friendly Business Designation [Businesses | League of American Bicyclists \(bikeleague.org\)](#)

Heat Maps (Data Analysis Tools for Outdoor Recreation)

STRAVA Heat Maps [Strava Global Heatmap](#)

Map Line Heat Maps [Create a Heat Map in Seconds | Mapline Mapping Solutions](#)



Padding

Ohio River Recreation Trail [Ohio River Digital Guide](#)
National Park Service [River Access Planning Guide](#)
[Images of Public Kayak Lockers](#)

River Safety

Ohio River Recreation Trail [Safety Tips — Ohio River Recreation Trail](#)
Ohio River Recreation Trail [On-Water Safety Guide](#)
US Coast Guard Float Plan Checklist [USCG Float Plan \(cgaux.org\)](#)
USGS Real time water data [USGS Current Water Data for the Nation \(waterdata.usgs.gov\)](#)
USGS Real time water data mobile version [USGS Mobile Water Data \(m.waterdata.usgs.gov\)](#)
Weekly Ohio River Water Quality Report [orsanco.org/weekly-ohio-river-water-quality-report](#)
NOAA Live River Forecast Center [NOAA - National Weather Service - Water](#)

II. Sustainable Tourism

USDA: Enhancing Sustainable Communities with Green Infrastructure
[Recreation Economy at USDA Economic Development Resources for Rural Communities](#)
[Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](#)

The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Rural Economic Development Toolkit
[Rural Development Toolkit – Outdoor Recreation Roundtable](#)

Solimar International [Solimar International | Tourism Marketing & Sustainable Tourism Consulting - Home](#)

Global Sustainable Tourism Council [Criteria, Standards, Certifications \(gstcouncil.org\)](#)

Adventure Travel Trade Association (This may be a great resource for river-based product development)
[Global Network of Adventure Travel Tour Operators, Destinations, and Industry Partners](#)

United Nations World Travel Organization [Sustainable development | UNWTO](#)

The Travel Foundation [Home Page - Travel Foundation \(thetravelfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

Invisible Burden [Destinations at Risk: The Invisible Burden of Tourism - Travel Foundation](#)

World Travel and Tourism Council [\(WTTC\) | Travel & Tourism Representative Council](#)

Destinations International (A resource for DMOs and Chambers of Commerce) [destinationsinternational.org](#)

Destination Development Association [Destination Assessment Program \(destinationdevelopment.org\)](#)

Destination Stewardship [Destination-Stewardship-Framework.pdf \(wtcc.org\)](#)

National Recreation & Park Association Agency Performance Review [nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf](#)

NRPA 2020 Engagement with Parks Report [2020-engagement-report.pdf \(nrpa.org\)](#)

Headwaters Economics [Home - Headwaters Economics](#)

Sample Survey from Township of Chatsworth, Ontario [Community Recreation Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](#)



Additional Reports/Studies

[Innovative and Promising Practices in Sustainable Tourism](#) (viu.ca)

[Ten Principles for Responsible Tourism](#) (Urban Land 2015)

[Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism](#) (worldbank.org)

COVID Management Tools

[Pandemic Toolkit](#) (PlaceMakers.com)

[Arts-and-Transportation-Rapid-Response.pdf](#) ([smartgrowthamerica.org](#))

(Summary of creative solutions to COVID-related transportation challenges)

[How Can Destinations Resume Tourism After the Pandemic While Ensuring Sustainability?](#) (PlaceBrandObserver.com)

III. Maintaining Small Town Character

Smart Growth Principles

[Smart Growth Principles - Smart Growth Online](#)

[Smart Growth Principles – Vermont Natural Resources Council](#) ([vnrc.org](#))

[Smart Growth in Small Towns and Rural Communities | Smart Growth | US EPA](#)

[Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities & Towns](#)

[National Main Street Program](#) ([mainstreet.org](#))

[Kentucky Main Street Program - Kentucky Heritage Council](#) ([heritage.ky.gov](#))

[Streetscape Design Guidelines for Historic Commercial Districts](#) ([heritage.ky.gov](#))

[Walkable Communities Library](#) ([walkable.org](#))

[New Designs for Growth Development Guidebook](#) ([newdesignsforgrowth.com](#))

[Downtown Revitalization in Small and Mid-sized Cities](#) ([planning.org](#))

[A Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods](#) ([aarp.org](#))

[Citizens' Institute on Rural Design](#) ([rural-design.org](#))

Additional Items to Consider

[Project for Public Spaces](#) [The Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Transformation of Public Spaces](#) ([pps.org](#))

[Creative Exchange for the Arts](#) [Toolkits for Change Archives - Creative Exchange](#) ([springboardexchange.org](#))

[Finding Nature News, Nature Blog | Children and Nature Network](#) ([childrenandnature.org](#))

[Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights](#) bring leaders, residents together - [Children and Nature Network](#)

[Waste in Our Waters: A Community Toolkit for Aquatic Litter Removal](#) ([rivernetwork.org](#))



IV. Grants & Funding Opportunities

[Home | GRANTS.GOV](#)

[Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation - American Rescue Plan | U.S. Economic Development Administration \(eda.gov\)](#)

[Economic Development Integration | U.S. Economic Development Administration \(eda.gov\)](#)

Outdoor Recreation Roundtable: Federal and ORR Member Funding and Technical Assistance Resources
[Outdoor Rec Resources \(Formatted\)-2.pdf - Google Drive](#)

[View EDA-HDQ-OIE-2020-2006705 | GRANTS.GOV](#) FY2020 SPRINT Challenge Grant

[Grassroots Grantmakers](#)

[U.S. Department of Transportation Transit, Highway, and Safety Funds - Funding - Bicycle and Pedestrian Program - Environment - FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#)

[The Grant Plant, Inc. New Mexico \(thegrantplantnm.com\)](#)

[Office of Small Business Development Centers Resources \(sba.gov\)](#)

[Keep America Beautiful's Community Restoration and Resiliency Fund Application Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](#)

[The Home Depot | The Home Depot Foundation - Team Depot Community](#)

[Shade Structure Program \(aad.org\)](#)

[Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](#)

[Community Impact | Waste Management \(wm.com\)](#)

[Online Funding Tool | Play and Recreation Funds | PlayCore](#)

[Grant Opportunities, Fundraising Resources, Funding | National Recreation and Park Association \(nrpa.org\)](#)

[Recreational Trails Program Project Database \(recreationaltrailsinfo.org\)](#)

[Thrive Outside - Outdoor Industry Association](#)

[Bicycles and Pedestrians | US Department of Transportation](#)

[Applications Now Live for the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design \(rural-design.org\)](#)

[Save America's Treasures \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

[Equitable Funding Hub | City Parks Alliance](#)

[Funding Parks and Trails Through Land Trust Partnerships | City Parks Alliance](#)

[Community Change Grants | AmericaWalks.org](#)

[Mini-grants | Celebrate Urban Birds](#)

[Community-Based Participatory Research Technical Assistance Grants - River Network](#)

[Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities 2020 Request for Letters of Interest | Smart Growth | US EPA](#)

[Six Unique Trail Funding Solutions - American Trails](#)



[Q Community Grant | Quality Bicycle Products \(qbp.com\)](#)

[Six Grants for Trails and Greenway Funding \(permatrak.com\)](#)

[State and Local Grant Funding - Land and Water Conservation Fund \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

Indiana [DNR: Land and Water Conservation Fund \(in.gov\)](#)

Kentucky [Kentucky DLG - LWCF Grants](#)

Ohio [Land and Water Conservation Fund | Ohio Department of Natural Resources \(ohiodnr.gov\)](#)

V. Organizations

Adventure Cycling Association [Discover What Awaits | AdventureCycling.org](#)

American Trails [AmericanTrails.org](#)

American Rivers [Rivers Connect Us](#) (americanrivers.org)

American Canoe Association [ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue \(americancanoe.org\)](#)

City Parks Alliance [About Us | City Parks Alliance](#)

International Journal of Wilderness [Foundation and Future of Long Distance Trails | IJW.org](#)

National Recreation and Parks Association [\(nrpa.org\)](#)

Partnership for the National Trails System [\(pnts.org\)](#)

People for Bikes [PeopleForBikes | Every ride. Every rider. Join us. \(peopleforbikes.org\)](#)

River Management Society [\(river-management.org\)](#)

River Network [Mission, Vision, Values - River Network](#) (rivernetwork.org)

Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals [Technical Resources \(recpro.org\)](#)

VI. Community Assistance Programs

National Park Service

[Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program \(RTCA\)](#)

- A national network of conservation and recreation planning professionals that partner with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and state and local governments to design trails and parks, to serve and improve access to rivers, protect special places, and create outdoor recreation opportunities
- Free technical planning assistance is available for Communities and non-profit organizations through an application process



[Directory of National Park Service Community Assistance Programs](#)



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

[Smart Growth Technical Assistance Programs | Smart Growth | US EPA](#)

- Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities
- Cool & Connected
- Governor's Institute on Community Design
- Greening Americas Communities
- Healthy Places for Health People
- Local Foods, Local Places
- Recreation Economy for Rural Communities
- Smart Growth Implementation Assistance
- Smart Growth Implementation Assistance for Coastal Communities
- Special Smart Growth Technical Assistance Projects



[Environmental Justice Grants, Funding and Technical Assistance](#)

US Forest Service

Shared Stewardship Programs

- Forest Legacy
- Forest Stewardship
- Community Forest
- Ecosystem Markets
- Wood Innovation
- Urban and Community Forestry
- Forest Health Protection
- Landscape Scale Restoration
- Forest Taxation and Estate Planning



[How the Forest Stewardship Program Works | US Forest Service \(usda.gov\)](#)

US Fish & Wildlife Service

Division of Partner & Intergovernmental Affairs

- Rural Fire Assistance
- Small Wetlands Program
- Landscape Conservation Design

Several other programs are available. Please visit the website and type "**List of Programs**" in the Search Box.

[USFWS - Division of Partner and Intergovernmental Affairs](#)



National Park Service

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

Ohio River Recreation Trail – **Resources List**

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National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

Active Programs

- Acres for America
- Bring Back the Natives
- Conservation Partners Program
- Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program
- National Coastal Resilience Fund
- Resilient Communities Program
- Bats for the Future Fund
- Monarch Butterfly & Pollinators Conservation Fund



[Programs | NFWF.org](https://www.nfwf.org)

US Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

[Technical Assistance | NRCS \(usda.gov\)](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

Rural Development Programs & Services

[Programs & Services | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/rural-development)

Strategic Economic & Community Development

[Strategic Economic and Community Development | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/economic-community-development)

