RIVER TOWN REVIEW

A Fresh Set of Eyes Helping to Enhance Tourism and Outdoor Recreation in Your Community

OHIO RIVER RECREATION TRAIL
PORTSMOUTH TO WEST POINT

Produced with the assistance of the National Park Service, Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program

- △ Thomas More Biology Field Station
- Lock
- — Tributary
- Urban Area
- River Counties

★ 12 River Town Reviews
(14 River Town Communities)

Portsmouth, OH

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

https://ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/

River Town Review Report for
Portsmouth, OH

River Town Review Team

OHIO RIVER WAY

LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

NPS RTCA
RIVERS, TRAILS & CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
www.nps.gov/rtca

May 2022

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Executive Summary

To help enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and increase tourism, the City of Portsmouth applied for assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, (RTCA). Along with eleven other river communities, Portsmouth was selected to participate in the Ohio River Recreation Trail, "River Town Review" program. Through the program, a team of outdoor recreation professionals conducted a River Town Review for each community, which included an objective assessment of outdoor recreation facilities and potential, a workshop to facilitate community input, and ultimately, a series of community-specific recommendations. The River Town Review is intended to start communities on their way towards reaching their outdoor recreation potential while enhancing tourism, as well.

The review team found Portsmouth to be well-positioned to take advantage of its location on the Ohio River, and its proximity to a multitude of exceptional regional outdoor recreation opportunities. The city can boast that four significant "long trails", the American Discovery Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the North Country National Scenic Trail, and Ohio's Buckeye Trail – all pass through the area.

Photo Credit: Cary Graham

As with all river town reviews, the process revealed both challenges and opportunities, and resulted in the development of the recommendations found in the body of this report. Notable items, along with brief comments, include:

- The perception of the Ohio as being polluted and dangerous, brought forth in the SWOT analysis, is a challenge but one that can be addressed by keeping the public well-informed, and involved, with readily available information and programs regarding water quality, and boating safety.
- To enhance what visitors can do on the Ohio and Scioto rivers, an accessible canoe/kayak launch and transient docking facility should be considered. The city can seek planning assistance for this essential facility through RTCA. In addition, the city's riverfront campground could provide primitive tent sites, which will attract and serve paddlers, cyclists, and hikers.
- There is a great need for bicycle infrastructure, and wayfinding signage in the downtown area.
- The Underground Railroad's fascinating history, local sites, routes, and facilities could be marketed to a broader, nation-wide audience and become a major tourism draw for Portsmouth.
- Portsmouth, and its neighboring river communities, can benefit by strengthening the partnerships between them. The River Town reviews have shown that many challenges and opportunities are common to all the communities. Ideas can be shared, and challenges addressed by working together.
- Portsmouth can explore the concept of becoming a "Trail Town", a welcoming haven serving cyclists, paddlers, and hikers. The economic benefits to trail towns are very real, significant, and well documented.
- Finally, with the Ohio and Scioto rivers, Shawnee State Park and Forest, and the Wayne National Forest on either side, and numerous nature preserves like Edge of Appalachia, Portsmouth is particularly blessed with an incredible amount of nearby high-quality, outdoor recreation opportunities. These provide an enviable opportunity to market and promote the community as truly an "outdoors town", attractive to visitors and potential new residents alike.

All of the challenges and opportunities identified through the process, along with accompanying recommendations and resources, are presented in detail in Portsmouth's complete River Town Review.

Introduction

The Ohio River Recreation Trail (ORRT)

The volunteer-led, Ohio River Recreation Trail Steering Committee is working to create a self-guided, 274-mile-long land and waterway trail, connecting people to opportunities for outdoor adventure, recreation, and discovery on and along the Ohio River. Stretching from Portsmouth, Ohio to West Point, Kentucky, the Ohio River Recreation Trail will serve to promote tourism, enhance economic development, and strengthen the connections between the communities it passes through. It will tell the story of the Valley's unique history and culture, while showcasing its natural beauty. By increasing environmental awareness and promoting a sense of stewardship towards this wonderful natural resource, the trail will give the Ohio River its own "voice", helping to ensure that it will provide benefits for generations to come. Please visit www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org.

ORRT Vision – The Ohio River is an accessible and welcoming recreation corridor with vibrant river towns connected by land and water trails.
ORRT Mission – To facilitate world-class outdoor adventure opportunities through partnerships that promote healthy recreation, education, stewardship, and economic development for Ohio River communities.

In a significant step towards realizing its vision and mission, the ORRT Steering Committee broadened its partnership with the Ohio River Way, a 501 C3 Charitable Organization dedicated to connecting river corridor communities, improving recreational, ecological, cultural, and compatible commercial opportunities along the waterway, ensuring a healthy river and riparian corridor, and fostering a mindset of planning and stewardship. The Ohio River Way recently contracted with Human Nature, a Cincinnati-based landscape architecture and environmental planning firm, with extensive experience with trails, greenways, parks and preserves, and Kolar Design, a Cincinnati-based firm as well, specializing in building branded experiences and connecting people with places. The firms are working to develop new branding strategies for the Ohio River Recreation Trail, a series of themed trail experiences, plans for cohesive messaging and consistent signage, a membership structure to ensure a sustainable organization, and a blueprint for increased collaboration between states and communities.

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)

NPS RTCA
RIVERS, TRAILS & CONSERVATION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
www.nps.gov/rtca

The National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program facilitates local conservation and outdoor recreation efforts around the country, helping communities develop or restore parks, rivers, and conservation areas, and create new and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities. In this case, the partnership of RTCA, the ORRT, and the Lewis and Clark Geo-tourism Project, worked to help Ohio River towns capture the benefits of outdoor recreation and tourism along the Ohio River. Utilizing the partners' combined experiences and skills, a free "River Town Review" was conducted for 12 Ohio River communities. The Review involved an objective assessment of each community's recreation resources and potential, the gathering of community input, and a summary of findings and recommendations. The communities, selected through an application process, included Madison, Lawrenceburg, Vevay, Aurora, Rising Sun, and as a group, Jeffersonville/Clarksville/New Albany, all in Indiana; West Point, Carrollton, Augusta, and Maysville, in Kentucky; and New Richmond, and Portsmouth, in Ohio. Upon completion of all 12 River Town Reviews, a Summary Report will be prepared and presented, including common and unique challenges, opportunities, ideas, and solutions, all illustrating the value of partnership and connections between Ohio River communities.


Photo Credit: NPS/LARO/Chelsea Brauner

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Experience

For almost 5,000 miles, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail follows the route of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Astoria, Oregon, travelling through 16 states and many communities along the Ohio River. Through an interactive map, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Experience helps people retrace the Expedition's route and explore local communities along the way. To help enhance tourism and the visitor experience, local communities and businesses can, and are encouraged to, add their information to the map, as well.
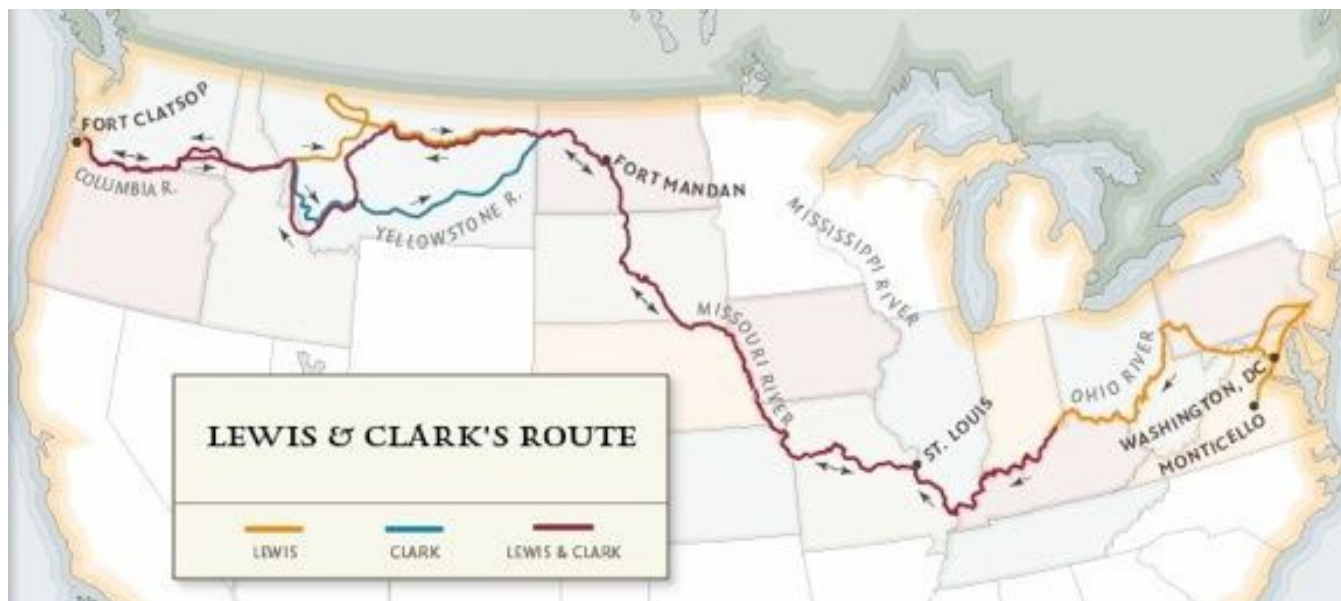
Portsmouth's River Town Review

The River Town Review team, consisting of professional planners from RTCA, leaders from the ORRT and the Lewis and Clark Geo-tourism Project, along with volunteers from outdoor recreation groups, began their task by reviewing materials provided by Portsmouth, and conducting online desktop reviews of the community's internet presence, relevant websites, and master planning efforts. Team members visited the community and developed objective impressions and suggestions for improvements. Due to covid restrictions, the team hosted a virtual, instead of in-person, community input workshop on January 20, 2022. The workshop included a SWOT analysis, and a brainstorming session intended to generate ideas for the enhancement of outdoor recreation in Portsmouth. Using the software program, Mural, team members led the participants through both exercises. Participants were also asked to provide short descriptions of their favorite places to take visitors while in Portsmouth. The team used the community's input in creating the recommendations found in this report.

Alexandria Point Park

Photo Credit: The City of Portsmouth

The Team's Desktop On-line Review

Internet Presence and Relevant Websites

Volunteers completed Desk Top Online reviews of Portsmouth's general internet and social media presence, and relevant, visitor-related websites, and obtained the city's walkability and bikeability scores. Reviewers found that the websites and social media for the City of Portsmouth, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Portsmouth Scioto County Visitors Bureau, provide very useful information about where to eat, shop, or stay. It is important to note, however, that though Portsmouth and Scioto County certainly offer a wide array of standard tourist facilities, the area is particularly blessed with an incredible amount of adjacent and nearby high-quality, outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences. Having access to the Ohio and Scioto rivers, Shawnee State Park and Forest, and Wayne National Forest, sets Portsmouth apart from other communities, and provides the wonderful and enviable opportunity to market and promote itself as truly an "Outdoors Town".

A summary of the team's observations follows, while details can be found in Appendix B.

Portsmouth City Website (www.portsmouthohio.org)

The City's website keeps residents up to date regarding public services, local government activities and special events. One reviewer said that the site "made the city look very hip with the lady practicing yoga, and local college information right up front". The City Calendar was found to be "colorful, attractive, and welcoming". River Days and Winterfest are well promoted on many platforms, though dates for 2022 were difficult to find. As with most of the sites reviewed, there is a lack of information initially found regarding outdoor recreation, though there is a link to the excellent Southern Ohio Trails website.

Visitors Bureau Guide for Portsmouth and Scioto County

A reviewer came across a printed version of the Visitors Bureau Guide for Portsmouth and Scioto County, found it very helpful, and called it "outstanding – lots of content and great photos!" It is well done, and one of only a few publications that contained information on boating. However, staff at the Visitors Center confirmed that unfortunately, this good resource is not available online.

The City of Portsmouth's Municipal Facebook page

The city's Facebook page with 2400 followers, keeps residents updated concerning city government issues, projects, and events. Mainstreet Portsmouth's Facebook page offers lots of posts and pictures, particularly regarding their numerous beautification projects. The organization's park and downtown bench programs were also highlighted, a great example for other river towns. The Friends of Portsmouth's Instagram account boasts 2,740 followers while promoting city events and programs.

Discover Portsmouth

The Scioto County Health Coalition, along with Main Street Portsmouth, CONNEX, and the Scioto Foundation, jointly produced a "Discover Portsmouth" piece. Found at the Visitors Center, it is excellent, and features a very attractive, and easy to use map and guide to the city.

CONNEX, a local nonprofit inspiring "Health Through Play", provides good information on local hiking and biking events on its website.

Several reviewers found the Scioto County Health Department site surprisingly helpful in identifying specific outdoor recreation options "That site had the most useful information for a visitor in one place. It gives a good overview of the kinds of things there are to do, and is a good resource for trip planning," said one reviewer. Potential visitors, however, probably would not associate a county health department with tourism and outdoor resources.

Summary of Internet Presence

Though the resources outlined above are very informative, generally speaking, reviewers had trouble finding the information they considered useful in deciding whether to visit Portsmouth. They noted that information about the city and the region was spread out in a confusing manner over different websites. One reviewer wrote, "There is a confusing split between the official city website and the website of the Chamber of Commerce." Another noted that "a clear-cut visitor's website was hard to find. I had to search for the Chamber site which covers a wide area, not just Portsmouth, and had to dig in the Portsmouth page to find the Main Street Portsmouth non-profit site, which seems to have the most information."

PHOTO BY ROY GREEN

Key websites were found to have similar looking URL's that often overlap – www.portsmouthohio.org (the City), and www.portsmouth.org (the Chamber of Commerce), for example. It was also noted that the URL for the Portsmouth Scioto County Visitors Bureau, www.ohiorivertourism.org, contains neither the word "Portsmouth" nor "Scioto County". A search for the Visitors Bureau, led to the Chamber of Commerce's site, and a search for Portsmouth, led to the Visitors Bureau, www.sciotocountyoh.com, prompting one reviewer to remark, "visitors may not know the name of the county".

In addition to finding basic tourism resources, and to follow the scope of the river town review, volunteers spent much time exploring outdoor recreation opportunities. Other than those available at Shawnee State Park, and to a lesser extent, Portsmouth's local municipal parks, they said it was difficult to find such opportunities online.

A recurring issue, the use of rather vague tabs, is a factor in making searches for outdoor recreation opportunities in particular, very difficult. For example, the city's website, though it contains a good amount of information, does not feature a park or outdoor recreation-type of tab on its home page. Rather, a "Relax" tab guides visitors to "Outdoor Recreation", which leads to "Parks and Recreation", which includes items not parks or recreation related, such as the Candyland Museum and Riverboat Dinner Cruises. Clicking on the "Adventure" tab leads one to the 1810 House and again to the Candyland Museum, not really "adventures". It does include the Shawnee Boat Club. Similarly, the Visitors Bureau website does not include an outdoor recreation-related home page tab. It's "Activities" tab leads only to a listing of City of Portsmouth parks, the dog park, and a mention of Shawnee State Forest with a link to the main ODNR Forestry page. The County website's "Recreation" tab leads not to recreation but to hotels and restaurants, and while the "Nature" tab does lead to one of the few references found regarding boating and fishing opportunities, many visitors may not make the connection between nature and boating. Save for those mentioned above, and Shawnee State Park, there were few references to marinas, boat ramps, fishing, camping, hiking, paddling, or the Ohio River itself. Information about biking was limited to inviting visitors to explore downtown Portsmouth by bike, but information about other bike trails or rentals was not easily found. As mentioned earlier, the city's website does provide a link to Southern Ohio Trails, which does a great job of outlining the area's plentiful hiking, road and mountain biking, and backpacking opportunities. However, it took multiple "clicks" to find this excellent resource.

Along with outdoor recreation, volunteers also sought information concerning the region's history. Several noted they learned quite a bit from Wikipedia. Another reviewer found a link to "Scioto Historical", on the city's website, a digital publication, to be very engaging and well done, providing information that would attract potential visitors. Descriptions of Native American sites and history, the building of Spartan Stadium, and the organization's "Abolitionist and Underground Railroad" tour, offered compelling reasons for tourists and history buffs alike, to visit.

The Scenic Scioto Heritage Trail site greatly impressed reviewers. The trail map of the area, shows more than 40 historical sites, along with recreational opportunities, prompting one reviewer to write, "I would do the Trail since it is easily laid out and explains what I would see." The website features only the map side of the brochure. A

printed large fold out version, with all sites and descriptions listed on the back, was found at the Visitors Center, and would be a great addition to the site.

In summary, the good news is that the area already has the hardest part covered – it is situated among an amazing amount of quality outdoor recreation opportunities offering a wide range of experiences. Local organizations and websites just need to make it easier for potential visitors to find them.

Walkability & Bikeability Scores for Portsmouth

Walk and Bike Score measures 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 Madison. **74 - Very Walkable. Most errands can be accomplished on foot.**
- Bikeability Score for Madison. **67 – Bikeable. Some bike infrastructure.**

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

Community Master Planning Efforts

A review of Portsmouth, and Scioto County master planning efforts, focused on plan components related to outdoor recreation, pedestrian and bicycling issues, trail development and connectivity, boating and paddling access, and waterfront development. Two, very significant plans currently in place include:

- "Elevate Portsmouth"- Master Plan, 2020.
- Scioto County Active Transportation Plan, 2020.

"Elevate Portsmouth" – Master Plan, 2020

Portsmouth's master plan is a well-done, attractive, and very readable document, with the marks of a community looking towards the future by "transforming spaces for 21st century needs". Many examples of the plan's elements that have been implemented in other communities, were included. This can help residents envision planned projects and potentially generate support. An interesting method of generating public input involved the development of an area Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats analysis, through answers to the questions - "Where do you go?", "Where do you avoid?", and "Where are areas of opportunity?" The resulting "heat map", showed many similarities to the input gathered during Portsmouth's workshop. Relevant to the River Town Review's focus, the plan addressed gateways and wayfinding, trail connectors and links, recreation and parks, and waterfront connections. The following items were also noted:

- The admirable and progressive goal of becoming a "Lifestyle City", with "Broad Recreation Opportunities", and "Great Public Spaces" was outlined.
- Portsmouth's riverfront was categorized as a "Top Priority".
- An example of leveraging existing assets was included, specifically the development of the regional Shawnee Recreation Trail, connecting Portsmouth with its natural features and resources through trails, greenways, and water trails on the Ohio and Scioto.
- Partnering with adjacent jurisdictions to create a regional park district to guide the development of area parks and recreation facilities and programs, was suggested.
- The renovation and activation of historic Spartan Stadium, along with the addition of athletic facilities, neighborhood meeting and event spaces, and a trail connection to downtown, was included as a "Big Project That Will Catalyze Change", revitalizing the East End.

## Scioto County Active Transportation Plan

Of significance, this is the first plan to focus on bicycle and pedestrian improvements in Scioto County. As with "Elevate Portsmouth", this is a very well done, attractive and readable document. The plan highlights the importance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the health benefits of walking and biking, and the positive impacts on an area's economy and our environment. Noteworthy observations and strategies included:
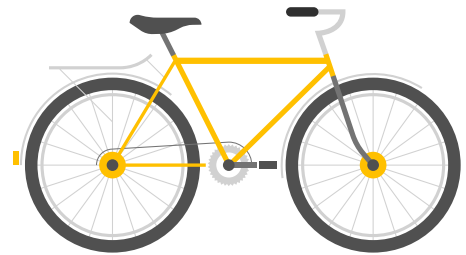
- An equity analysis measured underserved markets, while a demand analysis was performed for walking and biking opportunities. Portsmouth scored very high in both, indicating a great need for the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There are currently very few bike facilities in the city and county, providing ample opportunities to introduce bicycle infrastructure.
- The area boasts a multitude of potential local and regional routes that would serve recreational cyclists while serving residents' commuting needs, as well.
- Priority local trails initiatives included:
  o Implementing "Safe Routes to School" projects for children to walk or ride to their school.
  o Creating a protected bike lane along Rt. 52 between Portsmouth and Sciotoville.
  o Developing bike lanes along Waller Street, a less-travelled, north/south connector in the city.
- Priority county-wide trails projects include:
  o The Western Scioto Trail.
  o The Towpath Trail.
  o The Portsmouth River Trail.
- It was interesting and welcoming to find that, in addition to bike and pedestrian considerations, the plan includes a strong recommendation to "participate in and promote efforts to facilitate active recreation use of the Ohio River and Scioto River" through river trails. In particular:
  o The Ohio River Recreation Trail is mentioned, along with the need to improve signage and provide easy access to accommodations and services for boaters and paddlers.
    Pursuing Water Trail designation for the Scioto River was recommended, as well.

The Team's Visit to Portsmouth

To experience the community firsthand, members of the River Town Review Team visited Portsmouth. Their visit resulted in an objective assessment of facilities, connections, and access. They developed suggestions for improvements and noted potential opportunities. These were then considered during the development of the "Recommendations" section of this report. Following is a summary of their visits.
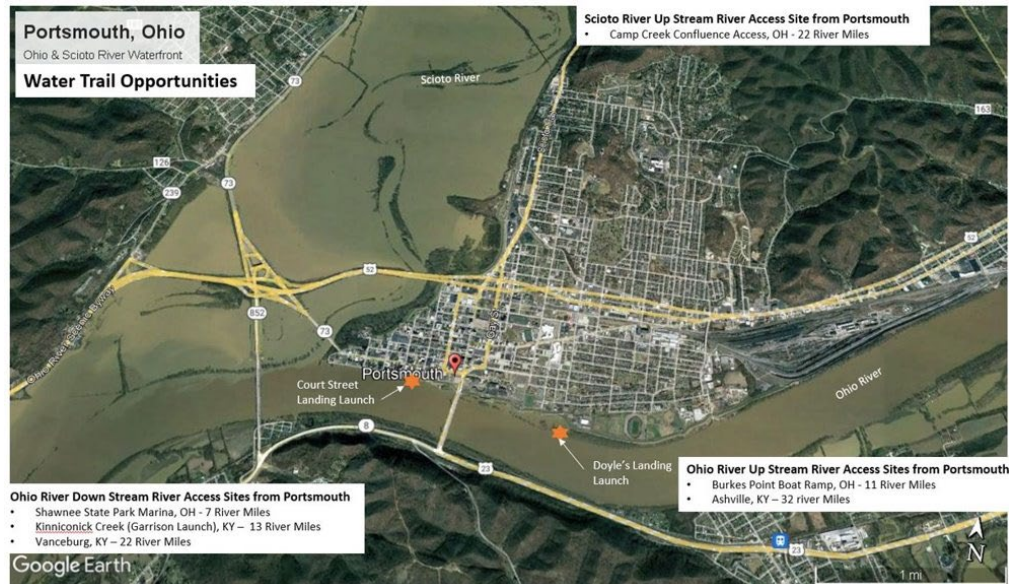
Observations and Initial Assessments

River Connections and Access

As is common in most communities with an extensive floodwall, access between the Ohio River and downtown is challenging. Riverfront Park, a long greenway between the floodwall and the river, is home to the city's campground, launch ramp with boarding docks, other unimproved boating access sites, a public art area where artists can paint sections of the floodwall, and a park area with playground. There is limited road and pedestrian access over and through the floodwall. Most of Riverfront Park's facilities were found to need maintenance and upgrades, and none of the boating access sites appeared to include docks for transient boaters. A new and well-marked bike route on the landside of the floodwall begins in the east end of town, travels along the south side of Shawnee State's campus, passes many of the Robert Dafford murals, and curves along Alexandria Point Park. Pedestrians and cyclists can find limited access to the river along this route.

Transient boaters, and paddlers on the Ohio or Scioto, like pedestrians and cyclists, will find access on the river, and subsequently to downtown, to be quite challenging.

The Portsmouth/Scioto County Visitors Center occupies a prominent and visible location across from the floodwall murals and designated bike route and provides valuable information and directions for tourists.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Team members found downtown Portsmouth to be walkable, with a full complement of sidewalks and ADA curb cuts. There were few marked crosswalks, however. Numerous high-quality benches were noticed throughout the downtown area, many provided through Main Street Portsmouth's wonderful bench and beautification programs. Several businesses along 2nd Street also provide sidewalk benches and tables, most of which were occupied. Outdoor dining areas were observed at the rear of The Lofts, and again, almost all were being used.


The downtown area does not include any designated bike lanes, which made biking rather difficult and unsafe. Except for those provided by CONNEX, no bike racks were found.

Shawnee State University, the Vern Riffe Center for the Performing Arts, and Portsmouth High School's Clark Athletic Complex, all offer great and almost park-like settings, with walking opportunities on newer concrete sidewalks.

Signage, Wayfinding, and Site Amenities

Streetscape amenities featured attractive period-piece streetlights, interpretive and historic signage was found at several locations throughout downtown, and the gateway sign to the Boneyfiddle District features a dancing skeleton with fiddle! However, there is almost a complete lack of wayfinding signage in the entirety of downtown, making it difficult for visitors to find their way around the community.
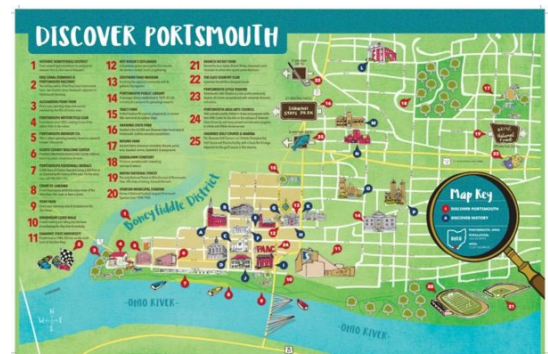
Some of the many park areas and related facilities visited included Spock Memorial Dog Park, the new skatepark, and Portsmouth's Riverfront Park. Portsmouth Raceway Park, in addition to its dirt track, features a boat ramp, and camping along the Scioto. Crossing the Scioto River by bike on the Route 73 bridge, was rather challenging. Riding the raised sidewalk offered the safest travel. Alexandria Point Park is a wonderfully peaceful place, with views of the river and plenty of benches and tables. The Roy Rogers Esplanade offers a relaxing area to sit downtown, and like Alexandria Point Park, features benches and bike racks provided by Main Street Portsmouth, and CONNEX. A small but very interesting park area, located below the new U.S. Grant Bridge, features a display of parts from the original U. S. Grant Bridge, and a series of interpretive plaques. With highly contrasting light gold

raised relief text on a dark black background, the plaques are easy to read and quite striking. A new facility, the Red Bull-Certified Pump Track at Earl Thomas Conley Riverside Park, figures to be an incredible asset for the area. Very few towns have a skatepark <u>and</u> a pump track.

Parking

The team found an abundance of parking throughout the downtown area, with a particularly attractive, diagonal parking area on Market Street.

The Virtual Workshop

On January 20th, 2022, the River Town Review Team hosted and facilitated a Virtual Workshop for Portsmouth. Over 40 community representatives, the most from any river town, participated in the workshop, which began with presentations on the Ohio River Recreation Trail, The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Experience, and the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Observations from the team's Desktop Online Review and Community Visit were presented, as well. Team members then facilitated a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, Analysis, (SWOT), followed by a Brainstorming Session for the generation and prioritization of ideas. Workshop participants shared their thoughts during both exercises, by submitting their ideas on virtual Post-It-Notes via Mural interactive software. In addition, the participants prioritized the items generated, by voting for three in each category. The participants' involvement in the process was positive and energetic, leading one team member to remark that they "had never seen so many Post-It-Notes generated". Participants were also invited to describe their favorite places in Portsmouth, and what would constitute the "perfect day" for a visitor to their community.

Combined with the information gathered through the Online Desktop Review and Community Visit, the input provided through the virtual workshop gave the River Town Review Team a better understanding of what is important to, and special about, Portsmouth, and the challenges and opportunities that are present. The process helped the team develop the targeted recommendations for Portsmouth.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Workshop participants identified the following as their highest priority considerations in each of the four SWOT categories. A complete listing of the items generated can be found in Appendix B.
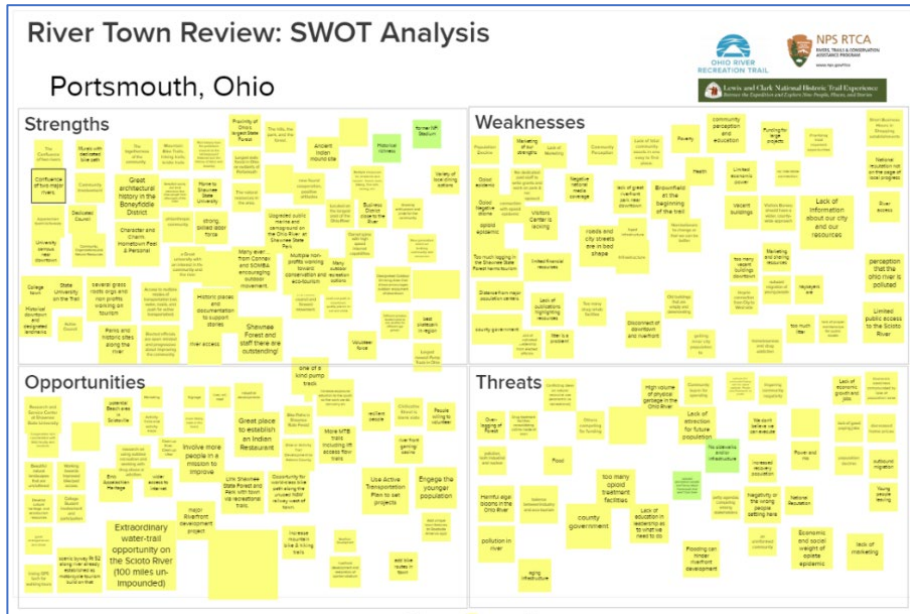
Strengths

- The natural resources in the area.
- The presence of Shawnee State University.
- Floodwall murals and the dedicated bike path.
- Adjacent Shawnee State Forest, the largest in the state.
- Portsmouth's location at the confluence of two major rivers.
- Historical downtown.
- Nearby mountain bike, hiking, and equestrian trails.
- The area's history, including the mound builders, the Underground Railroad, labor, and industry.
- The area's multiple modes of transportation.
- Access to the Ohio River.
- A Designated Outdoor Drinking Area. (DORA)
- Updated Shawnee State Park Marina.
- Newest and largest bike pump track in Ohio.
- The many events provided by CONNEX and SOMBA that encourage use of the outdoors.

Weaknesses

- Effects of the opioid epidemic.
- Population decline.
- Perception of the Ohio River as polluted and unsafe.
- Not marketing the area's strengths.
- Aged infrastructure.
- Excessive logging in Shawnee State Forest.
- No dedicated staff for grant writing or directing parks and recreation.
- Limited financial resources.
- The number of drug addiction rehabilitation facilities.
- Lack of access points on the Scioto River.
- The national negative perception of the community.
- No great, signature, riverfront park.

Opportunities

- Potential for a world-class bike trail on the unused N & W rail line.
- Great opportunity for a 100-mile-long water trail on the Scioto River, from Columbus to Portsmouth.
- A trail link between downtown and Shawnee State Park and State Forest.
- Riverfront development and restoration of historic Spartan Stadium.
- Chillicothe Street presents a clean slate for development.
- Establish a research project investigating the use of outdoor recreation to treat drug addiction.
- Develop more mountain bike trails, and a gravity park with lift.
- Continue working on bicycle and pedestrian access projects.
- Improved marketing.
- Take advantage of the strong motorcycle tourism along the Ohio Scenic Byway.
- Develop and promote ecotourism opportunities.

Threats

- The continuing impact of the opioid epidemic. Too many treatment facilities.
- Aging infrastructure.
- Conflicting ideas regarding the economics of extractive and recreational use of natural resources.
- Flooding that hinders riverfront development.
- Loss of jobs, young people leaving, and population decline.
- Negative national reputation, and lingering community negativity.
- Pollution from industry and the nearby nuclear facility.
- Pollution in the Ohio River.
- Harmful algae blooms.
- Uninformed leadership.
- Lack of marketing.

Brainstorming Session

Upon completion of the SWOT analysis, workshop participants were led through a brainstorming session to generate ideas for the enhancement of outdoor recreation and tourism in and around Portsmouth. The ideas generated were once again submitted on virtual Post-It-Notes through Mural interactive software and prioritized by a vote for three short-term and three long-term action items. A complete listing of the ideas generated can be found in Appendix B.
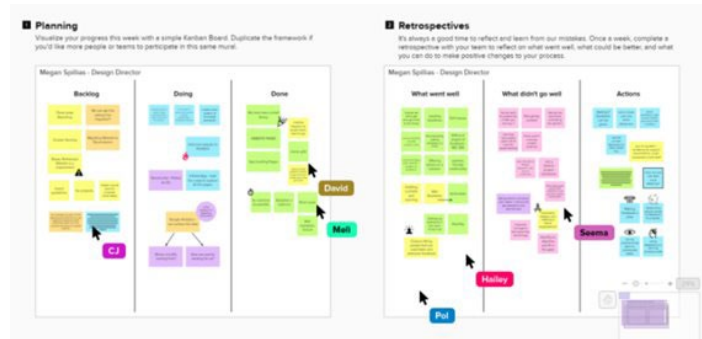
Short Term – First 3 Years.

- Develop a targeted social media campaign with one go-to site. Include an Area Outdoor Recreation Guide. Coordinate and connect related area websites.
- Commission a new Underground Railroad mural.
- Promote Appalachian-themed tourism opportunities.
- Hold community river cleanups.
- Schedule cycling events.
- Procure and install Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail signage.
- To connect kids to nature, develop a program like Cincinnati's "Adventure Crew".
- Host more events and festivals. Include food trucks along the riverfront.

Long Term – 3 to 10 Years

- Develop paved rail trail from Portsmouth to Peebles.
- Complete riverfront improvements.
- Connect downtown by trail with Shawnee State Park and Forest.
- Plan for and construct a kayak launch facility on the Ohio and/or Scioto.
- Expand and develop bike routes and trails.
- Fund historic landmark renovations.
- Purchase land for public outdoor recreation use.
- Scioto River Water Trail development and designation – Columbus to Portsmouth.
- Develop a campground and park along the Ohio River beach in Sciotoville.
- Establish an interdisciplinary research center at Shawnee State focusing on Ohio River issues.
- Restore the area's historic Civilian Conservation Corps, (CCC), camps.
- Create more access points along the lower Scioto.
- Plan for a bike trail to Adams County.
- Pursue State Wild and Scenic River designation for Scioto Brush Creek.
- Host pump track races.

Recommendations and Relevant Resources for Portsmouth

The City of Portsmouth participated in the River Town Review process to help reach its potential as a river town destination, in part by enhancing its outdoor recreation opportunities. Portsmouth may have challenges, but with the shear amount of quality outdoor recreation resources and experiences close by, the community's ceiling is incredibly high. The River Town Review team, using its expertise, and the community's input, developed the following recommendations for immediate, short, and long-term actions to help reach that high ceiling. Many of these can be undertaken immediately. For convenience, relevant resources are included with most of the recommendations. Communities are also encouraged to take advantage of the additional resources found in Section E. These may prove useful in further addressing the recommendations below, and may lead to new options and ideas, as well.

Recommendations:

Immediate Action Items

- Discuss Portsmouth's River Town Review with elected officials, business leaders, outdoor recreation and tourism advocates, and residents. A pop-up event or group walk may be an effective strategy.
- Review "Elevate Portsmouth", the city's Master Plan, and Scioto County's Active Transportation Plan. Two excellent, very readable documents, and with sections particularly relevant to this Review.
- Encourage local businesses, services, special events, and attractions to update and/or add their information to the Ohio River Recreation Trail, (ORRT) "Digital Guide" and to the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Experience's interactive map.
- Add the ORRT link to all relevant websites and social media platforms, to promote the Ohio River Corridor as an outdoor recreation destination.
- If not already, become partners with the ORRT , the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, the Buckeye Trail, and the American Discovery Trail.
- Strongly consider becoming a "Trail Town", a safe and welcoming haven with services for hikers, paddlers, and cyclists, and that provides very real, and well-documented, economic benefits to the community. Though a long-term endeavor, the team recommends an initial review of the following resources and inspiring examples.
    - Huron River Water Trail. Great example of, and an excellent promotional site for five river trail towns in Michigan.
    - The Trail Town Program. Trail town development guide with excellent economic/tourism enhancement statistics.
    - Rails to Trails Conservancy. Comprehensive trail town development step by step guide/toolkits.

- Market and promote not only Portsmouth's prime location on the Ohio and the Scioto, but also what residents and visitors can <u>do</u> on the rivers. Showcase river-oriented businesses, boating access, (like Shawnee and Anchor Pad boat clubs), fueling, and docking facilities, paddling opportunities, and riverside walkways/trails. Market directly to watersports groups.
- Portsmouth should seek the input of young and diverse groups, perhaps by facilitating a version of the River Town Review's SWOT analysis and brainstorming session for those demographics. Shawnee State may offer resources and an appropriate venue.
- Encourage implementation of the Scioto County Active Transportation Plan.
- Promote and provide support for existing regional trails and trail planning efforts.
- The perception of the Ohio River as being polluted and unsafe, was identified as a "Threat" in Portsmouth's and many of the community SWOT analysis. Towns can begin addressing this immediately by keeping the public well-informed by providing readily available and current information through social media regarding water quality, river conditions, and safe boating and swimming practices. The following resources are available to help address this issue.
    o [ORRT Safety Tips, and Safety Guide](#). Good review of the basics of boating safely on the Ohio. Current weather and forecast, river stage and velocity, safety equipment checklist, US Coast Guard Float Plan, and lock, dam, and Coast Guard contacts.
    o [The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO)](#) . Current "safe swimming" information during recreation season, regarding contact bacteria levels, harmful algae blooms. Weekly water quality reports, monthly "Ohio River Discussions" webinar series, and annual River Sweep information, as well.
    o [The Foundation for Ohio River Education, (FORE).](#) Teaches people of all ages to become environmental stewards through student and teacher programs, community events, and volunteer water quality monitoring programs.
- Increase promotion of Portsmouth's significant Underground Railroad history and sites. The National Park Service's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program offers background information and an excellent [promotional toolkit](#). Marketed nation-wide, the Underground Railroad can become a major tourism draw.
- Work with and encourage local businesses to begin installing bike racks and seek Bike-Friendly Business designation through the [American League of Bicyclists](#). (With almost no bike racks in the downtown area, this would be a "quick win".)
- Promote the fact that Portsmouth now has a great skatepark and the largest bike pump track in the state. These two facilities alone, will draw visitors to the city, and should be included and highlighted in all tourism marketing efforts. Very, very few communities offer this combination.

Short Term – First 3 Years.

- Become more welcoming to the cycling community by:
    - Ensuring that there are adequate bike racks near service facilities. Designs and examples can be found at www.cyclesafe.com/bike-parking-dimensions/.
    - Installing bike pump/repair stations. www.theparkcatalog.com/bike-repair-stand/.
    - Providing bike storage lockers. www.cyclesafe.com/product-category/bike-lockers/
    - Installing charging stations for the growing number of E-Bikes. Swift Mile provides charging stations for communities, funded through advertising.
    - Using the excellent assessment tool and checklist at https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-12/documents/bikabilitychecklist.pdf.
- Enhance Portsmouth's walkability as well by accessing the resources at America Walks. Free assistance is available to improve a community's pedestrian access.
- Primitive tent site areas attract paddlers, cyclists, and hikers. One could be incorporated in the city's River Front Park. A good introduction to meeting the needs of non-motorized travelers is the Bicycling Camping Guide .
- An interesting example of an "in town", primitive campground, which may be an opportunity for a local business, is the Up the Creek Campground, in Moab, Utah. Paddler, cyclist, and hiker-friendly, campground located a short walk from the downtown district.
- It was almost unanimous among Desktop reviewers, and affirmed during the community's workshop, that there is a need for one "go to" tourism/outdoor recreation site for Portsmouth and Scioto County. A new, separate site could be created, or be hosted by either Portsmouth, the Chamber of Commerce, or the County Visitors Bureau. Regardless of structure, the River Town Review Team recommends:
    - Including a robust "Outdoor Recreation", or "Get Outside" section with action-oriented pictures portraying Portsmouth as a "Lifestyle City" and illustrating what truly sets the community apart from others, namely the wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities provided by the Ohio and Scioto rivers, Shawnee State Park and Forest, Wayne National Forest, and preserves such as Edge of Appalachia and Davis State Nature Preserve.
    - Creating a compelling section focusing on the history of the region, key sites, and available tours, relating to the Mound Builders and Native Americans, early settlers, the Ohio River, the Underground Railroad, local sports history, Portsmouth's labor, and manufacturing legacy, etc.
    - Ignore city, county and even state boundaries, and promote the region's outdoor recreation opportunities. These will attract not only visitors, but potential residents looking for that "outdoors town" with access to quality outdoor resources both locally and within a short drive.
- Begin planning for a true kayak launch and transient docking facility as a National Park Service/RTCA project. To apply for technical planning assistance, visit RTCA's website . This was a highly ranked long-term item in Portsmouth's workshop brainstorming session and would provide much needed access to downtown for boaters and paddlers. There may be an opportunity to make this happen in partnership with a local business with riverfront access. In addition, explore the potential of including an accessible fishing pier in conjunction with this project, or at another location in the community. In the meantime, look at providing lockable storage facilities for paddlers and kayaks. (www.shopsoundboatworks.com).

Accessible Kayak Launch

- Solicit vendors to provide seasonal canoe and kayak rentals. An outdoor gear shop may be interested in providing this service. A good example of a successful local gear shop and its relationship with a trail town, can be found in Milford, Ohio, just east of Cincinnati. www.roadsriversandtrails.com/the-best-trail-town/.
- Since many tourists desire to travel with their dogs, promote and encourage pet friendly businesses. State tourism departments are beginning to actively promote these opportunities, as well. River towns can help through the provision of dog parks, (an inexpensive, great "bang-for-the-buck" project), and through hiking-with-pets programs. An excellent article can be found at www.thebark.com/content/states-go-all-boost-their-dog-friendly-tourism-attractions/.
- Develop a long-term plan for maintenance and upgrade of Riverfront Park facilities.
- Work in partnership with other river towns as suggested during River Town Review workshops.
- Paddle and peddle events should be planned to showcase the area's outdoor recreation opportunities. This could be done in conjunction with nearby river towns.

Long Term 3 – 10 Years

- The Ohio River and its tributaries, offer plenty of water trail possibilities. In Portsmouth's case, the Scioto River, presents a particularly interesting opportunity to capitalize on a potential connection, by water trail, all the way to Columbus. The following resources will be helpful in starting the planning process and developing access and launch sites for carry-in watercraft. Good access facilities will attract paddlers.
  - The National Park Service River Access Planning Guide
  - The River Management Society. Links to the RMS/NPS/RTCA "Prepare to Launch" guide for assessing, designing, and building launch sites, along with economic impacts, best management practices, and a toolkit.

Portsmouth, Ohio
Ohio & Scioto River Waterfront
Water Trail Opportunities

Scioto River Up Stream River Access Site from Portsmouth
- Camp Creek Confluence Access, OH - 22 River Miles

Ohio River Down Stream River Access Sites from Portsmouth
- Shawnee State Park Marina, OH - 7 River Miles
- Kinniconick Creek (Garrison Launch), KY – 13 River Miles
- Vanceburg, KY – 22 River Miles

Ohio River Up Stream River Access Sites from Portsmouth
- Burkes Point Boat Ramp, OH - 11 River Miles
- Ashville, KY – 32 river miles

Court Street Landing Launch

Doyle's Landing Launch

  - Paddling.com. Good resources and a way to connect with the paddling community. Also, a nation-wide interactive map and app for paddling opportunities.
  - EZ Dock. Examples of accessible kayak launch systems and docks.
- Work with the International Mountain Bike Association, (IMBA), to explore the opportunities for potential trail development. IMBA is the source for trail planning and design, "Trail Labs" workshops, toolkits, advocacy, and economic impact data. The area's terrain and significant elevation changes may also be ideal for a bike gravity park. Basic information can be found at www.diymountainbike.com/what-gravity-mountain-biking.

Gravity Mountain Biking

Photo Credit: 2016 Gravity Enduro National

- Portsmouth can increase recreation-based tourism by reaching underserved markets, in part through marketing, but by ensuring that facilities and services are
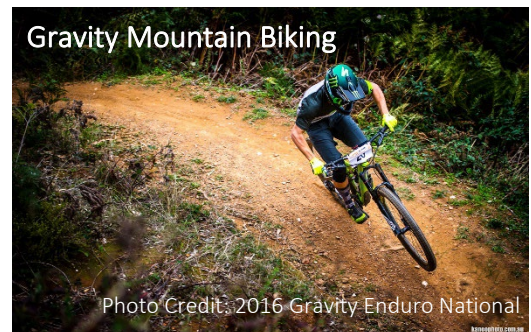
welcoming, accessible, and inclusive, as well. The following resources contain excellent information regarding recreation participation trends, inclusion in the outdoors, and underserved markets.

- o National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA), 2020 Engagement with Parks Report. Excellent resource for parks and recreation participation, identifying and reaching underserved markets.
- o Headwaters Economics. "Inspiring the Future Outdoor Recreation Economy, 2021". Well-done, attractive, and effective report/booklet.
- o "Five Steps to Make the Outdoors More Inclusive", each with action items.
- o Outdoor Afro & Latin Outdoors, two national leadership organizations promoting inclusion and equity in the outdoors.
- o American Canoe Association. Promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity in paddling.
- o The Safe Spaces Initiative, National Wildlife Federation. Making the outdoors a safe and comfortable place for all.
- o People for Bikes. Advocacy group getting more people biking.

- Though the land side of the city's floodwall features over 50 beautiful Robert Dafford murals, the river side does not feature nearly as many. Riverfront Park in particular, could be made more welcoming and attractive by working with local arts community organizations to develop a public art/beautification project. Newport, Kentucky, on the Ohio River, offers a wonderful example of such a project. https://stories.opengov.com/newportky/published/8MKJQJ9Z4. Another great example is pictured below - Parkersburg, West Virginia. www.parkersburgflood.org.
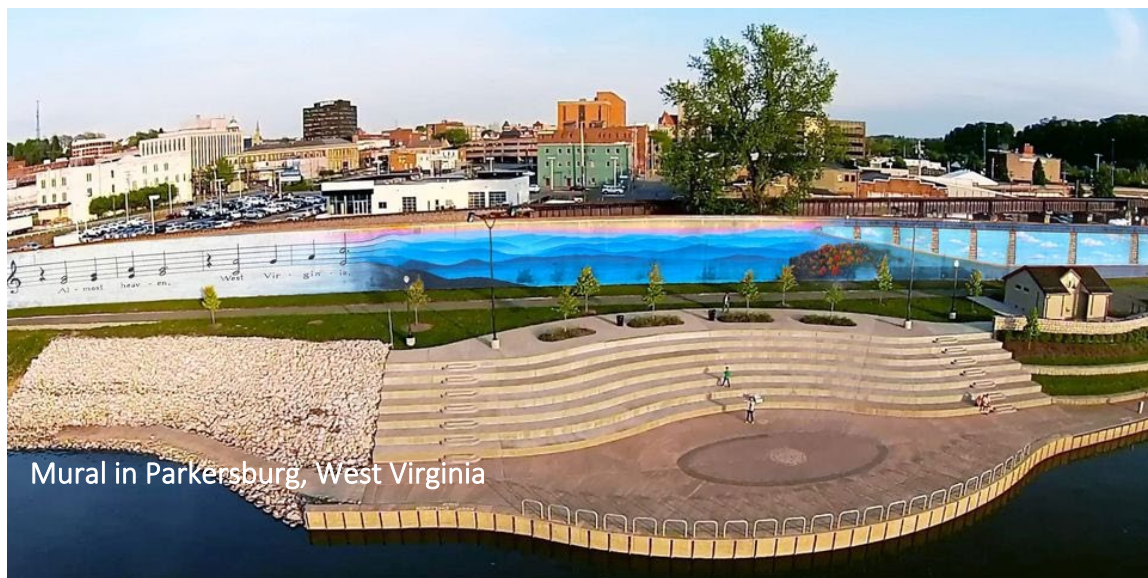
Mural in Parkersburg, West Virginia

Portsmouth Area Classic Trip Opportunities

Classic trip opportunities can make a community stand out among others, drawing visitors who may then take advantage of what else the area offers, and maybe even consider it as their future home. Portsmouth's location presents opportunities almost too numerous to list.

To get an initial taste of what the area offers, travel the 84 miles of scenic county roads, and stop at over 40 sites along the **Scenic Scioto Heritage Trail**. This designated Ohio Byway, travels west along the Ohio River, north through Shawnee State Park and Forest, and back south along the Scioto River. Along the way, climb the **Copperhead Fire Tower**. The fire tower, the first in Ohio, was constructed in in Shawnee State Forest in 1924, and shows the incredible scenery that surrounds Portsmouth.

Scenic Scioto Heritage Trail

Grab your mountain bike and spend the day riding the singletrack of Shawnee State Park's Cabin Fever, High Meadow, Horseshoe, and Lampblack trails. Riders can also try out the new pump track at Earl Thomas Conley Park.

Shawnee Bridge to Bridge Route

Road bikers can do the 36-mile out and back Scioto County Shawnee Bridge to Bridge Route. The first designated bike route in the county, this scenic, rural route involves some climbing, but fun downhills, as well, and includes the Otway Covered Bridge at one end, and the historic Mackletree Bridge at the other end.

Photo Credit: sociotrails.org

Southern Ohio and the Portsmouth area contain incredibly important, world-class archaeological sites, featuring earthworks constructed by the Adena, Hopewell, and Fort Ancient cultures. Begin a day-long journey back 2,000 years at Portsmouth's Mound Park. The new interpretive monument depicts the significant Portsmouth Earthworks complex. Head next to Serpent Mound National Historic Landmark, to see the world's largest serpent effigy mound, and then on to the Hopewell Culture National Historic Park, where you can walk among dozens of mounds and earthen enclosures, dating back 2,000 years. Both sites have been nominated for designation as United Nations World Heritage Sites. To put this in perspective, Stonehenge, and the Great Pyramids of Egypt, are World Heritage Sites.

Wayne National Forest

There are many opportunities in the area for equestrians. Depending on level of experience, horse lovers can take guided rides through Shawnee State Forest at Ben's Happy Trails Riding Stable and Campground or ride the extensive Lake Vesuvious Horse Trail System in nearby Wayne National Forest. The system features 79 miles of scenic trails, and an established horse camp.

Photo Credit: Wayne National Forest
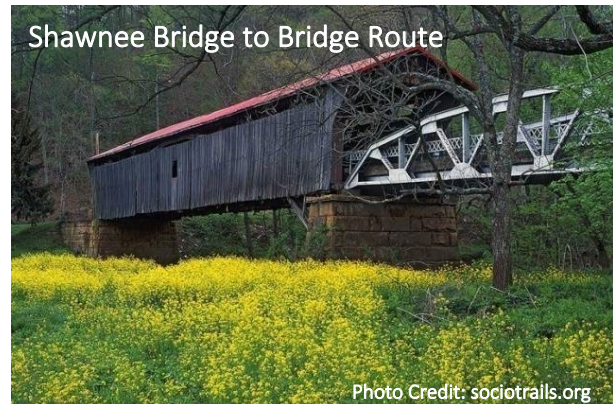
Paddlers can take a short day trip by putting in at Doyle's Landing at Portsmouth's Riverfront Park and heading down the Ohio a little more than 8 miles to Shawnee State Park Marina.

Portsmouth Riverfront Park

One of the most biologically diverse areas in the Midwest can be found at **the Nature Conservancy's Edge of Appalachia Preserve**. The preserve protects over 20,000 acres of rugged woodlands, prairies, and waterfalls. Spend the day hiking, birding, and enjoying wildflowers along 27 miles on 5 different trails. The 4.4-mile Buzzardroost Rock Trail leads to what many call the most spectacular view in Ohio.

The Portsmouth area offers true backpacking, an experience not found in other parts of the state. Take 2 or 3 days and **travel the rugged, almost 40-mile-long backpacking loop through the "Little Smokies" of Shawnee State Forest**. Shorter loops can be found at Zaleskie State Forest, (24 miles), and Tar Hollow State Park, (19 miles).

Shawnee State Park

Upon your return to Portsmouth, cap off any of these trips with a performance by **Portsmouth's Little Theater**, or an event at the Verne Riffe Center for the Arts. Hit the **Boneyfiddle District** for craft beer, live music, and an "Escape Room" experience, or join the crowd at Portsmouth Raceway Park Saturday nights, May through October, for **championship dirt track racing**.

Edge of Appalachia Preserve
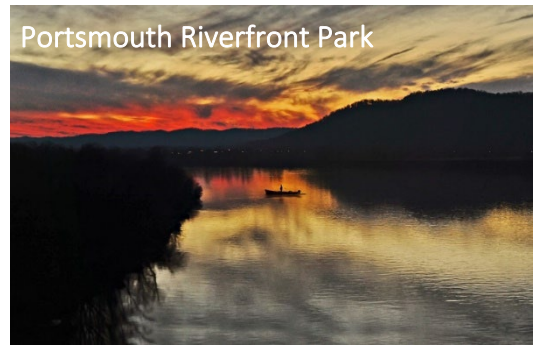
Relevant Resources for Your Community

Many relevant resources were included with the recommendations for your community. However, there are many more available to river towns as they begin working to enhance outdoor recreation and tourism. The following list is by no means all-encompassing but contains additional and valuable information that may be useful in completing this review's recommendations but may result in the generation of new ideas as well.

Trail Towns

1. Outdoor Towns: Toolkit and Resource Library
2. Kitsap Peninsula Water Trails Paddle Routes – Kitsap Peninsula Water Trails
3. Mon River Towns. Another excellent informational and promotional site highlighting fifteen river trail towns along the Monongahela River in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Includes "Fly Over the Mon", a video drone tour.
4. American Trails. Great definition and description of a "Trail Town".
5. Pennsylvania Environmental Council's River Town Program
6. River Towns Program | Susquehanna Greenway
7. RiverTowns Program — Tennessee RiverLine (tnriverline.org)
8. Kentucky Trail Towns Guide & Workbook, Kentucky Trail Towns v1.0 (kentuckytourism.com), Kentucky Trail Town Program Workbook (kentuckytourism.com)
9. Destinations International – Variables Workbook. Good, online, objective, self-assessment tool for communities.
10. Basic article describing glamping. May be an opportunity for trail towns. Glamping Is 2020's Hottest Travel Trend

Water Quality and River Safety

1. U.S. Geological Survey, USGS Current Water Data for the Nation.
2. U.S. Geological Survey USGS Mobile Water Data.
3. NOAA Live River Forecasts
4. Ohio Clean Marina and Boater Program. Educational programs, best management practices for marinas, clean boater, and marina designations.
5. Indiana Clean Marina Guidebook. Good resource for marina owners, boatyards, and boat clubs.
6. United States Army Corps of Engineers. Good resource for water quality and safety, and recreational use of the Ohio River. Huntington District (www.lch.usace.army.mil), Louisville District (www.lrl.usace.army.mil).
7. ACA Florida environmental awareness and protection toolkit for paddlers.
8. "Life Below the Waterline. ", a 2,000-gallon mobile aquarium, showcases the diversity of aquatic life in the Ohio.
9. The River Network. "Waste in Our Waters. A Community Toolkit for Aquatic Litter Removal."

Community Walkability and Bikeability

1. Walkability Score
2. Bikeability Score
3. National Walkability Index
4. America Walks. Pedestrian advocacy, and great resource for improving walkability and its benefits, and technical assistance to communities at no charge.
5. The League of American Cyclists. Founded in 1880(!), provides guidance for communities and businesses to enhance and embrace the cycling community. Bike-friendly community, business, and university designation programs. An excellent resource for improving cycling.
6. Walkability Assessment Tool | Planning for Complete Communities in Delaware
7. Indiana INDOT: Bicycle & Pedestrian Program
8. Kentucky Bike Walk Kentucky | KYTC
9. Ohio Bike & Walk | Ohio Department of Transportation
10. Bike Repair Stations and Bike Pump Stations | Duo-Gard
11. Bollard Post Bike Racks – Park Warehouse
12. Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, Bike Parking Guidelines

Cycling, Hiking, Land, and Water Trails

1. International Mountain Bicycling Association Trail Accelerator Grants | IMBA
2. U.S. Bicycle Route System
3. Indiana Bicycle Suitability Map
4. Kentucky Bike Routes
5. Ohio US Bike Routes
6. Long Distance Cycling Routes: Economic Impacts, Best Practices, and Marketing Strategies
7. Bike Gravity Park Information.
8. Pump Tracks. Pump Tracks.
9. Warm Showers. Hospitality-sharing site for touring cyclists.
10. Strava Global Heatmap
11. Map Line Heat Maps
12. Rails to Trails Conservancy. Excellent basic trail design and building toolkits.
13. American Hiking Society. Trail advocacy, local trail building and maintenance.
14. Hoosier Hikers Council. Trail building, maintenance, mapping.
15. Tri-State Trails. Alliance of community advocates working to advance the region's trails and bikeways.
16. American Trails. Trail design, building and maintenance resource. Trail advocacy and training programs. Trail Town Guide.
17. Louisville Loop. Proposed, partially completed, 100-mile trail connecting parks and neighborhoods in Louisville. Cincinnati Crown. Regional loop surrounding Cincinnati.
18. Ohio Horseman's Council. Good source for equestrian trail design and maintenance, and partnership-building.
19. Ohio Department of Natural Resources development and designation guide for water trails.
20. Indiana DNR. Indiana Department of Natural Resources information on water trails in the state and excellent "Where to Paddle", map and app.
21. Paddling.com. Good resources and a way to connect with the paddling community. Also, a nation-wide interactive map and app for paddling opportunities.

Sustainable Tourism

1. The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Rural Economic Development Toolkit. Very good toolkit.
2. Solimar International
3. Global Sustainable Tourism Council
4. Adventure Travel Trade Association. This may be a great resource for river-based project development.
5. Geo-tourism Toolkit. Re-imagining tourism.
6. United Nations World Travel Organization
7. The Travel Foundation
8. Invisible Burden
9. World Travel and Tourism Council
10. National Recreation & Park Association Agency Performance Review . Very good for benchmarking.
11. Promotion of collaborative stewardship of destination tourism assets.
12. Innovative and Promising Practices in Sustainable Tourism (viu.ca)
13. Ten Principles for Responsible Tourism (Urban Land 2015)
14. Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism World Bank.
15. Pandemic Toolkit (PlaceMakers.com)
16. Arts and Transportation Rapid Response. Creative solutions to COVID-related transportation challenges.
17. How Can Destinations Resume Tourism After the Pandemic While Ensuring Sustainability? (PlaceBrandObserver.com)

Maintaining Small Town Character

1. Smart Growth Principles – Smart Growth Online
2. Smart Growth Principles – Vermont Natural Resources Council (vnrc.org)
3. Smart Growth in Small Towns and Rural Communities | Smart Growth | US EPA
4. Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities & Towns
5. National Main Street Program Great program. Also mainstreetonlinetool.org, specifically for small businesses.
6. The Walkable Communities Library.
7. New Designs for Growth, Development Guidebook.
8. Kentucky Main Street Program – Kentucky Heritage Council (heritage.ky.gov)
9. Streetscape Design Guidelines for Historic Commercial Districts (heritage.ky.gov)
10. Project for Public Spaces   The Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Transformation of Public Spaces Creative Exchange for the Arts Toolkits for Change Archives – Creative Exchange
11. Finding Nature News, Nature Blog | Children and Nature Network (childrenandnature.org)
12. Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights bring leaders, residents together – Children and Nature Network
13. National Trust for Historic Preservation. Very relevant resources.
14. National Association of Preservation Commissions. Preservation professionals group providing forums, advocacy, and training programs.
15. Portsmouth Murals. Example of turning floodwalls into works of art.

Grants and Funding Opportunities

1. GRANTS.GOV
2. Economic Development Integration
3. U.S. Department of Transportation Transit, Highway, and Safety Funds – Funding – Bicycle and Pedestrian Program – Environment Major funding source.
4. Access + Stewardship Grants | onX Maps
5. Office of Small Business Development Centers Resources
6. Keep America Beautiful
7. Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program | Rural Development (usda.gov)
8. Community Impact | Waste Management (wm.com)
9. Online Funding Tool | Play and Recreation Funds Grant searches.
10. Grant Opportunities, Fundraising Resources, Funding | National Recreation and Park Association
11. Recreational Trails Program Project Database
12. Thrive Outside – Outdoor Industry Association
13. Bicycles and Pedestrians | US Department of Transportation
14. Citizens Institute on Rural Design
15. Save America's Treasures (U.S. National Park Service) Cultural and historic preservation grants.
16. Equitable Funding Hub | City Parks Alliance
17. Funding Parks and Trails Through Land Trust Partnerships | City Parks Alliance
18. Community Change Grants | AmericaWalks.org
19. Mini-grants | Celebrate Urban Birds
20. Six Unique Trail Funding Solutions – American Trails
21. State and Local Grant Funding – Land and Water Conservation Fund (U.S. National Park Service) (LWCF).
22. Kentucky Kentucky DLG – LWCF Grants
23. Ohio DNR. One-stop shopping for Ohio grant information on trails, boating facilities, paddling facilities, education, boat sanitary pump outs, and LWCF.
24. Indiana DNR Outdoor Recreation Grants. Information on LWCF, Indiana Trails Program, and Next Level Trails, (focusing on collaborative trail connections).
25. Every Kid Outdoors. Program aimed at 4th graders and their families, with free admission to federal parks and facilities.
26. www.fws.gov/wsfrprograms/subpages/grantprograms. Information on Boating Infrastructure, and Clean Vessel Act, (sanitary boat pumpouts), grants.
27. Appalachian Regional Commission grant programs. Appalachian Regional Commission grant programs.

Organizations and Trade Associations

1. Adventure Cycling Association
2. American Trails Policy, advocacy, training programs, webinars.
3. American Rivers
4. American Canoe Association
5. State Outdoor Business Alliance (SOBAN).
6. City Parks Alliance

7. [International Journal of Wilderness](#)
8. [National Recreation and Parks Association](#) For park and recreation professionals, local board members.
9. [River Management Society](#) Supports professionals helping to protect and manage America's rivers.
10. [River Network](#) Helping local communities protect their water resources.
11. [Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals](#)
12. [Ohio Parks and Recreation Association.](#)
13. [Indiana Parks and Recreation Association.](#)
14. [Kentucky Recreation and Parks Society](#).
15. [Partnership for the National Trails System](#). Helps connect not-for-profit trail organizations with Federal agency partners. Training programs.
16. [National Association of City Transportation Officials](#).
17. [American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.](#) Excellent guidebooks related to bicycle and pedestrian design.
18. [Outdoor Industry Association](#). Advocacy, Economic impact research. "Thrive Outside" inclusion program.
19. [National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds](#). Educational resources, including the National School of RV Park and Campground Management School.
20. [The National Park Service's very comprehensive guide to campground design](#)
21. [Association of Marina Industries (AMI).](#) Training, programs, financial planning/trends, advocacy.

Community Assistance Programs

1. National Park Service
   a. [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](#)

2. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
   a. [Smart Growth Technical Assistance Programs | Smart Growth | US EP](#)
      - 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 Costal Communities
- Special Smart Growth Technical Assistance Projects
- [Environmental Justice Grants, Funding and Technical Assistance](#)

3. **US Forest Service**
   a. 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)](#)

4. **US Fish & Wildlife Service**
   a. Division of Partner & Intergovernmental Affairs
      - Rural Fire Assistance
      - Small Wetlands Program
      - Landscape Conservation Design
      - Several other programs are available.
        [USFWS – Division of Partner and Intergovernmental Affairs](#)

5. **National Fish & Wildlife Foundation**
   a. Active Programs
      - Acres for America
      - Bring Back the Natives
      - Conservation Partners Program
      - Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program
      - National Costal Resilience Fund
      - Resilient Communities Program
      - Bats for the Future Fund
      - Monarch Butterfly & Pollinators Conservation Fund
      - [Programs | NFWF.org](#)

6. US Department of Agriculture
   a. Natural Resources Conservation Service
      - Technical Assistance | NRCS (usda.gov)
   b. Rural Development Programs & Services
      - Programs & Services | Rural Development (usda.gov)*
      - Strategic Economic & Community Development
        Strategic Economic and Community Development | Rural Development (usda.gov)

Underserved Markets and Inclusion in the Outdoors

1. Recreation Management/Outdoor Recreation Industry.
   www.recmanagement.com/rec-report-feature/202107-1. Current market trends in recreation participation.
2. The Chattahoochee RiverLands Project. A 100-mile-long network of inclusive greenways, blueways, trails and parks, becoming the defining public space in the Atlanta area. The Trust for Public Land. https://www.tpl.org/blog/chattahoochee-riverlands-georgia-atlanta-public-space?utm_source=digital&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=outsidematters&utm_content=march-2022-featured-2
3. The Adventure Crew. www.adventurecrew.org. A Cincinnati-based organization connecting teens to the outdoors. The desire for a similar program was mentioned in Madison's and Maysville's workshop.
4. Outdoors Alliance for Kids – Every Kid Outdoors Program. www.outdoorsallianceforkids.org. Partnership of 100+ organizations connecting kids to nature.
5. www.ada.gov/2010ada_standards.

Appendix A

The River Town Review Request and Planning Process

The River Town Review Team created the following outline of the Ohio River Recreation Trail, River Town Review request and planning process, including the facilitation of a virtual community input workshop.

The Request

- **River Town Review Request** – A river town community submits a letter to the Ohio River Recreation Trail Team requesting a River Town Review. Details about requesting assistance can be found at www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org. The river towns are selected for review based on criteria outlined on the website.
- **Community Participation Requirements –** If selected, the community agrees to provide a contact person, a list of key community members who would participate in the River Town Review workshop, a list of community assets, and a map identifying the location of recreation facilities. In addition, the community agrees to host a tour of the community with River Town Review Team members, and to promote and encourage participation in a community input virtual workshop.
- **Upon Selection –** The River Town Review Team will notify the community, work with them to schedule the virtual workshop and community visit and engage the community contact in the pre-workshop planning process.

Pre-Workshop Tasks

- **Desktop Online Review –** River Town Review Team volunteers will explore the community's internet presence and relevant tourism and outdoor recreation-related websites. They will perform a desktop online review as if they were planning a trip to the community, identifying outdoor recreation and related tourism opportunities, (activities, lodging, restaurants, entertainment venues, etc.). Team members will also conduct an online review of the community's current master plans. The volunteers will then prepare a summary of their observations and suggestions.
- **Community Visit and Assessment –** River Town Review Team members and volunteers will visit the community, assess recreation facilities, review pedestrian and bicycle opportunities, participate in a tour with local officials, and interview residents/visitors about community recreation assets. A summary of findings and suggestions will then be prepared.
- **Preparation for the Community Input Virtual Workshop –** River Town Review Team members will identify presenters, gather background information, and develop an agenda for the workshop.
- **Pre-workshop Review –** an online meeting will be held with community contacts to confirm workshop details and participants, and to identify and recruit additional participants, if necessary.

Workshop Tasks

- **The Community Input Virtual Workshop –** Due to covid travel restrictions, the River Town Review Team facilitates a virtual workshop to share their "fresh set of eyes", objective observations, with the community, along with information gathered through the desktop online reviews and community visits. The workshop includes a PowerPoint presentation, open dialogue, and interactive online polling. The team starts by presenting opportunities for the community to partner with the Ohio River Recreation Trail and increase local business exposure by appearing on the trail's award-winning Digital Guide. Similarly, workshop participants will be informed about the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Experience, and the opportunity for communities and local businesses to appear on the trail's online, interactive map. Using "Mural" interactive software, the team will begin to gather community input and ideas through a SWOT Analysis, where participants generate and rank the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats present in their community. Participants are then asked to brainstorm and rank short-term and long-term ideas they feel would enhance recreation and tourism. This information is shared real-time during the workshop, and ultimately included as part of the community's River Town Review.
- **Workshop Participants' Homework –** Participants are asked to review the SWOT concerns identified and the complete list of ideas generated through the brainstorming session. They are asked to provide their top three short and long-term brainstorming session ideas. In addition, participants are asked to describe a "perfect day" for a visitor to their community. This information is returned to the River Town Review Team to be analyzed and used for the development of the Team's recommendations.

Post Workshop Tasks

- **River Town Review Report Completed and Delivered –** The River Town Review Team will assemble and analyze all information collected from the desktop reviews, site visits, and community input, and ultimately prepare a summary of observations and recommendations, along with relevant resources. All the data collected, along with a comprehensive list of resources for each community, will be included in attached appendices. Upon completion, the report is sent to the community, and a time is scheduled for its review. In addition, the team will compile a summary report involving the information and knowledge gained through the development of all the river town reviews.
- **River Town Review Summit –** A Summit will be facilitated by the River Town Review Team, where the summary report will be reviewed and communities can share with each other, the challenges they face, the opportunities they have, and their solutions and successes. The value of strong partnerships between river towns will also be discussed and emphasized.

Appendix B

Portsmouth River Town Review Documents and Workshop Information

Appendix B contains the community's application letter, and all the data gathered through the Desktop Online Reviews and Community Visit. It also contains the Workshop Meeting Agenda, a list of participants, River Town Review Team contact information, all the data generated through the Workshop's SWOT Analysis and Brainstorming Session, and any other information collected during the River Town Review process.

River Town Review Team

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
John Olivier
Michael Shilling
Megan Hedges
Alyssa Walker

Appendix B: Table of Contents

Application Letter

Tracy Shearer <TShearer@portsmouthoh.org>
Mon 11/29/2021 11:59 AM

To: Irland, Andrea Irland; Clark, Russell L
Cc: Sam Sutherland <SSutherland@portsmouthoh.org>; scottie.powell@sciotocounty.net; Brewster Rhoads <brewohio@gmail.com>; Waugh, Wendi (WaughW@somc.org)

Hi Andrea and Russell-

The City of Portsmouth, in collaboration with Scioto County, would like to request assistance from the National Park Service to have a Rivertown Review completed for the City of Portsmouth. This assessment can objectively review our city and offer ideas and opportunities that we may be overlooking. We feel that a Rivertown Review would assist us in identifying new opportunities for recreation and tourism as well as combatting our weaknesses. This opportunity will also provide a more clear path in planning for anticipated riverfront development and help support future grant applications. Portsmouth has many wonderful assets such as our welcoming and supportive community members, our historic Boneyfiddle District with locally owned shops and eateries, as well as our famous floodwall murals. I will be the primary contact for this review and I will reach out to include other community members as well. Wendi Waugh, with Portsmouth Connex will help identify which key stakeholders to include in this review. Lastly, the City of Portsmouth agrees to provide all information, stakeholder participation and will host meetings needed for this assessment, if selected.

Please let me know if there's anything else needed for your selection process. I have included the primary supportive participants such as the City Manager and Scioto County Commissioner in this email, if you would also like to include them in the December 16th kickoff meeting.
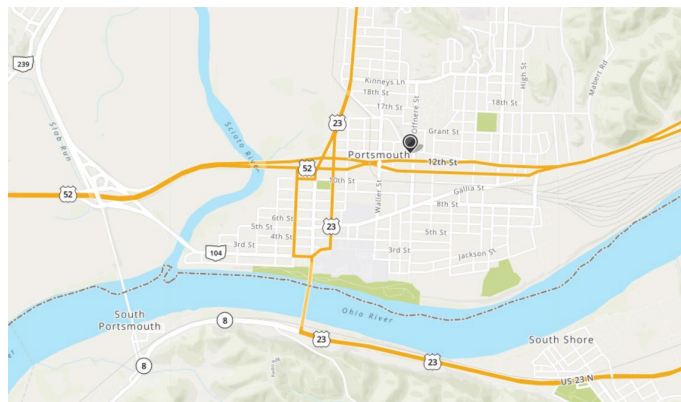
I look forward to working with you!

Best regards,

Tracy Shearer

Tracy Shearer

Community Development Director
City of Portsmouth
728 Second St. Rm 25
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
740.354.5673

Digital Desktop Reviews

Nineteen individuals completed Desk Top Reviews for Portsmouth. They were asked to imagine they were researching a visit to Portsmouth online to learn what they could discover about the community, what they could do there, where they could stay, where they could eat/drink, what attractions they could visit, etc. Note that most of the reviewers live 40-200 miles away and are avid lovers of the outdoors.

Team Review Summary, January 13, 2022

The following is a high-level summary of the findings:

Overview

Reviewers noted that the websites and social media for the City of Portsmouth, Chamber of Commerce and Portsmouth Scioto Visitors Bureau provided very useful information for local residents, businesses, and tourists, especially about where to eat, places to visit, where to shop or stay, etc.

The City's site does a very good job of making information available to residents about public services, local government activities and special events. On reviewer said that the site "made the city look very hip with the lady practicing yoga and the local college info right up front. The City Calendar is fantastic – I did want to visit because it was colorful, attractive and welcoming."

Several reviewers came across the printed Visitors Guide for Portsmouth and Scioto County and found it very helpful. One even called it "outstanding – lots of content and great photos!"

For people from out of town searching online for information about interesting and fun places to visit, play and recreate, however, the existing websites and social media, while useful, were seen as incomplete, somewhat disjointed, and not compelling.

Reviewers had a hard time finding the information they considered useful in 1) deciding whether to visit Portsmouth and 2) learning what they could do there that would be compelling. One of the main reasons was that information about the city and the region (amenities, lodging, dining, attractions, activities, etc.) was so spread out over different websites.

One reviewer wrote "There is a confusing split between the official city website and the website of the Chamber of Commerce." Another noted that "a clear-cut visitor's website is hard to find – I had to search for the Chamber site which covers a wide area not just Portsmouth and had to dig on the Portsmouth page to find the Main Street Portsmouth non-profit which seems to have the most information."

Another problem is that the key websites have URL's that overlap – Portsmouthohio.org (City), Portsmouth.org (Chamber). Or the address does not include the words "Portsmouth" or "Scioto County" (ohiorivertourism.org for the Scioto Co. Visitor's Bureau).

"If you search Portsmouth, Ohio the official visitor bureau site does not come up. You get the city website and the Chamber's site. It you search Portsmouth Scioto County it will pop-up, but not all people know the name of the county," one reviewer observed.

Overall, reviewers (who were almost all from outside the Portsmouth/Scioto County area) did not feel that the websites and social media for the community (Facebook Pages, Instagram, and Twitter accounts) did a very good job providing **compelling reasons** for tourists, especially those interested in outdoor recreation, to visit.

One reviewer noted that the City of Portsmouth site promoted the pending release of a "Discover Portsmouth Mobile App" that was "coming soon". That announcement was posted on February 4, 2016.

Sample Reviewer Comments on the Websites

"Nothing I found online is compelling me to want to visit Portsmouth. Or to NOT want to visit Portsmouth. Just… meh."

"Based on what I saw online, my impression is that there is not a whole lot to do in Portsmouth… I would like to see more attractions and things to do in the area because I'm sure there is plenty available."

"While their website is colorful, there is nothing that really enticed me to want to visit."

"From what I saw on their website, I probably would not plan a visit here. It is not engaging and purely lists what is there but does not try to entice me to visit."

"Not at all compelling… Seems IT-sufficient but not a reason why I should put Portsmouth in my travel plans."

"Not much pops which would make me want to visit."

"Telling me a little blurb about WHY I should visit Portsmouth somewhere would be nice. Links are fine but people are lazy and want all the relevant information in front of them without having to keep clicking through other websites."

Information about Outdoor Recreation

Reviewers were very interested in finding information about **outdoor recreation opportunities**. But other than those available at Shawnee State Park (well presented with useful info about all their outdoor activities) and to a much lesser extent at local parks (though hard to find locations and amenities), they said it was difficult to find online.

There was virtually no information on main websites about **marinas, boat ramps, fishing, camping, hiking, or paddling** (other than Shawnee State Park). Information about biking was limited to inviting visitors to explore downtown Portsmouth by bike. But information about bike trails or rentals could not be found.

Information about the **Buckeye Trail** and the annual **Tour of the Scioto River Valley** (60th anniversary TOSRV is coming up Sept. 24-25) would be of great interest to cyclists and hikers throughout Ohio and Kentucky.

Several reviewers found the [Scioto County Health Department](#) site the most helpful in identifying specific outdoor recreation options. "That site has the most useful information to a visitor in one place. It gives a good overview of the kinds of things there are to do and is a good resource for trip planning," said one reviewer.

Information about Events

River Days and **Winterfest** were both well highlighted… but the **dates** for those events in 2022 were difficult to find. The Friends of Portsmouth site noted that River Days is always over Labor Day weekend but the date for Winterfest 2022 could not be found. They both caught the attention, though, of reviewers, many of whom said they would be interested in traveling to Portsmouth for those events.

And while annual events were listed on the ohiorivertourism.org site by month, there were no specific **2022 dates** for them nor were there links for more information. It is hard to plan travel in advance without knowing when these events are taking place. The event calendar on the Chamber's site did not have any of these major events listed either.

Interest in History and Historical Sites

Reviewers were interested in learning more about the region's **history** (Native Americans, early settlers, Underground Railroad, floods, industry, sport personalities, etc.) and **historic sites** (Indian Mounds & Earthworks, Raven Rock, 1810 House, Ohio and Eric Canal, Otaway Covered Bridge). Several noted that they learned more about Portsmouth and Scioto County from the [Wikipedia listing](#) than from official sites from the City or County.

Several folks came across the [Scioto Historical](#) site and found the information very engaging. Also of interest was the Scioto Historical's "[Abolitionist and Underground Railroad](#)" tour.

The [Scenic Scioto Heritage Trail](#) site was also of great interest. One wrote "I would do that (the Trail) since it is easily laid out and explains what I would see."

Another said "The **Scioto Heritage Trail** and the associated Native American history is the most articulated experience I discovered. The info is spread out across several websites, so I think a more centralized place to find all that information could help build a narrative and link together several of Portsmouth's highlights, including the museum."[7]

Interest in "Ideal Weekend" in Portsmouth Info

Several were hoping to find information about what an **ideal day or weekend** would be in Portsmouth – interesting options for lodging (not national brands), unique places to eat/drink (not national chains), what they could do outside (paddle on the Scioto or the Ohio, cycle/hike at Shawnee State Park, hike up to Raven Rock, picnic on the banks of the Ohio at Riverfront Park or at Alexandria Point Park, visit Mound Park or the Flood Wall Murals, etc.

[Check out this blog about a Cincinnatian's visit to Portsmouth](#).

Social Media Platforms Visited included:

Trip Advisor.com – Top 5 Things listed to do in Portsmouth

>   Portsmouth Flood Wall Murals
>   Shawnee State Park
>   Portsmouth Raceway Park
>   Southern Ohio Museum
>   Hidden Treasurers Antique Shop

Yelp's 5 Best Places Listed Near Portsmouth

>   River Days
>   Bennet's Mill Covered Bridge (in Greenup, KY)
>   Dragon Fly Outdoor Adventures (also in Greenup, KY)
>   City Limits Family Fun Center
>   Happy Pot (Paint Your Own Pottery Studio)

"Trip Advisor Is somewhat better than the City website detailing things to do and places to go."

"Trip Advisor showed great reviews of the Murals. All the reviews suggested these are a must see."

"Trip Advisor's top two listings were the murals (with 271 Five Star reviews) and the State Park (with a Four-Star average)."

"The newest reviews I was able to find were on "Niche" with an average rating of 3 out of 5 stars and twice as many terrible reviews as excellent."

"It's nice that their Trip Advisor landing page includes two images of the river (well, actually the bridge spanning the river). But the "To Do" section is all museums, the distillery, galleries, etc."

Useful links about Portsmouth
Wikipedia

Touring Ohio - what you can do in Portsmouth

USA Today - article about What to Do in Portsmouth (2018)

TrekOhio – good info about parks and natural areas in Scioto County

Recommendations

Create one "go to" tourism site for Portsmouth and Scioto County. Have the City and the Chamber co-sponsor and direct web traffic to it.

Focus on making the site the top one that shows up on **search engines**. Here are some search optimization tips – https://www.mtu.edu/umc/services/websites/seo/

Use pictures of the Ohio River to drive home that Portsmouth is a "river town" with a rich history that makes it distinct and unique. Consider using the Ohio to drive home the "Lifestyle City" message… "Portsmouth, A Lifestyle City on the Ohio" or "Live the Life You Love in Portsmouth on the Ohio".

Decide that is the official "tag" for the City of Portsmouth. Is it "Where Southern Hospitality Begins" or "Portsmouth, It's All Here" or "Discover Portsmouth, Where You Are Always Welcome"?

Create a section of that site that presents a sample **"Wonderful Day in Portsmouth"** as well as an **"Amazing Weekend in Portsmouth"** with suggestions about what to do, where to stay, where to eat/drink, what special places to visit, etc.

Create a robust "Outdoor Recreation" or "Get Outside" section of that website that would include action-oriented pictures with information about local and state parks, boating, paddling, fishing, camping, cycling, off roading, hiking, hunting, etc. Include links to marinas, campgrounds, outdoor stores, bike and bait shops, canoe/kayak liveries, etc. Also include links to local organizations that promote outdoor recreation (like CONNEX and cycling, fishing, hiking and college outdoor clubs/organizations).

Create a master online listing (calendar) of all outdoor recreation events in the City and region (like bike rides, paddling events, fishing tournaments, etc. with links to sponsoring organizations.

Include pictures and quotes from local and out of town folks about what they love about Portsmouth, especially about all the wonderful things folks can do outdoors.

Compliment those postings with Facebook and Instagram posts that promote the activities these folks love with links to more info about where you can do those things.

Put together a suggested **"River Days" package** of outdoor activities that folks can do while they are in town for this wonderful event.

Incorporate the Scenic Scioto Heritage Trail information into the new Visitor's Bureau website for the City and County. Will require an expansion of the existing site to include more info about the location of the key points of interest, better graphics, etc.

Given how interested people are in history and historical sites, consider developing a robust section of the consolidated visitor's site on the **history of the region** and the **key historical sites** folks can visit. Should include info about Native Americans, early settlers, the Ohio River, the role of the region in the Underground Railroad, all your sports history, the Ohio, and Eric Canal, your mhttps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portsmouth,_Ohioanufacturing legacy, etc.

Community Visit Photos

Photographs from community webpages

Visitor Assessments

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.

Visitor Assessment Summary, April 14, 2022

Team Member – John Olivier

To experience the community firsthand, and to get a better perspective of Portsmouth, I travelled to the community on a nice day in mid-April. I brought my road bike, parked near the city's dog park, and conducted the review entirely by bike and on foot. The visit resulted in an objective assessment of facilities, connections, and access. Visiting certainly improved my perception of Portsmouth and gave me a greater appreciation for the challenges faced by communities with extensive flood walls and levees. The visit also helped with the development of suggestions for improvements and potential opportunities. These were then considered during the development of the "Recommendations" section in the main body of this report. Following is a summary of observations made during my visit.

River Connections and Access

As is common in most communities with an extensive floodwall, access between the Ohio River and downtown was found to be very challenging. Riverfront Park, a long greenway between the floodwall and the river, is home to the city's campground, launch ramp with boarding docks, other unimproved boating access sites, a public art area where artists can paint sections of the floodwall, and a park area with playground. It is completely invisible from the landside of the flood wall, and I felt separated from the community. However, it is a wonderful resource for Portsmouth to have on the Ohio River. The floodwall is a visual barrier from the river as well, but Portsmouth still welcomes visitors arriving by water.

As I rode, I found limited and intermittent road and pedestrian access to Riverfront Park over and through the floodwall. Many of the park's facilities were found to need maintenance and upgrades, and none of the boating access sites appeared to include docks for transient boaters. A new and well-marked bike route on the landside of the floodwall begins in the east end of town, travels along the south side of Shawnee State's campus, and passes many of the Robert Dafford murals. Pedestrians and cyclists can find limited access to the river along this route.


- The designated bike lane curves along Alexandria Point Park and begins to head into downtown, entering through the historic Boneyfiddle District.

- Transient boaters, and paddlers on the Ohio or Scioto, as I found as a pedestrian and cyclist, will find access on the river, and subsequently to downtown, to be quite challenging. However, the Portsmouth/Scioto County Visitors Center occupies a prominent and visible location across from the floodwall murals and the designated bike route. A stop at the facility and nice conversations with staff showed me that travelers will be provided with the information they need and directions to guide them on their visit.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

- I found downtown Portsmouth to be walkable, with a full complement of sidewalks and ADA curb cuts, but there were few marked crosswalks. It should be noted however, that there was much roadwork occurring throughout the city on my visit. Numerous high-quality benches were noticed throughout the downtown area, many provided through Main Street Portsmouth's wonderful bench and beautification programs. Several businesses along 2nd Street also provide sidewalk benches and tables, most of which were occupied. Outdoor dining areas were observed at the rear of The Lofts, and again, I noticed almost all were being used.

- The downtown area does not include any designated bike lanes, which made biking rather difficult and unsafe. I'll mention again, though, that there was a good bit of roadwork going on. Except for those provided by CONNEX, I noticed no other bike racks.

- Shawnee State University, the Vern Riffe Center for the Performing Arts, and Portsmouth High School's Clark Athletic Complex, were found to be quite like parks. All offered great walking opportunities, in almost park-like settings, close to downtown, and on newer concrete sidewalks.
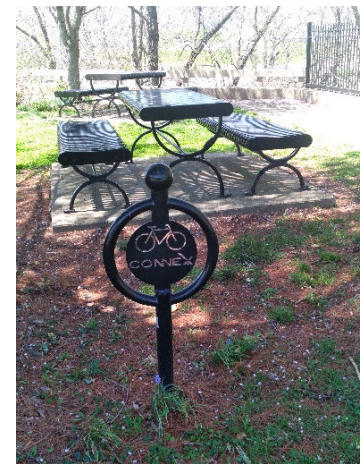
Signage, Wayfinding, and Site Amenities

- Streetscape amenities in some areas featured attractive period-piece streetlights, interpretive and historic signage was found at several locations throughout downtown. I rode past the gateway sign to the Boneyfiddle District which features a dancing skeleton with fiddle! However, I found an almost a complete lack of wayfinding signage in the entirety of downtown, making it difficult for me, and I'm sure other visitors, as well, to find my way around the community.

- Some of the many park areas and related facilities visited included Spock Memorial Dog Park, the new skatepark, and Portsmouth's Riverfront Park. Portsmouth Raceway Park, in addition to its dirt track, features a boat ramp, and camping along the Scioto. I crossed the Scioto River by bike on the Route 73 bridge. It was a bit challenging, but riding the raised sidewalk offered relatively safe travel. If possible, marking it as a bike lane, may make it safer and certainly more visible to drivers.
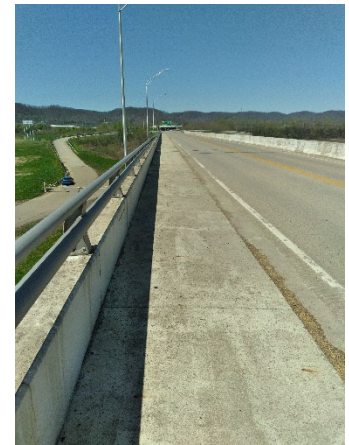
- Alexandria Point Park is a wonderfully peaceful place, with views of the river and plenty of benches, again provided by Main Street Portsmouth. It's a significant vantage point at the confluence of the Ohio and Scioto.

The Roy Rogers Esplanade offered a relaxing area to sit downtown and eat my lunch, and like at Alexandria Point Park, I found benches and bike racks provided by Main Street Portsmouth, and CONNEX.

A small but very interesting park area, located below the new U.S. Grant Bridge, features a display of parts from the original U. S. Grant Bridge, and a series of interpretive plaques. With highly contrasting light gold raised relief text on a dark black background, the plaques are easy to read and some of the most striking I've seen.

A new facility, the Red Bull-Certified Pump Track at Earl Thomas Conley Riverside Park, figures to be an incredible asset for the area. It joins the relatively new skatepark to meet the needs of an already large and growing audience. Very few towns have a skatepark <u>and</u> a pump track.

Parking

I noticed a real abundance of parking with many lots throughout the entire downtown area. There is a particularly attractive, diagonal parking area on Market Street.

Outdoor Recreation Assets in Greater Portsmouth & Scioto County

Shawnee State Park and Forest

13291 U.S. Rt. 52, West Portsmouth

Once the hunting grounds for the Native American Shawnee tribes, the rugged landscape of the 1,095-acre [Shawnee State Park](#) offers outdoor adventurers an opportunity to explore the back country of southern Ohio's Appalachian foothills near the banks of the Ohio River.

Nestled within the 63,000-acre Shawnee State Forest, the area is often called the "Little Smokies of Ohio." When combined with the state forest (the largest in Ohio), the scenic trail system offers a variety of options for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts including horseback riding, hiking, backpacking, birding, golf, disc golf, archery, picnicking, and foraging for mushrooms and berries.

The Shawnee Backpack Trail is 46.4 miles long and includes portions of the [Buckeye Trail](#). The Day Hike Trail is 11 miles. 3.5 miles of mountain biking trails have recently been developed. There are 70 miles of horse trail as well.

Two lakes provide a variety of boating, fishing, and swimming opportunities. There is an annual trout tournament at Turkey Creek Lake the 4th Saturday of the April. Canoes, kayaks, SUPs, pedal boats, and rowboats are available for rent. A full-service marina is located off U.S. 52 providing access to the Ohio River with 72 docks, 8 of which are for transient boaters.

Overnight features range from the rustic, well-appointed Shawnee State Park Lodge, and modern vacation cabins to the wooded family campground.

Governor DeWine just authorized the expansion of the Forest by 1,200 acres in January 2022.

Scioto Brush Creek State Nature Preserve

Tatman-Coe Road, McDermontt, OH

[The Preserve](#) (30 acres) protects over a mile of Scioto Brush Creek which is one of the most biologically diverse streams in Ohio with over 70 species of fish including longnose gar (*Lepisosteus osseus*) and rosyside dace (*Clinostomus funduloides*).

The preserve contains mature trees, spring wildflowers, and rare species. The preserve protects one of four populations of the Federal Threatened Appalachian spiraea (*Spiraea virginiana*), a shrub known only in Ohio from the Scioto Brush Creek watershed.

Brush Creek State Forest

Otawy, OH

Located in the unglaciated hill country of south-central Ohio, Brush Creek State Forest was established in 1928 and comprises well over 13,000 acres of productive hardwood forest land.

The vast majority of these acres is made up of steep hillsides, deep hollows, and narrow ridge tops. Combined with the climate in the region, this land is ideally suited to the growth of deciduous hardwood forests.

Raven Rock State Nature Preserve

52 Old River Road, West Portsmouth, OH

Raven Rock (95 acres) is a promontory of Mississippian age sandstone overlooking the Ohio River Valley. While various legends exist as to how the hill received its name, from the air, it takes on the shape of a bird with outstretched wings. According to folklore, Native Americans used the rock as a lookout, spotting European settlers as they entered the region via flat boats on the Ohio River.

Today, the preserve continues to offer a panoramic view of the Ohio River valley. Weathering of the sandstone has resulted in three natural arches, the largest with a 10 foot span. The preserve is home to the potentially threatened blackjack oak (*Quercus marilandica*) and the state endangered small-flowered scorpion weed (*Phacelia dubia*).

Access is by permit only from the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves.

Boat Ramps/Access Points/ Marinas

Offnere St. Ramp and Doyle's Landing Boat Ramp – at Riverfront Park

Court Street Public Landing

Anchor Pad Boat Club - 306 Riverview Dr., *Portsmouth*, Ohio 45662

Shawnee Boat Club - 940 Riverview Dr, *Portsmouth*, *OH* 45662

Shawnee State Park Marina – (7 miles) - West Portsmouth

Holiday Point Marina – (18 miles) - 141 F **Tylers** Way, Franklin Furnace, OH 45629

Dragonfly Outdoor Adventures - 550 Treasurer Cove Rd., Greenup, KY 41144

Local Parks

Alexandria Point – 110 Scioto St., Portsmouth

Riverfront Park – 728 Second St., Portsmouth

Mound Park – 1528 Grandview, Portsmouth

York Park – First and Ofneer St., Portsmouth

Tracy Park – Chillicothe St., Portsmouth

Porter Park – 12101 Gallia Pike, Portsmouth

Riverside Park – 15888 U.S. 52, West Portsmouth

Three Bridges Park – 131 Front St., Portsmouth

Larry Hilse Park – 2238 Thomas Ave., Portsmouth

Millbrook Park – Oak St, New Boston

Doug Coleman Memorial Splash Pad – 52 Old U.S. 52, West Portsmouth

Spock Memorial Dog Park – 740 Second St., Portsmouth

Allard Park – 6026 Harding, Portsmouth

Portsmouth Skate Park – Fourth St., Portsmouth

Porter Township Community Park – 12063 Gallia Pike. Portsmouth

Cyndee Secrest Park – 5600 Glenn St., Portsmouth

Earl Thomas Conley Park (with Pump Track) – 720 North Union St., Portsmouth

Campgrounds

Riverfront Park – 728 Second St. on the Ohio River in Portsmouth (RV camping)

Shawnee State Park & Forest

    Turkey Creek Campground – Off 152 near Roosevelt Lake

    Ohio River Campground – U.S. Rt. 52, West Portsmouth near Marina

    Equestrian Camp – Bear Lake in Shawnee State Forest (primitive)

Lazy Village Campground – 13610 U.S. Highway 52, West Portsmouth, OH 45663

Wolford's Landing Campground – 6888 E. Front St., Portsmouth, OH 45662

Little Bear Island Campground – 789 State Route 3307, Greenup, KY 41144

Dragonfly Outdoor Adventures – 550 Treasurer Cove Rd., Greenup, KY 41144

Places to Boat & Fish (within 30 miles)

Ohio River

Scioto River

Scioto Brush Creek

Little Scioto River

Turkey Creek

Old Pond Run

Upper & Lower Twin Creek

Ohio Brush Creek

Little Sandy River (KY)

Tygrats Creek (KY)

Kinniconnick Creek (KY)

Roosevelt Lake, McBride Lake, Turkey Creek Lake – all in Shawnee State Park/Forest

Additional Parks, Preserves, Forests & Points of interest in region (within 40 miles)

Edge of Appalachia – West Union, OH (30 miles)

White Lake State Park – Waverly, OH (30 miles)

Wayne National Forest – Bailey's Mountain Bike Trail System – Pedro, OH (27 miles)

   Trail Map

   Hiking Brochure

Serpentine Mound – Peebles, OH (37 miles)

Ohio and Erie Canal Lock #48

Phillip Moore Stone House (1797)

1810 House

Roy Rogers Boyhood Home

Mt. Hope One Room School

Otaway Covered Bridge

Shawnee State Park Nature Center

Bear Lake Horse Camp

Hobey Hollow & the Copperhead Fire Tower

100 Mile House

Kalanu Native American Cemetery

Raven Rock

Historical Tours – Scioto Historical (https://sciotohistorical.org/)

Early Conflict in the Scioto Valley (1730 - War of 1812)

Saving Shawnee Forest

Portsmouth Floodwall Murals

Settling the Scioto Valley

Along the Scenic Scioto Heritage Trail

Ackerman's Bicentennial Portsmouth

Community Meeting Agenda

RIVER TOWN REVIEW

Portsmouth, OH

January 20, 2022

Agenda

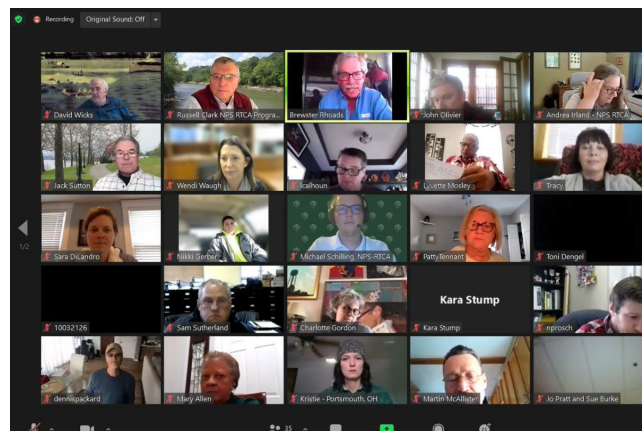|	
2:00 – 2:10	Welcome
2:10 – 2:25	Big Picture *Ohio River/ORRT/LECL* *RTR process* *LECL Geotourism Site & ORRT Digital Guide*
2:25 – 3:00	Tell us about your town (SWOT Analysis) *Strengths* *Weaknesses* *Opportunities* *Threats*
3:00 – 3:10	What we learned *(Desktop Review & Site Visit)*
3:10 – 3:40	Brainstorming
3:40 – 3:50	Human Nature *(Consultants)*
3:50 – 4:00	Questions, Wrap up, Next Steps

List of Participants

Community Participants

Portsmouth River Town Review Zoom Meeting Workshop Participants (January 20, 2022)

Name	Email	Organization
Tracy Shearer	tshearer@portsmouthoh.org	City of Portsmouth
Wendi Waugh	waughw@somc.org	Connex, Southern Ohio Senior Games, and SOMC
Sam Sutherland	ssutherland@portsmouthoh.org	City Manager
Lyvette Mosley	ladymose@gmail.com	Portsmouth City Councilmember, ADAMHS Board
Andy Cole		3rd Ward City Council
Nathan Prosch	nathan.prosch@portsmouthoh.org	City of Portsmouth
Dennis Packard	dwprnbc@gmail.com	6th ward Councilman Portsmouth, Ohio
Charlotte Gordon		Southern Ohio Museum and City Council, 2nd Ward
Sean Dunne	sdunne@shawnee.edu	Portsmouth City Council and Shawnee State University
Jeff Bauer	jbauer@shawnee.edu	President, Shawnee State University
Dr. Andrew Feight	afeight@shawnee.edu	Center for Public History, Shawnee State University
Ted Strickland		Former Governor of Ohio
Nikki Gerber	Moondoggieliveree2020@gmail.com	MoonDoggie LIVERee -Manchester OH
Dan Shirey	danshirey575@gmail.com	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 575
Gina Collinsworth	gcollinsworth@ovrdc.org	Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission
Kara Stump	kbobo-stump@shawnee.edu	Shawnee State University
Patty Tennant	patty@thesciotofoundation.org	Scioto Foundation
Jacob Taylor		Ohio Valley Regional Development Commisson
Mary Allen	mallen1@fuse.net	ORW Board
Hannah Smith	hannah.g.smith@usace.army.mil	Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington
Ryan Bartley	Ryan.Bartley@dnr.ohio.gov	ODNR Parks and Watercraft -Shawnee State Park
Natalie Pirvu	Natalie.Pirvu@dnr.ohio.gov	ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft
Mark Allen	Mark.Allen@dnr.ohio.gov	ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft
Martin McAllister	martin.mcallister@tnc.org	Friends of Scioto Brush Creek, Inc.
Kristie Franklin	k.franklin1378@gmail.com	Southern Ohio Mountain Bike Association (SOMBA)
Joseph Pratt	director@mspohio.org	Main Street Portsmouth
Sue Burke	sueburke57@gmail.com	Main Street Portsmouth
Jason Ashworth	jasonash@gmail.com	Portsmouth Connex
Summer Kirby	skirby@compasscommunityhealth.org	CEO Compass Community Health
Holly Johnson	holly.johnson@adamscountyoh.gov	Adams County Economic and Community Development
Bryan Smith	Bryansmith@friendsofportsmouth.co	Asst Director- Friends of Portsmouth
Ryan Stump	ryan.stump@dnr.ohio.gov	Shawnee State Park Assistant Park Manager
Jenny Richards	jenny.richards@dnr.ohio.gov	Shawnee State Park, Naturalist
Gerald Cadogan		head coach Shawnee State University, Portsmouth City Schools
Toni Dengel	toni@thesciotofoundation.org	Scioto Foundation

RTR Team Participants

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Michael Schilling: Michael_Schilling@nps.gov
John Olivier: jolivierfalls@gmail.com
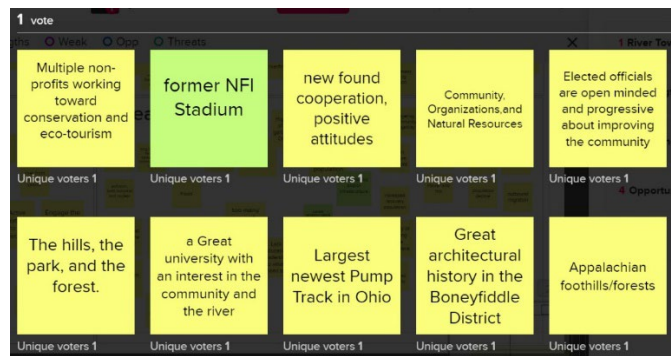Chriss Maning: cmanning@humannature.cc
Sara DiLandro: sdilandro@humannature.cc

SWOT Analysis

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats

These following are the SWOT Analysis results of the River Town Review conducted via Zoom for Portsmouth on January 20, 2022.   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 information on the following pages includes the lists all of the ideas in each of the SWOT categories and the polling results to identify priorities for the information.
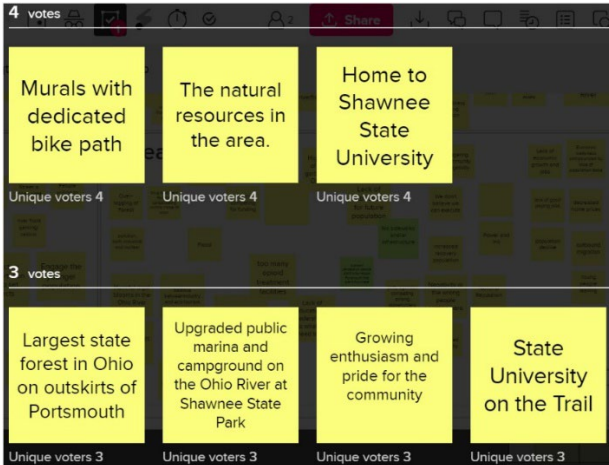
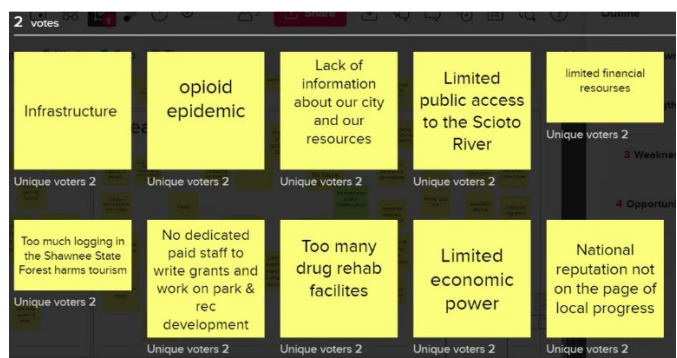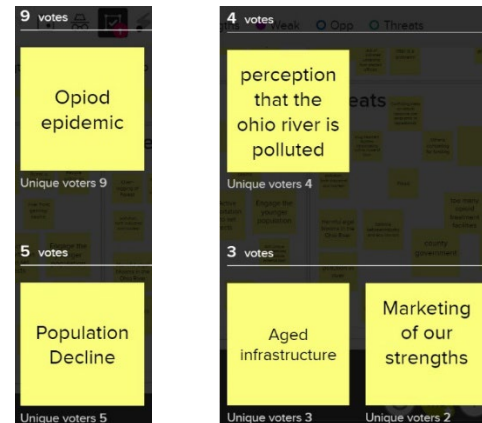# Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats – Continued

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Proximity of Ohio's largest State Forest	Short Business Hours in Shopping establishments
former NFl Stadium	community perception and education
one of a kind pump track	litter is a problem!
The hills, the park, and the forest.	Funding for large projects
quality places to eat and drink	Poverty
Historical richness	Prioritizing most important opportunities
Ancient indian mound site	Community Perception
The togetherness of the community.	Population Decline
Mountain Bike Trails, hiking trails, bridle trails	Marketing of our strengths
Rich history- prehistoric mounds/Underground Railroad/history of labor and industry	homelessness and drug addiction
The Confluence of two rivers	Lack of total community assets in one easy to find place.
Murals with dedicated bike path	Lack of Marketing
Largest state forest in Ohio on outskirts of Portsmouth	litter
Variety of local dining options	Lack of coordinated
Multiple resources for residents and tourist - forest, river, biking, fine arts, racing, etc.	National reputation not on the page of local progress
Historical downtown and designated landmarks	Health
Confluence of two major rivers.	Limited economic power
Community Involvement	no interstate connection
new found cooperation, positive attitudes	Opiod epidemic
Great architectural history in the Boneyfiddle District	No dedicated paid staff to write grants and work on park & rec development
Beautiful country and local attractions that draw people from other parts of the state	Negative national media coverage
Home to Shawnee State University	lack of great riverfront park near downtown
The natural resources in the area.	Brownfield at the beginning of the trail
Growing enthusiasm and pride for the community	River access
Different activities located close to one another for different age groups.	Opiod Negative
Located on the longest pool of the Ohio River	stigma
Business District close to the River	connection with opioid epidemic
Appalachian foothills/forests	Vacant buildings
Dedicated Council	getting inner city population to
Parks and historic sites along the river	Visitors Bureau should have a wider, county-wide approach
Upgraded public marina and campground on the Ohio River at Shawnee State Park	Lack of information about our city and our resources
philanthropic community	lack of proper maintenance for public assets
Elected officials are open minded and progressive about improving the community	Visitors Center is lacking
river access	county government
strong, skilled labor force	opioid epidemic
Character and Charm. Hometown Feel & Personal	too much
best skatepark in region	Aged infrastructure
Oarnet spine with high speed internet capabilities	Non-believers to change or that we can be better
Community, Organizations,and Natural Resources	Disconnect of downtown and riverfront
New generation intent on building community and resources	roads and city streets are in bad shape
University campus near downtown	Limited public access to the Scioto River
a Great university with an interest in the community and the river	Infrastructure
Many events from Connex and SOMBA encouraging outdoor movement.	Marketing and sharing resources
Multiple non-profits working toward conservation and eco-tourism	Too much logging in the Shawnee State Forest harms tourism
Active Council	limited financial resourses
Many outdoor recreation options	leadership from elected officials
Designated Outdoor Drinking Area that allows encourages outdoor enjoyment of downtown	too many vacant buildings downtown
College town	perception that the ohio river is polluted
State University on the Trail	outward migration of young people
several grass roots orgs and non profits working on tourism	Too many drug rehab facilites
Access to multiple modes of transportation (rail, water, roads, and push for active transportation)	naysayers are
Historic places and documentation to support stories	Distance from major population centers
The newer council and forward movement.	bicycle connection from City to West side
Shawnee Forest and staff there are outstanding!	Old buildings that are empty and deteriorating
multi use path in downtown	Lack of publications highlighting resources
Volubteer force	
Largest newest Pump Track in Ohio	

Polling Results – Strengths

4 votes
- Murals with dedicated bike path — Unique voters 4
- The natural resources in the area. — Unique voters 4
- Home to Shawnee State University — Unique voters 4

3 votes
- Largest state forest in Ohio on outskirts of Portsmouth — Unique voters 3
- Upgraded public marina and campground on the Ohio River at Shawnee State Park — Unique voters 3
- Growing enthusiasm and pride for the community — Unique voters 3
- State University on the Trail — Unique voters 3

2 votes
- Multiple resources for residents and tourist - forest, river, biking, fine arts, racing, etc. — Unique voters 2
- river access — Unique voters 2
- Many events from Connex and SOMBA encouraging outdoor movement. — Unique voters 2
- Historical richness — Unique voters 2
- Confluence of two major rivers. — Unique voters 2
- Access to multiple modes of transportation (rail, water, roads, and push for active transportation) — Unique voters 2
- Historical downtown and designated landmarks — Unique voters 2
- Mountain Bike Trails, hiking trails, bridle trails — Unique voters 2
- Rich history from the prehistoric mounds to the Underground Railroad and the history of labor and industry — Unique voters 2
- Historic places and documentation to support stories — Unique voters 1

1 vote
- Multiple non-profits working toward conservation and eco-tourism — Unique voters 1
- former NFI Stadium — Unique voters 1
- new found cooperation, positive attitudes — Unique voters 1
- Community, Organizations, and Natural Resources — Unique voters 1
- Elected officials are open minded and progressive about improving the community — Unique voters 1
- The hills, the park, and the forest. — Unique voters 1
- a Great university with an interest in the community and the river — Unique voters 1
- Largest newest Pump Track in Ohio — Unique voters 1
- Great architectural history in the Boneyfiddle District — Unique voters 1
- Appalachian foothills/forests — Unique voters 1
- Oarnet spine with high speed internet capabilities — Unique voters 1
- strong, skilled labor force — Unique voters 1
- Active Council — Unique voters 1
- Different activities located close to one another for different age groups. — Unique voters 1
- Business District close to the River — Unique voters 1
- Parks and historic sites along the river — Unique voters 1
- Many outdoor recreation options — Unique voters 1
- Community Involvement — Unique voters 1
- The togetherness of the community. — Unique voters 1
- The Confluence of two rivers — Unique voters 1

Polling Results - Weaknesses

9 votes
- Opiod epidemic — Unique voters 9

4 votes
- perception that the ohio river is polluted — Unique voters 4

5 votes
- Population Decline — Unique voters 5

3 votes
- Aged infrastructure — Unique voters 3
- Marketing of our strengths — Unique voters 2

2 votes
- Infrastructure — Unique voters 2
- opioid epidemic — Unique voters 2
- Lack of information about our city and our resources — Unique voters 2
- Limited public access to the Scioto River — Unique voters 2
- limited financial resourses — Unique voters 2
- Too much logging in the Shawnee State Forest harms tourism — Unique voters 2
- No dedicated paid staff to write grants and work on park & rec development — Unique voters 2
- Too many drug rehab facilites — Unique voters 2
- Limited economic power — Unique voters 2
- National reputation not on the page of local progress — Unique voters 2
- Funding for large projects — Unique voters 2
- Community Perception — Unique voters 2

1 vote
- getting inner city population to — Unique voters 1
- too much litter — Unique voters 1
- naysayers are — Unique voters 1
- outward migration of young people — Unique voters 1
- county government — Unique voters 1
- connection with opioid epidemic — Unique voters 1
- Marketing and sharing resources — Unique voters 1
- too many vacant buildings downtown — Unique voters 1
- Disconnect of downtown and riverfront — Unique voters 1
- Non-believers to change or that we can be better — Unique voters 1
- Negative national media coverage — Unique voters 1
- Visitors Bureau should have a wider, county-wide approach — Unique voters 1
- Visitors Center is lacking — Unique voters 1
- community perception and education — Unique voters 1
- Poverty — Unique voters 1
- Brownfield at the beginning of the trail — Unique voters 1
- lack of great riverfront park near downtown — Unique voters 1
- no interstate connection — Unique voters 1
- Short Business Hours in Shopping establishments — Unique voters 1
- Lack of total community assets in one easy to find place. — Unique voters 1

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats – Continued

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
increase exposure/eduction to the youth so the work we do can carry on	Economic weakness compounded by lose of population base
	portsmouth's connection/history with the opioid epidemic. People view Portsmouth as unsafe.
industrial developments	Community buy-in for spending
riverfront development and restoration of spartan stadium	lingering community negativity
Marketing	Lack of economic growth and jobs
Signage	Conflicting ideas on natural resource use (economic vs recreational)
river, rail, road	High volume of physical garbage in the Ohio River
Research and Service Center at Shawnee State University	Lack of attraction for future population
potential Beach area in Sciotoville	Over-logging of Forest
Chillicothe Street is blank slate	Drug treatment facilities consolidating victims inside of coun
resilient people	Others competing for funding
People willing to volunteer	We don't believe we can execute
Bike Paths in Shawnee State Forest	lack of good paying jobs
Activity Trails and activity maps	Flooding can hinder riverfront development
more hiking trails in the forest	decreased home prices
Great place to establish an Indian Restaurant	No sidewalks and/or infrastructure
More MTB trails including lift access flow trails	lack of marketing
Cooperation and coordination with SSU faculty and students	Power and mo
build on that	pollution, both industrial and nuclear
river front gaming/	an uninformed community
casino	Flood
add bike routes in town	population decline
Clean up River. Clean up Litter	outbound migration
Involve more people in a mission to improve	increased recovery population
Bike or Activity Trail Development to Adams County	too many opioid treatment facilities
scenic byway Rt 52 along river already established as motorcycle tourism	outward perception/ people don't know about Porstmouth that aren't from here
research on using outdoor recreation and working with drug abuse and adicition	Young people leaving
Beautiful natural landscapes that are uncluttered	aging infrastructure
Working towards improved bike/ped access	Harmful algal blooms in the Ohio River
Engage the younger population	balance betweenindustry and eco tourism
Use Active Transportation Plan to set projects	Negativity or the wrong people settling here
Embrace Appalachian Heritage	National Reputation
Using GPS tech for walking tours	petty agendas competing among stakeholders
wider access to	county government
internet	Economic and social weight of opiate epidemic
Link Shawnee State Forest and Park with town via recreational trails.	Lack of education in leadership as to what we need to do
Opportunity for world-class bike path along the unused N&W railway west of town.	pollution in river
Develop cultural heritage and eco-tourism resources	
College Student involvement and participation	
major	
Riverfront development project	
Add unique town features to Roadside America app!	
Extraordinary water-trail opportunity on the Scioto River (100 miles un-impounded)	
increase mountain bike & hiking trails	
great entrepreneurs and ideas	
Riverftont	
Development	

Polling Results –Opportunities

Polling Results –Threats

Opportunities:

- 9 votes — Opportunity for world-class bike path along the unused N&W railway west of town. — Unique voters 7
- 5 votes — Link Shawnee State Forest and Park with town via recreational trails. — Unique voters 5
- riverfront development and restoration of spartan stadium — Unique voters 4
- 7 votes — Extraordinary water-trail opportunity on the Scioto River (100 miles un-impounded) — Unique voters 7
- 4 votes — People willing to volunteer — Unique voters 4
- 3 votes — Chillicothe Street is blank slate — Unique voters 3
- Beautiful natural landscapes that are uncluttered — Unique voters 3

- 1 vote:
  - Engage the younger population — Unique voters 1
  - increase exposure/eduction to the youth so the work we do can carry on — Unique voters 1
  - major Riverfront development project — Unique voters 1
  - Cooperation and coordination with SSU faculty and students — Unique voters 1
  - Involve more people in a mission to improve — Unique voters 1
  - potential Beach area in Sciotoville — Unique voters 1
  - river, rail, road — Unique voters 1
  - Riverftont Development — Unique voters 1
  - Embrace Appalachian Heritage — Unique voters 1
  - river front gaming/ casino — Unique voters 1

- 4 votes — Conflicting ideas on natural resource use (economic vs recreational) — Unique voters 4
- 3 votes:
  - Young people leaving — Unique voters 3
  - Lack of economic growth and jobs — Unique voters 3
  - increased recovery population — Unique voters 3
  - Flooding can hinder riverfront development — Unique voters 3
  - Economic weakness compounded by lose of population base — Unique voters 3

- 2 votes:
  - research on using outdoor recreation and working with drug abuse and adiction — Unique voters 2
  - scenic byway Rt 52 along river already established as motorcycle tourism build on that — Unique voters 2
  - More MTB trails including lift access flow trails — Unique voters 2
  - Working towards improved bike/ped access — Unique voters 2
  - Develop cultural heritage and eco-tourism resources — Unique voters 2
  - Using GPS tech for walking tours — Unique voters 2
  - Marketing — Unique voters 2

Threats:

- 6 votes:
  - Economic and social weight of opiate epidemic — Unique voters 6
  - too many opioid treatment facilities — Unique voters 6
- 5 votes — aging infrastructure — Unique voters 5
- Others competing for funding — Unique voters 1

- 2 votes:
  - National Reputation — Unique voters 2
  - pollution in river — Unique voters 2
  - Lack of education in leadership as to what we need to do — Unique voters 2
  - Community buy-in for spending — Unique voters 2
  - lingering community negativity — Unique voters 2
  - Harmful algal blooms in the Ohio River — Unique voters 2
  - pollution, both industrial and nuclear — Unique voters 2

- 1 vote:
  - Use Active Transportation Plan to set projects — Unique voters 1
  - Bike Paths in Shawnee State Forest — Unique voters 1
  - Research and Service Center at Shawnee State University — Unique voters 1
  - resilient people — Unique voters 1
  - Signage — Unique voters 1
  - portsmouth's connection/history with the opioid epidemic. People view Portsmouth as unsafe. — Unique voters 1
  - balance betweenindustry and eco tourism — Unique voters 1
  - Flood — Unique voters 1
  - population decline — Unique voters 1
  - lack of marketing — Unique voters 1
  - lack of good paying jobs — Unique voters 1
  - petty agendas competing among stakeholders — Unique voters 1
  - Lack of attraction for future population — Unique voters 1
  - High volume of physical garbage in the Ohio River — Unique voters 1
  - decreased home prices — Unique voters 1

Community Brainstorming Ideas

These are the brainstorming results of the River Town Review conducted via Zoom for Portsmouth on January 20, 2922. 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 the brainstorming ideas were grouped into short-term and long-term ideas to pursue based on the input of the meeting participants.

Mural Board Brainstorming Ideas Input Results

Polling Results to Prioritize Short-term Ideas for Portsmouth

Polling Results to Prioritize Long-term Ideas for Portsmouth
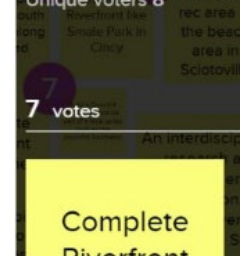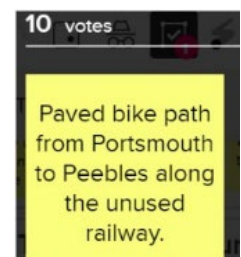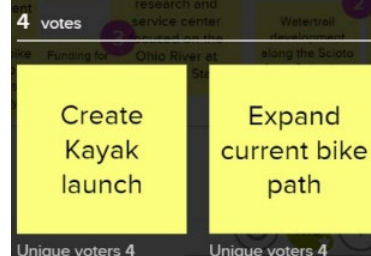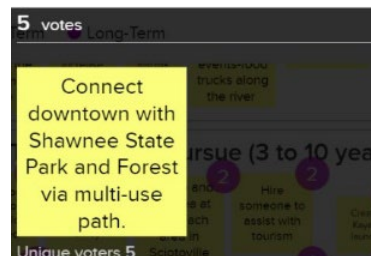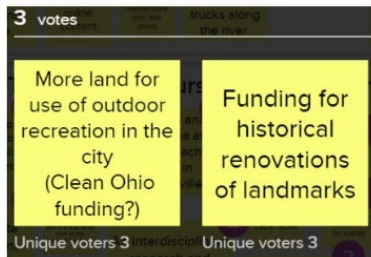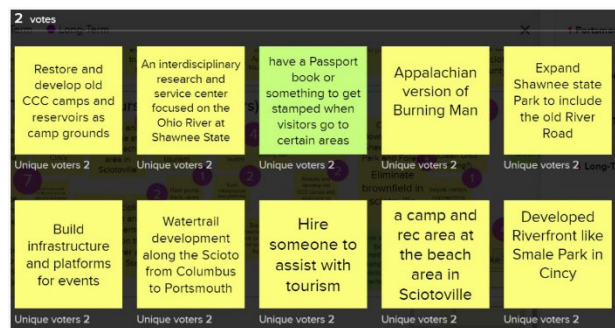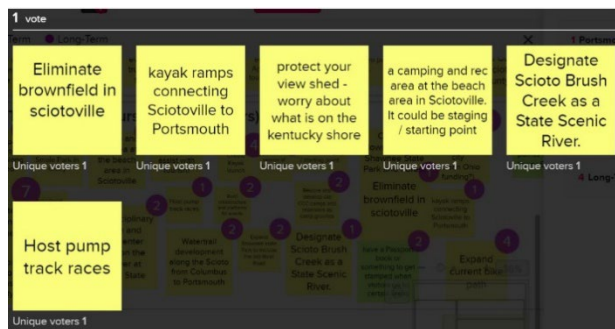
Comments

The workshop participants were asked to provide their thoughts on the following questions in the chat box at the end of the zoom meeting:

- We invite YOU to look at your town with fresh eyes!
- Describe a perfect day for a visitor in your community
- What other contacts or organizations could be valuable partners?

A Perfect Day (Describe a perfect day for a visitor in your community)

Start with a morning hike or mountain bike ride in the Shawnee State Park and Forest, then lunch in the Boneyfiddle District, with a stroll along the flood wall murals, and antique shopping, capped off with dinner at Yamato's Japanese restaurant, and a dramatic production at the Portsmouth Little Theatre.

A day in Portsmouth to review murals, possibly visit museums, shop, have dinner, and then spend evening in Shawnee State Park. Alternatively, active folks could bike the paths-- city or mountain or pump-- kayak, hike, and camp.

Stay at Shawnee State Park Lodge, go hiking on a few of the MANY trails in the area, visit Serpent Mound, go paddling on the river or Scioto Brush Creek, have ice cream and take a walk along the floodwall to see the murals.

I would share the unique history of Mound Park. I would escort the visitor up Raven Rock and talk about not only the river resources but the indigenous population of peoples that lived and populated the area. I would further take them to Shawnee Park and Forest. We might bike on a forest road or paddle on a lake. I would finish the day with one of our unique breweries and long-standing eateries in the community.

How about perfect weekend....Shawnee lodge/forest hiking, Scioto heritage trail takes in the entire county and offers a wonderful drive and things to do.

Start with a morning hike or mountain bike ride in the Shawnee State Park and Forest, then lunch in the Boneyfiddle District, with a stroll along the flood wall murals, and antique shopping, capped off with dinner at Yamato's Japanese restaurant, and a dramatic production at the Portsmouth Little Theatre.

A night at Murphin Ridge Inn, birding at the Edge of Appalachia Preserve and dinner at the Scioto Ribber.

Who should be here? (Other valuable community partners)

Manchester, OH

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

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