

Elevating Greenway Planning:

Incorporating Environmental Justice, Urban Landscapes and Ecological Restoration



THE ALLEGHENY GREEN WEB

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Objectives of Today

1. Discuss the limitations of the traditional approach to greenway planning and why many well-intentioned plans have not been implemented.
2. Explore the potential of greenway planning to address environmental justice issues in impoverished urban areas by incorporating blighted lands and by overcoming physical barriers to green space.
3. Examine how the restoration of blighted lands and the creation of resilient landscapes forges new opportunities for greenway corridors.
4. Explain this through the introduction of the Allegheny Green Web case study.



Allegheny Green Web

Members & Partners



Allegheny Green Web

The Vision

Envision a future where all communities within Allegheny County are more livable, healthy, prosperous and environmentally sound, through *an interconnected trail system*

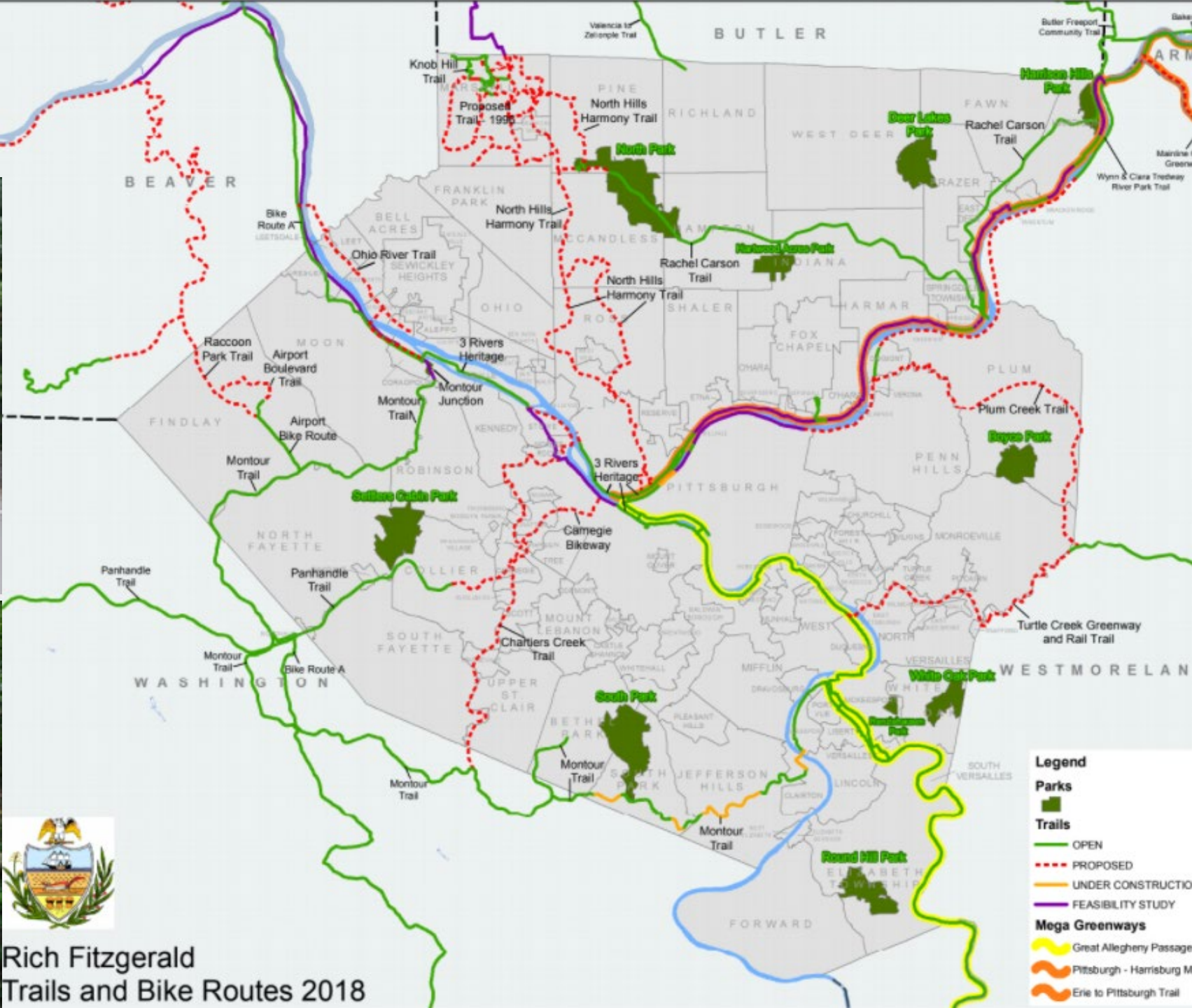
Goals

- #1 Connects County & Municipal parks with each other, and to communities
- #2 Provides options for outdoor recreation and alternative transportation
- #3 Equitable and connects all communities
- #4 Build communication between, and share info with, municipalities, organizations, and residents about trail connections



County Comp Plan

No local connections



Rich Fitzgerald
Trails and Bike Routes 2018

Greenways and Trails “With a Twist”

Can we ALSO use trails and greenways to overcome and/or mend the environmental liabilities we have created in our communities?

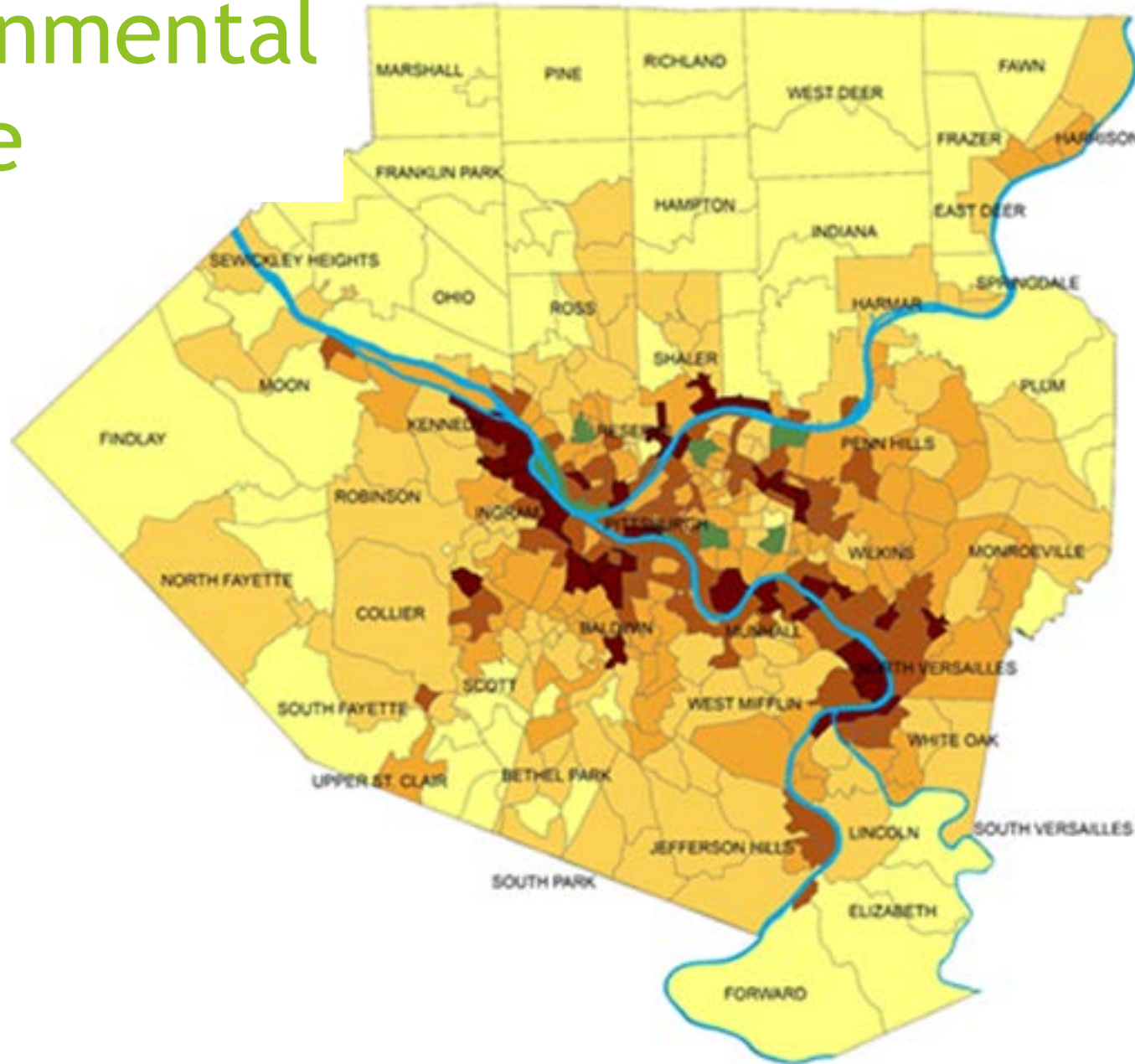




Environmental Justice

Environmental hazards such as poor air quality, contaminated ground water and lack of usable green space have left some Allegheny County communities with a legacy of health and wellness issues

Environmental Justice



Resiliency

Can greenways and trails be strategically used to improve our communities' abilities to manage and absorb heavy rain events and flooding?





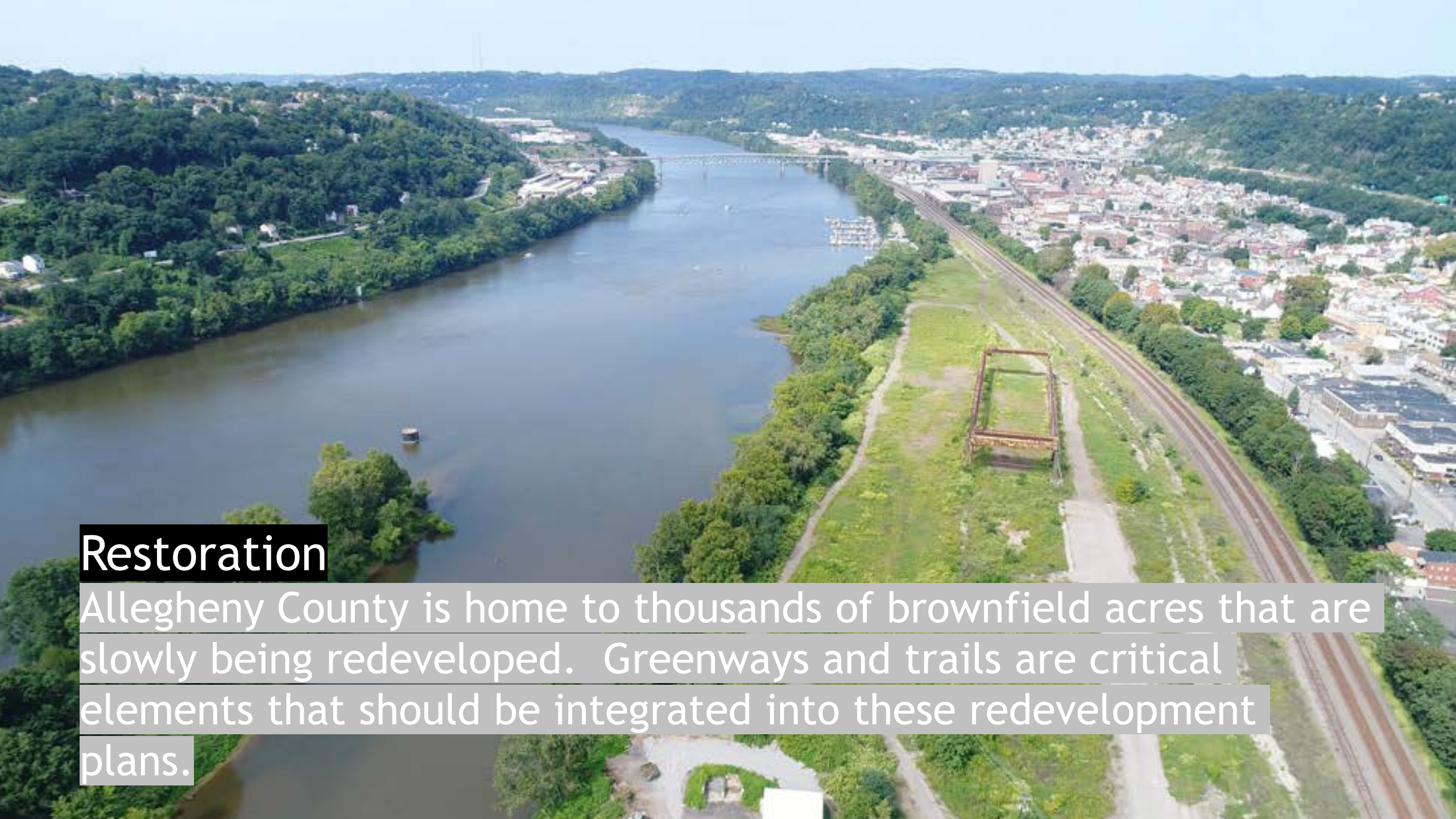
Resiliency

The cost of public safety and economic losses created by overtaxing the County's landslide and flood-prone areas is difficult to quantify but it is a REAL threat to both public and private assets

Restoration

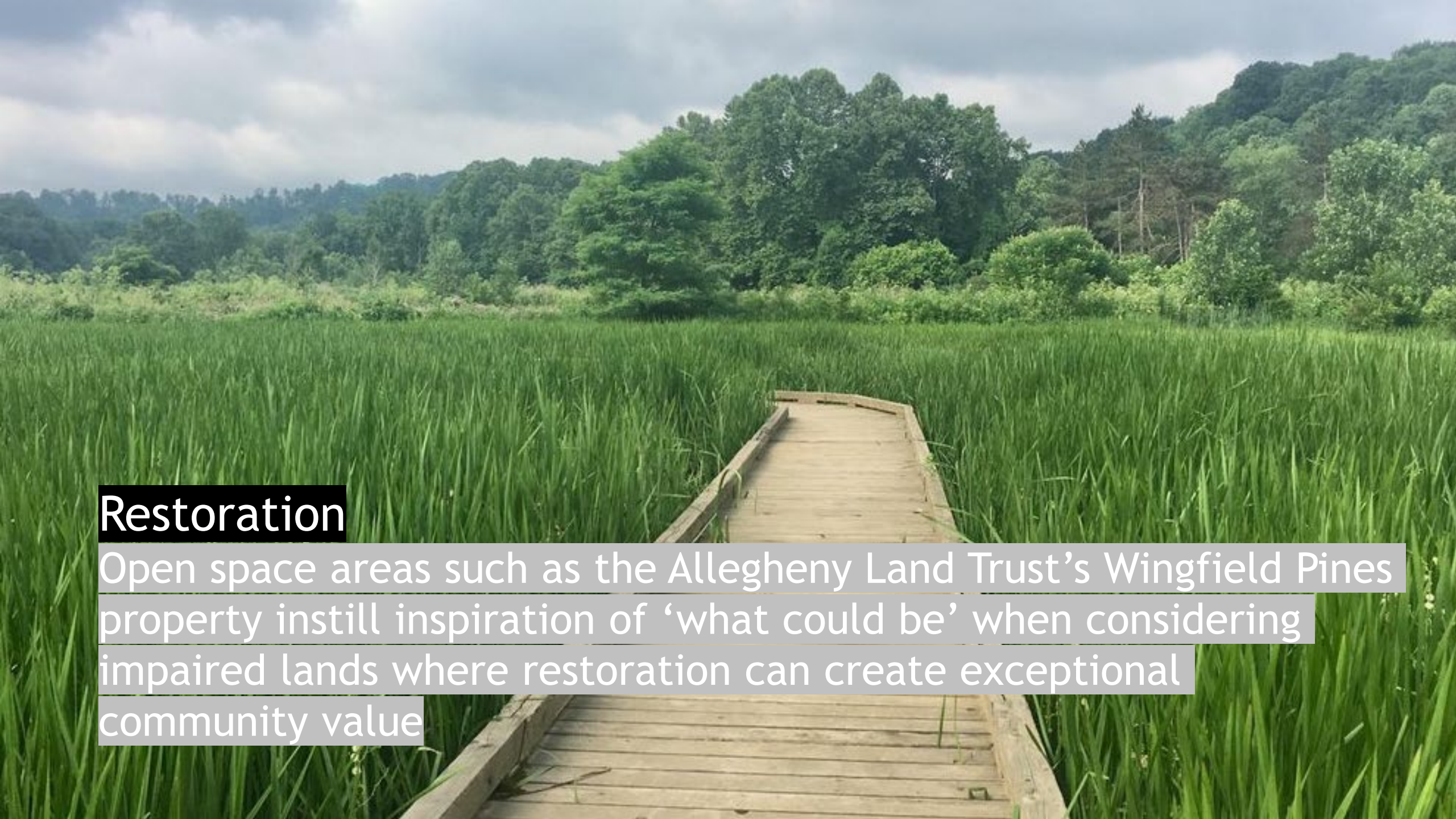
Decades of industrialization and resource extraction have left a raft of environmental legacies



An aerial photograph showing a wide river flowing through a landscape. On the left bank, there is a dense forest. On the right bank, there are railroad tracks running parallel to the river, followed by a city with various buildings. A bridge is visible in the distance across the river. In the foreground on the right, there is a large, empty rectangular metal frame structure on a grassy area.

Restoration

Allegheny County is home to thousands of brownfield acres that are slowly being redeveloped. Greenways and trails are critical elements that should be integrated into these redevelopment plans.



Restoration

Open space areas such as the Allegheny Land Trust's Wingfield Pines property instill inspiration of 'what could be' when considering impaired lands where restoration can create exceptional community value

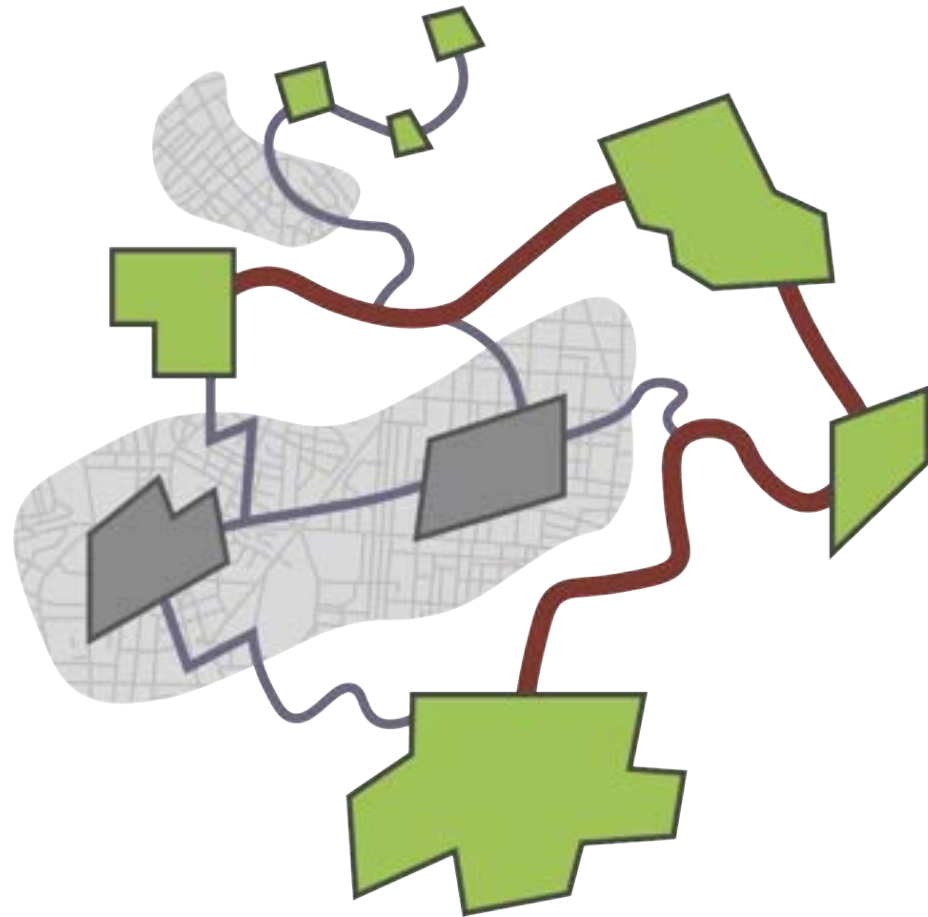
*So How Can a Trail and
Greenway Plan Address
Resiliency, Restoration and
Environmental Justice?*

Paradigm Shift

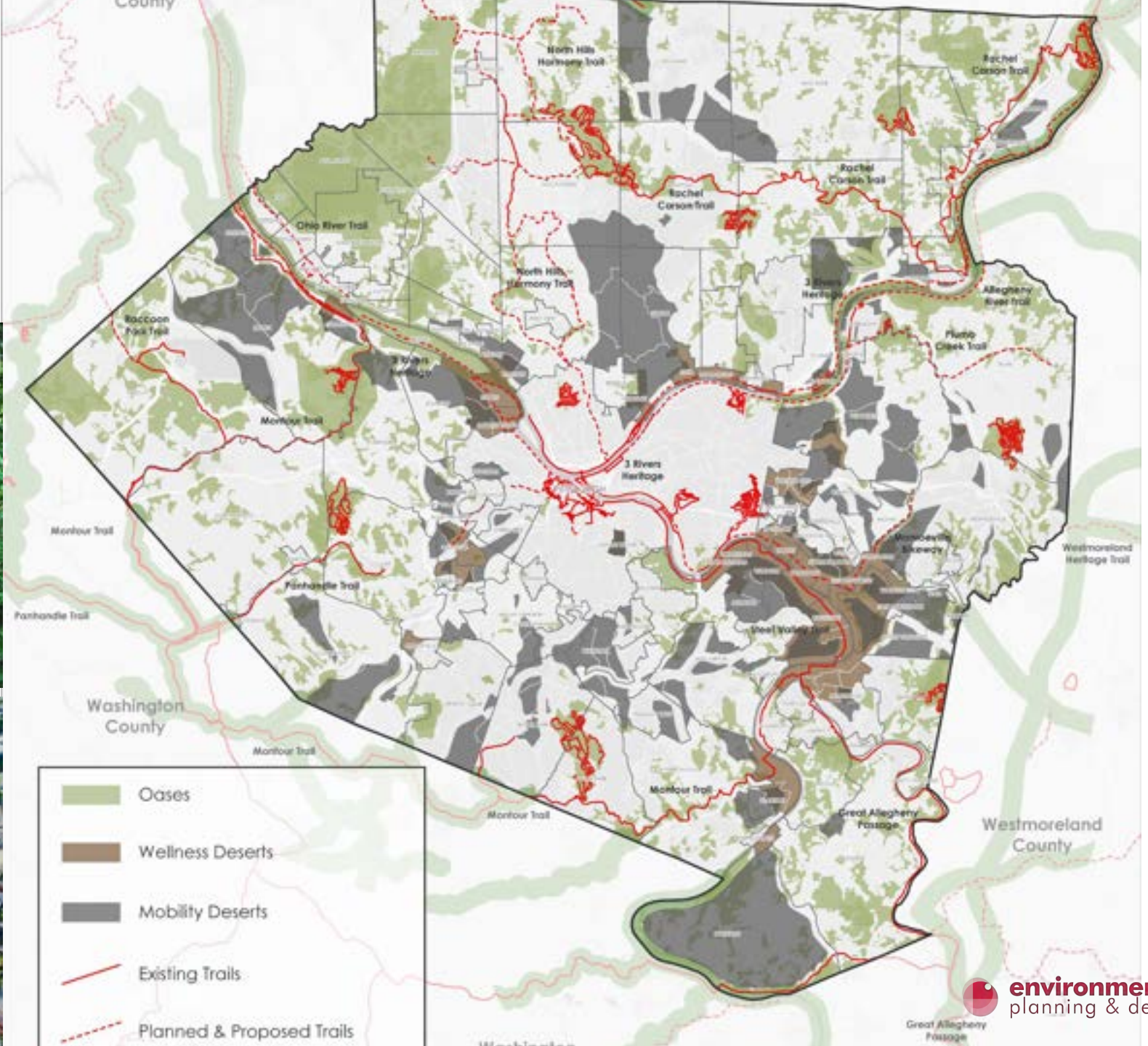
- #1 Imagine an expansive network of open spaces, natural and built, as well as a set of connective ribbons – again natural or built; **places and connections**
- #2 Look not only at the positive assets of a county or region, but also consider how the places and connections where unhealthy environments or circumstances could be mended or healed; **oases and deserts**
- #3 Delineate more than the connection between the important places, but also define connections to ALL communities independent upon size, location, affluence and/or degree of accessibility – ‘no community left behind’; **arteries and capillaries**



Allegheny Green Web Concept



A group of people are hiking on a dirt path through a dense forest. The path is narrow and covered with dry leaves and twigs. The forest is lush with green foliage, including tall trees and thick undergrowth. The hikers are seen from behind, moving away from the camera into the woods.



Types of Arterial Connections

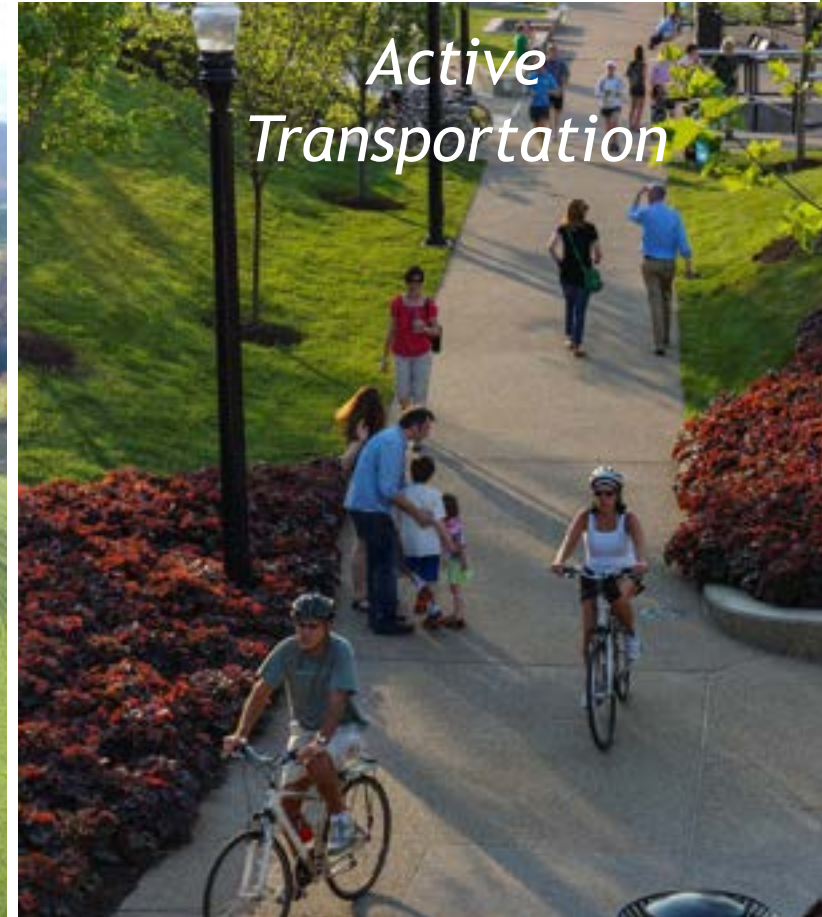
Ecology



Heritage



*Active
Transportation*



Ecology, Heritage and Active Transportation
Examples of Typical Greenway Connections

Types of Arterial Connections



Restoration

A Connection Type Unique to the Allegheny Green Web

Types of Arterial Connections



Resilience

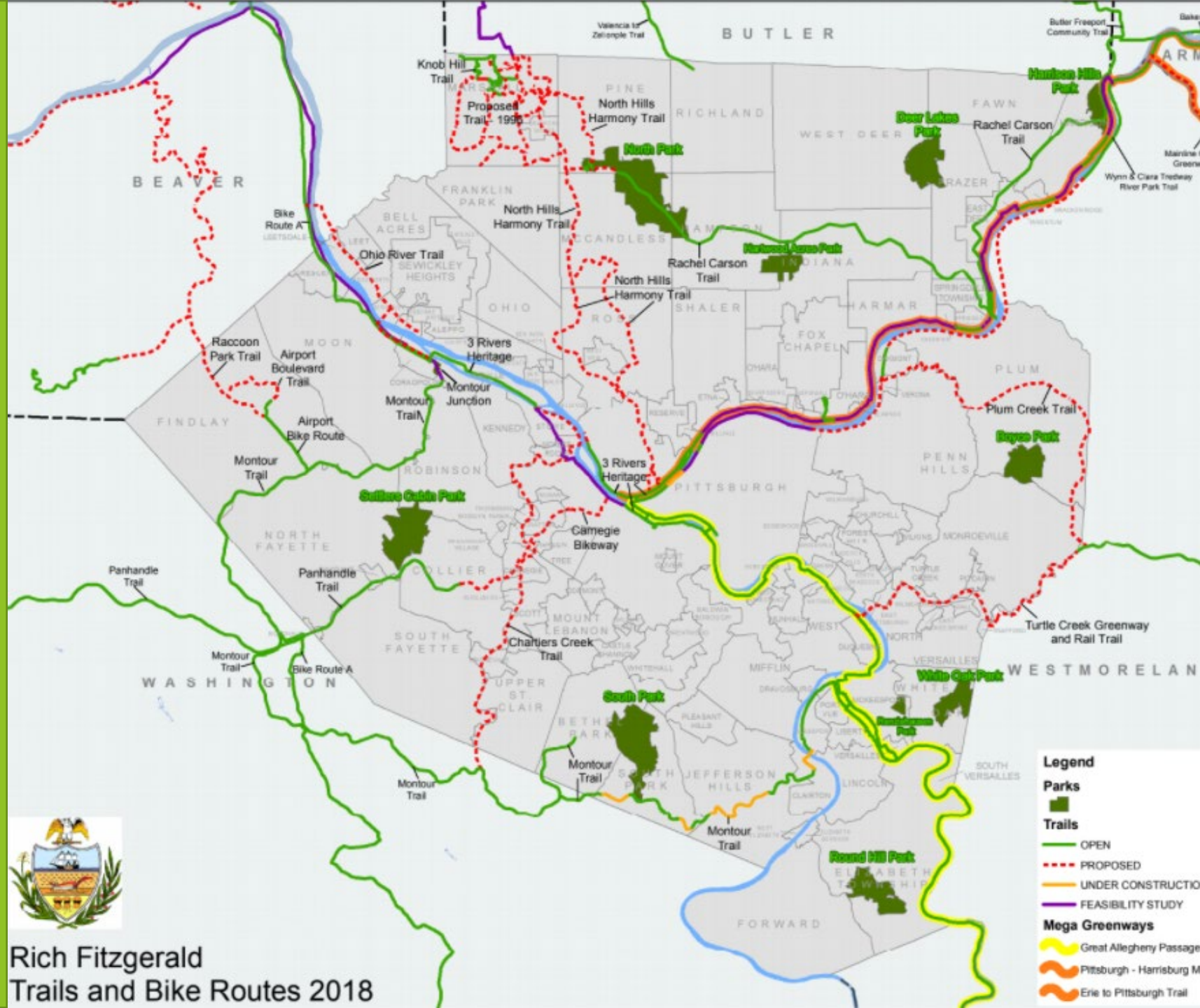
A Connection Type Unique to the Allegheny Green Web

How Will We Implement?

Strategy for Municipalities

Develop a Baseline

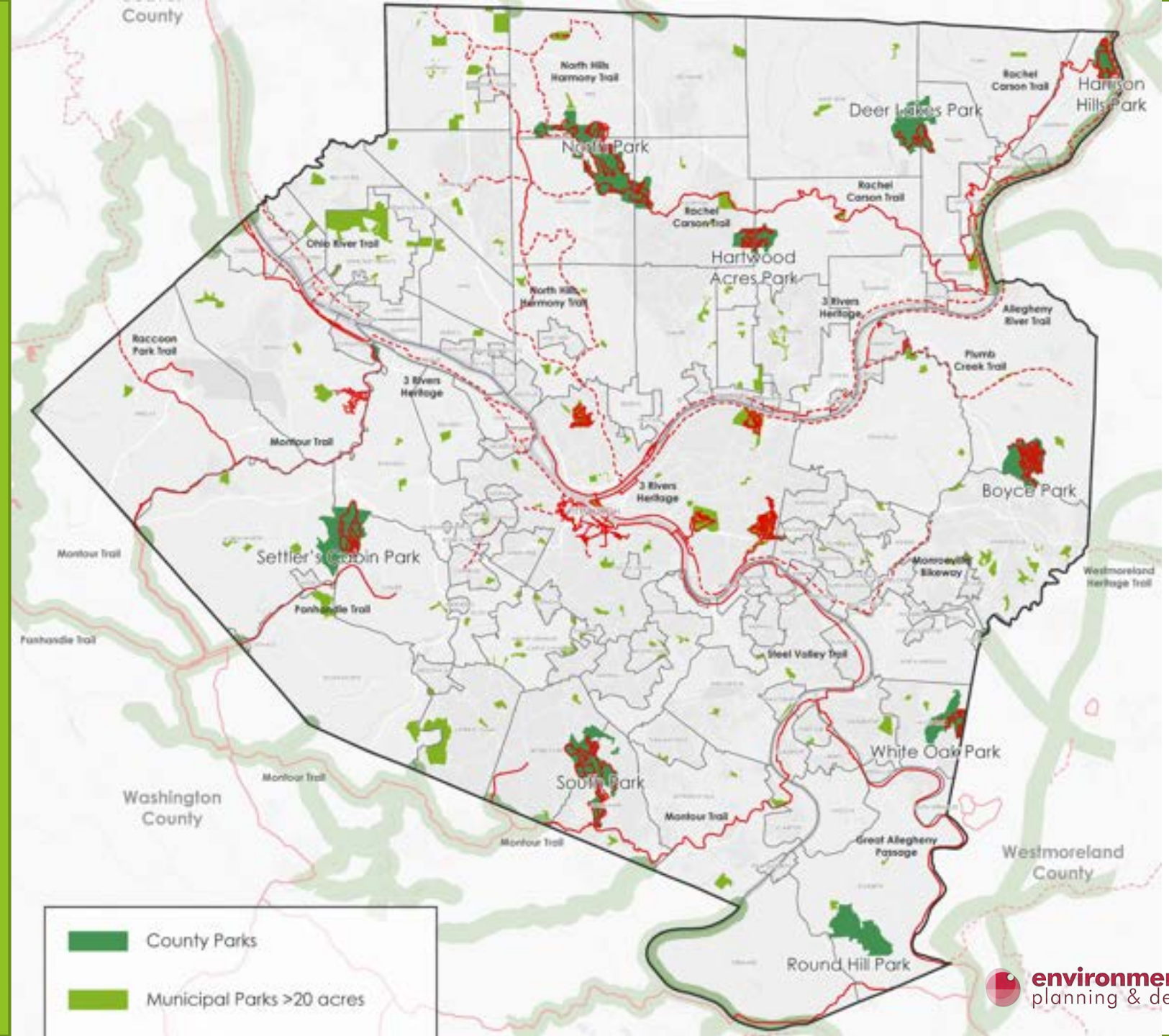
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Strategy for Municipalities

Develop a Baseline

1

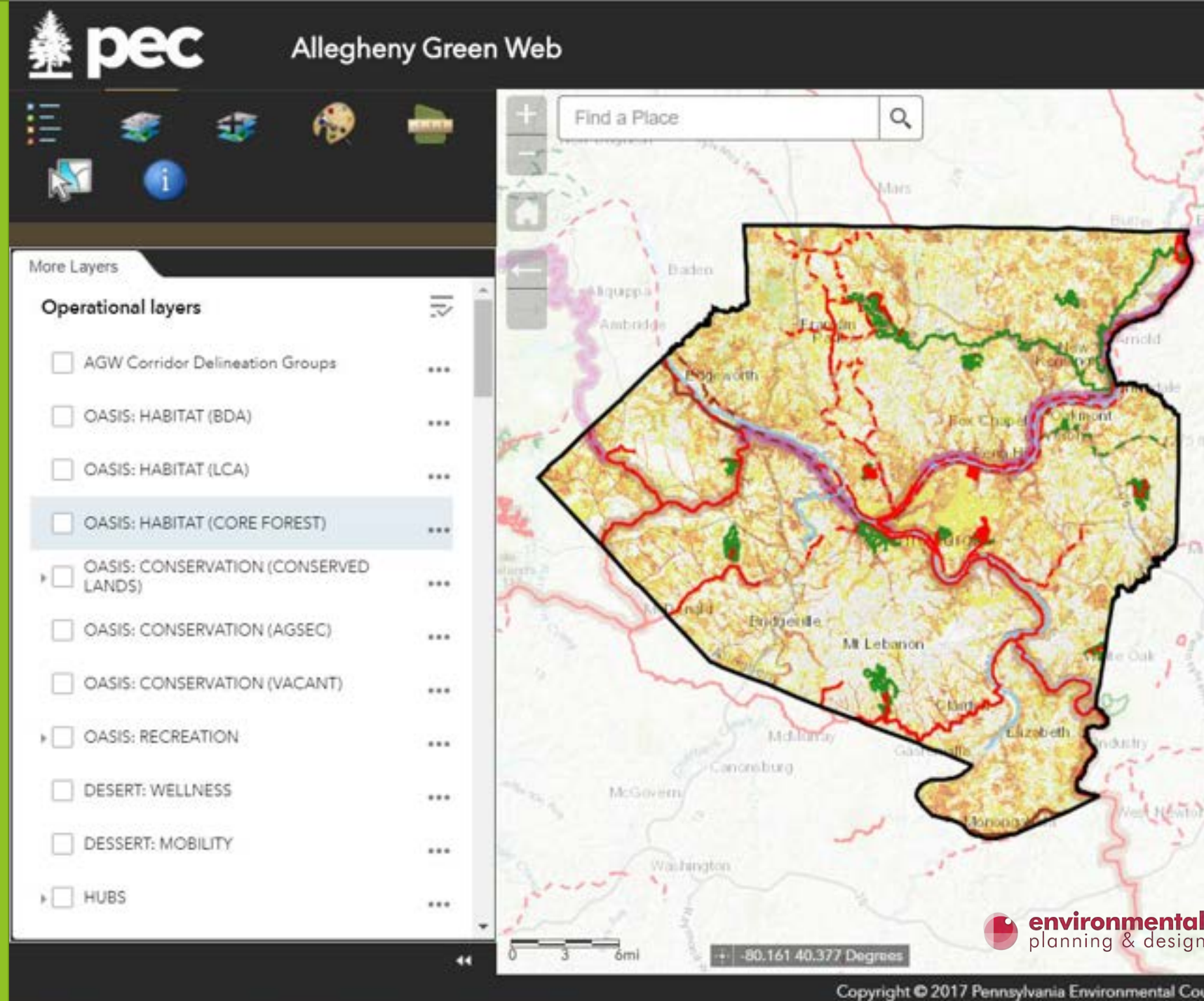


Strategy for Municipalities

Offer Data

www.tinyurl.com/agw-sandbox

2

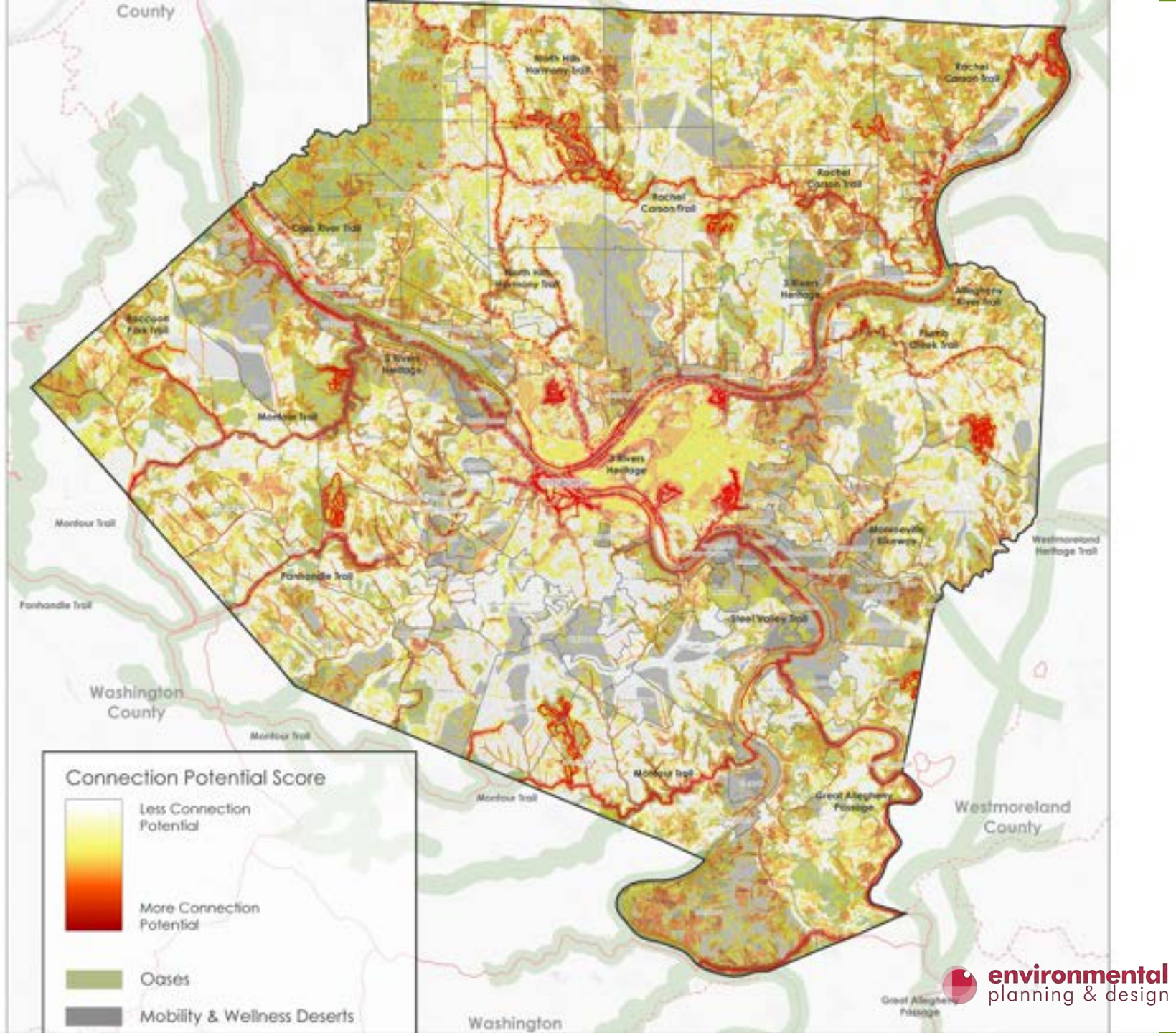


Strategy for Municipalities

Offer Analysis

Creating an “artery” Trail &
Greenway Corridor Options Tool

3



Strategy for Municipalities

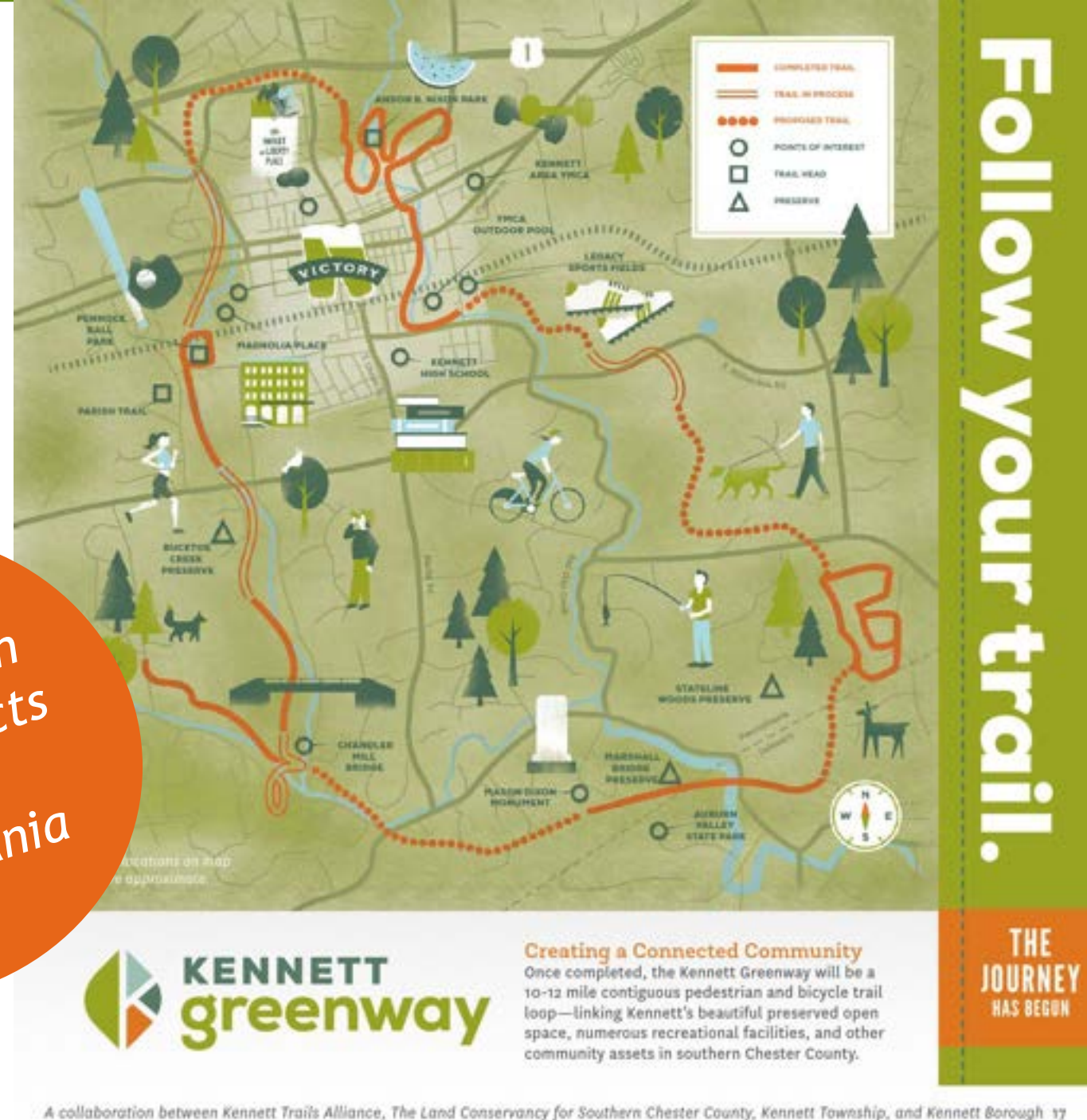
Build a Strategy

Our analysis + local knowledge

Loose conceptual plan: broad “artery” and “capillary” corridors, connecting critical touch points

4

Finding inspiration in other projects across Pennsylvania



Strategy for Municipalities

Offer Technical Assistance to Help Implement Their Section

- Identify + apply for resources
- Land acquisition + easements
- Build/steward trails + greenways
- And much more



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Prioritizing projects with a high resiliency and restoration score/benefit



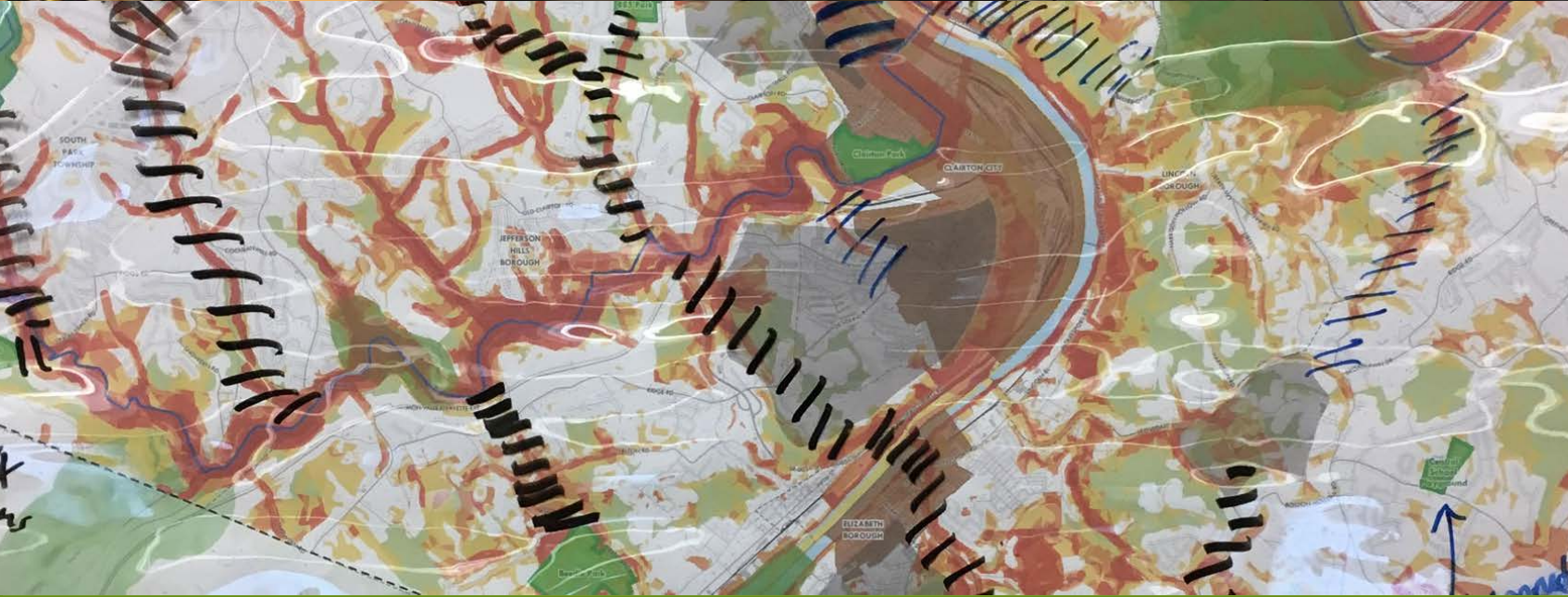


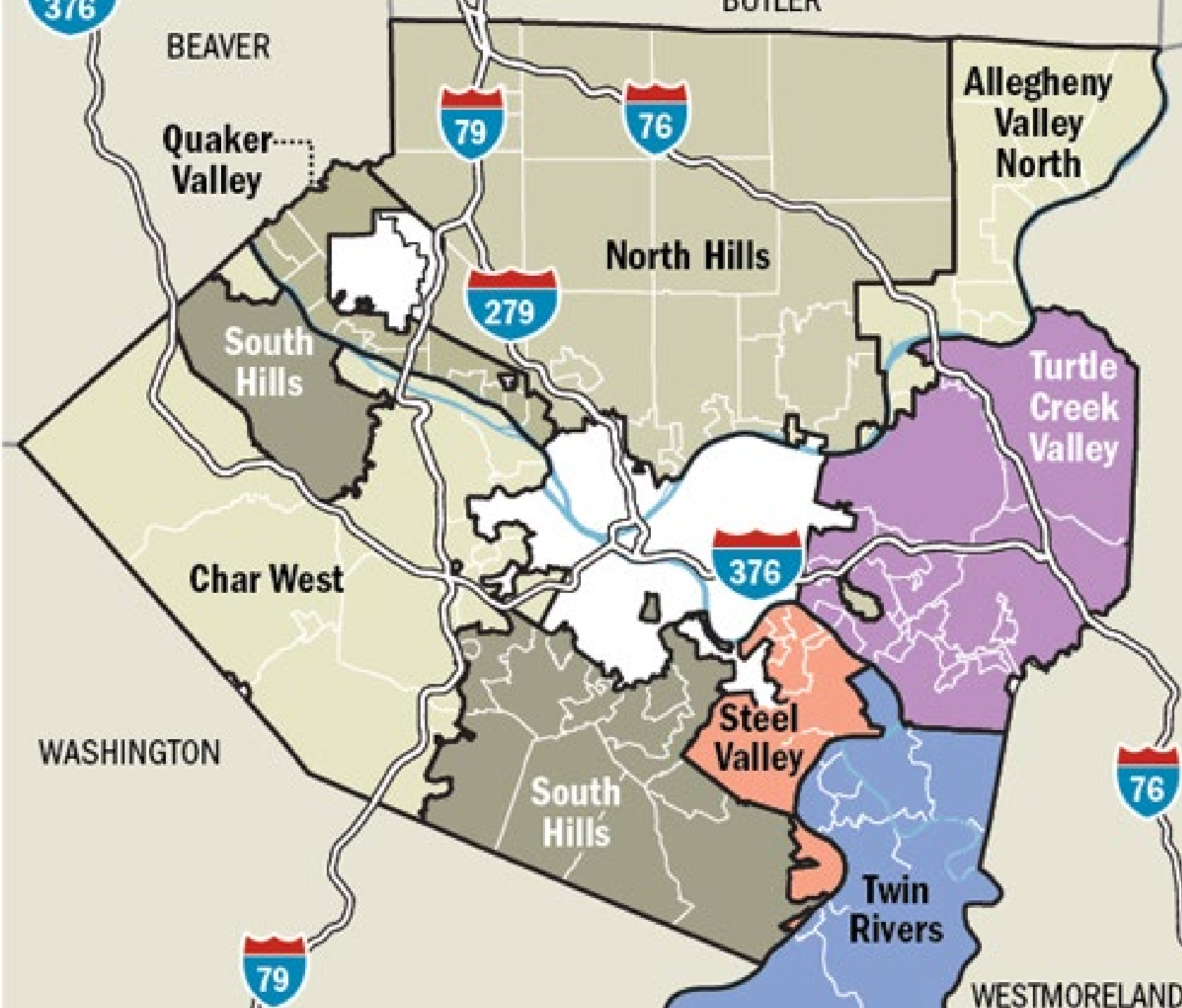
Next Steps for the Allegheny Green Web

2018 *Finishing Our Analysis*

Creating the “artery” Trail &
Greenway Corridor Options Tool

Corridor scoring system, based on:
Ecology, Heritage, Alternative
Transportation, Resiliency and
Restoration benefit





Next Steps for the Allegheny Green Web

2019 *Engaging the Municipalities Through the COGs*

1. Develop the baseline inventory
2. Input on the “artery” Trail & Corridor Options
3. Start to define the local “capillary” connections to the “arteries”

Thank you!
Questions and Discussion