Management Action Plan Report

# LINCOLN HIGHWAY HERITAGE CORRIDOR














RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

# Acknowledgements

In Fall 2024, Relevant Strategies & Solutions' (RS&S) Director of Consulting Operations, Catherine Grace, and Senior Consultant, Ryan Szuch, were engaged by the leadership of the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC) to facilitate a planning process to update its Management Action Plan (MAP).

RS&S appreciates the opportunity to partner with the LHHC on this process. The LHHC extends deep gratitude to its Board of Directors, staff, community partners, and stakeholders who generously contributed their time, insights, and vision to this planning process. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) continues to be a steadfast partner, providing guidance and support for Pennsylvania's heritage areas.

Special thanks are extended to the MAP Planning Committee and to all community members who engaged in surveys, interviews, and public meetings, ensuring this plan reflects the collective aspirations of the Corridor.

The Corridor especially acknowledges the businesses, museums, historic sites, heritage partners and local governments who participated in surveys and interviews, lending valuable perspectives about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Their voices have helped ensure that this plan not only reflects the LHHC's organizational priorities but also responds directly to community needs.

This project was financed by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, using the Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Program Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. We are grateful for DCNR's ongoing partnership and leadership throughout this process.

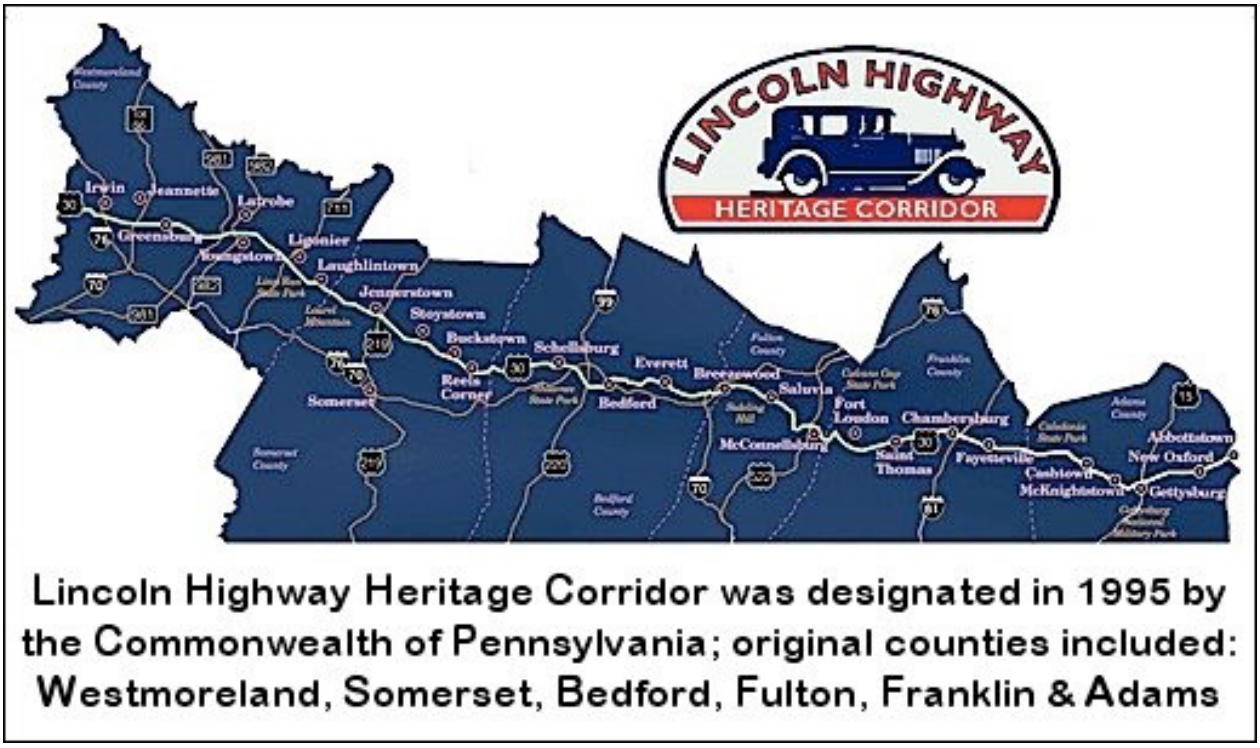
The efforts of all who contributed to this document are greatly appreciated.






# Executive Summary

The Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC) is entrusted with a unique responsibility: to steward America's first transcontinental road through Pennsylvania while ensuring its relevance for today and tomorrow. Stretching across more than 200 miles of U.S. Route 30, the Corridor connects communities, landscapes, businesses, and people. It is both a rich historic resource and a symbolic reminder of the American spirit of innovation, travel, and connection.




Over the last several decades, LHHC has championed the Corridor through preservation projects, interpretive signage, educational programming, and community partnerships. Yet, as the planning process revealed, the Corridor stands at a pivotal moment. Stakeholders consistently highlighted several realities: LHHC must increase its visibility, diversify its funding base, and expand its partnerships to meet rising expectations.

This Management Action Plan (MAP) for 2025–2030 provides a clear roadmap for addressing these challenges and leveraging the Corridor's vast potential. It balances respect for history with an emphasis on relevance to contemporary life, telling stories that resonate not just with nostalgia but also with the lived experiences of the people and communities along the Corridor today.

## The Opportunity Ahead

The Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor is uniquely positioned to serve as both a heritage destination and an engine of community vitality. Tourism research shows that visitors increasingly seek authentic, place-based experiences that blend history, culture, and recreation. Communities along the Corridor hold a wealth of assets such as historic downtowns, museums, scenic landscapes, cultural traditions, and thriving businesses, that can be knit together into a compelling narrative. By positioning itself as the leader in connecting and promoting these assets, LHHC has an opportunity to dramatically expand its impact.

At the same time, LHHC is part of Pennsylvania's broader Heritage Areas Program, which provides critical funding and technical support. Aligning with statewide goals in conservation, recreation, education, and economic development will ensure that LHHC contributes to regional priorities while benefitting from the shared strength of the heritage network.

## Challenges to Address

The planning process identified key challenges that LHHC must address over the next five years:

- **Visibility and Awareness** – Recognition of LHHC is uneven, stronger in the western Corridor and limited in the east. Messaging has often relied on nostalgia rather than contemporary relevance and the "lived experience".
- **Sustainability** – Like many nonprofits, LHHC must diversify its funding streams to ensure long-term stability. Reliance on public funding alone cannot sustain ambitious growth.
- **Capacity** – Expanding programming, partnerships, and geographic coverage will require increased staff, stronger Board leadership, and greater volunteer engagement.
- **Equity and Inclusion** – To remain relevant, LHHC must broaden the stories it tells and the communities it serves, ensuring diverse voices are reflected in interpretation and programming.

## MAP Goals at a Glance

To meet these challenges and seize new opportunities, this plan organizes LHHC's work around five interconnected goals:

- **Education & Interpretation**
  Deliver compelling educational and interpretive experiences that illuminate the Corridor's heritage and elevate the lived experience through diverse, inclusive storytelling.
- **Conservation & Outdoor Recreation**
  Protect and celebrate the Corridor's cultural and natural resources, while promoting stewardship and public enjoyment of the historic and natural landscape.

- **Marketing & Visibility**
  Enhance brand recognition and public awareness through cohesive storytelling, strategic partnerships, and consistent engagement across platforms (both on-site and digital).
- **Financial Sustainability**
  Diversify and grow funding—earned income, philanthropy, and public support—to sustain operations, conservation, and programming, and to advance all heritage-area goals.
- **Institutional Strength**
  Continue to strengthen LHHC's capacity in governance, staffing, systems, facilities, and culture to operate as a high-performing, values-driven organization.

## Why this Plan Matters

The Lincoln Highway is more than a road. It is a cultural touchstone that shaped how Americans traveled, lived, and dreamed. In Pennsylvania, it continues to be an economic driver, a scenic route, and a source of local pride.

This MAP ensures that LHHC honors this history while embracing the opportunities of the present including connecting heritage with economic vitality, community pride, and visitor engagement. By advancing this plan, LHHC will expand its role from being a steward of the past to being an innovator for the future. It will weave together history, culture, and contemporary life in ways that inspire residents, attract visitors, and support thriving communities along the Corridor.

In short, this plan is both a preservation strategy and a growth strategy. It positions LHHC to be a more visible, impactful, and sustainable organization that ensures America's first transcontinental road continues to shape meaningful journeys for generations to come.

# Table of Contents


Introduction ..... 8

Overview of the Management Action Planning Process ..... 14

LHHC's Management Action Plan: 2025-2030 ..... 17

Mission & Vision ..... 17

The Direction Forward – MAP Goals (2025-2030) ..... 19

1) Education & Interpretation ..... 19

2) Conservation & Outdoor Recreation ..... 19

3) Marketing & Visibility ..... 19

4) Financial Sustainability ..... 19

5) Institutional Strength ..... 20

Implementing the Plan ..... 20

Goal 1: Education & Interpretation ..... 22

Goal 2: Conservation & Outdoor Recreation ..... 23

Goal 3: Marketing & Visibility ..... 24

Goal 4: Financial Sustainability ..... 25

Goal 5: Institutional Strength ..... 26

One-Year Action Plan ..... 27

Business & Operational Impacts of the MAP ..... 32

Conclusion ..... 34


## Appendices


**A**: Baseline Assessment Report

**B**: Interview Discussion Guide

**C**: Summary of Partner Survey Responses

**D**: Plans Assessment

**E**: Benchmarking Summary

**F**: Core Values, Mission and Vision

**G**: Full Interpretive Framework & Action Plan

**H**: Geospatial & Visitor Analysis

**I**: York-Lancaster Counties Expansion Feasibility Study

**J**: Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Integration

**K**: Education and Interpretation Framework

# Introduction

Established as one of Pennsylvania's twelve state-designated heritage areas, LHHC operates as a nonprofit organization headquartered at the Lincoln Highway Experience in Latrobe, Westmoreland County. The Corridor stretches across more than 200 miles of U.S. Route 30, connecting vibrant communities, historic landmarks, and treasured landscapes.

The Lincoln Highway itself is iconic. It was America's first transcontinental road, spanning from New York to San Francisco, and it played a transformative role in shaping travel, commerce, and culture. Within Pennsylvania, the Highway passes through bustling towns, quiet farmlands, industrial hubs, and scenic landscapes, each offering its own contribution to the national story.

Since its founding in 1995, the LHHC has sought to preserve these resources and share their stories. It has provided grants, interpretive signage, visitor programs, and community events. It has partnered with local museums, tourism bureaus, small businesses and more to strengthen the Corridor as both a heritage destination and a community resource.

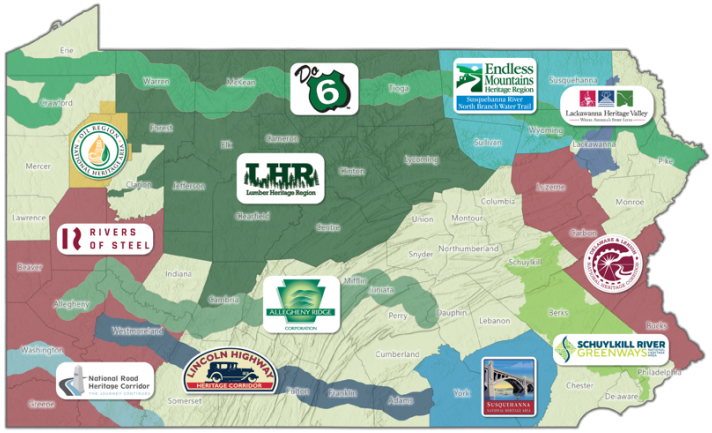
Yet, challenges remain including uneven recognition throughout the Corridor and messaging that often leans more heavily on nostalgia, rather than to the lived experience of today. And like many nonprofits, LHHC must address financial sustainability while meeting growing community expectations.

This MAP directly responds to these realities, outlining a path to build visibility, relevance, and resilience while honoring the legacy of America's first transcontinental road.

## What is a Heritage Area?

The Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Program promotes conservation and community and economic development with a strong rooting in the Commonwealth's natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources, places, and stories.

Heritage Areas were established in 1989 after nearly a decade of planning to create dynamic and collaborative conservation partnerships that enhance a region's "sense of place" and strengthen local economies and improve quality of life for residents and visitors. These partnerships are foundational to maintaining vibrant communities around the state while also preserving and promoting each region's unique heritage. These partnerships then help to attract private and public investment and serve as a draw for tourism.




*Credit: DCNR 1*

There are 12 state-designated Heritage Areas in Pennsylvania, which together, operate in 57 of 67 counties throughout the Commonwealth. Each of these Heritage Areas is guided by a management entity, is informed by strong strategic planning, and reflects the unique landscape character and resources of its area.

These organizations are especially important – while they play a critical role in advancing and investing in state-wide conservation efforts, they also support and strengthen significant quality of life assets in the communities they serve.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), as part of its heritage conservation mission and duties, allocates program funding received through the annual Pennsylvania state budget's "Heritage Parks" line item, which was the initial program name in 1989. This funding is then granted and administered by DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation to support the overall management of the Heritage Area and targeted implementation projects.

## Economic Impact of Pennsylvania Heritage Areas

As a key economic driver in their respective regions, the economic impact of a heritage area can be quite robust.

A 2014 report from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania found that:

Tourists spent an estimated 7.5 million days and nights in Pennsylvania's Heritage Areas, purchasing more than $2 billion worth of goods and services.

70 percent of this spending was purely reliant on heritage-related attractions.

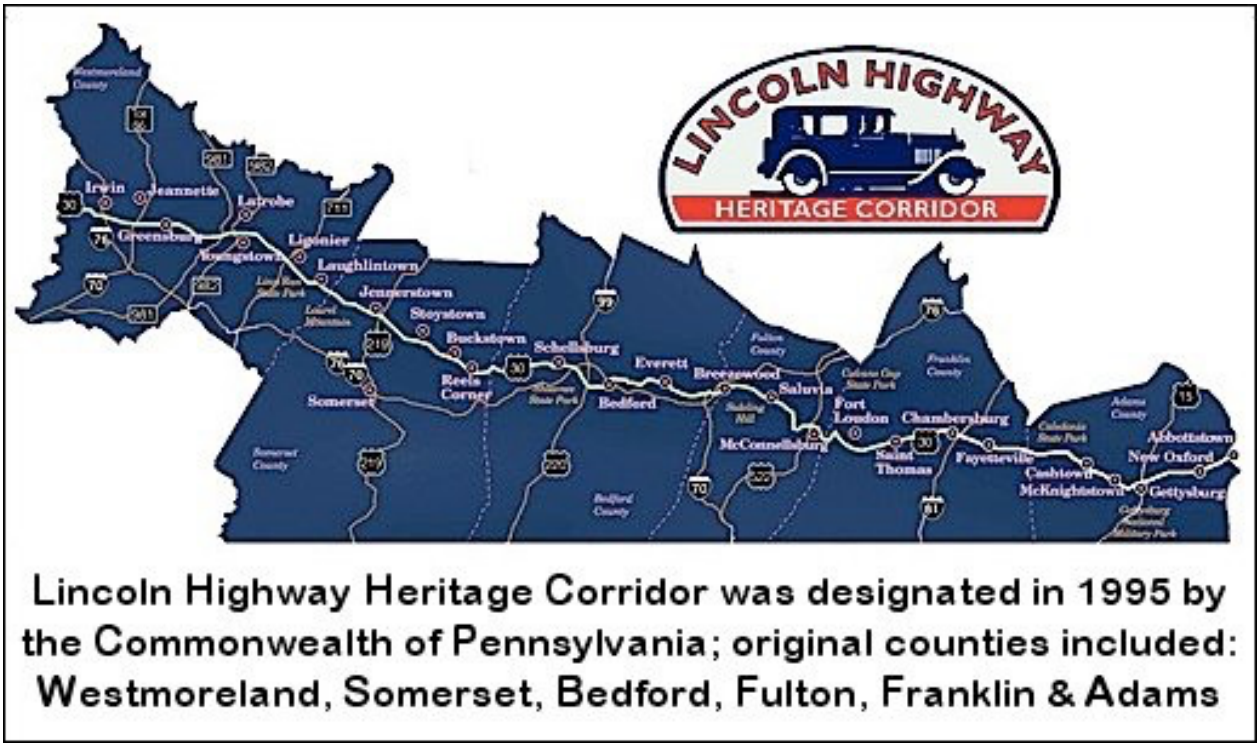
The total contribution of heritage visitor spending to the state economy was 25,708 jobs and $798 million in labor income.

In fact, a study conducted by Southwick Associates for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership found that outdoor recreation, ranging from biking and snow sports to camping and fishing, generated almost $59 billion in economic activity in Pennsylvania in 2020. This was up 26% from four years prior.

# Current Situation

## About LHHC

LHHC is one of Pennsylvania's twelve designated Heritage Areas, operating as a nonprofit from the Lincoln Highway Experience (LHE) in Latrobe and stewarding the Highway's story across a six-county span.




LHHC leadership engaged RS&S in late 2024 to update the MAP, grounding this refresh in an inclusive and thorough planning process to clarify its direction for the next five years. Through this process, the planning team uncovered some key themes and findings that informed the goals and priorities of the updated MAP, including:

- **Identity & Role.** LHHC's dual identity as a heritage area and museum remains both an asset and a challenge. The Lincoln Highway Experience has some regional recognition and delivers a strong, memorable on-site experience; however, public awareness of LHHC's broader Corridor-wide role is largely lacking, and the organization's brand as a heritage area is sometimes eclipsed by the museum brand. The MAP process affirms LHHC's role as that of a lead convener, storyteller, and partner across the Corridor, with LHE functioning as a key gateway or anchor for the heritage area.

- **Audiences & Relevance.** Visitation has rebounded post-pandemic, but group tours have lagged and the audience skews older. The planning work surfaces a clear opportunity to broaden relevance by expanding interpretation, programs, and delivery formats to engage families, students and new audiences across the Corridor.

- **Awareness & Story.** Stakeholders report that while most people "know Route 30," fewer recognize LHHC as the coordinating organization; in survey results, awareness averaged 2.8/5, with stronger recognition in the west than the east portions of the heritage area. Messaging has leaned nostalgic; stakeholders encouraged telling the "lived experience" of the Highway today alongside its early twentieth-century story. The MAP responds with a unified narrative and Corridor-wide visibility strategy.
- **Partnerships & Geography.** Strategic partnerships are the most scalable path to impact without overextending staff. Reinvestment in relationships, including museums, schools, tourism bureaus, conservation landscapes, among many others, can extend programming, co-market experiences and elevate underrepresented stories. LHHC is also examining how to serve the full Lincoln Highway in Pennsylvania more consistently, including feasibility work on adding York and Lancaster counties.
- **Organizational Capacity.** Leadership transition in 2024 stabilized operations and rebuilt confidence; the Board has leaned in on transparency and governance. Volunteers are enthusiastic and growing in number, though they skew older, prompting a need to diversify roles and build younger pipelines.
- **Financial Footing.** As with many heritage areas, LHHC benefits from DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) program, yet that line has faced increased scrutiny recently, heightening the importance of a diversified revenue mix (earned, contributed, public) and a more consistent, visible mini-grant program that doubles as partner cultivation.
- **Strategic inflection point.** Board and MAP committee conversations are pointing toward a more "activated" corridor, including such initiatives and activities as mobile outreach, cycling on historic alignments, dark-sky programming, and corridor-wide events. Paired with brand cohesion and modern interpretive tools, these activities can help move LHHC from primarily museum-centric storytelling to Corridor-scale impact.

## Past MAP Goals & Assessment of Progress

The 1995 Management Action Plan (MAP) is at first striking in that it lacks a clear mission for the organization, stating only, "Its mission is to implement the ambitious but sound plan that follows." The MAP does describe in several sentences what the LHHC is:

> "LHHC is a grassroots confederation of local efforts and projects working to bring new life and activity to places with deep roots and a rich transportation heritage.
>
> LHHC is a regional heritage tourism initiative that utilizes the historic Lincoln Highway as the unifying element for packaging the diverse experiences available in the 140+ mile corridor between Greensburg and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. The area is rich in history, scenic and natural beauty, recreation, special events, small town and rural life, and special places to stay, eat, and shop. The Lincoln Highway ties many of them together."

At 136 pages, the MAP contains a great volume of recommended actions around interpretation, tourism, community development, scenic conservation, and historic preservation. Key highlights include:

- Greet people at either end of the Corridor, while playing off existing strengths and/or market niches (emphasis on attracting children)
- Entice people over the mountain (proposed interpretive facilities at Grand View Ship Hotel and a primary visitor center in Bedford)
- Create a critical mass – (to exceed visitor expectations, need larger centers = 3,500-10,000 sq ft)
- Leverage benefit to local municipalities (put facilities downtown, Main Street revitalization, business improvement districts)
- Strengthen existing attractions that are willing to be included within the interpretive framework (e.g., Fort Ligonier, Civilian Conservation Corps camps in state parks)
- Strengthen building preservation and cultural and land conservation efforts
- Enhance continuity of experience (some stretches have sparse vestiges of region's history – use pathfinder signs and interpretive messages)
- Tell a national story locally
- Tie into private sector (e.g., bed and breakfasts, motels, restaurants)
- Do not expect to sequence the visitor experience (experiences must stand on their own because people will pop on and off the Lincoln Highway in different sections)
- Drive the message home (there is presently no primary message, state key message over and over again)
- Wayfinding system (Lincoln Highway Guide; Highway Markers; scenic, cultural, and commercial waysides, sequential signs)
- LHHC Traveling Road Show
- Special Events and Promotions
- Cultural landscapes should include farmland/open space preservation, ecological rehabilitation
- Develop and adopt design and maintenance guidelines for properties
- Develop a series of walking and driving tours
- Create scenic loops with abandoned sections
- Mini-grants program
- Develop stronger linkages to towns (five towns were focused upon in the MAP)
- Cultural Education and Conservation Opportunities

In several places, the MAP called for formal designations to pursue. For the Lincoln Highway itself, the MAP called for pursuit of Scenic Conservation and National Scenic Byway Designations as well as listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It also suggested that towns along the Lincoln Highway pursue historic district designation.

The MAP identified spatial zones around the highway corridor for planning and implementation purposes. The defined zones were the following:

> **Inner Corridor –** the Lincoln Highway and immediate environs (it called for 70% of effort to be expended within the Inner Corridor in the first five years of MAP implementation)
>
> **The Midlands –** the municipalities though which Lincoln Highway passes
>
> **The Outer Reaches –** beyond The Midlands, potential loop drives off the Lincoln Highway

## External Planning Environment

A scan of state, regional, and county plans reveals strong alignment with LHHC's mission and potential partners:

- **PA SHPO 2025–2035**: ties preservation to community identity and economic vitality. This plan calls for coalitions with Main Streets and economic development, broader advocacy, and inclusive storytelling, all of which directly resonates and aligns with LHHC's goals.
- **Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)**: documents the shift from "collecting objects" to "collecting experiences" and elevates outdoor recreation as a tool for economic development, opening pathways for LHHC to link heritage with trails, cycling, dark-sky, and town-to-trail connections.
- **Conservation Landscapes (Laurel Highlands; South Mountain)**: emphasize making recreation accessible, building projects with regional impact, and partnerships across outdoor recreation, culture, business, natural resource conservation, and tourism marketing. Similar to heritage areas, conservation landscapes were established to be partnership-based, cross-sector models.
- **County/Regional Plans (e.g., Reimagining Our Westmoreland; Allegheny Outdoors; York County plans)**: converge on main street revitalization, small-business support, wayfinding, and outdoor connectivity; these are fertile ground for LHHC's place-based projects and small-business storytelling efforts and activities.

LHHC can scale impact by aligning programs where heritage, outdoor recreation and storytelling intersect (e.g., scenic loops on historic alignments, façade/wayfinding collaborations, corridor-wide event series). More detail about the external environment can be found in **Appendix D**.

# Overview of the Management Action Planning Process

This updated MAP was developed through a nearly year-long planning process that was inclusive, data-driven, and future-focused.

## A: Project Initiation/Information Gathering

RS&S began the planning process with extensive discovery, during which we collected background materials about LHHC. LHHC staff and Board leadership also convened a MAP Planning Committee (Planning Committee), a group of LHHC staff, Board members and DCNR representatives to oversee the planning process. The individuals of the Planning Committee included:

- **Kim Cady, LHHC Executive Director**
- **Casey Bowser, LHHC Board President**
- **Evan Crider, LHHC Board Member**
- **David Maher, DCNR PA Heritage Areas Coordinator**
- **Lindsay Baer, DCNR Regional Advisor**

### Stakeholder Interviews & Surveys

In our stakeholder interviews, we spoke with a total of 18 individuals and conducted one online survey. Below is the list of individuals interviewed as well as an overview of the online survey.

| Staff Interviews (7) | Board Interviews (9) | DCNR Representatives (2) |
|---|---|---|
| •Kim Cady, Executive Director<br>•Lindsay Greene, Digital Marketing Coordinator<br>•Wanda Kingera, Greeter<br>•Beverly Ravida, Office & Gift Shop Manager<br>•Tom Ravida, Facilities Manager<br>•Tina Rusiski, Development and Grants Manager<br>•Spencer Simpson, Manager of Visitor Services | •Fr. Brian Boosel, OSB<br>•Casey Bowser<br>•Kristen Ecker<br>•Joan Hawk<br>•Eric Knopsnyder<br>•Adam Kopp<br>•Jessica Petrovich<br>•Lauren Titterington<br>•Michael Tusay | •Lindsay Baer, DCNR Regional Advisor<br>•David Maher, DCNR PA Heritage Areas Coordinator |

## Partner Survey

- Invitations to participate were sent to 48 partners, mini grant recipients, funders, civic/government agencies, and other community stakeholders
- Received 15 responses
- 31% response rate

The summary of the survey responses as well as the summary of baseline findings is attached to this report. More information about be found **Appendix A, B and C**.

## Comparative Benchmarking

To further frame our strategic conversations and test the opportunities identified during the planning project, we identified several individuals who could offer background and new thinking around many of the opportunities and challenges LHHC is facing. RS&S worked with the Executive Director to identify these benchmarks.

While it is important to note that no two organizations are alike, the benchmarking information can be used as a frame of reference and to help inform future strategic discussions.

The benchmarking summary as well as the list of individuals with whom we spoke is included in this report as **Appendix E**.

## Planning Meetings (January – April 2025)

The RS&S team facilitated several meetings with the Planning Committee as well as LHHC staff to update the mission, develop a new vision statement, clarify core values and begin to define the action plan that will guide the organization over the next five years. With this, a full interpretive framework was developed, with a clear sense of priorities over the next five years. The full interpretive framework is included as **Appendix F** and **G** in this report.

## Board Retreat (July 2025)

LHHC leaders reviewed findings, tested the draft mission and vision language, and articulated an ambitious "vivid vision". That vision included expanding the Corridor eastward, developing new interpretive hubs, and building a diversified financial model.

## Public Meetings (August 2025)

RS&S facilitated three in person and two virtual public meetings to provide the community with an opportunity to preview and share feedback on the draft MAP for the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor. These sessions confirmed strong community interest in new programming, broader partnerships, and a

stronger, more inclusive narrative about the Highway. Participants urged LHHC to connect nostalgia with modern relevance, showing how the Highway's legacy still shapes daily life.

## Geospatial Analyses

To support the MAP process as well as provide high-value data to aid MAP implementation across a range of Action Steps, the RS&S team conducted two types of geospatial analysis for LHHC. These analyses informed the best locations for beginning to expand visibility and partnership throughout the Corridor.

Placer.ai location data and analytics were employed to examine visitation levels, tourism, travel routes, and visitor demographics at key locations along LHHC. The locations analyzed with Placer.ai were the LHE and the downtown districts of Bedford, Chambersburg, and McConnelsburg.

Key findings from the Placer.ai analysis included the following:

- Most visitors to these locations reside in the region, suggesting that residents find value in their downtowns and the LHE.
- Tourism visits (i.e., person coming from 50+ miles away) experience a great increase related to special events in the communities (e.g., ice festival, fall festival).
- There is not a strong linear visitation progression along the Lincoln Highway, with visitors and tourists arriving at the LHE and communities via multiple routes besides the road corridor.
- Downtown businesses lose significant business patronage to regional and national chains outside the downtown districts.
- Visitation to these sites is overwhelmingly White.

These key findings and others will prove valuable as the LHHC Board and staff seek to implement the MAP and conduct outreach to new partners. For example, curated itineraries could direct drivers to use the Highway itself more as they travel between communities, and staff outreach into these communities can be focused on big event weekends to maximize touchpoints with tourists. The Placer.ai analysis also examined specific business/organization locations that could serve as key partners for LHHC, based on visitation trends to these locations and their shared interests in heritage/history or tourism.

A summary of additional key findings and a slide deck of Placer.ai statistics, maps, and graphics are included as **Appendix H** to this report.

An additional geospatial inventory was conducted to catalog points of interest along the entire LHHC. This inventory incorporated multiple existing datasets to build a comprehensive Google Earth-based map of interpretive assets and attractions along the corridor. A pilot program also assessed the condition of interpretive assets along the corridor, such as murals and interpretive panels. This inventory and Google Earth tool will prove valuable for marketing and visibility efforts, by identifying both clusters of attractions as well as gaps. It will also help the LHHC staff to systematically manage future interpretive installations and maintenance needs. This information has been provided to LHHC leadership separately from this report.

## Management Action Plan

This report represents the culmination of all elements of the process detailed above, with particular support and input from LHHC's network of partners, and provides the full Management Action Plan for the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor over the next five years.

This inclusive planning approach ensured the MAP reflects not only organizational priorities but also the aspirations of the communities it serves.

# LHHC's Management Action Plan: 2025-2030

## Mission & Vision

A **mission statement** is a succinct expression of purpose that articulates what an organization does and why they do it. A mission statement is a fundamental building block upon which the Management Action Plan is developed.

A **vision statement** reflects a futuristic view of what an organization wants to become.

Together, the vision and mission unify an organization at all levels and galvanize positive action. They bring stakeholders together to work toward achieving shared goals and establish a unified brand understood by external stakeholders such as partners, funders, and community leaders.

During the planning process, the staff, Board and MAP Planning Committee revised the mission statement and developed a new vision statement.

### Mission

*To promote and enrich the communities and treasured resources along Pennsylvania's Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor through dynamic storytelling, meaningful partnerships, and thoughtful conservation – honoring both the highway's history and its lived experience today*.

### Vision

*A vibrant corridor that celebrates the Lincoln Highway's history as well as its lived experience today — fueling economic vitality, fostering lifelong memories, and inspiring a deeper appreciation for the living legacy of America's first transcontinental road*.

## Core Values

Core Values set the framework for how the staff and Board of the LHHC will conduct their work to implement this MAP. They establish the desired culture for the organization. New core values were defined as part of this planning process and include the following:

- **Partnership & Collaboration**: We believe in the power of working together—with communities, organizations, and individuals—to build meaningful relationships that strengthen and support the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor.
- **Lifelong Learning**: We foster curiosity and discovery by sharing stories of the past and present. We see every interaction as an opportunity to inspire learning and deepen understanding of the Corridor's legacy.
- **Conservation & Preservation**: We are dedicated to protecting and honoring the historic and natural resources of the Corridor. Preserving the past ensures its lessons and beauty remain for future generations.
- **Welcoming Community**: We create inclusive, engaging spaces and experiences where everyone feels seen, valued, and connected. Our work is rooted in connection and a genuine desire to welcome all.
- **Excellence in Operations**: We pursue excellence in everything we do. From programming to visitor services, we hold ourselves to the highest standards to make a lasting impact on the communities we serve.
- **Transparency & Integrity**: We are committed to openness, honesty and ethical practices. Clear communication and trust guide our decisions, ensuring mutual understanding and accountability.

These values ground LHHC's work in a culture of excellence, community, and stewardship. They remind us that the Corridor is not only a road but also a shared heritage that deserves care, creativity and celebration.

# The Direction Forward – MAP Goals (2025-2030)

Guided by community, Board and staff input, LHHC will focus its next five years on the following interconnected goals. Together they shift LHHC from nostalgia alone to a broader "lived experience" of the Corridor, linking heritage, learning, recreation, and local economies while addressing the awareness and capacity gaps identified in the planning process.

## 1) Education & Interpretation

LHHC will deliver compelling educational and interpretive experiences that illuminate the Corridor's national significance and its contemporary relevance for Pennsylvanians. Priorities include: expanding school and adult learning partnerships, developing inclusive stories that elevate underrepresented histories, and deploying flexible formats in "telling" these stories (on-site exhibits, mobile outreach, tours, and programs) to meet audiences where they are along the Corridor. This approach responds directly to stakeholder feedback to balance "classic road" nostalgia with today's lived experience of the Lincoln Highway. It also moves from a museum-centric focus to one that includes and balances both the museum and the broader Corridor.

## 2) Conservation & Outdoor Recreation

To protect what makes the Corridor special, LHHC will champion conservation of cultural and natural resources while encouraging responsible public enjoyment. Efforts will include support of preservation projects, interpretive signage in priority locations, and promoting recreation offerings, like cycling on historic alignments and dark-sky programming, that connect place, health and history. These initiatives align with the vision for a Corridor that invites active exploration and strengthens stewardship.

## 3) Marketing & Visibility

Addressing uneven awareness, LHHC will implement a cohesive storytelling and marketing strategy that clarifies who we are, what we do and why it matters. Tactics will include a unified brand narrative, digital engagement, media partnerships and signature programs that lift the LHHC name at every touchpoint. The goal is to move from a "known road" to a "known organization" across the entire Corridor.

## 4) Financial Sustainability

LHHC will diversify and grow revenue, balancing earned income, philanthropy and public support, to sustain operations and fuel mission growth. Board cultivation, individual and corporate giving, sponsorships, grants and earned revenue initiatives (e.g., special experiences, merchandise and rentals) will collectively reduce risk and enable strategic investments in programs and people. This diversified model reflects organizational priorities for a resilient, scalable organization.

### 5) Institutional Strength

To deliver at a higher level, LHHC will continue to build its internal capacity consistent with its mission and values. Focus areas include Board development, staff training and right-sizing, technology and data practices that support decision-making, and facilitate strategies that enhance access and presence along the Corridor. Long-range concepts discussed by the Board, such as expanding into additional counties and launching an endowment campaign will be evaluated through feasibility and partnerships before considering phased implementation.

Note: The summary feasibility analysis for expansion into Lancaster and York Counties is attached to this report as **Appendix I.**

**How these goals work together.** The Education & Interpretation goal provides the content and experiences that make the Corridor meaningful; Conservation & Outdoor Recreation protects and activates the places that ground those stories; Marketing & Visibility ensures the public can find, understand and value LHHC's role; Financial Sustainability powers long-term delivery; and Institutional Strength equips the organization to execute with excellence. This integrated strategy advances the mission and vision affirmed through this comprehensive planning process.

## MAP Framework

The detailed structure of the MAP is expressed in the LHHC Framework for Management Action Planning (**Appendix C**). The Framework has multiple hierarchical levels and elements. At the highest level, the MAP process identified the five Goals described above. Each Goal has several Objectives that detail the key aspects of how the Goals will be addressed over the next five years. Each Objective contains a series of Action Steps that begin to operationalize the Framework. Each action step has been assigned a timeframe for initiating the work described therein. Some action steps have been designated as occurring on an ongoing basis. To track accomplishments and progress, a series of Metrics for Success have been identified at the Objective level of the Framework.

## Implementing the Plan

This updated Management Action Plan is a **living document**. Implementation will be guided by the sequence of action steps, measurable performance metrics, and regular review by the Board and staff. Progress should be tracked against the identified metrics and updated as circumstances require. The action plan should inform annual work plans and be reviewed in full by the Board at a minimum of annually.

This framework ensures that LHHC not only stays accountable but also adapts to emerging opportunities.

As a living document, the Management Action Plan is as an evolving framework—one that LHHC staff and the Board will routinely re-examine, adapt as needed, and formally update every five years to remain responsive to the Corridor's needs.

## Goal 1: Education & Interpretation

**Goal Statement:** Deliver compelling educational and interpretive programs through the Corridor that inspire curiosity, connect audiences to history, and elevate the lived experience through diverse, inclusive storytelling.

| Objective | Metrics for Success |
|---|---|
| **Interpretive Experience**: Create and maintain an interpretive experience that advances the mission of LHHC both along the Corridor and at the Museum | Visitor data (family, grandparent, library pass, etc.)<br><br>Visitor center visitation vs. museum visitation<br><br>Feedback on visitor experience (via surveys and anecdotal information)<br><br># of types of curated itineraries<br><br>Data on which itineraries are taken/accessed<br><br>Data on digital map access and use<br><br>Development of wayfinding and signage plan<br><br># of assets along the Corridor that are installed, updated, etc. year over year |
| **Attracting New Audiences**: Develop programming and experiences that cover a wide range of topics to appeal to new and more diverse audiences | # of visitors<br><br>% visitors from demographics outside of the "traditional" LHHC audience<br><br># of workshops on historic preservation<br><br>Use of mobile exhibit |
| **Partnerships**: Establish and maintain partnerships to tell the story of the Lincoln Highway | # of partnerships within the "hubs" |
| **Estimated Financial Impact** | Printing costs<br>Costs associated with tour translation<br>Cost of new and updated signage<br>Lecture costs<br>Cost to create and assemble mobile exhibit |

## Goal 2: Conservation & Outdoor Recreation

**Goal Statement:** Protect and celebrate the Corridor's cultural and natural assets through proactive conservation efforts and the expansion of unique outdoor experiences, encouraging both stewardship and enjoyment of the historic and natural landscape.

| Objective | Metrics for Success |
|---|---|
| **Emphasize the Lived Experience:** Promote outdoor recreation along the Corridor through marketing, programming and storytelling that focused on the lived experience of the Highway and surrounding region | # of dark skies events<br><br>#of biking events on old alignments<br><br>Data on which itineraries are accessed<br><br># of programs/events facilitated by environmental educators<br><br>Total $ given via mini grant program to support trails and other conservation related orgs |
| **Partnerships:** Establish and maintain partnerships to help promote outdoor recreation sites and experiences along the Corridor | # of relationships established and maintained |
| | # of partnerships within the "hubs" |
| **Estimated Financial Impact** | No new costs identified |

## Goal 3: Marketing & Visibility

**Goal Statement:** Enhance brand recognition and public awareness of the Lincoln Highway's significance through comprehensive marketing, cohesive messaging, storytelling, strategic partnerships, and consistent engagement across platforms.

| Objective | Metrics for Success |
|---|---|
| **Integrated marketing strategy:** Develop a marketing strategy that unifies the brand and messaging of both the Corridor and Museum. | # of individuals on marketing list(s)<br><br>Consistent use of one logo/brand<br><br>Greater understanding of brand (via surveys)<br><br>Mini grant recipients consistently using brand guide<br><br>$ spent on new marketing<br><br># of social media followers and engagement year over year<br><br># of website hits |
| **Storytelling and messaging:** Develop and maintain messaging that tells the stories and impact of the Lincoln Highway, reflecting both its history and the lived experience today | Social media engagement<br><br>Average rating on reviews<br><br># of visitors who visit other sites along Corridor<br><br># of visitors taking advantage of discounts offered at Corridor sites |
| **Partnerships:** Establish and maintain partnerships to tell the story of the Lincoln Highway | # of new partnerships year over year<br><br># of guest lecturers from partner sites |
| **Technology:** Leverage technology resources to expand LHHC's presence and visibility and to promote the resources along the Corridor. | New website launched<br><br>Digital Directory launched<br><br># of organizations participating in digital directory year over year |
| **Estimated Financial Impact** | Marketing and advertising costs<br>Potential cost of intern<br>Costs for new website (already allocated) |

## Goal 4: Financial Sustainability

**Goal Statement:** Diversify and grow funding sources - including earned income, public support, private contributions, and grants - to ensure long-term financial health and the ability to invest in innovation, programming, and advance all goals of the heritage area.

| Objective | Metrics for Success |
|---|---|
| **Public:** Leverage public sources of revenue to support LHHC's operating costs. | Funding received from DCNR year over year<br><br>% of funding from public sources |
| **Contributed (Fundraising):** Develop a comprehensive development program to diversify and create greater sustainability in LHHC's financial model. | Submit 1-2 new grant applications each year<br><br>Total fundraising $<br><br>% of total funding from contributed sources<br><br>Annual giving $<br><br># of new donors<br><br>Average $ per donor year over year |
| **Earned:** Expand sources of earned revenue to further diversify LHHC's financial model. | Host 1-2 new pilot events each year<br><br>Total event revenue<br><br>Feedback on events (via survey and staff feedback)<br><br>Total $ from rentals<br><br># of rentals year over year |
| **Mini Grant Program:** Consistently execute the mini grant program to support and be an ongoing economic and technical resource to organizations along the Corridor. | # of grants year over year<br><br>Total grant funding allocated year over year<br><br>Total $ given in flex grants year over year |
| **Financial best practices:** Continue to advance best practices in financial reporting and management. | $ used for professional development opportunities<br><br>$ for preventative and deferred maintenance |
| **Membership:** Evaluate the membership program to ensure alignment with LHHC's activities and the value it offers to visitors of the Museum and Corridor | # of new members<br><br>Total membership revenue<br><br>Percentage of members renewing year over year<br><br>Number of members participating in events annually<br><br># of corporate members |
| **Estimated Financial Impact** | Cost of grantwriter<br>Costs associated with annual giving appeals<br>Cost for planned giving insert |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Event planning costs<br>Potential cost of outside consultant for endowment planning<br>Cost of wealth screening<br>New event costs |

## Goal 5: Institutional Strength

**Goal Statement:** Continue to strengthen LHHC's capacity through clear governance, leadership and staff development to ensure a resilient organization that advances its mission and lives its core values.

| Objective | Metrics for Success |
|---|---|
| **Partnerships**: Leverage partnerships to support mission execution and elevate the LH Corridor. | # of new relationships established each year<br><br># of nationwide partners added/maintained each year |
| **Staff and professional development:** Consistently support staff through internal development and external professional development opportunities. | # of professional development opportunities for staff members<br><br>Staff feedback on those opportunities<br><br>Hiring and recruitment of new staff positions |
| **Board Development:** Continue to strengthen the Board to support and advance the work of the LHHC. | Annual Board Retreat<br><br>Strategic recruitment of new Board members<br><br>County representation across Board |
| **Policies and Procedures:** Ensure current policies and procedures are in place that ensure consistency in operational practices. | Updated collection plan<br><br>Policies written and in place |
| **Facilities:** Continue to implement practices that maintain and improve the Museum and experience for staff and visitors. | Current emergency preparedness plan<br><br>PM schedule<br><br>Inventory of deferred maintenance needs |
| **Estimated Financial Impact** | Professional development costs<br>Cost of marketing assistant salary<br>Cost of education coordinator salary<br>Cost of development assistant salary<br>Cost of annual board retreat & potential outside facilitator<br>Costs associated with maintaining climate controlled room |

# One-Year Action Plan

## Education & Interpretation

**Focus:** modernize interpretation; take the story on the road; broaden audiences.

**1.1.1** Ensure clarity and visibility of numbered signs throughout the Museum to support flow of experience

**1.1.2** Ensure greeter explains flow to support a positive experience

**1.1.3** Create a variety of curated itineraries and brochures based on different themes (military, parks and recreation, etc.) that encourage travel along the Corridor

**1.1.4** Have some printed itineraries available in the visitor center and others on the website

**1.2.1** Continue to host and coordinate lectures that offer different perspectives (Ongoing)

**1.2.1.1** Include topics loosely tied to the mission (Ongoing)

**1.2.1.2** Select rotating locations to draw attendees from a wider geography (Ongoing)

**1.2.2** Continue to offer a temporary exhibit space for partners to host traveling exhibits at the Museum (Ongoing)

**1.3.1** Identify 2-3 "hubs" or areas throughout the Corridor on which to focus concentrated efforts in order to build relationships without straining limited resources (Ongoing)

**1.3.2** Build partnerships within the "hubs" through signage, joint events, sharing promotional materials, participation in local events, etc. (Ongoing)

**1.3.2.1** Work with partners to promote their organizations, events, etc. (Ongoing)

## Conservation & Outdoor Recreation

**Focus:** protect key places; make outdoor experiences easy to find and use.

**2.1.1** Promote natural restoration efforts on the Museum's grounds (via signage, tours, trails, etc.) (Ongoing)

**2.2.1** Establish relationships with the Department of Forestry related to sites along the Corridor (Ongoing)

**2.2.1.1** Facilitate conversations with parks representatives to better understand how LHHC can help to promote their sites and programs (Ongoing)

**2.2.2** Establish a relationship with the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, Western PA Conservancy and other similar organizations (Ongoing)

## Marketing & Visibility

**Focus:** make LHHC visible Corridor-wide; unify brand; tell the lived-experience story.

**3.1.1** In visitor surveys, ask for email addresses to allow for follow up and drip campaigns

**3.2.1** Ensure messaging is consistent and reflects updates in the brand and marketing strategy (Ongoing)

**3.2.2** Leverage visitors' experience via social media to help promote visitation to the Museum and along the Corridor (Ongoing)

**3.2.2.1** Repost reviews on social media and on the website (Ongoing)

**3.2.2.2** Encourage visitors to post and take pictures of their experience using a specific hashtag (Ongoing)

**3.2.3** Identify additional strategies to encourage Museum visitors to continue their experience out into the broader Corridor (Ongoing)

**3.2.3.1** Continue to provide visitors with the driving guide upon conclusion of their visit (Ongoing)

**3.2.3.2** Consider working with local restaurants to negotiate discounts for Museum visitors (Ongoing)

**3.3.1** Partner with educational institutions to encourage school groups to visit resources along the Corridor, as well as the Museum (Ongoing)

**3.3.2** Consider establishing a partnership with St. Vincent College, particularly with their education department (Ongoing)

**3.3.2.1** Consider recruiting interns to support storytelling efforts (Ongoing)

**3.3.2.2** Utilize staff and faculty as guest lecturers or sponsor an event on campus (Ongoing)

**3.3.3** Establish relationships with tourism bureaus, hotels, restaurants and outdoor recreation facilities to help promote the Corridor and these organizations' respective programs and locations (Ongoing)

**3.3.4** Establish relationships with niche organizations to access individuals with specific interests that align with LHHC (car clubs, heritage organizations, roadside America, atlas obscura, conservation landscape initiatives, etc.) (Ongoing)

## Financial Sustainability

**Focus:** diversify revenue; make mini-grants annual; strengthen sponsorships.

**4.2.1** Research grants from private sources (foundations, corporate giving, etc.) and create a schedule to manage due dates and bandwidth (Ongoing)

**4.2.2** Consider engaging a contract grantwriter to support soliciting funding via grants (Ongoing)

**4.2.3** Work with PANO to support fundraising strategies and the development of policies and procedures to support an enhanced fundraising effort (Ongoing)

**4.2.4** Ensure consistent use and entry of data into PastPerfect donor management system (Ongoing)

**4.2.5** Establish a sponsorship packet for events (Ongoing)

**4.2.12** Expand Board responsibilities to include annual donation to flex grant program (above and beyond regular annual giving) (Ongoing)

**4.3.1** Continue to pilot/experiment with new but smaller events that have the potential to generate revenue, utilize minimal staff time and that have the potential to appeal to new and different audiences (Ongoing)

**4.3.1.1** Determine which events can be duplicated and hosted at partner sites (Ongoing)

**4.3.2** Promote the events of partners and consider sponsoring select partner events (Ongoing)

**4.3.3** Explore additional and new sources of earned revenue (Ongoing)

**4.3.4** Continue to promote rentals at the Museum (Ongoing)

**4.3.5** Explore opportunities for both indoor and outdoor events for rental (Ongoing)

**4.3.6** Analyze all events for ROI, staff time required and other areas to determine which events to keep and which to consider eliminating or reimagining

**4.4.1** Begin to execute the mini grant program on an annual basis (Ongoing)

**4.4.1.1** Host workshops throughout the Corridor to both promote the program and provide technical support to potential partners (Ongoing)

**4.4.2** Consider focusing on themes each year for the mini grant program (i.e. a specific geographic area, type of organization, element of heritage area goal, etc.) (Ongoing)

**4.4.3** Work with partner organizations to raise funds for small-scale support for other types of organizations (private businesses, etc.) - Flex grants (Ongoing)

**4.5.1** Continue to develop and maintain procedures and policies for financial reporting and systems (Ongoing)

**4.5.2** Create a budget for professional development to support continual growth of staff members (Ongoing)

**4.5.3** Allocate a % of operating budget for deferred maintenance (Ongoing)

## Institutional Strength

**Focus:** people, systems, governance, and facilities to deliver at scale.

**5.1.1** Continue to maintain a strong, productive relationship with DCNR (Ongoing)

**5.1.2** Expand the relationship to support the development of relationships with other heritage areas and other governmental agencies (Ongoing)

**5.1.3** Establish relationships with local government representatives in each county within the LHHC territory (Ongoing)

**5.1.4** Build relationships with the nationwide partners of the Lincoln Highway Association (Ongoing)

**5.2.1** Identify professional development opportunities for each staff member (Ongoing)

**5.2.2** Ask staff to submit requests for external professional development opportunities (Ongoing)

**5.2.3** Determine staffing needs to support expanded programming, fundraising and other efforts

**5.3.1** Facilitate an annual Board retreat to create a regular opportunity for strategic discussions and social engagement for Board members (Ongoing)

**5.3.2** Work with PANO to identify the necessary policies and procedures that need to be in place related to Board management and development (Ongoing)

**5.3.2.1** Regularly revisit the Board's role and responsibilities (Ongoing)

**5.3.2.2** Update them to reflect current needs and expectations, including a greater emphasis on fundraising (Ongoing)

**5.2.3** Develop and maintain a matrix of Board expertise, background, etc. to support strategic recruitment efforts (Ongoing)

**5.4.1** Update the collection management plan (Ongoing)

**5.4.1.1** Include the time period for the collection (Ongoing)

**5.4.1.2** Include a deaccessioning policy (Ongoing)

**5.4.2** Establish an EV charging policy at the Museum

**5.4.3** Include a paranormal event policy

**5.5.1** Maintain an emergency preparedness plan

**5.5.2** Create a schedule for preventative maintenance

**5.5.3** Maintain a climate-controlled room for traveling exhibits

**5.5.4** Maintain an inventory and schedule for addressing deferred maintenance needs

**5.5.5** Use the assessment report to prioritize facility needs and create a menu of fundraising priorities

# Business & Operational Impacts of the MAP

Below we summarize the business impacts based on the sequence of the MAP goals and key activities outlined within the plan.

| | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 & Beyond |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MAP New Revenue Impacts** | - Expansion of Paid Events Revenue +<br><br>- Funding from additional public sources ++ | - Expansion of Fundraising Program ++<br><br>- Funding from additional public sources and grants ++<br><br>- Expansion of Paid Events Revenue +<br><br>- Expansion of Rental Revenue+<br><br>- Expansion of membership program+ | - Expansion of Fundraising Program ++<br><br>- Funding from additional public sources and grants ++<br><br>- Expansion of Paid Events Revenue +<br><br>- Expansion of Rental Revenue+<br><br>- Expansion of admissions revenue+<br><br>- Expansion of membership program+ | - Expansion of Fundraising Program +++<br><br>- Funding from additional public sources and grants ++<br><br>- Expansion of Paid Events Revenue +<br><br>- Expansion of Rental Revenue++<br><br>- Expansion of admissions revenue+<br><br>- Expansion of membership program++ |
| **MAP New Expense Impacts** | - Expanded accessibility of interpretive materials<br><br>- Update LHHC marketing collateral +<br><br>- Investment of expanded LHHC events+<br><br>- Continued investment in historic preservation workshop supplies as popularity grows + | - Continued investment in historic preservation workshop supplies as popularity grows +<br><br>- Investment in new website (already allocated)+++<br><br>- Investment of expanded LHHC events+<br><br>- Continued investment in | - Investment in new and updated signage along the Corridor<br><br>- Investment of expanded LHHC events++<br><br>- Continued investment in historic preservation workshop supplies as popularity grows +<br><br>- Continued investment in | - Investment in mobile exhibit++<br><br>- Continued investment in historic preservation workshop supplies as popularity grows +<br><br>- Investment of expanded LHHC events++<br><br>- Continued investment in fundraising tools + |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | - Investment in professional development+ | fundraising tools +<br><br>- Investment in Board Development (Retreat)+ | fundraising tools +<br><br>- Addition of more staff resources +++<br><br>- Investment in Board Development (Retreat)+ | - Cost of planning for endowment campaign+++<br><br>- Addition of more staff resources +++<br><br>- Investment in Board Development (Retreat)+ |
| **MAP Cumulative Budgetary Impacts for the Year** | Incremental budgetary impacts | Incremental budgetary impacts with exception of larger investment in new website (allocated) | Incremental budgetary impacts with exception of investment in staffing | Launching an endowment campaign will be a significant investment; should be wrapped into total fundraising goals to offset costs<br><br>In 10 years time, the goal of fundraising should be to generate $100,000 for operations and additional $100,000-$300,000 for special projects. |

**Key:**

+ < $10,000

++ $10,000 to $50,000

+++ >$50,000

The most significant growth in revenue potential is associated with the launch of a comprehensive individual fundraising program and future endowment campaign. These are both on a 10-year+ timeline to significant growth in operational capacity. The fundraising could be launched aggressively in 2027 and continuously expanded year over year to support the necessary investments in staff and programming.

# Conclusion

The Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor Management Action Plan (2025–2030) positions LHHC to honor its historic legacy while embracing its future potential. By advancing leadership, deepening partnerships, broadening engagement and sustaining organizational excellence, LHHC will continue to fuel community pride, economic vitality and lasting appreciation for America's first transcontinental road.

As a living, evolving framework LHHC staff and Board will routinely re-examine this Management Action Plan, adapt it as needed, and formally update it every five years to remain responsive to the Corridor's needs.

Appendix A: Baseline Assessment Report

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

Baseline Assessment Report

# LINCOLN HIGHWAY HERITAGE CORRIDOR


**Project Team**

Catherine Grace
Ryan Szuch


RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

March 2025

# Introduction

Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC) engaged Relevant Strategies & Solutions (RS&S) in the fall of 2024 to facilitate an update to its Management Action Plan (MAP). RS&S was pleased to be selected for this project and appreciates the opportunity to work with the staff and Board to develop a creative yet practical "roadmap" that will empower LHHC to set ambitious yet realistic goals for the future.

This document is the baseline assessment report and reflects a summary of our initial findings and observations. The assessment will help LHHC leadership make informed decisions about its mission, vision, core values, goals and objectives for the next five years.

To inform our understanding of LHHC, we reviewed available background materials, conducted interviews with both internal and external stakeholders, and solicited input about LHHC from organizational and funding partners via an online survey.

We interviewed a total of 18 individuals and conducted one online survey. Below is the list of individuals interviewed as well as an overview of the online survey.

| Staff Interviews (7) | Board Interviews (9) | DCNR Representatives (2) |
|---|---|---|
| •Kim Cady, Executive Director<br>•Lindsay Greene, Digital Marketing Coordinator<br>•Wanda Kingera, Greeter<br>•Beverly Ravida, Office & Gift Shop Manager<br>•Tom Ravida, Facilities Manager<br>•Tina Rusiski, Development and Grants Manager<br>•Spencer Simpson, Manager of Visitor Services | •Fr. Brian Boosel, OSB<br>•Casey Bowser<br>•Kristen Ecker<br>•Joan Hawk<br>•Eric Knopsnyder<br>•Adam Kopp<br>•Jessica Petrovich<br>•Lauren Titterington<br>•Michael Tusay | •Lindsay Baer, DCNR Regional Advisor<br>•David Maher, DCNR PA Heritage Areas Coordinator |

## Partner Survey

- Invitations to participate were sent to 48 partners, mini grant recipients, funders, civic/government agencies, and other community stakeholders
- Received 15 responses
- 31% response rate

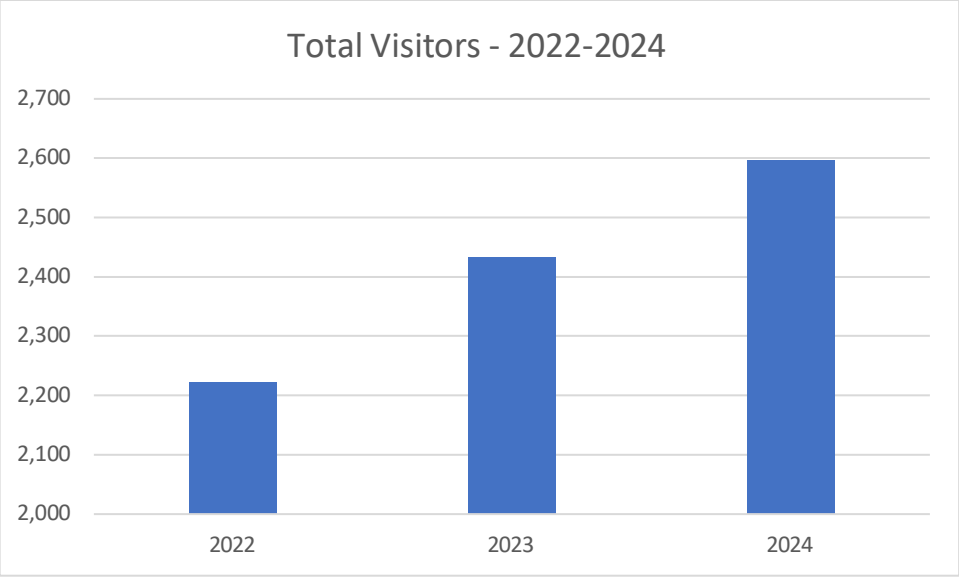
# Strategic Profiles

## Operations

### Facilities & Grounds

- The Lincoln Highway Experience Museum (LHE) is the largest museum dedicated to the history of the Lincoln Highway. It was established in 2012 to preserve and interpret the highway's rich history through educational programming and engaging exhibits. LHE is situated in the historic Johnston House, which was purchased in 2011 to provide the Lincoln Highway Experience with a permanent home.
- An addition was added in 2018, which included Serro's Diner, the 1920's tourist cabin and the 1937 Packard.
- Given that the majority of the Museum is housed in an historic building, there is a great deal of deferred maintenance. To date, it has been a challenge to understand the full scope of facility needs. Lincoln Highway leadership has engaged the services of a consultant to assess the facility and will create an inventory of needed improvements. This will inform the prioritization and costs associated with these needs. Staff and Board leadership will then be well-positioned to develop a strategy to raise necessary funds for key improvements and upgrades.
- While the addition expanded capacity to accommodate larger numbers of visitors, the small size of many rooms constrains the ability to move large groups through the Museum. Currently, capacity is around 100 people.
- This small size of the facility limits the size of group tours and requires that staff be very mindful and strategic around capacity limitations.

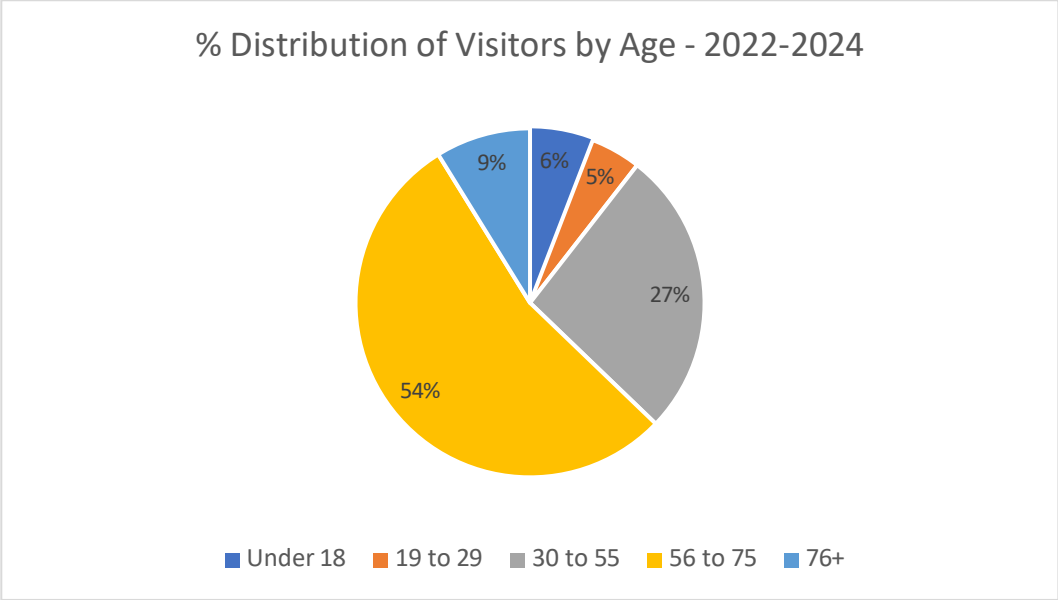
### Admissions & Attendance



- As seen in the chart above, total visitation has steadily increased over the last three years. This is likely due, in part, to visitors returning to arts and cultural sites post-Pandemic.
- While total visitation has increased, visitation from group tours has decreased over the same three-year timeframe, as seen in the chart below.




- Visitors to the Lincoln Highway Experience skew older, as seen below. Over half of all visitors from 2022 through 2024 were age 56 to 75. Staff leadership has been working to identify strategies that can help to expand relevance and attract visitors from a broader range of ages.



## Membership

- Membership has not historically been a priority of LHHC. As a result, membership is very small. As the table shows below, 2025 membership through the first quarter is minimal.

| Category | Number | Total Revenue |
|---|---|---|
| **Motorist** | 1 | $30.00 |
| **Fisher & Joy** | 1 | $150.00 |
| **Sightseer** | 1 | $20.00 |
| **Totals** | 3 | $200.00 |

- As programming becomes more robust and LHHC priorities are clarified, creating a strategy for membership will be beneficial to the organization, both from a revenue and visitation standpoint.
- Corporate membership opportunities represent a potential avenue for growth for LHHC. Strengthened ties with businesses along the corridor could prove beneficial for revenue generation, joint marketing, and relationship building for potential volunteer workforce or future Board members.

# Financial Overview

## General

| | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 Budget |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Revenue** | | | | |
| Grants | $246,380 | $127,248 | $384,082 | $339,000 |
| Museum Admission | $30,829 | $29,339 | $31,758 | $43,000 |
| Events (Net) | $12,890 | $8,964 | $8,478 | $8,500 |
| Contributions | $22,601 | $27,223 | $31,305 | $31,000 |
| Diner and Product Sales (Net) | $4,977 | $5,191 | $12,477 | $10,000 |
| Investment Income | $418 | $496 | $3,441 | $3,500 |
| Misc. | $16,537 | $287 | $9,863 | |
| **Total Revenue** | **$334,632** | **$198,748** | **$481,404** | **$435,000** |
| | | | | |
| Released from Restrictions | $139,552 | $220,427 | $360,308 | |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Expenses** | | | | |
| Program | $700,388 | $283,228 | $261,209 | $313,555 |
| Management and General | $25,401 | $28,281 | $70,261 | $64,820 |
| Fundraising | $15,089 | $17,510 | $1,434 | $2,250 |
| **Total Expenses** | **$740,878** | **$329,019** | **$332,904** | **$380,625** |

- Revenue from grants decreased significantly in 2023 from 2022. Grant revenue then rebounded in 2024 and grew from 2022. The projected revenue from grants in 2025 shows a slight decrease from 2024. Not only do some of these years include impacts from the Pandemic, but it also demonstrates the dependence on external funding sources and highlights the need for diversification of revenue.
- Museum Admissions were fairly stable between 2022 and 2024 (hovering around $30–32,000). The 2025 budget projects a strong increase, suggesting optimism in visitation growth.
- Events revenue declined steadily from 2022 to 2024. The 2025 budget holds flat, indicating realistic expectations rather than planned growth. Staff has consistently indicated the need for a deeper analysis of events to support more informed and strategic events planning in the future.
- Contributions have seen a solid upward trajectory year over year from 2022 through 2024 and holds steady in 2025.
- Diner & Product Sales has seen small but notable growth year over year since 2022.
- Program Expenses saw a drastic drop since 2022 through 2024. The 2025 budget projects a slight rebound.
- Management & General has risen gradually from 2022 through 2024. The 2025 budgets holds the number fairly steady from 2024.
- Fundraising expenses were slightly larger in 2023 from 2022 and decreased significantly in 2024. Expenses in 2025 are expected to continue to be minimal. This will likely increase as staff and Board leadership look to spend more time focused on fundraising in the coming years.
- Overall, the 2025 Budget projects stability rather than aggressive growth: higher admissions and steady contributions, modest expenses. Grants are expected to remain the backbone of revenue.

## Earned Revenue

- An operational priority of staff leadership is to protect the current sources of earned revenue while working to identify new sources to further stabilize and strengthen the financial model of LHHC.
- With the heavy reliance on funding from DCNR, it will be a priority in this planning process to define potential new sources of earned revenue to support a more diversified and robust financial model.

- Per capita revenue for select events, as shown in the table below, shows that *Supper Market* has been an event that requires heavy staff effort without much return in that investment. The events section below provides more information about how staff is thinking about this and more broadly, all events.
- Events are a primary source of earned revenue outside of admissions. As staff leadership continues to pilot new event ideas, this represents an area of revenue with great potential for growth.

| Per Capita Revenue - 2021-2024 | |
|---|---|
| LHE-total | $10.83 |
| LHE-groups | $9.08 |
| SupperMarket | $2.74 |
| Free LHE Day | $0.92 |
| Car Cruise | $68.29 |
| Home Tour | $26.34 |
| LH Talks | $5.47 |

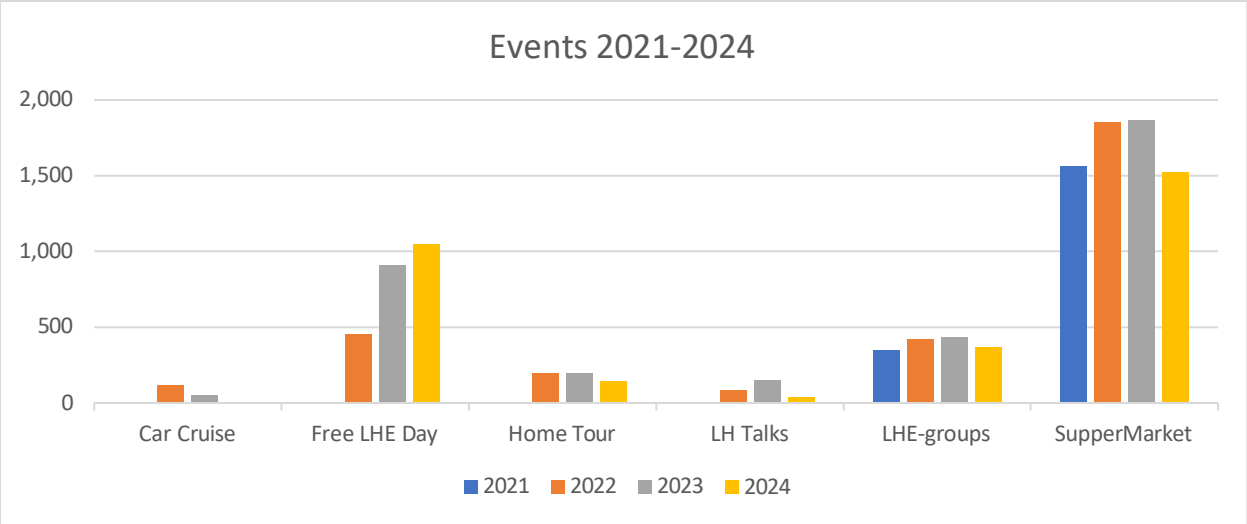
## Fundraising

### Annual Fund & Individual Giving

- The Pandemic, turnover in executive leadership, changes in Board leadership and the lack of structured reporting and processes has made it difficult to focus on fundraising outside of events.
- Discussions around fundraising and building a greater base of support will be part of this planning process.

### Events/Rentals

- LHHC hosts a range of events throughout the course of the year. Through our interviews, it became very clear that some events have become stale, generating minimal revenue but requiring a significant staff and volunteer effort.
- In particular, *Supper Market*, tends to draw the same attendees. As it is hosted weekly throughout the summer, it requires significant staff and volunteer time. Staff leadership is currently reconsidering this event and how to reinvent it in a way that will attract new and more visitors while reducing the burden on staff.
- The table below shows participation in key events from 2021 through 2024. The free day remains a popular event, with increasing attendance from 2022 through 2024. Groups and Supper Market have seen similar trends with decreasing attendance from 2023 to 2024. Again, given the level of effort required to execute Supper Market and the decreasing attendance, the decision to revisit and make changes to the event is appropriate.




- Historically, events like *Supper Market* didn't include access to the Museum. This past year, this was offered, providing an opportunity for event participants to gain greater awareness of what the Museum has to offer.
- Staff leadership has been successfully piloting small events such as a spirit tasting and a charcuterie event. These small events generate revenue without needing significant staff time. They also attract new and different audiences. Staff intends to continue piloting these types of smaller events.
- Interviewees suggested that LHHC could benefit from continued discussions evaluating events and weighing the return on investment against the resources for all events to ensure informed decisions are made regarding future events.
- Rentals represent potential earned revenue. Staff leadership has begun to offer private rentals. It will be important to weigh income earned against staff time needed and facility use.

**Sponsorships**

- While not a substantial stream of revenue to date, sponsorships represent an area of significant potential growth for LHHC, especially once events are reevaluated and more events begin to occur throughout the Corridor.
- Creative packaging and marketing of opportunities will be essential to the successful development of a robust sponsorship initiative.

## Public Sources of Funding

- As a heritage area, LHHC receives an annual allocation of funding from the state through DCNR. This is awarded through the C2P2 grant program.
- Recently, the C2P2 grant program has come under scrutiny, amid a political environment aimed at reducing funding for select programs and areas. It will be important to not only pay close attention to these changes and their financial impact on LHHC, but to prioritize strategies that allow the organization to expand funding through contributed and earned sources.

## Mini-Grant Program

- Like all heritage areas, LHHC receives a designated sum of money from DCNR to execute a mini-grant program. Currently, the program does not award grants on an annual basis. The current cadence is approximately every two years.
- The new Executive Director came into her role at the end of Round 25 and did not select but needed to execute upon those that received grants. Round 27, the most recent round, is her first opportunity to oversee and control the entirety of the process.
- Mini-grant recipients report a positive relationship with LHHC. In many instances, they would like to have a more robust relationship with the organization.
- Given the inconsistent nature of the mini-grant program, LHHC has not been able to leverage its recipients to support raising awareness and visibility for the organization. This may be a strategy worth discussing and considering in the course of this planning process.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Round 25 (2021-2022)** | **Total to Award: $33,825** |
| | Fulton County Historical Society: $10,000 |
| | Franklin County Historical Society: $5,000 |
| | Greensburg Art Club: $5,400 |
| | Latrobe Community Revitalization Program in partnership with the city of Latrobe ad the Eastern Westmoreland Career & Tech Center $9,500 |
| | Totem Pole Playhouse: $850 |
| | Westmoreland Cultural Trust: $675 |
| | Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra: $2,400 |
| **Round 27: 2024-2025** | Total to Award: $30,000 |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Westmoreland Fayette Historical Society dba West Overton Village & Museum: $6,000 |
| | SAMA Ligonier: $4,000 |
| | Fort Loudoun Historical Society: $8,500 |
| | Adams County Arts Council: $3,000 |
| | Westmoreland Performing Arts: $2,500 |
| | Western Pennsylvania Conservancy: $3,500 |
| | Westmoreland Cultural Trust: $2,500 |

- As a culture of philanthropy grows within the organization, it will be important to raise funds through fundraising for the mini-grant program. This is an important way to develop strategic partnerships and advance key goals of the heritage area. Fundraising to supplement mini-grant funds will allow for annual program execution and the ability to weather external economic threats to funding.

# Programs & Mission-Based Initiatives

## Educational Programming

- There is a desire to expand audiences, with a potential focus on schools and school-aged children. LHHC leadership recognizes that growing programming for new audiences will need to be highly strategic, given the limited staff resources for educational programming.
- There is a desire to create interpretation and programming that appeals to diverse audiences, such as women, African Americans, and the LGTBQ+ community.
- Having a tour or visit to the Museum end at the diner is a great way to conclude a visit but to also create fun memories for visitors of all ages.

## Interpretive Experience

- Staff offer a compelling, informed visitor experience and tour of the LHE.
- Staff recognize that they need to be thoughtful when it comes to attracting more visitors but in a way that does not compromise the visitor experience, particularly in light of space restrictions.
- An interpretive plan was developed to guide the visitor experience from 2000-2010. A new interpretive framework will be developed as part of this planning process.

- The experience along the corridor is presently interpreted through a 64-page Driving Guide and waypoint signage along the corridor.
- Signage along the corridor could be improved to better communicate turn-offs where the historic LH diverts from US Route 30.
- The larger communities along the corridor (e.g., Chambersburg, Bedford) offer vibrant downtowns and a variety of businesses and attractions. However, some of the small communities along the historic LH would benefit from beautification and economic development (e.g., facade improvements, Main Street programs). This could particularly make the turn-offs along the historic LH more attractive diversions for tourists.
- A variety of outdoor recreation assets exist along the LHHC. Given the increased popularity of outdoor recreation and strong focus on outdoor recreation at national and state levels of government, LHHC could benefit from stronger ties to these recreation assets. This would also create stronger alignment with the DCNR's goals for its heritage areas.
- Based on the Board interviews, there is strong interest to create a more modern interpretive offering for traveling the corridor, such as a passport or mobile application. Such an approach could more closely tie the LHHC to businesses, recreation assets, historical sites, and other attractions along the corridor and make the traveling experience easier and more engaging.

## Strategic Partnerships

- LHHC's strongest strategic partnership is with its primary funder, DCNR. DCNR supports its heritage areas with a designated Heritage Areas Coordinator, who oversees all heritage areas, providing technical support and ensuring they are executing on their goals. In addition, the DCNR regional representative serves as an additional, "boots on the ground" source of support and liaison to DCNR, helping to connect heritage areas to resources and potential partners. The current regional representative is newer in her role but has demonstrated strong support for LHHC.
- Partnerships are key to successfully executing on the goals of a heritage area. With turnover in the leadership position, partnership relationships have had numerous starts and stops, impacting momentum.
- In addition, the significant facilities and financial transparency needs of the organization have impacted leadership's ability to proactively cultivate new relationships throughout the Corridor, particularly with organizations on the eastern side of the Corridor.
- Strategic partnerships offer tremendous potential for LHHC to advance its mission and extend its reach without further stretching its already limited staff bandwidth.
- Growing relationships with key partners will help to educate broader audiences about the importance of the Lincoln Highway and to raise greater awareness of the resources and assets along the Highway through its six-county territory.

- Partnerships can also serve as the primary avenue for engaging with new audiences, providing access points to share knowledge, deepen understanding, and build relationships.
- Leadership recognizes the importance of this; as a result, this MAP process will detail strategic action steps that will allow leadership to begin to strengthen existing and develop new relationships while honoring the realities of operational challenges and constraints.

# Organizational Model

## Staffing

- The new Executive Director was hired in March 2023, after the previous director helped to see the organization through the height of the Pandemic. Prior, the organization had a founding executive director, who had been in place since the organization was formally established. The current executive director has done a tremendous job getting up to speed, building staff, establishing trust, building a culture of transparency, and navigating significant operational challenges.
- The Board of Directors articulated in their interviews their overwhelming confidence in the new Executive Director and the direction in which she is taking LHHC.
- With turnover in the Executive Director position, Board changes and many newer staff members, some momentum around key initiatives, including fundraising, programming, etc. slowed. Staff leadership is working in earnest to regain that momentum.
- There is tremendous potential to build on the energy and enthusiasm of the new staff and board while focusing on growing programming and ensuring that key areas of expertise reside within staff and not just with volunteers.

## Volunteers

- Volunteers have always been at the heart of the Lincoln Highway Experience.
- As can be seen below, the number of volunteers has increased in recent years, allowing for volunteers to support the guest experience at the Museum.

| Year | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **# of volunteers** | 16 | 25 | 33 |
| **volunteer hours** | 1686 | 3103 | 2553 |

- Both as a matter of course and as circumstances have required, many dedicated volunteers have and continue to put in many hours of service. As is reflected in its visitor demographics, volunteers also skew older. As a result, there are limits to the tasks they can take on and their ability to attract and appeal to wider audiences is somewhat limited. This is an issue that staff leadership is not only aware of but is working to develop strategies to also build new audiences

that can become future volunteers. In particular, there have been discussions related to younger students needing volunteer hours and other similar strategies.

- It will be important to evaluate and redefine the ideal roles of volunteers while carefully fostering the important connections and culture that make LHHC a treasured place for volunteers.

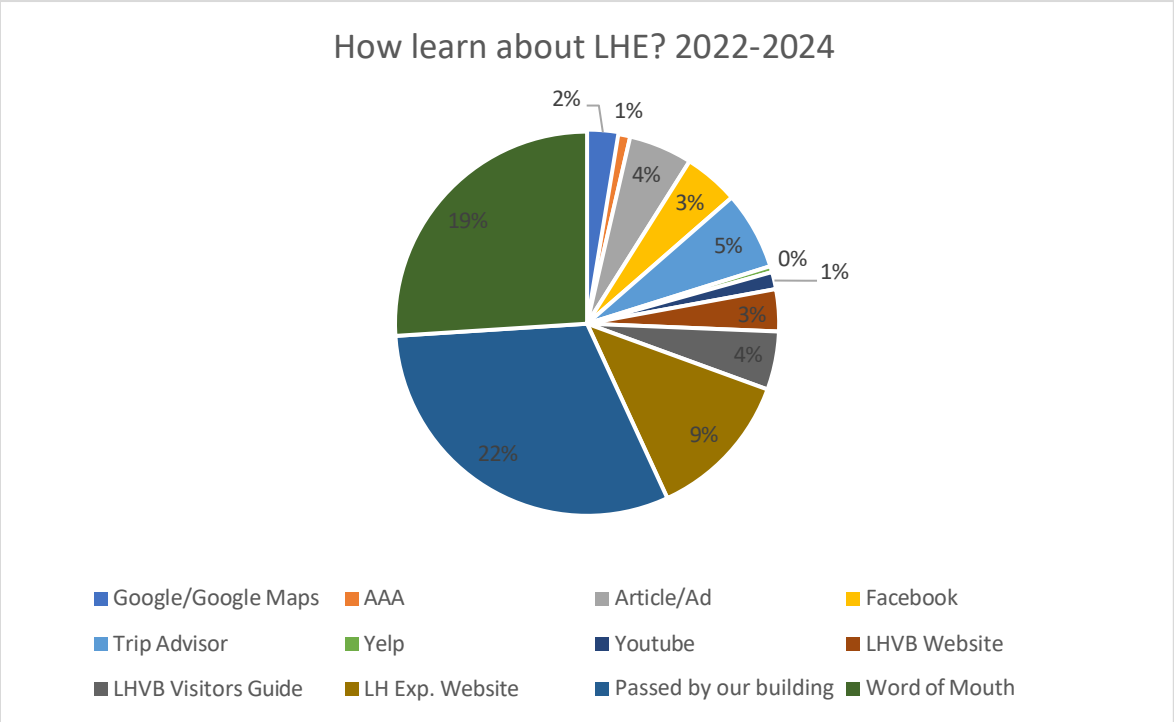
### Board

- The LHHC Board is comprised of an extremely engaged and dedicated group of people.
- They have been instrumental to LHHC's success.
- Numerous Board members have played a pivotal role in helping the Executive Director sort through the financials and establish increased transparency and clarity around them.
- As LHHC works to expand its reach to more consistently engage the entirety of the Corridor across its six-county reach, the Board's role and breadth of membership will need to evolve and be clearly defined moving forward.

## Marketing & Awareness

### Lincoln Highway Experience

- The Lincoln Highway Experience currently serves as the primary means of telling the "story" of the Lincoln Highway. Many interviewees recounted anecdotes about visitors telling them they never knew the Museum existed or frequently drove by wondering what it was all about.
- As the chart below shows, "word of mouth" and "passed by the building" remain the two primary ways that individuals learn about LHHC. It will be important to leverage these means while also expanding to include other methods that allow the Museum and Corridor to have a broader reach.




- With a new digital and marketing coordinator position recently brought onto the team, LHHC has been able to tell more compelling stories and better market the organization
- In recent years, most of the marketing and visibility efforts have been aimed at the LHE rather than the entire corridor. In many ways, LHE and LHHC have been treated like two separate brands. In many ways, this is the result of constrained resources impacting the ability of staff to reach the entire Corridor and build the relationships necessary to engage and promote the Lincoln Highway across the six counties it serves.
- Current marketing efforts tell a story of nostalgia, telling the story and history of the Lincoln Highway through the first half of the 20th century. More recent efforts have sought to expand the stories being told. These help to engage broader audiences and share a more comprehensive history of the Highway.
- Board interviews highlighted that telling the story of today's "lived experience" on and around the Highway is largely absent from storytelling. It will be important to incorporate these messages and stories to include all facets of what it means to be a heritage area and to broaden the relevance of the Highway.

**Social Media**

- LHHC has started to make greater use of social media and digital content creation. This may be a way to continue to appeal to broader audiences and promote partners along the Corridor in the future.
- Social media content helps to raise awareness and connect audiences to LHHC. Currently, content is focused on the Museum, but in the future, could incorporate more of the Corridor.
- Creative and engaging posts provide a way for LHHC to showcase knowledge, highlight programs, facilitate visitation, and generate excitement while potential visitors can register for an event, gain understanding of the history of the Lincoln Highway, or plan to visit.
- Social media can be further leveraged to better connect a broader range of audiences to the Lincoln Highway.

**Website & Virtual Content**

- Virtual content was heavily emphasized during the pandemic by arts and cultural organizations. While in-person programming has returned to normal levels, the demand and expectation of having virtual programming and robust website content available has remained.
- Currently, the website effectively showcases upcoming programming and information about the Corridor and the Museum. However, there is not much access to programming or more robust content. This is something for LHHC to consider whether it has a role in the current planning process.
- The website is currently very limited in terms of showcasing other resources and assets along the Lincoln Highway. This too will be an ongoing topic of discussion throughout this planning process.

**Name & Brand**

- During our first visit to the Museum, we learned that while the Museum is referred to as the "Lincoln Highway Experience", one had to search online for the "Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor" to find the organization's physical address. This illustrates the confusion that exists between the brand of the Museum and the brand of the Corridor and heritage area.
- These separate brands should be operating as one to reduce confusion and create greater cohesion.
- Ultimately, the brand is the heritage area, with the Museum functioning as a "gateway" to the Lincoln Highway in Pennsylvania. Throughout this process, we will detail action steps to help bring the branding and marketing efforts in greater alignment with this intention.

Appendix B: Interview Discussion Guide

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

***Managing Action Planning: Discussion Guide***

Name:

Position/Role:

Length of Involvement with LHHC:

Discussion Questions:

1. In your own words, what is the mission of LHHC?

2. What is your vision for LHHC for the next 5 years?

3. What is LHHC known for, its unique characteristics? How has the level of awareness for LHHC changed in the past 5 years?

4. What are LHHC's top opportunities in the next 5 years?

5. What are LHHC's biggest challenges or barriers to success/growth?

6. Looking towards the future, what programs/services would you invest in if you had additional resources to further enhance LHHC?

7. Who are LHHC's best partners? Why? What partnerships need to be changed or even stopped?

8. Does the composition and role of the Board need to change over the next three to five years to ensure that LHHC remains a viable, sustainable and valued mission-driven institution? If so, how?

9. Is there anything that LHHC is doing today that it should stop doing? Why?

10. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Appendix C: Summary of Partner Survey Responses

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

# LHHC Partner Survey

Summary of Responses

# Overview

- A total of 15 responses

# How well known is LHHC?

Q1 Within your local community and immediate surrounding areas, how well known is LHHC?



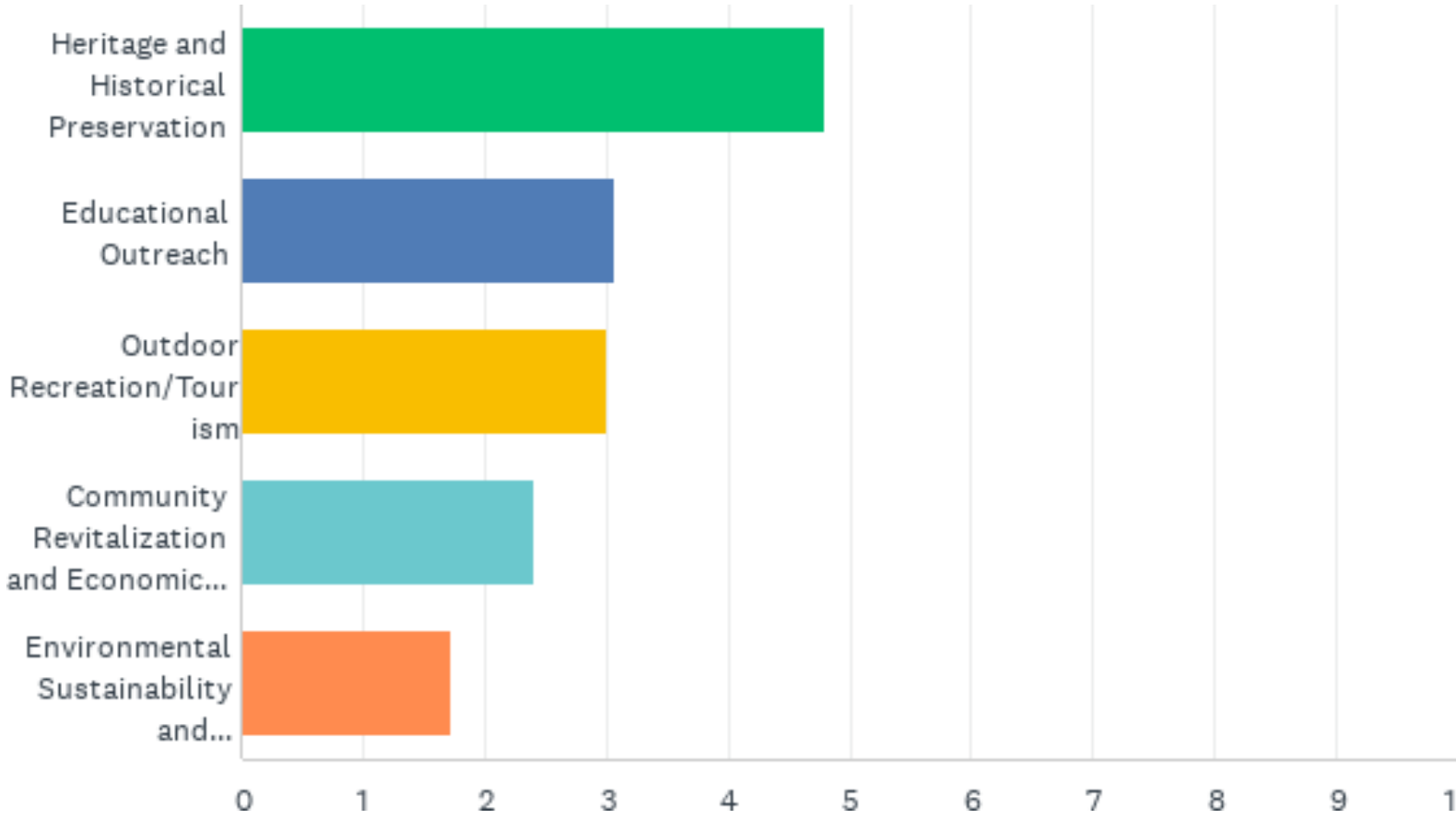
# Relationship with LLHC

| 4 (Responses) | Communications/Marketing |
|---|---|
| 1 | Subject Matter Expertise |
| 2 | Donor |
| 2 | Mini-Grant Recipient |
| 1 | Partner on Mission Activities |
| 1 | Community Funder |
| 3 | Other |

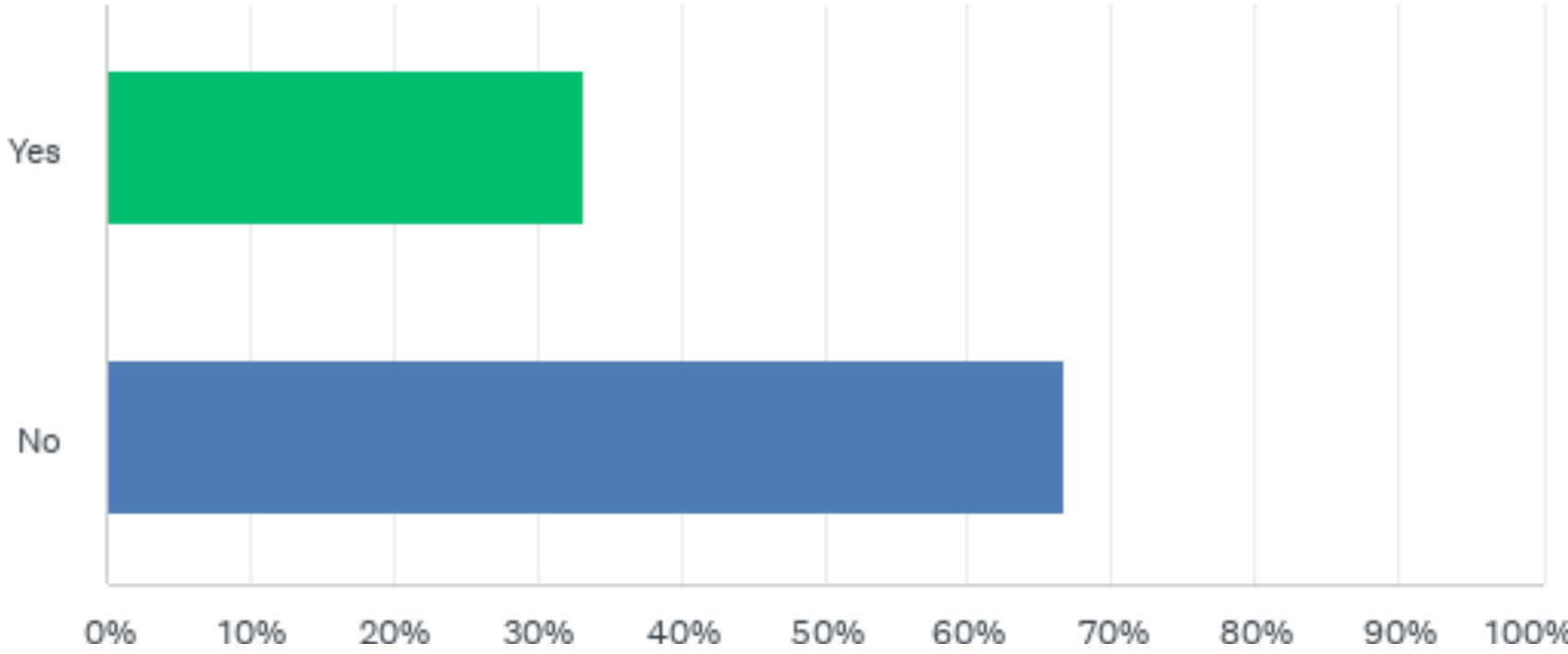
# Improving the Relationship

- Increased communication and education of LHHC
- Continued promotion of partners' activities, events, etc.
- Expand the impact of LHHC
- Opportunities for greater collaboration and alignment

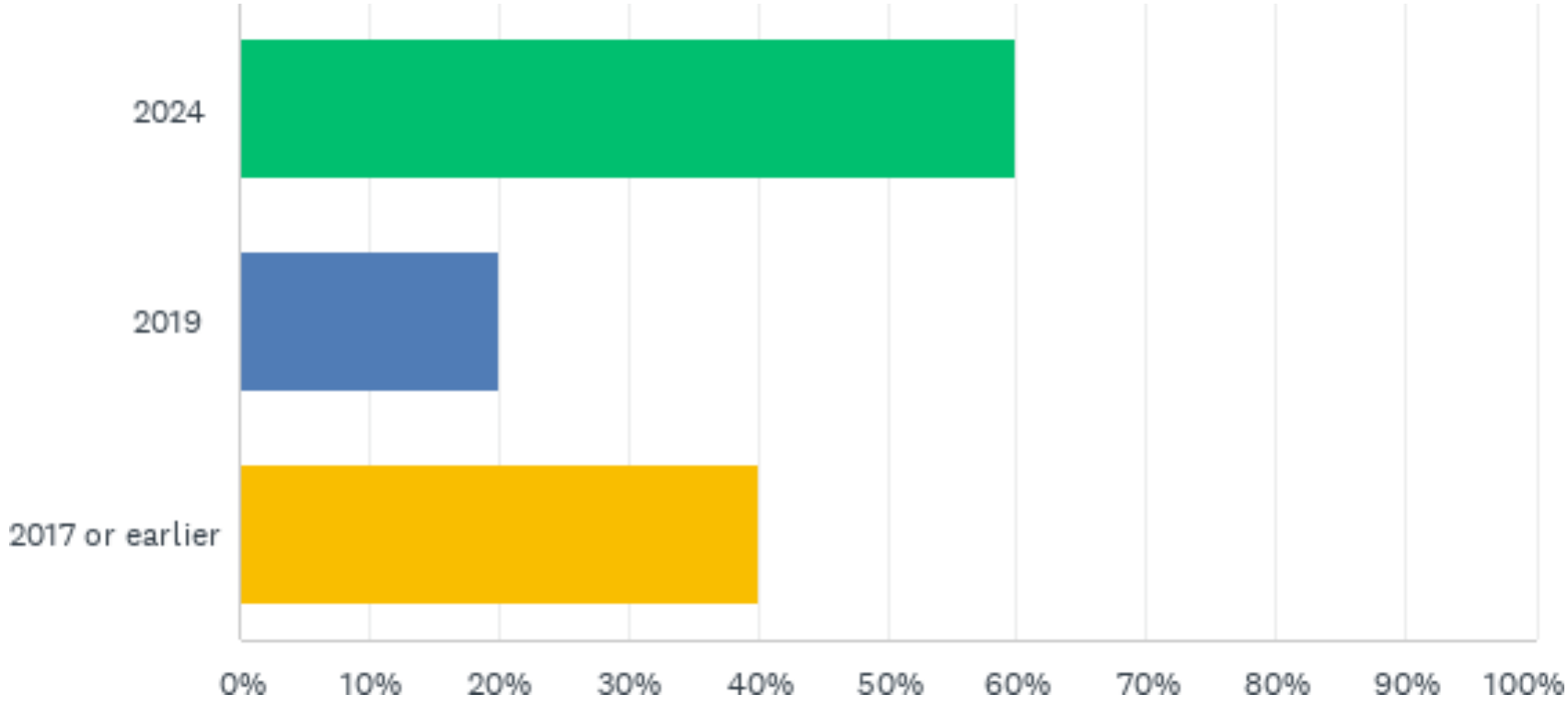
# Most Pressing Strategic Issues



# Have you Received a Mini Grant?



# If yes, what year(s) did you receive a mini grant?



# Guidance on making the mini grant progra better

- More outreach and education
- Greater awareness of its existence
- Better leverage mini grant recipients to support LHHC initia

# Who could benefit from a relationship wit LHHC?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Destination Gettysburg | Latrobe Art Center | Boutique Hotels |
| Franklin County Visitors Bureau | Latrobe Community Revitalization Program | Girl & Cub Scouts |
| Fort Loudon Community Center | Mainstreet McConnellsburg | Friends Groups |
| Fulton County Historical Society | The Old PA Pike | Local Museums |
| Greenburg Professional and Business Association | | Local Restaurants |
| Latrobe Area Historical Society | | Local and State Planners |

# Have you participated in any LHHC event

- Yes (5)
- No (10)
  - Too far away
  - Not with the current ED and team
  - Very interested and open to collaborations

Appendix D: Plans Assessment

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan Update

### Plans Assessment

This document outlines recommended actions of the original 1995 Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC) – Management Action Plan.

It then summarizes strategic plans, comprehensive plans, and other planning documents of state-wide, regional, and county organizations that relate to the work of the LHHC. The summary highlights goals and strategies of these other organizations that may present the LHHC with opportunities for alignment, collaboration, and partnership.

## 1995 LHHC Management Action Plan

The 1995 Management Action Plan (MAP) is at first striking in that it lacks a clear mission for the organization, stating only, "Its mission is to implement the ambitious but sound plan that follows." The MAP does describe in several sentences what the LHHC is:

> "LHHC is a grassroots confederation of local efforts and projects working to bring new life and activity to places with deep roots and a rich transportation heritage.
>
> LHHC is a regional heritage tourism initiative that utilizes the historic Lincoln Highway as the unifying element for packaging the diverse experiences available in the 140+ mile corridor between Greensburg and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. The area is rich in history, scenic and natural beauty, recreation, special events, small town and rural life, and special places to stay, eat, and shop. The Lincoln Highway ties many of them together."

At 136 pages, the MAP contains a great volume of recommended actions around interpretation, tourism, community development, scenic conservation, and historic preservation. Key highlights are provided below.

- Greet people at either end of the Corridor, while playing off existing strengths and/or market niches (emphasis on attracting children)
- Entice people over the mountain (proposed interpretive facilities at Grand View Ship Hotel and a primary visitor center in Bedford)
- Create a critical mass – (to exceed visitor expectations, need larger centers = 3,500-10,000 sq ft)
- Leverage benefit to local municipalities (put facilities downtown, Main Street revitalization, business improvement districts)
- Strengthen existing attractions that are willing to be included within the interpretive framework (e.g., Fort Ligonier, Civilian Conservation Corps camps in state parks)
- Strengthen building preservation and cultural and land conservation efforts

- Enhance continuity of experience (some stretches have sparse vestiges of region's history – use pathfinder signs and interpretive messages)
- Tell a national story locally
- Tie into private sector (e.g., bed and breakfasts, motels, restaurants)
- Do not expect to sequence the visitor experience (experiences must stand on their own because people will pop on and off the Lincoln Highway in different sections)
- Drive the message home (there is presently no primary message, state key message over and over again)
- Wayfinding system (Lincoln Highway Guide; Highway Markers; scenic, cultural, and commercial waysides, sequential signs)
- LHHC Traveling Road Show
- Special Events and Promotions
- Cultural landscapes should include farmland/open space preservation, ecological rehabilitation
- Develop and adopt design and maintenance guidelines for properties
- Develop a series of walking and driving tours
- Create scenic loops with abandoned sections
- Mini-grants program
- Develop stronger linkages to towns (five towns were focused upon in the MAP)
- Cultural Education and Conservation Opportunities

In several places, the MAP called for formal designations to pursue. For the Lincoln Highway itself, the MAP called for pursuit of Scenic Conservation and National Scenic Byway Designations as well as listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It also suggested that towns along the Lincoln Highway pursue historic district designation.

The MAP identified spatial zones around the highway corridor for planning and implementation purposes. The defined zones were the following:

**Inner Corridor –** the Lincoln Highway and immediate environs (it called for 70% of effort to be expended within the Inner Corridor in the first five years of MAP implementation)

**The Midlands –** the municipalities though which Lincoln Highway passes

**The Outer Reaches –** beyond The Midlands, potential loop drives off the Lincoln Highway

## PA's Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2025-2035

The PA State Historic Preservation Office recently revised this plan as part of its obligations under the National Historic Preservation Act. In part, the Plan is intended to guide organizations, agencies, municipalities, and others to include historic places and archaeological sites in their work as well as serve as a strategic plan for realizing more preservation outcomes in the Commonwealth.

This Plan includes a great number of Goals, with supporting Objectives, that align with the work of the LHHC, including the following key examples.

### Goal 1 - Real and perceived barriers to historic preservation have been reduced or eliminated through data-driven and thoughtful investments in relationships, programs, funding, and policies.

- Increase access to historic preservation programs, funding, and policies.
- Build coalitions between preservation and preservation adjacent organizations and initiatives, such as local economic development and Main Street organizations, to support the use and reuse of historic buildings.
- Create alliances between preservation organizations and preservation-adjacent organizations such as Heritage Areas, colleges and universities, Main Street organizations, and economic development agencies to foster more holistic community development.
- Recruit new advocates for preservation, particularly in the real estate and economic development sectors.
- Recognize and support Pennsylvanians, particularly those representing historically diverse and underrepresented communities, who are documenting and celebrating their histories and advocating for preservation outcomes and historic places in their communities.

## Goal 2 - Historic preservation and historic places are valued as integral to community identity, sense of place, economic development, and sustainable growth in Pennsylvania communities.

- Promote the inherently healthy design of historic communities, including the benefits of walkability, sense of place, community, public health, and other conversations about place.
- Leverage historic places to foster community dialogues that expand and strengthen appreciation for and understanding of local history, create context for historic places, and communicate the importance of story and memory to existing historic places.
- Engage with small business owners to identify ways in which historic preservation can support the historic downtown commercial area to thrive as the community's historic core.
- Encourage a culture of preventive maintenance for historic properties.
- Develop programs or initiatives to assist lower- and middle-income homeowners and owners of affordable housing properties to maintain and weatherize their historic buildings.
- Increase assistance to small and legacy business owners to maintain their historic buildings and manage change in ways that meet their needs and preserve the historic building's character and materials.
- Provide incentives to encourage developers and the real estate community to utilize existing historic buildings for housing needs.

## Goal 3 - Pennsylvanians create more meaningful preservation outcomes by leveraging knowledge and opportunities offered by historic preservation and historic places.

- Expand the public's knowledge of history, archaeology, and historic preservation through coordinated education and training programs.
- Partner with communities, stakeholders, and preservation and preservation-adjacent advocacy organizations to educate local and regional governments about the economic, community, and environmental benefits of historic preservation.
- Create marketing and communication campaigns that emphasize preservation's impact on property values, downtown revitalization, tourism, job creation, and tax revenue generation to show how prioritizing preservation directly improves a community's economic health and well-being.

# Outdoor Places, Shared Spaces: Pennsylvanian's 2025-2029 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Development of this rendition of the State-wide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was a two-year process that included an online survey that garnered approximately 8,000 responses; a "Providers Survey" of land managers, recreation program providers, and nonprofits; public opinion polling through the Lion Poll; and visitor analysis through placer.ai.

The SCORP recognizes that there has been a change in cultural consumption patterns in society, from collecting objects to collecting experiences. This shift was occurring prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but was put into overdrive as consumers sought both digital and nature-based experiences during the pandemic. The shift to experiences as a form of consumption is true for both tourists to an area as well as residents of local communities. This increased value in experiences makes recreation assets and historic assets, like the LHHC, important factors in attracting tourists as well as retaining residents and a dynamic workforce through provision of a high quality of life. Furthermore, research performed for the SCORP on linkages between recreation assets and local businesses presents strong evidence towards likely critical connections between LHHC attractions and its local businesses.

The main Priority Area of the SCORP that is relevant to the LHHC is "Promoting Community and Economic Development." It has three Goals, with underlying Action recommendations.

## Goal: Support communities in creating vibrant and resilient regions through outdoor economic development.

### Actions

- Connect communities to local and regional outdoor recreation through trails, safe on-road networks, waterways, and other infrastructure
- Resource communities with best practices to create welcoming places and services for residents and outdoor recreation visitors
- Expand, enhance, and modernize the use of data to support recreation planning, management, and engagement
- Deliver outdoor recreation as a strategic tool for economic development

### Goal: Further activate Pennsylvania as a hub for outdoor recreation and adventure for all people

#### Actions

- Convene a commercial recreation summit to facilitate dialogue about best practices for events, guiding, and conducting business on public and private natural lands
- Build Pennsylvania's brand as a national leader in outdoor recreation through tourism, innovation, product development, and thought leadership
- Develop a clear and cohesive agreement and permit process for special, commercial, and organized activities on DCNR managed lands

### Goal: Develop and support Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation industry and its businesses and workforce.

#### Actions

- Develop outdoor recreation incubators, accelerators, innovation hubs, and similar to support outdoor recreation business and workforce development
- Grow the capacity to assess, plan, design, build, and maintain natural surface trails

## Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape – Priorities and Strategies

Although the Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape completed a Strategic Plan in 2022, correspondence with its leadership indicated that a more recent set of core priorities and strategies (provided to RS&S) better represents the current strategic direction of the Conservation Landscape partners.

Among the provided list, the following priorities and strategies seem most relevant to the LHHC.

- **Make Recreation Easily Accessible and Accommodating:** reduce social barriers to entry; expand and diversify user base; reduce physical barriers to entry
- **Develop Projects with Significant Regional Impact:** connect existing assets; account for multiple user types, intentions

- **Adopt Outdoor-Focused Economic Development Strategies:** leverage partnerships to pursue novel funding streams; create pathways to capital and technical assistance; share economic impact data from outdoor recreation in the region
- **Elevate the Profile of Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape Through Events:** encourage local business engagement and patronage; coordinate sharing of events throughout the Laurel Highlands; emphasize inter-disciplinary approach to events
- **Enhance Visits and Encourage Return Visits:** emphasize place-based identity; cultivate community wayfinding; match destinations to users' desired experience; appeal to "neighbor" visitors
- **Promote the Integral Nature of the Outdoors on the Region:** foster greater understanding between the outdoors and cultural / historical attractions; promote outdoor recreation opportunities, both actively and passively; expand promotional materials for outdoor spaces

## South Mountain Partnership – Strategic Plan (August 2024 update)

The South Mountain Partnership, which is the external lead for the South Mountain Conservation Landscape, developed a Strategic Plan for the 2022-2025 timeframe, which it amends from time-to-time with its Leadership Committee and other committee members. The last update and check-in on actions occurred in August 2024.

The South Mountain Partnership has established the following Mission and Primary Goals.

### Mission = Conserving Landscape Resources to enrich the quality of life and sense of place of the South Mountain region's citizens and communities

**Primary Goal 1: Conservation of Landscape Resources** - conserving and stewarding the natural, cultural, recreational, and agricultural resources that make the South Mountain landscape unique

**Primary Goal 2: Promotion of Landscape Resources** - elevating public awareness of the natural, cultural, recreational, and agricultural resources

**Primary Goal 3: Connections Across the Landscape** - creating a community of collaboration amongst a critical mass of public agencies, non-profit and community organizations, businesses, and citizens

Goals and Actions within the Strategic Plan of potential relevance to the LHHC including the following.

- Develop and share recommendations for addressing priority landscape issues
- Regularly meet with partners to review comprehensive and strategic plans, identify areas of overlap/ consistency, and align work and priorities
- Attend partner planning processes during plan creation and updates to provide input on priorities of the South Mountain Partnership
- Provide financial assistance to projects and activities that preserve and promote our Landscape Resources
- Deliver networking and educational opportunities for Partners
- Implement State of the Region Action Plan recommendations, two of which could be impactful to the LHHC:
    - Expand Regional Trails & connectivity to parks & towns – Create Regional Multi-Use Trail Coalition
    - Undertake a South Mountain Inventory of Historic Resources

## Reimagining Our Westmoreland

This Comprehensive Plan, produced by Westmoreland County in 2018, provides seven Core Objectives and 38 Strategies to guide the future of Westmoreland County. The document's development involved eleven focus groups and 34 community workshops and resulted in engagement with over 5,000 people in the County.

Key Objectives/Strategies with potential to support the LHHC are listed below, followed by actions that may be particularly relevant to the LHHC.

- **Strategy 1.3 - Assist Small Businesses:** improve outreach, small business advisory groups, create a "one-stop-shop" online resource guide, additional grant opportunities
- **Strategy 2.2 - Cultivate Arts & Entertainment:** develop new partnerships, promote Arts Districts, promote Town Squares, utilize vacant buildings, support events
- **Strategy 2.3 - Welcome Everyone:** establish local ambassadors, create welcome packet to new residents, assist with new Board recruitment, develop "Why I Love This Place" program, cross-cultural communication and education

- **Strategy 3.1 - Invest in Downtowns:** prioritize investment and provide incentivizes for downtown development, streamline development process
- **Strategy 3.3 - Cultivate a Restaurant Industry:** food truck support, restaurant incubator, dining guide
- **Core Objective 4 - Connect with Parks and Nature:** enhance trail systems, make parks more welcoming, preserve open space, improve water resources
- **Strategy 5.1 - Eliminate Blight:** blighted-property strategy and task force, LandBank, funding for blight elimination and façade improvements, technical assistance
- **Strategy 5.2 - Invest in Beautification:** identify key corridors, design and fund improvements, strengthen partnerships, engage volunteers, façade improvements, neighborhood plans

## Alleghenies Outdoors

Alleghenies Outdoors is a regional initiative of the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission serving Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset Counties. Completed in March 2024, *Alleghenies Outdoors: Moving the Recreation Economy Forward* is a collaborative effort to define the region's outdoor recreation economy, assess its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, and establish principles, strategies, and actions to advance outdoor recreation as a driver of economic development, workforce attraction and retention, and quality of life.

The plan establishes five principles of Advancement for the Regional Outdoor Economy, several of which align closely with the purpose of the LHHC:

1. **Be Strategic** – Strategically invest in and steward recreational assets and experiences
2. **Be Collaborative** – Leverage shared resources across the region to steward the outdoor economy
3. **Be Welcoming** – Welcome residents and visitors into the outdoors and into communities
4. **Be a Destination** – Steward and enhance key recreational destinations for residents and visitors
5. **Be Champions** – Advocate for and celebrate the outdoor economy as a positive force in the region

The document identifies several key challenges affecting the regional outdoor economy:

1. limited and uncertain funding for long-term trail and recreation infrastructure maintenance
2. heavy reliance on volunteer labor for stewardship and maintenance
3. inconsistent wayfinding, signage, and welcoming practices for residents and visitors
4. limited regional coordination and capacity for trail development, promotion, and data tracking
5. increasing competition from other Appalachian regions investing in outdoor recreation for economic development

The plan identifies three priority regional action areas to move the outdoor economy forward: Trail Stewardship, Showing Progress, and Working Together. In addition, it outlines desired outcomes and recommended actions that cut across counties and align with LHHC priorities.

## Trail Stewardship (Regional)

### Desired Outcomes

- Trails and recreation infrastructure are built to a high standard and well-maintained
- Increased organizational and volunteer capacity for long-term stewardship
- Sustainable funding mechanisms for maintenance and capital improvements

### Recommended Actions

- Build regional trail stewardship capacity through shared staffing, training, and coordination
- Identify and pursue dedicated funding sources for trail maintenance
- Create regional trail coordination and data-sharing mechanisms

## Welcoming and Community Linkages (Regional)

### Desired Outcomes

- Increased participation in outdoor recreation by residents and visitors
- Improved quality of life that supports resident retention

- Stronger economic linkages between recreation assets and downtowns

**Recommended Actions**

- Improve signage, wayfinding, and messaging to be more welcoming and informative
- Activate trail-to-town connections through events, itineraries, and business engagement
- Increase youth programming and beginner-friendly recreation opportunities

## Business and Workforce Development through Outdoor Recreation (Regional)

**Desired Outcomes**

- Employers are better able to recruit and retain workers
- Outdoor recreation is recognized as an economic development asset
- Increased business activity tied to recreation and tourism

**Recommended Actions**

- Foster collaboration among economic development organizations around the outdoor economy
- Promote recreation-friendly business practices and destination marketing
- Track and communicate the economic impact of outdoor recreation through regional reporting

# Imagine Franklin 2035

This Comprehensive Plan, produced by Franklin County in 2023, sets six Focus Areas for the County's future, each supported by lists of Recommended Actions. The document's development involved seventeen focus groups, thirteen "pop-up" events, five open houses, and an online survey that garnered over 1,500 responses.

The Focus Areas and underlying Actions that seem most relevant to the future of the LHHC are listed below.

## Land Use and Natural Resources Focus Area

- prioritize preservation of natural areas and linkage to parks and recreation areas
- support projects that conserve open space and promote tourism activities
- promote development around established communities
- support revitalization of boroughs and villages

## Housing Focus Area

- adopt new tools to address blighted properties
- promote Neighborhood Assistance Program
- promote Neighborhood Partnership Program

## Community Facilities Focus Area

- promote and encourage outdoor recreation
- offer support to municipalities to develop additional recreation opportunities
- explore benefits of electric vehicle charging stations along corridors

## Supporting Our Urban Centers Focus Area

- promote historic preservation resources and support main street development
- support Certified Local Government
- support Dept. of Community and Economic Development Keystone Program
- provide incentives for communities to construct trail and bikeway connectors

## Adams County Comprehensive Plan – 1991

With this plan being over 30 years old, it was determined that its findings and recommendations would not be pertinent and current enough for consideration in the LHHC planning process. Therefore, it is not summarized in this Technical Memorandum.

## Susquehanna National Heritage Area - 2024 Management Plan

Lancaster and York counties were officially designated as the Susquehanna National Heritage Area (SNHA) and America's 55th National Heritage Area on March 12, 2019.

The stated mission of the SNHA is:

> "The Susquehanna National Heritage Area connects the people and communities of Lancaster and York Counties to one another and to the nation through stories about this nationally important place. The National Heritage Area welcomes visitors, cultivates partnerships, and nurtures a strong regional identity."

The state vision of the SNHA is:

> "The Susquehanna National Heritage Area is regarded across the nation as a place with a unique identity where people and communities cultivate their connections with each other, the landscape, and their history."

The chapter of the Management Plan are organized into three main sections around: (1) Who We Are: Resources and Identity, (2) What We Are Working Toward: Benefits, and (3) How We Work Together: Organization and Action. Each of these focal areas has a set of several goals, as follows.

### Who We Are: Resources and Identity

- Sustain and enhance the sense of place and identity experienced across the entire National Heritage Area.
- Foster storytelling, learning, and research that enable audiences to enjoy and appreciate the National Heritage Area's history and historic sites, natural resources, and communities.
- Focus on how the Susquehanna River has shaped the natural landscape and humans' response to that landscape.

- Encourage greater public awareness of the importance of the National Heritage Area's resources and identity.

## What We Are Working Toward: Benefits

- Foster healthy natural resources and healthy human relationships with those resources.
- Emphasize the importance of the National Heritage Area's resources and identity to its economic vitality and attraction as a unique place to live, work, invest, and visit.
- Make it easy for those moving around the National Heritage Area to find their way and maintain an awareness of the region's resources and identity.

## How We Work Together: Organization and Action

- Build the capacity of organizations, communities, and networks to work in concert with the vision, mission, and goals of the National Heritage Area.
- Build a strong and diverse constituency of partnerships and supporters that can act to protect and enhance the National Heritage Area's resources and identity.

The Management Plan identifies four historic themes that will be woven into its work in interpretation and storytelling. These themes cover how the Susquehanna shapes this place and people of the region, with a focus on the natural landscape and rich watershed. Two themes cover historic periods of the region, being the rich Native American and archaeological records, and then the cultural development that occurred during European settlement. A final theme is about critical, unique, and profound events of history that occurring in the region, such as establishment of the Mason-Dixon Line, Revolutionary and Civil War events, and the influence of the Underground Railroad in the area. There is also a strong emphasis on both natural resource conservation and the sustainability of communities within the region.

# York County Comprehensive Plan

York County's Comprehensive Planning approach utilizes a collection of discipline-based plans that address different aspects of county planning and are revised on separate timetables.

## Economic Action Plan – 2020

Strategies potential relevant to the LHHC, include the following:

- Improve the built environment and support infrastructure around York County's outdoor recreational assets
- Create a sustainable pool of funding to support the development and marketing of all of York County's regional assets
- Build organizational capacity to do placemaking and main street development in smaller boroughs and townships

## GOYORK 2045 – Metropolitan Transportation Plan (completed 2021)

The Lincoln Highway is briefly mentioned in this plan, but without any recommended strategies or actions regarding it.

## Growth Management Plan – 2017

This plan has a stated Countywide Vision of "For York County to be a place where a balance is achieved between promoting economic growth and prosperity; protecting or preserving important historic, cultural, and natural resources; and maintain the esteemed quality of life residents cherish."

It defines Growth Areas as those for primary growth, secondary growth, and future growth. For Rural Areas of the county, it categorizes lands as Agricultural Resource Land, Natural Resource Land, and Rural Centers.

## Heritage Preservation Plan – 2016

This plan offers a robust inventory of historical and heritage assets within York County and establishes six goals, as follows:

1. Identify, protect, and promote York County's unique heritage resources – the communities, landscapes, buildings, and traditions – that make up the fabric of the York County landscape.

2. Create a simple and realistic set of evaluation criteria that will pinpoint the most valuable heritage resources. Indicators will help target the limited and changing financial resources that are available to implement preservation goals.

3. Promote coordination and consensus in the conservation of heritage resources across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

4. Link conservation and preservation of heritage resources to economic opportunity, sustainability, and revitalization of York County's towns, villages, and rural landscapes.

5. Create a catalog of heritage preservation tools and resources that local residents, historical groups, and municipalities can reference.

6. Educate citizens about their heritage, its value, and the variety of tools available for protecting heritage resources.

The plan aims to achieve these goals through implementation of five core strategies, each of which has underlying recommended actions. The strategies are to Celebrate York County's Heritage, Build Preservation Partnerships, Make New Friends, Develop Support Systems, and Strengthen the County's Role. There are likely a number of actions in the Heritage Preservation Plan through which the LHHC could find support or alignment.

## Housing and Community Development Plan - 2020

This Plan includes an entire chapter on Neighborhood & Community Development. Were LHHC to find communities along the Lincoln Highway in need of assistance and support, there are revitalization strategies and neighborhood improvement tools described in this chapter.

## Open Space and Greenways Plan – 2006

To the extent that the LHHC desires to make significant connections to greenways and outdoor recreation opportunities along the Lincoln Highway, this plan provides a description of opportunities and planning tools.

# Places2040 – A Plan for Lancaster County PA – 2018

In this most recent comprehensive planning document, Lancaster County set aside a typical approach of addressing planning topics one-by-one, and integrated strategies into "5 Big Ideas" that cut across traditional planning silos. They are as follows, with recommendations on what the county needs to do differently through implementation.

## 1. Creating Great Places

Great places are places where we're proud to live, work, learn, play, and visit. They're safe and attractive environments that improve our quality of life – and ensure the success and sustainability of our economy. When we create great places, we make it easier to achieve many of our other goals.

### What We Need to Do Differently

- Make our downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive
- Design communities that put people first
- Create a mix of uses in our communities and corridors
- Provide a greater supply and diversity of housing types to own and rent
- Find new and innovative ways to reduce congestion

## 2. Connecting People, Place, & Opportunity

We need to work harder to connect people with each other and the places around them – students with schools, workers with jobs, and jobs with housing. Simply put, it should be easier for residents and visitors to get around. By maximizing connections, we make everything more efficient and create more opportunities for interaction.

### What We Need to Do Differently

- Make our downtowns into regional hubs
- Create more places to hike, bike, play, and enjoy nature
- Make it easier for residents and visitors to get around without a car
- Connect housing, jobs, schools, transportation, and other destinations
- Intentionally cultivate, retain, and expand industry
- Maintain, attract, and retain a skilled workforce that earns a competitive wage
- Facilitate business partnerships

## 3. Taking Care of What We Have

Our world-class farmland, urban places, and natural areas provide a strong foundation for our quality of life and distinguish this place from any other. Stewardship of our heritage should be a priority, not just because we like the view, but because it makes the county more attractive to investment – particularly from visitors and prospective employers.

### What We Need to Do Differently

- Preserve large, contiguous areas of agricultural and natural land
- Preserve the farmer as well as the farm
- Improve water quality and work together on stormwater management
- Use existing buildings and maintain public infrastructure
- Promote entrepreneurship and help local businesses grow

## 4. Growing Responsibly

We need to consider where development happens, when it happens, and what form it takes. By 2040, the data tells us we can expect about 100,000 new people to live here. To accommodate them, we need to improve the pattern of growth and ensure that we develop in a more compact, efficient, and fiscally responsible way.

### What We Need to Do Differently

- Grow where we're already growing
- Prioritize redevelopment and infill in Urban Growth Areas
- Manage the use of large tracts of vacant land in Urban Growth Areas
- Limit large-lot suburban development in rural areas
- Build more compactly and efficiently

## 5. Thinking Beyond Boundaries

We need to think and act differently. We need to see places as they are, rather than dividing them up in traditional ways. Many of the issues we face aren't limited to municipal and school district boundaries. We need to approach challenges more collaboratively, cultivate leadership, and take our partnerships to the next level.

### What We Need to Do Differently

- Integrate place-based thinking into all future planning initiatives
- Break down the traditional silos that limit our effectiveness
- Make planning and regulation more efficient, consistent, and regional
- Keep ourselves accountable for the goals we've set

Through its discussion of Place-Based Thinking, the plan emphasizes, in part, the concept of corridors that serve as a pathway for people to help maintain the County's quality of life and economic competitiveness. This focus on the value of corridors could present an opportunity for the LHHC.

## Implications for LHHC

There are several themes or threads across the planning documents described above that could have implications for the future of the LHHC and its Management Action Plan process.

1. **Connecting to Regions** – There is a focus by PA DCNR on regional application of its programs through the Conservation Landscapes and Heritage Areas as well as through other DCNR initiatives. The LH intersects with several strong regionally oriented organizations, such as the South Mountain Partnership and Laurel Highlands. Additionally, some counties along the LH have moved to a regional approach to comprehensive planning, such as through the Alleghenies Outdoors document. LHHC could benefit from enhanced engagement with these strengthening regional initiatives.

2. **Community Revitalization** – All of the county planning documents across the LH, as well as state-wide and regional plans, describe the importance of strengthening communities, both rural and urban. The counties along the LH are committed to addressing blight and investing in Main Streets and downtowns. The PA SHPO plan describes the importance of historical and cultural resources to communities and even how diligent repurposing of historical structures can drive community growth. Given that the LH passes through many mid-sized to small communities, some of which appear to be struggling, the LHHC could leverage the community revitalization initiatives of other organizations to help make the communities along the LH more attractive and stronger.

3. **Small Business Support** – Another common theme across the county and other plans described above is the importance placed on thriving small businesses. There are numerous funding streams and efforts toward business incubation that could be tapped by LHHC to support existing small businesses along the LH or to kick-start the creation of new small business where the LHHC sees an unmet need.

4. **Outdoor Recreation** – The momentum behind the improvement of outdoor recreation opportunities and the outdoor recreation economy are strong across the nation, across Pennsylvania, and throughout these planning documents that touch the LH. Many of the counties and regional organizations along the corridor are recognizing the importance of outdoor recreation to their constituents and their work. There are many outdoor recreation assets along or near the LH that provide ample opportunity for the LHHC to embrace an increased focus on outdoor recreational pursuits for both locals and tourists.

Appendix E: Benchmarking Summary

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan Update

### Benchmarking Summary

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Oil Region Alliance** | Jen Burden | Historian-Educator |
| **Fulton County Chamber of Commerce** | Misty Hershey | Interim Executive Director |
| **Discover Lancaster** | Joel Cliff | Director of Communications and Advocacy |
| **Susquehanna National Heritage Area** | Mark Platts | President |
| **Nebraska Chapter-LHA and National Scenic and Historic Byway** | Sarah Focke | Director |
| **PA Chapter – LHA** | Tom Davidson | Volunteer Director |

# Oil Region Alliance

## Background

- Started working at the Alliance in late '17/early '18; started off as historian educator – then moved into current position when predecessor retired
- Will be leaving the Oil Region this year for National Road as the Director of Cultural Resources
- ORA was established in 2005, when 4 nonprofits merged. Two were focused exclusively on economic development. Includes operation of the heritage area.
- They have a staff of 13 that serves all 4 organizations within the Alliance.

## Evolution of the Organization and its Services/Programs

- Heritage and outdoor recreation have always been vital to the organization.
- Still the designated tourism agency for Venango County.
- The economic development arm has ebbed and flowed. Some properties were acquired in the past, including some industrial park land that has been under ORA's ownership. They sell things off as they can. Their goal now is to hold very little to no industrial park land.
- They have recently gotten involved in brown field reclamation, which is prevalent throughout the region. Lots of ups and downs working with EPA and DEP. It's a slow process. Very few other organizations are doing this work in the region and it is work that needs to be done.
- They also began getting involved in orphaned wells.
- They keep getting involved in more areas because of a gap from other organizations. Noone else is owning these things.
- Venango County is a poor region; Oil City isn't particularly wealthy. The very poor sections of town often get overlooked. There are not a lot of development opportunities that are likely to be profitable.
- They also look at other manufacturing nearby to determine if they want to expand or look at a trail system and consider spur development.
- When an opportunity comes in, they have to determine whether it fits as an ORA project or one for the heritage area. If it's through the lens of improving the heritage area, it counts as supporting the heritage area.

## Key Challenges

- Finding staff to work on opportunities that arise. There is often money for the kinds of projects they take on but getting people to do the work is hard. The grants they receive include a small percentage for administrative costs.
- They have expanded staff somewhat but are still stretched in terms of staff bandwidth.
- The previous President & CEO preferred to operate in silos. Outdoor recreation never talked to heritage who never talked to economic development. The silos have since disappeared but there are concerns that as they take more on, that they are returning to these silos. No one can devote enough time to fully understand what's going on.

## Opportunities

- There is funding for elements of their strategic plan that need to be completed, such as trail work, wayfinding and signage.
- They own 6 or 7 historic buildings, including their current office building – an historic Pennzoil fueling station. They operate a small museum – Tarbell House – it can get lost in the shuffle sometimes.

## Funding Model

- Most funding comes from public sources include national and state funding.
- They operate more like a state heritage area but with the backing of the national funding.
- They receive some funding through a hotel tax. Their tourism manager is partly funded through the tax.
- They have a main street program, which provides them with some funding. Their full-time employee who focuses on main street is funded through that program.
- Operating Budget: $7M; majority is public; also get hotel tax; have a membership project that is being revamped this year.

## Building Awareness

- Since they always go from project to project, they rarely tout their accomplishments.
- They have tried to improve in this area. when a public facing project is complete, they do a press release.
- Since they are in a small area, anything they put out goes into the local media.

- In 2021, they developed a new logo specifically for the heritage area. There was always a logo for the Alliance, but this meant there were different logos throughout the region. It didn't identify them as one organization. At first, it seemed unnecessary to have a new logo, but they realized they weren't fully leveraging their status as a National Heritage Area. They've been using their new logo now for the past several years and it has helped to raise awareness of the heritage area itself. They kept the logo similar to the ORA one, including the same color palette. Sometimes they use both together, but often just use the heritage area logo.

## Partnerships

- As people get to know them better, they sometimes bring things to ORA. The mini-grants are a key mechanism for providing funding to partners and to start new relationships. Their most recent round was strictly focused on heritage related projects. They only had $26,000 and were able to fund 10 projects. It's great for ORA because it's 10 projects that the ORA staff didn't have to manage but their name is on it and they can take some credit for it.

# Fulton County – Chamber of Commerce, Historical Society, Main Street McConnellsburg

## Background

- The Chamber hasn't had a full-time director. She has been serving in an interim capacity for 2 years.
- She also sits on Main Street McConnellsburg

## Key Challenges

- Fulton County leadership's engagement depends on what organization you are working with. There was a vibrant McConnellsburg committee back in the 1990's. They are trying to revitalize that again.
- They have no idea where people can stay in Fulton County, as there are no hotels. There are some AirBnB's.
- They could use help marketing the County.
- There is nothing out there that says come for the weekend and shows the theater or state parks.

## Opportunities

- They are also working with the Center for Community Action and trying to do more grantwriting for Main Street to get more traffic. They'd like to get people to come to the Museum and then stay for ice cream. They'd like to get more businesses to move there.
- It would be a great time for LHHC to talk to the Committee.
- The Historical Society in the midst of planning for the 175th anniversary of Fulton County. There is some type of event planned every month, including a strawberry festival in June
- They have a beautiful DCNR building with a walking trail around it, but – nothing to promote it.

## Partnerships

- They would love to have a partner in LHHC to support getting the word out about assets in the county, including Downtown McConnellsburg. They have a historical society and would be open to working with the Chamber and LHHC to establish a "hub" there.

- They'd love help promoting and putting greater professionalism behind that with social media or video. It's a great location and just needs to be better showcased.

# Discover Lancaster

## Evolution of the Organization and its Services/Programs

- They changed their website URL when their name changed, but kept the old domain name linked.
- They've updated their messaging, including development messaging specifically focused on arts and entertainment, food and beverage, outdoor recreation and more.
- Use consistently across marketing materials, visitors, guides, email blasts, website, social media, advertising (billboard, TV, streaming), and selling to group tours, PR, media outreach.
- "Everything you'd expect, and everything you didn't." "You'd be surprised to know_____." Thing you know and love, right next to a new attraction. Compare and contrast historic assets with new assets. E.g., downtown Lancaster = "Hip yet historic."
- Some grants during the pandemic filled the gap of lodging taxes that weren't coming in. Lodging numbers were strong in 2021 and normalized in the last two years.
- They had some extra money to use toward promotional and advertising.
- Changed name 10 years ago, from PA Dutch Visitors Bureau. Wanted to broaden understanding of what today's Lancaster County has to offer.

## Key Challenges

- The markets where they advertise are expensive (metro NY, DC, Baltimore), so funding is top of mind.
- The name change has been a relative success. They have done quite a bit in terms of showcasing attractions of other food and beverage, outdoor recreation assets, and the renaissance of downtown Lancaster City, but they still have a ways to go in turns of shifting the image. Don't want to leave PA heritage behind – just want to expand people's vision.
- Appealing to those in their 20s-30s is a challenge but city, arts, recreation have helped pulled that demographic into the County. It creates a cycle of different options as people move through age ranges.
- Current technological challenge - Impact of AI as far as application in the web, and their own website. So much data scraping goes on now. Instead of most relevant page on the website, the first item is an AI description that is scraping off information from DL website. This is taking a toll on web traffic to the DL site.

## Opportunities

- Food and beverage is a major traveling trend right now. Dutch Haven Shoe Fly Pie Windmill is a great asset for Lancaster County – same pie recipe since 50s.

## Partnerships

- DL does a lot on history and heritage. They have some byways along Route 23 and 340 (Bird in Hand). DL is a county-wide destination marketing organization, so traveling across the County is good. They have covered bridge tours too.
- Whether right on the LH or just off a ½ mile or so, there are many different things besides heritage to bring out and attract people to – other places to stop and eat or stay overnight.
- A partnership with LHHC to promote the LH in Lancaster would fit nicely within DL marketing tools and ways they try to get people exploring the County.
- There are lots of different organizations that exist in the region. There is overlap, but people tend to get along. Even if LHHC cuts across the County from west to east.
- The key challenge to expanding into Lancaster County would be the perceived competition for funding.
- Focus on small towns, touring back roads, travel, heritage, and history. Slowing down. Taking your time. Exploring.

# Susquehanna National Heritage Area

## Background

- 10 full time staff, 6 seasonal/part-time. Staff increased when the Heritage Area received national heritage area designation. It took 11 years to get the national designation.
- They have been in the Zimmerman space for 20 years.
- Mark was an original employee of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region in 2003. It received its heritage area designation in 2001, developed a board in 2002.

## Evolution of the Organization and its Services/Programs

- Budget went from 900k to $2.1 million (25% of funding is Federal). National designation was in 2019. National Heritage funding bumped to $500k after the Federal MAP was completed. They got the Governor to increase state heritage area funding.

## Key Challenges

- The decision was made around 2009 to support the river corridor. This made them less connected to a bigger community of partners, as they were largely focused on the partners on the river and themselves.
- The National MAP pushed them to focus more on the rest of the counties. Going beyond the river was an intentional change and shift. Doing so requires a lot of outreach and they have not yet been able to hire the people to do that.
- When they got Zimmerman Center, the Zimmerman's had just spent $1M renovating it, but that was 25 years ago. Things are starting to fail. The endowment helps. The Zimmerman's started the endowment. It then received a gift of $700,000. In total, the endowment generates $10,000 per year and helps to offset ongoing expenses.
- They incur approximately $20,000-$30,000 in expenses for building maintenance. They budget for these expenses.
- Implementing the master plan Mifflin Farm will cost $40M over the next 5-10 years. They currently own the 1800 house and barn.

## Opportunities

- They want to have a Heritage Partnerships Planner that will do outreach throughout counties.
- Will be using their mini-grants to outreach further out into county.

- They want to fill a role for Grants Administrator but are holding on hiring for new positions due to Federal uncertainty.

## Funding Model

- In 2003, the total budget was 250k, of which $100,000 came from the State.
- Started doing private fundraising to build capacity. They started with Board.
- During the Great Recession, a funder pulled out. Then they started doing an annual fundraising event in 2009.
- Gifted the Zimmerman Center. Came with an art collection. Needed help for visitor services, part-time help.
- By 2015, they hired a full-time manager for Zimmerman Center. Got some transportation enhancement money to improve outside of Center. Zimmerman Center became an official visitor contact center for water trail national park.
- DCNR state funding grew over this period. Started to be free to use DCNR money for services. Started getting 200k to 300k from DCNR.
- Private giving was up to around 100k by the time they did improvements at Visitor Center.
- Columbia Crossing, built by town around 2016. The town had planned to run it with volunteers. It wasn't really working that well. The Mayor approached Mark to get involved. Mark was interested because they had no physical presence in Lancaster. Wanted foothold and presence. Costs around 175k to run it. Town gives them 114k by agreement. There are some challenges with building maintenance, which the town is responsible for (by contract).
- For a period of time, they were getting 10 cents per ton of waste into LCSWMA land fill. Was around $75k. Evolved to flat funding support of LCSWMA commitment of $85k.
- York money was coming from hotel tax. Tourism Bureau didn't like that. But York Commissioners made a raise in the hotel tax conditional on getting some funding to four entities other than Tourism Bureau (one of which was SNHA).
- Get Marcellus Shale money sometimes from counties. Heritage Areas are in Act 13, as an explicitly eligible entity.
- York Co has not funded SNHA the past two years, due to some political changes.

# Nebraska Chapter – LHA and National Scenic and Historic Byway

## Background

- Headquartered in Kearny, NE.
- Kearny has a population of 35,000.
- It is home to a University of Nebraska Campus.
- There is a 2,000 sq ft Welcome Center.
- Route 30 runs through town.
- Kearney has a vibrant sports and convention market.
- The Visitor Center highlights dozens of attractions in Kearny, including an archway across the Interstate; it touches on LH era.
- A focus Tree Seedling Mile project was installed along 30 in Kearny.
- The NE Byway system had just been created when Sarah got involved (2004-05). There are now nine state Byways in NE.
- National byway program used to provide more funding than it does now; the NE system got established around that time that Feds were providing lots of funding. Counties pay dues to the Byways.
- Byways has its own Board; often a CVB (Convention and Visitors Bureau). The CVB's are funded by a lodging tax. There are no staff for the Byways; they are staffed by the CVB's. Because of this, some of the Byways have floundered and fallen apart.
- Byways stop at city limits. Won't see Byway signs in a community.

## Evolution of the Organization and its Services/Programs

- The national byway designation was a big deal. It provided new marketing opportunities. They don't automatically get any funding, but it gives them an opportunity to bid on Federal funding. That funding only comes around every 7 years or so.
- Lincoln Highway was a smaller section at first but is now 500 miles across whole state. The Byway runs through 37 communities in 14 counties.
- Initially, the LHA was disconnected from the Byway. Eventually, the marketing efforts of the Byway and LHA were merged.
- Sarah leads the Byway and serves as the leader of the NE LHA Chapter.

- The annual LHA conference was there in 2025.
- They hosted the Centennial Celebration for LHA association in 2013. Did a lot of beautifying leading up to that.

## Key Challenges

- Enthusiasm for the LH is hard to capture and promote. They get tourism grants for brochures, marketing, website updates.
- Getting people involved has always been a challenge. There are the same 4-5 people on calls all the time.
- Funding is always a challenge, particularly at the state and federal levels. They are waiting on a second round of funding from the federal government.
- Just getting people off the interstate is hard. Getting people to take slower pace and scenic route is the challenge.
- NE Tourism staffs travel consultants at rest stops on I-80. They offer an alternative route or stop and see X or Y. People often don't realize that 30 parallels 80. Their brochure is one of the most popular brochures.

## Opportunities

- Projects for Federal funding (if they get it) would be:
    - Marketing, both paper and electronic
    - Social media support
    - Podcast series
    - Signage and wayfinding; from DOT's perspective – it would cost the Byway around $6,000
- Illinois is a good model for wayfinding and interpretation along LH.

## Funding Model

- County dues to Byway. CVBs are funded by lodging tax.

## Building Awareness

- They have always had a really good brochure. They like to highlight what is currently out there to see what was in the 1913 LH era (e.g. abandoned opera house, replica LH markers) as well as new things (e.g., a Bailey Yard – longest Union Pacific railroad along LH).
- The art museum in Kearney is on the corner of the LH. There are also water parks and veterans parks.
- Her team will point people to attractions 5-10 miles off the LH.
- She feels the name recognition is an asset. People that know the name – LH are more likely to want to drive coast to coast.
- History and culture are important in NE. Lots of old communities, brick streets, intact historic buildings.

# Pennsylvania Chapter – LHA

## Background

- LHA has zero paid staff.  Each state has a volunteer director.
- Primary event of LHA is a nation-wide conference. It will be in PA in 2026 coinciding with the America250 celebration. Attendees will be staying at the Yorktowne Hotel. There will be bus tours east and west to Lancaster and Chambersburg as well as a day of presentations.
- Tom was employed with the Federal government until recently. He would have been forced to return to office in DC, and chose to take early retirement.
- PA Chapter is not its own nonprofit.
- Tom gives talks on the LH.
- Hanes Shoehouse in York County is now a guest house (Air BnB).  One of the best examples of programmatic architecture in the country. He's got a marker up there from PHMC.
- National Association maintains a good online map. People can set the GPS so they can follow along the map. Tom works to keep national online map up to date.
- National Association has a quarterly magazine that Tom gets articles in once in a while.
- PA Chapter has a Facebook page. He posts updates.
- They have Retro Reunions (RR) every few years. Last one was the same weekend as the Latrobe Banana Spilt Festival. This year RR will be in Wayne, PA.

## Key Challenges

- Connecting with people along the highway in such a big state – 14 counties.
- It is a membership-driven organization. They have seen a decline, demographically there is less of an interest. They presently have around 150 members. When you join National, you can select a state chapter.
- People that like to take road trips tends to be an older demographic, leaning towards retirement. They are trying to find ways to engage beyond current membership. They are hoping the conference could be a catalyst for new memberships and raising awareness.
- Try to have volunteer county level "concerts."  About half of counties have a county rep leader. A lot of what happens locally is dependent on county engagement.

## Opportunities

- Researched the potential of making LH in PA a Scenic Byway at Federal level. First should try to accomplish this at the state level and then apply for national recognition as State Byway. The impetus for that was the beginning of the All American Road program – an even higher level than the Scenic Byway.
- The Chapter has had a hard time pursuing this. It has been a barrier to get every municipality to support along the byway. If you can't do that you need to get a state law passed. Both of these options are a heavy lift.
- Getting people into the towns and along the historic corridors where 30 bypasses the towns (Everett, McConnellsburg, Bedford).

## Building Awareness

- Retro Reunions.
- His effort is highly focused on the conference. He expects LHHC will be part of conference – he has a meeting out in Latrobe in a couple of weeks. LHHC is probably going to give free museum admission before or after conference. May host an event on the Saturday before conference for people enroute to York.

## Partnerships – LHHC and LHA

- 2028 is the 100-year anniversary of the concrete markers. Could they get some communities to put in replica markers – might help connect communities along the road.
- Some 90s funding put in art wayside exhibits, but nobody really has ownership of them now. Could they encourage people to adopt them in local communities. (e.g., the gas pumps). Outdoor artwork is hard to maintain.
- Tom spends a lot of time reacting to PennDOT road improvement projects. It is challenging to get them to recognize the historical value of the LH; their primary focus is safety. He tries to get PennDOT to protect the heritage of the road and not turn it into a highway bypass.

Appendix F: Core Values, Mission & Vision

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## ***Management Plan Update***

***Strategic Framework***

### Core Values

- ***Partnership & Collaboration:*** We believe in the power of working together—with communities, organizations, and individuals—to build meaningful relationships that strengthen and support the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor.
- ***Transparency & Integrity:*** We are committed to openness, honesty, and ethical practices. Clear communication and trust guide our decisions, ensuring mutual understanding and accountability.
- ***Excellence in Operations:*** We pursue excellence in everything we do. From programming to visitor services, we hold ourselves to the highest standards to make a lasting impact on the communities we serve.
- ***Welcoming Community:*** We create inclusive, engaging spaces and experiences where everyone feels seen, valued, and connected. Our work is rooted in connection and a genuine desire to welcome all.
- ***Lifelong Learning:*** We foster curiosity and discovery by sharing stories of the past and present. We see every interaction as an opportunity to inspire learning and deepen understanding of the Lincoln Highway's legacy.
- ***Conservation & Preservation:*** We are dedicated to protecting and honoring the historic and natural resources of the corridor. Preserving the past ensures its lessons and beauty remain for future generations.

### Mission

- To promote and enrich the communities and treasured resources along Pennsylvania's Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor through dynamic storytelling, meaningful partnerships, and thoughtful conservation – honoring both the highway's history and its lived experience today.

- To promote and enrich the communities and treasured resources along Pennsylvania's

Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor through dynamic storytelling, meaningful partnerships, and thoughtful conservation – honoring meaningful journeys along the highway both past and present.

## Vision

- A vibrant corridor that celebrates the Lincoln Highway's history as well as its lived experience today — fueling economic vitality, fostering lifelong memories, and inspiring a deeper appreciation for the living legacy of America's first transcontinental road.

Appendix G: Full Interpretive Framework & Action Plan

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

**1. Goal Statement:** Deliver compelling educational and interpretive programs through the Corridor that inspire curiosity, connect audiences to history, and elevate the lived experience through diverse, inclusive storytelling.

**1.1 Interpretive experience:** Create and maintain an interpretive experience that advances the mission of LHHC both along the Corridor and at the Museum

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1.1 Ensure clarity and visibility of numbered signs throughout the Museum to support flow of experience | 2025 | Visitor data (family, grandparent, library pass, etc.)<br><br>Visitor center visitation vs. museum visitation<br><br>Feedback on visitor experience (via surveys and anecdotal information)<br><br># of types of itineraries<br><br>Data on which itineraries are taken/accessed<br><br>Data on digital map access and use<br><br>Development of wayfinding and signage plan<br><br># of assets along the Corridor that are installed, updated, etc. year over year |
| 1.1.2 Ensure greeter explains flow to support a positive experience | 2025 | |
| 1.1.3 Create a variety of curated itineraries and brochures based on different themes (military, parks and recreation, etc.) that ecourage travel along the Corridor | 2025 | |
| 1.1.4 Have some printed itineraries available in the visitor center and others on the website | 2025 | |
| 1.1.5 Consider an app, or other digital, interactive map to showcase the curated itineraries and brochures (i.e. theclio.com) | 2026 | |
| 1.1.6 Transition driving guide to be an audio guide for solo drivers | 2026 | |
| 1.1.7 Create a comprehensive wayfinding and signage plan that includes both the Museum and the Corridor | 2026 | |
| 1.1.8 Translate the Museum audio tour to Spanish (print) | 2026 | |
| 1.1.9 Offer the Museum audio tour in printed form | 2026 | |
| 1.1.9.1 Maintain an intinerary of current signs, murals, etc. throughout the Corridor | 2026 | |
| 1.1.10 Develop a strategy for prioritizing which items to update, replace, etc. | 2026 | |
| 1.1.11 Consider reframing the entrance to the Museum as a visitor center | 2026 | |
| 1.1.12 Redecorate to include and promote the Corridor | 2026 | |
| 1.1.13 Greeter not only promotes Corridor but encourages continuing to experience the Museum | 2026 | |
| 1.1.14 Create different versions of the Museum coloring book/scavenger hunt | 2026 | |
| 1.1.15 Create a Corridor-wide scavenger hunt | 2027 | |
| 1.1.16 Create additional interactive experiences for children including photo puzzles | 2027 | |
| 1.1.17 Share new, different stories through curated tours that incorporate a broad range of audiences, timeframes, themes, etc. | 2027 | |
| 1.1.18 Translate the Museum audio tour to Spanish (audio) | 2028 | |
| 1.1.19 Consider adding LH-branded signs that preview upcoming attractions (i.e. LH attraction ahead X miles) | 2028 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

- Printing costs
- Costs associated with tour translation
- Cost of new and updated signage

**1. Goal Statement:** Deliver compelling educational and interpretive programs through the Corridor that inspire curiosity, connect audiences to history, and elevate the lived experience through diverse, inclusive storytelling.

**1.2 Attracting New Audiences:** Develop programming and experiences that cover a wide range of topics to appeal to new and more diverse audiences

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 1.2.1 Continue to host and coordinate lectures that offer different perspectives | Ongoing | # of visitors<br>% visitors from demographics outside of the "traditional" LHHC audience<br># of workshops on historic preservation<br>Use of mobile exhibit |
| 1.2.1.1 Include topics loosely tied to the mission | Ongoing | |
| 1.2.1.2 Select rotating locations to draw attendees from a wider | Ongoing | |
| 1.2.2 Continue to offer a temporary exhibit space for partners to host | Ongoing | |
| 1.2.3 Bring experts in historic preservation to support and provide techincal expertise to partner organizations | 2026 | |
| 1.2.3.1 Host workshops, both on site and virtual | 2026 | |
| 1.2.4 Leverage interpretive experiences for younger audiences and adapt them for school groups | 2026 | |
| 1.2.5 Consider creating a mobile, traveling exhibit that can be featured at other locations as a pop-up to appeal to new and different audiences | 2029 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

Lecture costs
Cost to create and assemble mobile exhibit

**1.3 Partnerships:** Establish and maintain partnerships to tell the story of the Lincoln Highway

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 1.3.1 Identify 2-3 "hubs" or areas throughout the Corridor on which to focus concentrated efforts in order to build relationships without straining limited resources | Ongoing | # of partnerships within the "hubs" |
| 1.3.2 Build partnerhips within the "hubs" through signage, joint events, sharing promotional materials, participation in local events, etc. | Ongoing | |
| 1.3.2.1 Work with partners to promote their organizations, events, etc. | Ongoing | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

No new costs identified

**1. Goal Statement:** Deliver compelling educational and interpretive programs through the Corridor that inspire curiosity, connect audiences to history, and elevate the lived experience through diverse, inclusive storytelling.

**1.1 Interpretive experience:** Create and maintain an interpretive experience that advances the mission of LHHC both along the Corridor and at the Museum

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1.1 Ensure clarity and visibility of numbered signs throughout the Museum to support flow of experience | 2025 | Visitor data (family, grandparent, library pass, etc.)<br><br>Visitor center visitation vs. museum visitation<br><br>Feedback on visitor experience (via surveys and anecdotal information)<br><br># of types of itineraries<br><br>Data on which itineraries are taken/accessed<br><br>Data on digital map access and use<br><br>Development of wayfinding and signage plan<br><br># of assets along the Corridor that are installed, updated, etc. year over year |
| 1.1.2 Ensure greeter explains flow to support a positive experience | 2025 | |
| 1.1.3 Create a variety of curated itineraries and brochures based on different themes (military, parks and recreation, etc.) that ecourage travel along the Corridor | 2025 | |
| 1.1.4 Have some printed itineraries available in the visitor center and others on the website | 2025 | |
| 1.1.5 Consider an app, or other digital, interactive map to showcase the curated itineraries and brochures (i.e. theclio.com) | 2026 | |
| 1.1.6 Transition driving guide to be an audio guide for solo drivers | 2026 | |
| 1.1.7 Create a comprehensive wayfinding and signage plan that includes both the Museum and the Corridor | 2026 | |
| 1.1.8 Translate the Museum audio tour to Spanish (print) | 2026 | |
| 1.1.9 Offer the Museum audio tour in printed form | 2026 | |
| 1.1.9.1 Maintain an intinerary of current signs, murals, etc. throughout the Corridor | 2026 | |
| 1.1.10 Develop a strategy for prioritizing which items to update, replace, etc. | 2026 | |
| 1.1.11 Consider reframing the entrance to the Museum as a visitor center | 2026 | |
| 1.1.12 Redecorate to include and promote the Corridor | 2026 | |
| 1.1.13 Greeter not only promotes Corridor but encourages continuing to experience the Museum | 2026 | |
| 1.1.14 Create different versions of the Museum coloring book/scavenger hunt | 2026 | |
| 1.1.15 Create a Corridor-wide scavenger hunt | 2027 | |
| 1.1.16 Create additional interactive experiences for children including photo puzzles | 2027 | |
| 1.1.17 Share new, different stories through curated tours that incorporate a broad range of audiences, timeframes, themes, etc. | 2027 | |
| 1.1.18 Translate the Museum audio tour to Spanish (audio) | 2028 | |
| 1.1.19 Consider adding LH-branded signs that preview upcoming attractions (i.e. LH attraction ahead X miles) | 2028 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

- Printing costs
- Costs associated with tour translation
- Cost of new and updated signage

**1. Goal Statement:** Deliver compelling educational and interpretive programs through the Corridor that inspire curiosity, connect audiences to history, and elevate the lived experience through diverse, inclusive storytelling.

**1.2 Attracting New Audiences:** Develop programming and experiences that cover a wide range of topics to appeal to new and more diverse audiences

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 1.2.1 Continue to host and coordinate lectures that offer different perspectives | Ongoing | # of visitors<br>% visitors from demographics outside of the "traditional" LHHC audience<br># of workshops on historic preservation<br>Use of mobile exhibit |
| 1.2.1.1 Include topics loosely tied to the mission | Ongoing | |
| 1.2.1.2 Select rotating locations to draw attendees from a wider | Ongoing | |
| 1.2.2 Continue to offer a temporary exhibit space for partners to host | Ongoing | |
| 1.2.3 Bring experts in historic preservation to support and provide techincal expertise to partner organizations | 2026 | |
| 1.2.3.1 Host workshops, both on site and virtual | 2026 | |
| 1.2.4 Leverage interpretive experiences for younger audiences and adapt them for school groups | 2026 | |
| 1.2.5 Consider creating a mobile, traveling exhibit that can be featured at other locations as a pop-up to appeal to new and different audiences | 2029 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

Lecture costs
Cost to create and assemble mobile exhibit

**1.3 Partnerships:** Establish and maintain partnerships to tell the story of the Lincoln Highway

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 1.3.1 Identify 2-3 "hubs" or areas throughout the Corridor on which to focus concentrated efforts in order to build relationships without straining limited resources | Ongoing | # of partnerships within the "hubs" |
| 1.3.2 Build partnerhips within the "hubs" through signage, joint events, sharing promotional materials, participation in local events, etc. | Ongoing | |
| 1.3.2.1 Work with partners to promote their organizations, events, etc. | Ongoing | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

No new costs identified

**2. Goal Statement:** Protect and celebrate the Corridor's cultural and natural assets through proactive conservation efforts and the expansion of unique outdoor experiences, encouraging both stewardship and enjoyment of the historic and natural landscape.

**2.1 Emphasize the Lived Experience:** Promote outdoor recreation along the Corridor through marketing, programming and storytelling that focuses on the lived experience of the Highway and surrounding region

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1.1 Promote natural restoration efforts on the Museum's grounds (via signage, tours, trails, etc.) | Ongoing | # of dark skies events<br><br>#of biking events on old alignments<br><br>Data on which itineraries are accessed<br><br># of programs/events facilitated by environmental educators<br><br>Total $ given via mini grant program to support trails and other conservation related orgs |
| 2.1.2 Develop a strategy to identify locations for and promote dark skies programming throughout the Corridor and surrounding regions | 2026 | |
| 2.1.3 Ensure there are curated itinteraries that focus on outdoor recreation assets throughout the entire corridor | 2026 | |
| 2.1.4 Utilize social media and the website to encourage people to experience the highway by stopping and experiencing an outdoor recreation asset | 2026 | |
| 2.1.4.1 Promote the state park passport program or other similar experiences to further encourage this | 2026 | |
| 2.1.4.2 Develop marketing messaging and storytelling focused on the region's outdoor recreation assets | 2026 | |
| 2.1.5 Invite environmental educators in the region to participate in and potentially host new programming (lecture series, children's program) | 2026 | |
| 2.1.5.1 Rotate to include programs at the Museum and at outdoor recreation assets throughout the Corridor's territory | 2027 | |
| 2.1.6 Determine LHHC's role in trail support and development | 2026 | |
| 2.1.6.1 As a starting point, consider using the mini grant program to focus investment in organizations working to develop new trails and support existing trails that are near or immediately adjacent to the Corridor and in the designated "hubs" | 2027 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
No new costs identified

**2.2 Partnerships:** Establish and maintain partnerships to help promote outdoor recreation sites and experiences along the Corridor

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 2.2.1 Establish relationships with the Department of Forestry related to sites along the Corridor | Ongoing | # of relationships established and maintained |
| 2.2.1.1 Facilitate conversations with parks representatives to better understand how LHHC can help to promote their sites and programs | Ongoing | |
| 2.2.2 Establish a relationship with the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, Western PA Conservancy and other similar organizations | Ongoing | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
No new costs identified

**3. Goal Statement:** Enhance brand recognition and public awareness of the Lincoln Highway's significance through comprehensive marketing, cohesive messaging, storytelling, strategic partnerships, and consistent engagement across platforms.

**3.1 Integrated marketing strategy:** Develop a marketing strategy to unify the brand and messaging of both the Corridor and Museum.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 3.1.1 In visitor surveys, ask for email addresses to allow for follow up and drip campaigns | 2025 | # of individuals on marketing list(s)<br>Consistent use of one logo/brand<br>Greater understanding of brand (via surveys)<br>Mini grant recipients consistently using brand guide<br>$ spent on new marketing<br># of social media followers and engagement year over year<br># of website hits |
| 3.1.2 Create and maintain a marketing plan that brings greater consistency and cohesion and that unifies the brands of the Museum and the Corridor | 2026 | |
| 3.1.3 Update messaging to establish the Museum as a resource along the | 2026 | |
| 3.1.4 Consistently use one logo to represent both the Museum and the | 2026 | |
| 3.1.5 Ensure consistency in language used for events, on the website and across all collateral | 2026 | |
| 3.1.6 Create a brand/messaging guide for mini grant recipients and partners to ensure partners are speaking about LHHC consistently and accurately | 2026 | |
| 3.1.7 Prioritize channels and social media platforms where promoting the LHHC brand is likely to be most effective | 2026 | |
| 3.1.8 Invest in marketing at locations that attract new audiences and that encourage local visitation (i.e. restaurant menus, guides at hotels, etc.) | 2026 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
Marketing and advertising costs

**3.2 Storytelling and messaging:** Develop and maintain messaging that tells the stories and impact of the Lincoln Highway, reflecting both its history and the lived experience today

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 3.2.1 Ensure messaging is consistent and reflects updates in the brand and marketing strategy | Ongoing | Social media engagement<br>Average rating on reviews<br># of visitors that go on to visit other sites along Corridor<br># of visitors taking advantage of discounts offered at Corridor sites |
| 3.2.2 Leverage visitors' experience via social media to help promote visitation to the Museum and along the Corridor | Ongoing | |
| 3.2.2.1 Repost reviews on social media and on the website | Ongoing | |
| 3.2.2.2 Encourage visitors to post and take pictures of their experience using a specific hashtag | Ongoing | |
| 3.2.3 Identify additional strategies to encourage Museum visitors to continue their experience out into the broader Corridor | Ongoing | |
| 3.2.3.1 Continue to provide visitors with the driving guide upon conclusion of their visit | Ongoing | |
| 3.2.3.2 Consider working with local restaurants to negotiate discounts for Museum visitors | Ongoing | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
No new costs identified

**3. Goal Statement:** Enhance brand recognition and public awareness of the Lincoln Highway's significance through comprehensive marketing, cohesive messaging, storytelling, strategic partnerships, and consistent engagement across platforms.

**3.3 Partnerships:** Establish and maintain partnerships to tell the story of the Lincoln Highway

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 3.3.1 Partner with educational institutions to encourage school groups to visit resources along the Corridor, as well as the Museum | Ongoing | # of new partnerships year over year<br><br># of guest lecturers from partner sites |
| 3.3.2 Consider establishing a partnership with St. Vincent College, particularly with their education department | Ongoing | |
| 3.3.2.1 Consider recruiting interns to support storytelling efforts | Ongoing | |
| 3.3.2.2 Utilize staff and faculty as guest lecturers or sponsor an event on campus | Ongoing | |
| 3.3.3 Establish relationships with tourism bureaus, hotels, restaurants and outdoor recreation facilities to help promote the Corridor and these organizations' respective programs and locations | Ongoing | |
| 3.3.4 Establish relationships with niche organizations to access individuals with specific interests that align with LHHC (car clubs, heritage organizations, road side America, atlas obscura, conservation landscape initiatives, etc.) | Ongoing | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
Potential cost of intern(s)

**3.4 Technology:** Leverage technology resources to expand LHHC's presence and visiblity and to promote the resources along the Corridor.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 3.4.1 Launch a new website with greater capability | 2027 | New website launched |
| 3.4.1.1 Develop a strategy for the types of organizations and information to include | 2028 | Digital Directory launched |
| 3.4.2 Create a digital directory, using a similar model such as Discover NEPA, to help build partnerships and help promote resources along the Corridor | 2029 | # of organizations participating in digital directory year over year |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
Cost for new website (already allocated)

**4. Goal Statement:** Diversify and grow funding sources - including earned income, public support, private contributions, and grants - to ensure long-term financial health and the ability to invest in innovation, programming, and advance all goals of the heritage area.

**4.1 Public:** Leverage public sources of revenue to support LHHC's operating costs.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 4.1.1 Evaluate whether there are additional sources of funding from DCNR, particularly in support of outdoor recreation assets throughout the Corridor | 2026 | Funding received from DCNR year over year<br>% of funding from public sources |
| 4.1.2 Identify other sources of public funding that LHHC can pursue for select projects or initiatives (i.e. Penn DOT, DCED, SHPO, etc.) | 2026 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

No new costs identified

**4.2 Fundraising:** Develop a comprehensive development program to diversify and create greater sustainability in LHHC's financial model.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 4.2.1 Research grants from private sources (foundations, corporate giving, etc.) and create a schedule to manage due dates and bandwidth | Ongoing | Submit 1-2 new grant applications each year<br>Total fundaising $<br>% of total funding from contributed sources<br>Annual giving $<br># of new donors<br>Average $ per donor year over year |
| 4.2.2 Consider engaging a contract grantwriter to support soliciting funding via grants | Ongoing | |
| 4.2.3 Work with PANO to support fundraising strategies and the development of policies and procedures to support an enhanced fudraising effort | Ongoing | |
| 4.2.4 Ensure consistent use and entry of data into PastPerfect donor management system | Ongoing | |
| 4.2.5 Establish a sponsorship packet for events | Ongoing | |
| 4.2.6 Create a menu of giving opportunities informed by the historic site survey | 2026 | |
| 4.2.7 Formalize an annual giving effort that includes a spring and year-end appeal | 2026 | |
| 4.2.8 Incorporate simple planned giving strategies into fundraising efforts | 2027 | |
| 4.2.8.1 When sending an annual report or other similar communication, include an insert that asks whether LHHC is included in the individual's | 2027 | |
| 4.2.8.2 Consider hosting a workshop focused on estate planning with financial planning firms; incorporate a soft ask about LHHC in planning | 2027 | |
| 4.2.9 Begin to outline the strategies and resources needed to mount a future endowment campaign | 2028 | |
| 4.2.10 Conduct a wealth screening of members and donors in the CRM to develop a pipeline of prospects | 2028 | |
| 4.2.11 Create a top propsect list, to be reviewed by the Board each quarter | 2028 | |
| 4.2.12 Expand Board responsibilities to include annual donation to flex grant program (above and beyond regular annual giving) | Ongoing | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

Cost of grantwriter
Costs associated with annual giving appeals
Cost for planned giving insert
Event planning costs
Potential cost of outside consultant for endowment planning
Cost of wealth screening

**4. Goal Statement:** Diversify and grow funding sources - including earned income, public support, private contributions, and grants - to ensure long-term financial health and the ability to invest in innovation, programming, and advance all goals of the heritage area.

**4.3 Earned:** Expand sources of earned revenue to further diversify LHHC's financial model.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 4.3.1 Continue to pilot/experiment with new but smaller events that have the potential to generate revenue, utilize minimal staff time and that have the potential to appeal to new and different audiences | Ongoing | Host 1-2 new pilot events each year<br>Total event revenue<br>Feedback on events (via survey and staff feedback)<br>Total $ from rentals<br># of rentals year over year |
| 4.3.1.1 Determine which events can be duplicated and hosted at partner sites | Ongoing | |
| 4.3.2 Promote the events of partners and consider sponsoring select partner events | Ongoing | |
| 4.3.3 Explore additional and new sources of earned revenue | Ongoing | |
| 4.3.4 Continue to promote rentals at the Museum | Ongoing | |
| 4.3.5 Explore opportunities for both indoor and outdoor events for rental | Ongoing | |
| 4.3.6 Analyze all events for ROI, staff time required and other areas to determine which events to keep and which to consider eliminating or reimagining | 2025 | |
| 4.3.7 Develop a rental policy | 2026 | |
| 4.3.8 Evaluate admissions pricing and determine whether to increase prices | 2027 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
New event costs

**4.4 Mini Grant Program:** Consistently execute the mini grant program to support and be an ongoing economic and technical resource to organizations along the Corridor.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 4.4.1 Begin to execute the mini grant program on an annual basis | Ongoing | # of grants year over year<br>Total grant funding allocated year over year<br>Total $ given in flex grants year over year |
| 4.4.1.1 Host workshops throughout the Corridor to both promote the program and provide techincal support to potential partners | Ongoing | |
| 4.4.2 Consider focusing on themes each year for the mini grant program (i.e. a specific geographic area, type of organization, element of heritage area goal, etc.) | Ongoing | |
| 4.4.3 Work with partner organizations to raise funds for small-scale support for other types of organizations (private businesses, etc.) - Flex grants | Ongoing | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
No new costs identified

**4.5 Financial best practices:** Continue to advance best practices in financial reporting and management.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 4.5.1 Continue to develop and maintain procedures and policies for financial reporting and systems | Ongoing | $ used for professional development opportunities<br>$ for preventative and deferred maintenance |
| 4.5.2 Create a budget for professional development to support continual growth of staff members | Ongoing | |
| 4.5.3 Allocate a % of operating budget for deferred maintenance | Ongoing | |
| 4.5.4 Establish a budget for addressing both deferred maintenance and preventative maintenance needs | 2026 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
No new costs identified

**4.6 Memberships**: Evaluate the membership program to ensure alignment with LHHC's activities and the value it offers to visitors of the Museum and

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 4.6.1 Evaluate the membership program to ensure alignment with pricing and benefits | 2027 | # of new members<br>Total membership revenue<br>Percentage of members renewing year over year<br>Number of members participating in events annually |
| 4.6.1.1 As more programming is developed, determine if there are new benefits that can be added | 2027 | |
| 4.6.2 Through partnership, offer discounts at various sites throughout the Corridor as part of membership levels | 2027 | |
| 4.6.3 As digital directory expands, consider adding corporate membership that incorporates inclusion in the directory | 2029 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
No new costs identified

**5. Goal Statement:** Continue to strengthen LHHC's capacity through clear governance, leadership and staff development to ensure a resilient organization that advances its mission and lives its core values.

**5.1 Partnerships:** Leverage partnerships to support mission execution and elevate the LH Corridor.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 5.1.1 Continue to maintain a strong, productive relationship with DCNR | Ongoing | # of new relationships established each year<br><br># of nationwide partners added/maintained each year |
| 5.1.2 Expand the relationship to support the development of relationships with other heritage areas and other governmental agencies | Ongoing | |
| 5.1.3 Establish relationships with local government representatives in each county within the LHHC territory | Ongoing | |
| 5.1.4 Build relationships with the nationwide partners of the Lincoln Highway Association | Ongoing | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

No new costs identified

**5.2 Staff and professional development:** Consistently support staff through internal development and external professional development opportunities.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 5.2.1 Identify professional development opportunities for each staff member | Ongoing | # of professional development opportunities for staff members<br><br>Staff feedback on those opportunities<br><br>Hiring and recruitment of new staff positions |
| 5.2.2 Ask staff to submit requests for external professional development opportunities | Ongoing | |
| 5.2.3 Determine staffing needs to support expanded programming, fundraising and other efforts | 2025 | |
| 5.2.3.1 Hire a marketing assistant to support expanded storytelling efforts both at the Museum and throughout the Corridor | 2028 | |
| 5.2.3.2 Hire an education coordinator to support more robust interpretive programming | 2028 | |
| 5.2.3.3 Hire a development assistant to support expanded fundraising efforts | 2029 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

Professional development costs
Cost of marketing assistant salary
Cost of education coordinator salary
Cost of development assistant salary

**5.3 Board Development:** Continue to strengthen the Board to support and advance the work of the LHHC.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 5.3.1 Facilitate an annual Board retreat to create a regular opportunity for strategic discussions and social engagement for Board members | Ongoing | Annual Board Retreat<br><br>Strategic recruitment of new Board members<br><br>County representation across Board |
| 5.3.2 Work with PANO to identify the necessary policies and procedures that need to be in place related to Board management and development | Ongoing | |
| 5.3.2.1 Regularly revisit the Board's role and responsibilities | Ongoing | |
| 5.3.2.2 update them to reflect current needs and expectations, including a greater emphasis on fundraising | Ongoing | |
| 5.2.3 Develop and maintain a matrix of Board expertise, background, etc. to support strategic recruitment efforts | Ongoing | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**

Cost of annual board retreat & potential outside facilitator

**5. Goal Statement:** Continue to strengthen LHHC's capacity through clear governance, leadership and staff development to ensure a resilient organization that advances its mission and lives its core values.

**5.4 Policies and Procedures:** Ensure current policies and procedures are in place that ensure consistency in operational practices.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 5.4.1 Update the collection management plan | Ongoing | Updated collection plan<br>Policies written and in place |
| 5.4.1.1 Include the time period for the collection | Ongoing | |
| 5.4.1.2 Include a deaccessioning policy | Ongoing | |
| 5.4.2 Establish an EV charging policy at the Museum | 2025 | |
| 5.4.3 Include a paranormal event policy | 2025 | |
| 5.4.4 Create a Harvest Host policy | 2026 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
No new costs identified

**5.5. Facilities:** Continue to implement practices that maintain and improve the Museum and experience for staff and visitors.

| Action Step | Year | Measurable Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 5.5.1 Maintain an emergency preparedness plan | Ongoing | Current emergency preparedness plan<br>PM schedule<br>Inventory of deferred maintenance needs |
| 5.5.2 Create a schedule for preventative maintenance | Ongoing | |
| 5.5.3 Maintain a climate controlled room for traveling exhibits | Ongoing | |
| 5.5.4 Maintain an inventory and schedule for addressing deferred maintenance needs | Ongoing | |
| 5.5.5 Use the assessment report to prioritize facility needs and create a menu of fundraising priorities | 2025 | |

**Estimated Cost/Investment Impact**
Costs associated with maintaining climate controlled room

Appendix H: Geospatial & Visitor Analysis

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

**Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor Visitor Analysis**
**Key Findings Summary**

**Visitation:**

In the communities and sites studies, overall visitation is down as compared to pre-pandemic levels. Following a decline during the pandemic, visitation recovered but not to 2018 or 2019 levels. This is true of other Lincoln Highway communities beyond the study, such as Downtown York.

Most visitors live within the region, an indicator that residents find value in their downtowns and visit at high rates of frequency. This is a strength for the communities upon which to build.

**Tourism:**

Each location attracts tourists. McConnellsburg has the lowest percentage of tourists (5.2%) just trailing Chambersburg (6.8%). In Bedford, 17.4% of visitation comes from tourists. In each of these communities, special events drive tourist visits, including Chambersburg's wintertime ice festival and McConnellsburg and Bedford's fall-oriented festivals. Tourism rates are lower during the rest of the year.

Significant work still needs to occur for tourism to have a year-round impact in these communities, and LHHC cannot depend on high levels of existing tourism to drive interest in LHHC programs, particularly outside of Bedford.

In some cases, such as in McConnellsburg, tourist rates are low enough that Placer.ai could not find a sufficient sample size to identify tourists' "favorite places" within the business district.

**Visitor Journey:**

Based on the data available, we don't see a clear linear visitor progression from one Lincoln Highway town to another. Visitors, including tourists, seem to access downtowns and sites from multiple routes, including but not limited to Route 30. Prior and post destinations only partially follow the Route 30 corridor.

This poses a challenge for LHHC. Unlike Route 6, which is often experienced as a linear route punctuated by stops in each community through which it passes, it appears visitors (even tourists) experience LHHC communities one at a time or through a circuitous route that does not necessarily follow the Lincoln Highway. There is an opportunity to build on the idea of a thru-drive of all LHHC communities.

Another finding is that currently the downtowns lose business patrons to regional and national chains outside their boundaries. This presents a business development opportunity within the downtowns, if they can work with businesses to expand inventory, improve signage and otherwise work to capture visitors before they leave the community.

**Demographics:**

Visitation to the four sites and communities is overwhelmingly White, and diversity did not increase during the study period. In most cases, as overall visitation declined since 2019 so did the total number of Black, Hispanic and Asian visitors. Lincoln Highway Experience drew a more diverse visitor base than the downtowns, although—as noted on slide deck—this number changed in such a dramatic way as to require more explanation from LHE leadership about possible causes.

Increasing diversity is both a moral imperative and an economic need. Given the decline in overall visitation, there is a strong need to reach new and expanded audiences for the LHHC through targeting marketing and generally promoting communities as welcoming to all.

**Potential Partners:**

Where relevant, the slide deck identifies partner sites and businesses for whom there is either (1) a strong, existing connection between visitation to the primary site and the partner site, or (2) the opportunity for alignment because of the site's focus on visitors, heritage, recreation, culture, or a mix of all of these.

- In Bedford, there is obvious synergy around Fort Bedford Park & Museum and nearby businesses, such as Cove Creek Outfitters. The only downside to focusing on these assets is that visitation spikes, at least to the park and museum, are tied to special events. The Omni resort also has a strong connection to the downtown, with 49,000 downtown visits originating from the resort in 2024 alone.

- In McConnellsburg, the Fulton County Historical Museum is located directly on the Lincoln Highway and had nearly 6,500 visits in 2024. 92% of these visits were from less than 50 miles away, but the opportunity exists to further promote and program the museum and affiliated sites to draw more tourists. In the past year, 200 visitors came directly to the downtown from the PA State Museum in Harrisburg, so there could be an opportunity to build on that relationship as well through targeted promotions to heritage visitors in Harrisburg.

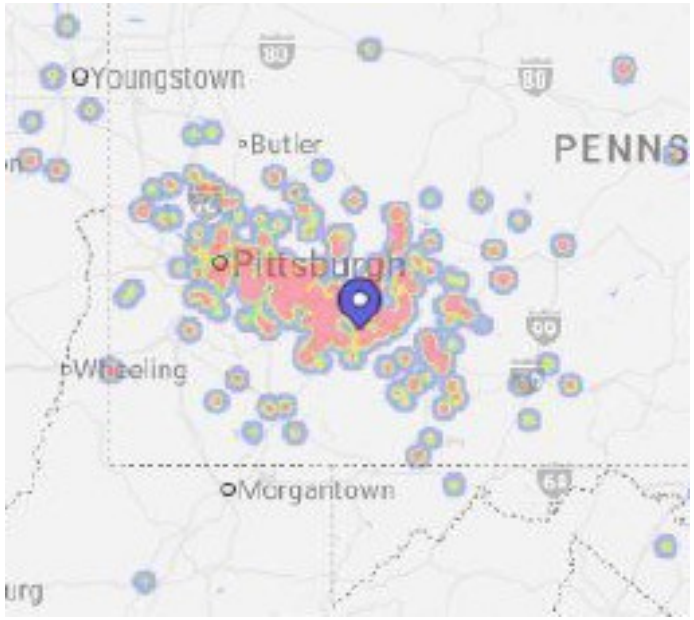
- In Chambersburg, the Chambersburg Heritage Center is located directly on the Lincoln Highway and hosted 5,608 visits by 3,081 unique visitors in 2024. The Center is most popular with regional visitors living 10-30 miles away, but 6% of visitors are tourists. The Franklin County Visitors Bureau also had 7,310 visits in 2024. Both sites are located at the town square, with a short walk of the most-frequented destinations in the downtown district. There is an opportunity to reach thousands of visitors at either site.

- The Lincoln Highway Experience in Latrobe is a visitor destination in its own right, but there are opportunities to build relationships with other destinations to which LHE visitors travel as part of the same trip. The data shows LHE visitors in 2024 went directly to—or came directly from—Fort Ligonier 278 times; Compass Inn Museum 50 times; and Idlewild Park 43 times. As a percentage of visitation, these figures are not especially significant, but they represent an opportunity to grow partnerships with other local attractions that keep visitors in the community longer.

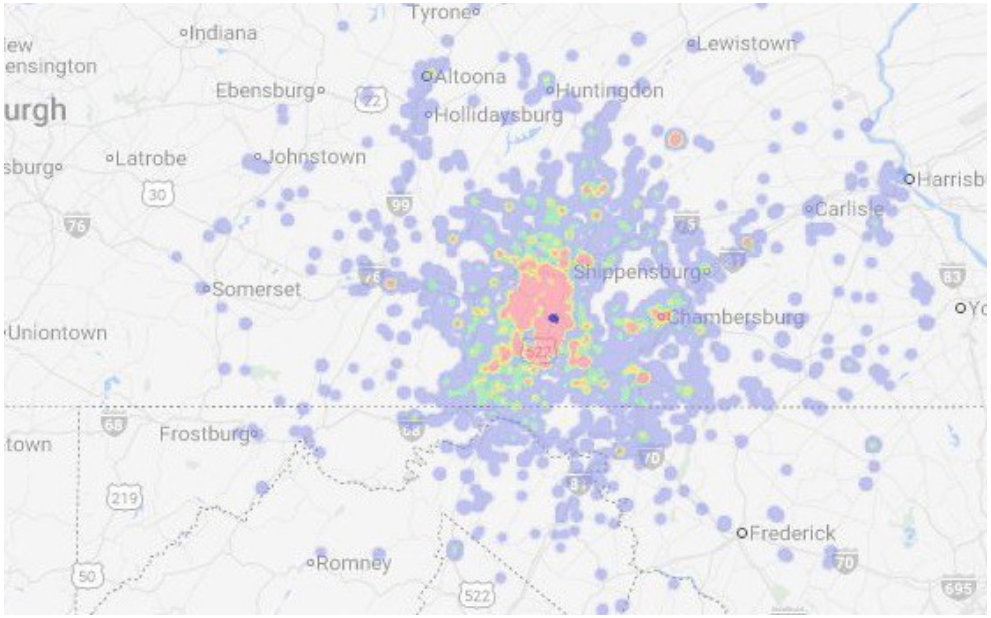
**Methods:**

Please note that differences in visitation to each of these four communities and sites posed a challenge in standardizing the analysis. The three downtowns were analyzed as "markets," which provides a different set of data points than LHE, which was analyzed as a discrete "point of interest." Further, the sample sizes for some years were small enough that projecting ethnicity or tracking visitors' most common destinations within a market were not possible. Where necessary, Firefly tried to substitute other data that could still shed light on interesting aspects of visitation. The result is that each analysis has a slightly different set of slides and some of the visualizations vary between sites. This is not an error or for lack of seeking consistency but is the reality of analyzing sites that differ significantly in terms of visitation.

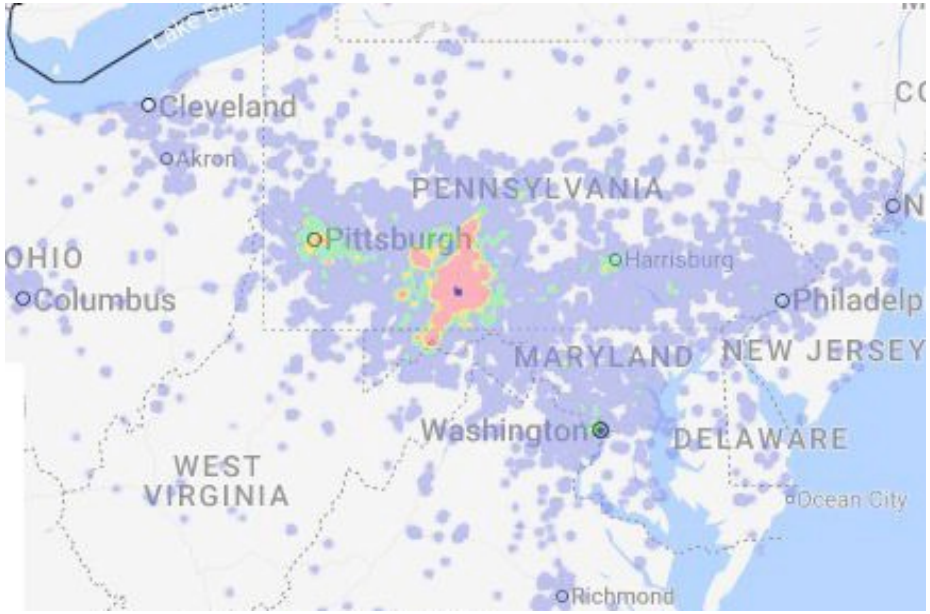
## LHE



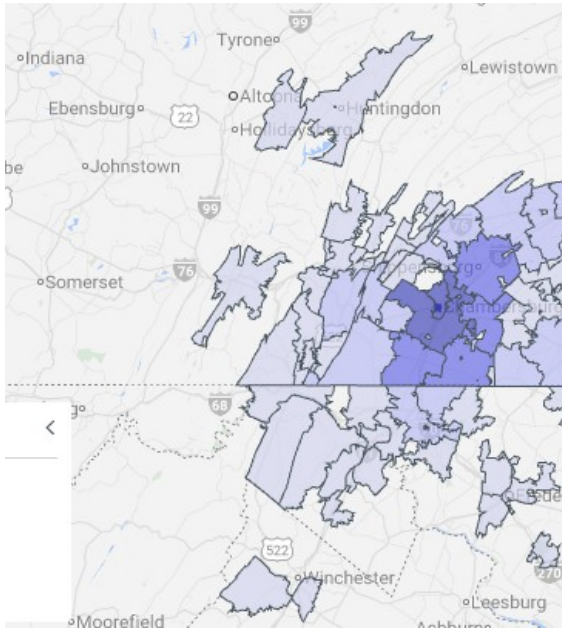

## Mcconnellsburg

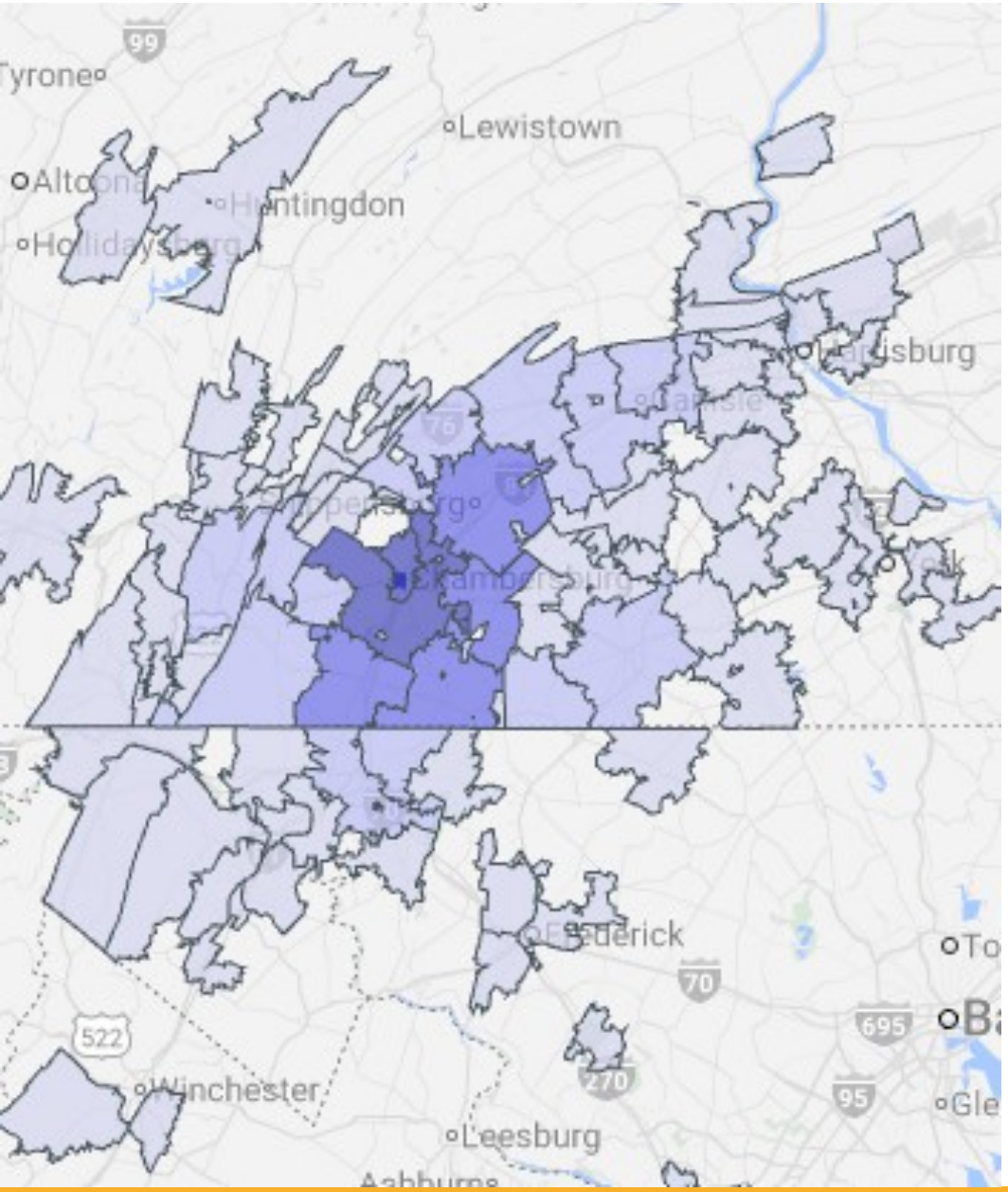



## Bedford




## C






# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor Visitor Analysis Case Studies

**Silas Chamberlin, PhD**
President
Firefly Outdoor + Economics

**July 2025**

Powered by Placer.ai

FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Downtown Chambersburg

FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Chambersburg- Visitation

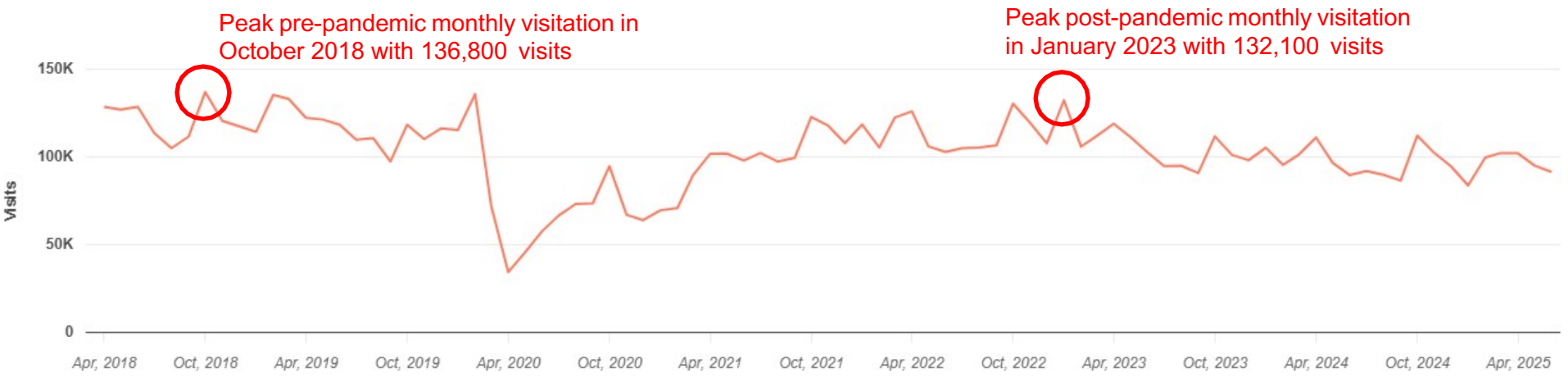
Between 2019 and 2024, total annual visits to Downtown Chambersburg decreased 16% and unique annual visitors decreased by 7%. Visitation lagged during the pandemic and has not since recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

Average visitor frequency and average dwell time have also generally decreased.

| Year | Visits | Visitors | Frequency | Duration (min.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019 | 1,405,962 | 296,882 | 4.74 | 63 |
| 2020 | 899,098 | 220,841 | 4.07 | 54 |
| 2021 | 1,177,484 | 252,048 | 4.67 | 56 |
| 2022 | 1,353,743 | 282,652 | 4.79 | 57 |
| 2023 | 1,273,377 | 292,692 | 4.35 | 57 |
| 2024 | 1,176,536 | 276,120 | 4.26 | 56 |

# Chambersburg – Visitation (2018-2025)

This graph shows monthly out-of-market visitation from April 2018 to June 2025.



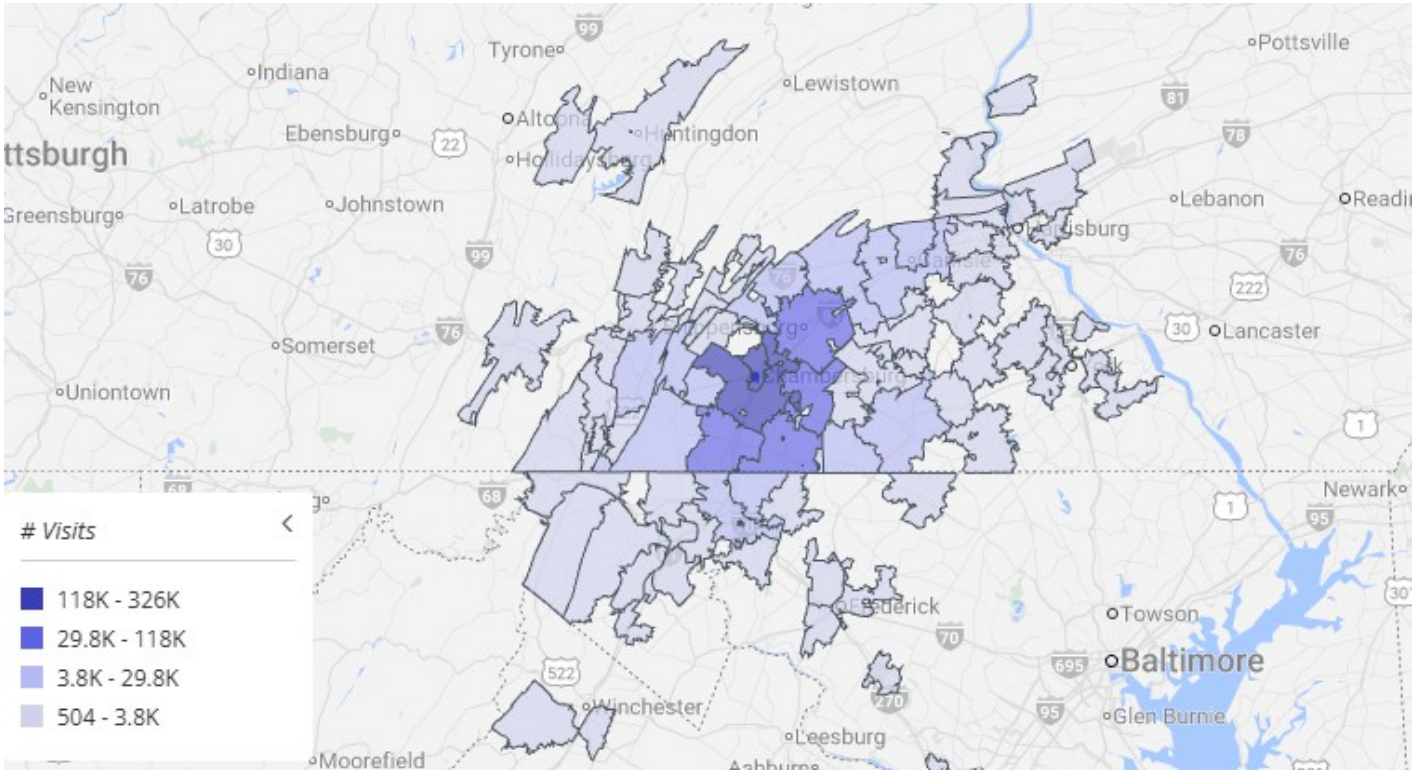
# Chambersburg – Weekly Visitation (2024)

The weekly visitation chart for 2024 shows steady visitation throughout the year, punctuated by high-visitation weeks during special events.



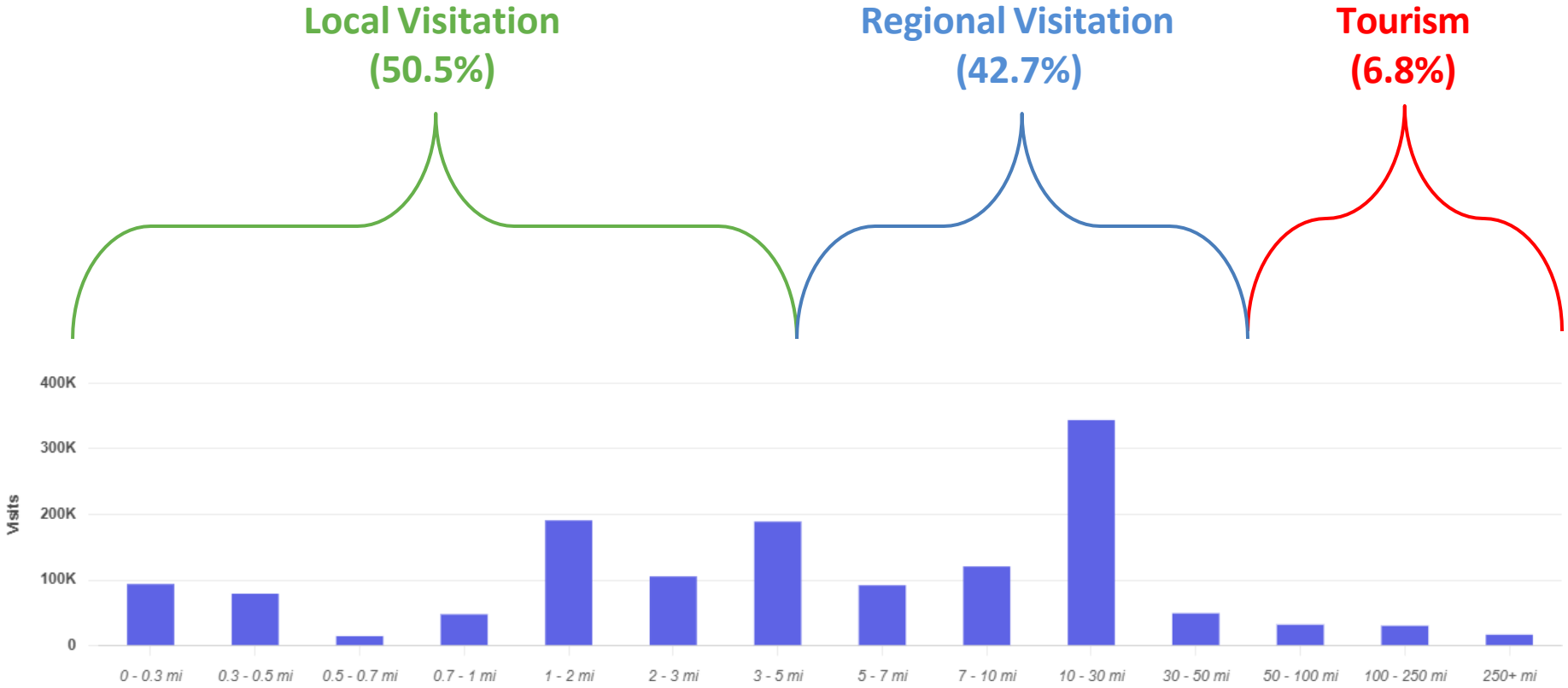
# Chambersburg – Trade Area

This trade area map shows concentrations of visitor home zip codes during the 7-year study period, with concentrations in southcentral Pennsylvania and northern Maryland.




FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Chambersburg – Trade Area (2024)




Tourism accounts for 6.8% of visitation to Downtown Chambersburg. Like most downtowns, visitation is dominated by those living within a short drive or drawn to the downtown for special events.

# Chambersburg – Tourism Impact

**79,452 Tourist visits** × **$419 per visit** = **$33,290,388**

The 6.8% of visits attributed to tourism amounts to a projected **79,452 tourist visits in 2024** alone.

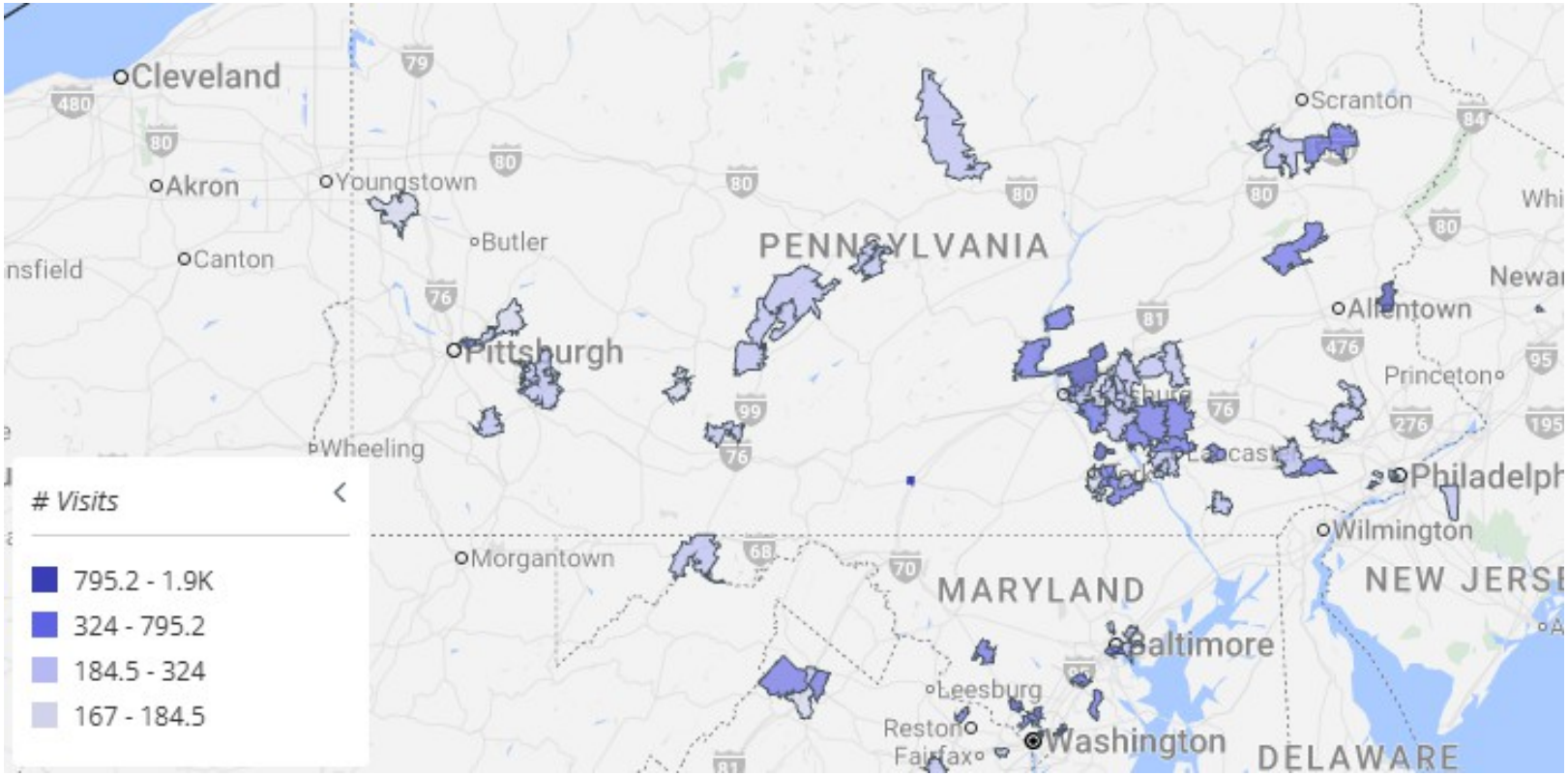
Based on the PA Tourism Office's estimate of $419 in spending per tourist visit, Downtown Chambersburg helps sustain an estimated $33.3 million in tourist consumer spending each year.

(Notably, whereas overall downtown visitation has decreased since 2019, the percentage and total number of tourists visits have increased from 78,972 tourist visits in 2019.)

Since only 9.4% of all tourists arrive in the downtown directly from home, we can assume Chambersburg is one destination of several during their visit or perhaps a secondary destination.

# Chambersburg – Tourism Impact

This map shows Downtown Chambersburg strongest tourism markets.




FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Chambersburg – Top Places (2024)

The top 20 most visited locations in Downtown Chambersburg are clustered along the Main Street Corridor, which runs perpendicular to the Lincoln Highway. The chart shows total visitation to top visitor-oriented destinations.




| Business Name | Address | Total Visits in 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Avocado Cafe | 33 N Main St | 36813 |
| Bistro 71 | 71 N Main St | 21716 |
| Fox's Pizza Den | 120 S Main St | 17272 |
| La Caribena Grocery | 49 N Main St | 17128 |
| The Falafel Shack | 9 N Main St | 14762 |
| Chasing Shadows Skateboards | 67 N Main St | 13067 |
| Cheerful Flowers & Gifts | 85 N Main St | 11871 |
| Brussel's Café | 55 N Main St | 10681 |
| Olympia Candy Kitchen | 43 S Main St | 9314 |
| The Barrel House | 39 N 3rd St | 8860 |
| Chambers Fort Park | 40 Spring Valley Rd | 8641 |
| Franklin County Visitors Bureau | 15 S Main St | 7310 |
| Northwood Books | 59 N Main St | 6084 |
| Screaming Bambino Cellars & Jan Zell Wines | 47d N Main St | 5924 |
| Chambersburg Heritage Center | 100 Lincoln Way E | 5608 |
| Showtime Elite Chambersburg | 254 E King St | 5164 |
| Here's Looking At You | 123 S Main St | 4615 |
| Franklin Historical | 175 E King St | 2037 |
| TBC Brewing Company | 39 N 3rd St | 617 |
| John Brown House | 225 E King St | 481 |

# Chambersburg – Tourist Visitation (2024)

Focusing on tourism destinations within the downtown reveals a similar distribution of patronage to hospitality businesses in January and July 2024

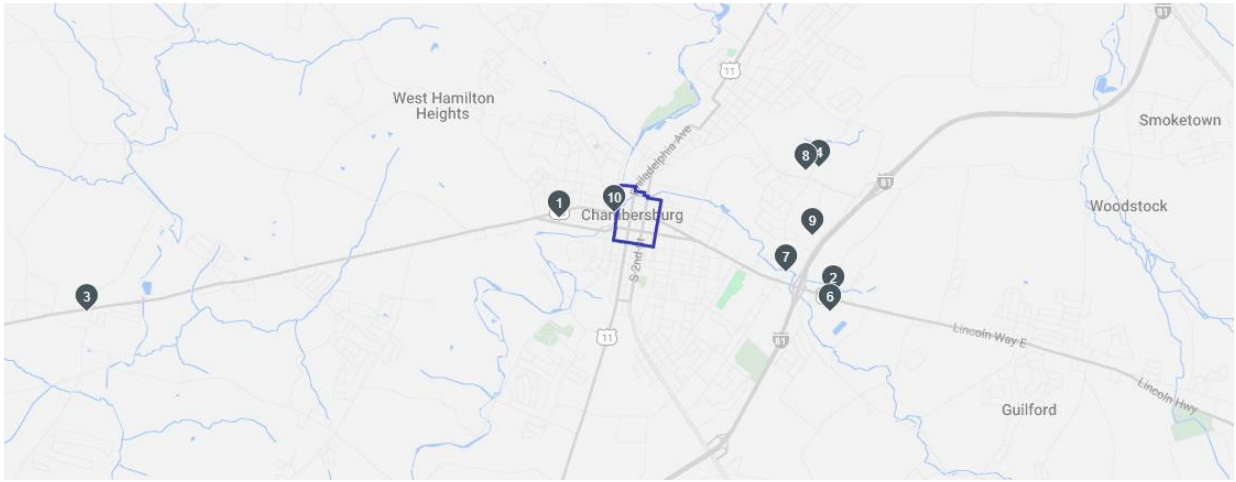
Notably, Chambersburg Heritage Center, Franklin County Visitors Bureau and Franklin County Historical Society have relatively limited tourist visitation.

| Business Name | January 2024 Tourist Visits | July 2024 Tourist Visits |
|---|---|---|
| Avocado Cafe | 445 | 309 |
| Bistro 71 | 262 | 154 |
| Fort Chambers Park | 84 | 289 |
| La Caribena Grocery | 260 | 89 |
| Brussel's Café | 176 | 152 |
| Fox's Pizza Den | 209 | 109 |
| Hope Center | 136 | 159 |
| Jenz Family Connection | 191 | 100 |
| Northwood Books | 163 | 105 |
| YP Jewelers | 164 | 97 |
| Oasis Cafe | 144 | 111 |
| Chasing Shadows Skateboards | 74 | 170 |
| Falafel Shack | <10 | 235 |
| CVAS Thrift Store | 179 | 40 |
| Here's Looking At You | 141 | 53 |
| Franklin Historical | 100 | 68 |
| Cheerful Flowers & Gifts | 67 | 93 |
| Olympia Candy Kitchen | 57 | 82 |
| Chambersburg Heritage Center | <10 | 113 |
| Franklin County Visitors Bureau | 74 | <10 |
| The Hub Building | 54 | <10 |
| Screaming Bambino Cellars | 53 | <10 |

# Chambersburg – Tourist Journey

After leaving the downtown, tourist visitors' most common stops are gas stations, convenience stores, lodging and big box retail stores within or near the Chambersburg metro and generally clustered along Route 30.

None of the top 50 destinations are in Gettysburg or McConnellsburg, suggesting a weak correlation between visiting Downtown Chambersburg and visiting other Lincoln Highway communities.

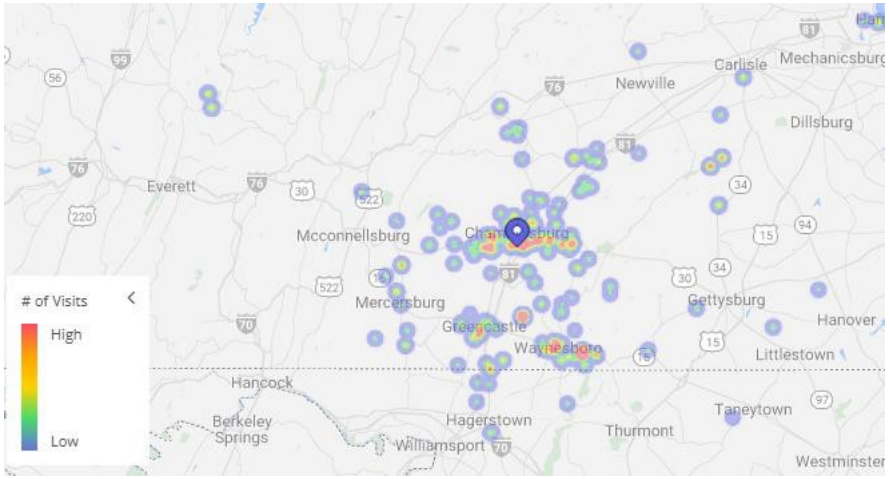


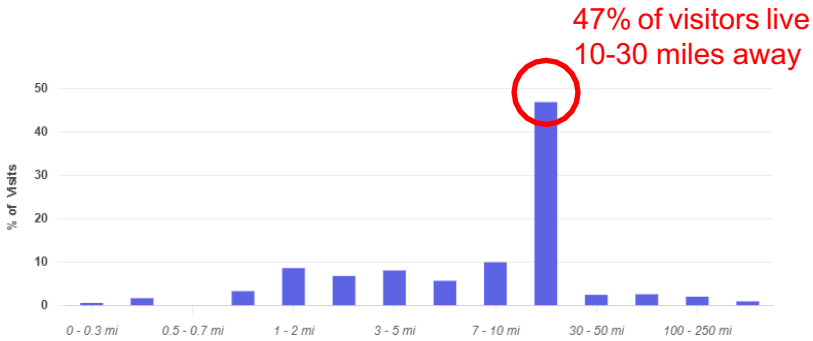

FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Chambersburg Heritage Center

The Chambersburg Heritage Center is one logical LHHC partner. In 2024, the Center hosted 5,608 visits by 3,081 unique visitors, with an average dwell time of 61 minutes. The Center's trade area (show bottom left) reflects a similar trade area as the downtown.

The Center is most popular with regional visitors living 10-30 miles away. Only 6% (or 291) of Center visitors are tourists.




FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Chambersburg – Demographics

Most Downtown Chambersburg visitors are White (77%). During the study period, the number of Black and Hispanic visitors fluctuated but generally declined due to overall declines in visitation. In 2024, both groups were nearing pre-pandemic levels. The number of Asian visitors, however, declined by 15%. In general, downtown visitors are not being attracted from increasingly diverse Census tracts.

During the same period, the average downtown visitor's median household income increase by 7.5 percent.

| Year | Ethnicity | | | | Median Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Black | Hispanic | Asian | |
| 2019 | 229,490 | 15,438 | 35,032 | 4,453 | $70,900 |
| 2020 | 167,817 | 14,333 | 26,876 | 3,158 | $66,300 |
| 2021 | 192,287 | 16.181 | 30,145 | 4,083 | $65,800 |
| 2022 | 219,960 | 16,111 | 31,459 | 4,183 | $66,500 |
| 2023 | 228,739 | 15,015 | 33,806 | 4,068 | $76,200 |
| 2024 | 214,021 | 15,269 | 32,555 | 3,783 | $76,200 |

# Lincoln Highway Experience

# LHE – Total Visitation (2019-2024)

Between 2019 and 2024, total annual visits to LHE decreased by 22.1%. Unique visitors, however, more than doubled from 1,396 in 2019 to 2,813 in 2024. This is due to a very high visitor frequency in 2019.

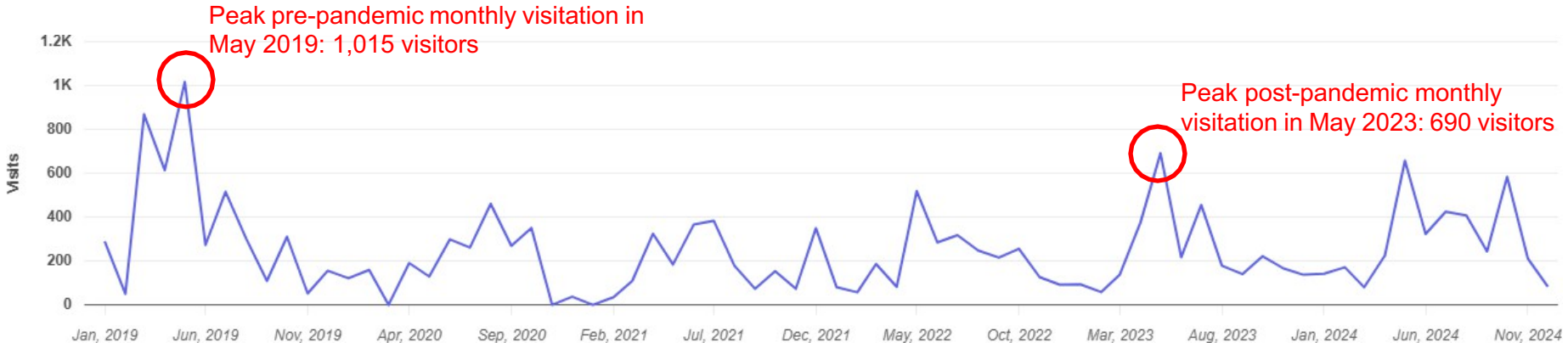
Visitor dwell time has fluctuated during the period but has generally increased since 2019.

Note: Due to sample size, some visitor data for 2020 is unavailable. LHE may be able to explain the special circumstances in 2019 that skewed visitation.

| Year | Visits | Visitors | Frequency | Duration (min.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019 | 4,549 | 1,396 | 3.26 | 65 |
| 2020 | 2,274 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 2021 | 2,226 | 1,458 | 1.53 | 97 |
| 2022 | 2,459 | 2,005 | 1.23 | 77 |
| 2023 | 2,868 | 2,542 | 1.13 | 65 |
| 2024 | 3,546 | 2,813 | 1.26 | 78 |

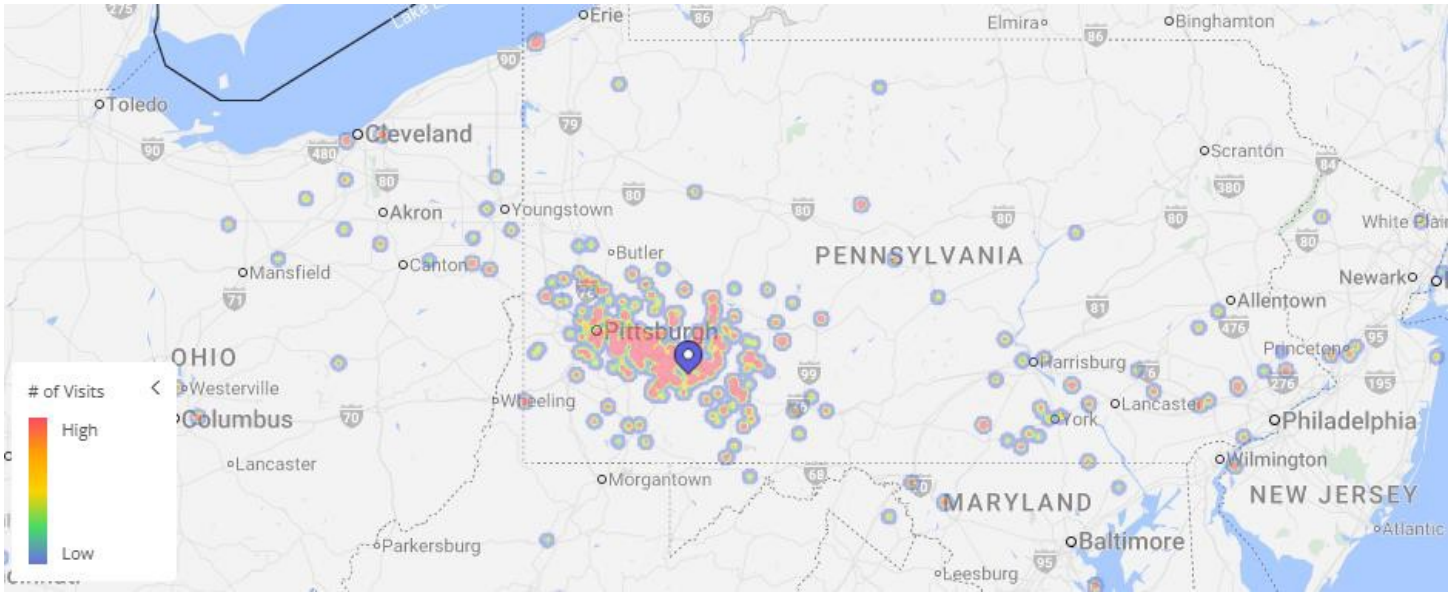
# LHE – Monthly Visitation (2019-2024)

The monthly visitation chart for the period 2019-2024 shows seasonal highs and lows, as well as the impact of pandemic-related closures. Generally, visitation has rebounded since the pandemic but has still not yet reached pre-pandemic monthly visitor levels.



# LHE Visitor Home Locations (2019-2024)

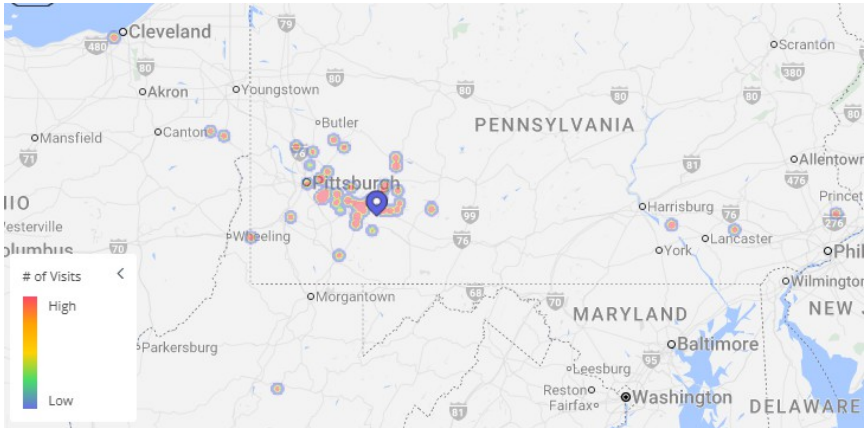
Many LHE visitors originate from southwestern PA and the region between Pittsburgh and Johnstown, but visitors also travel from other parts of Pennsylvania and Ohio.



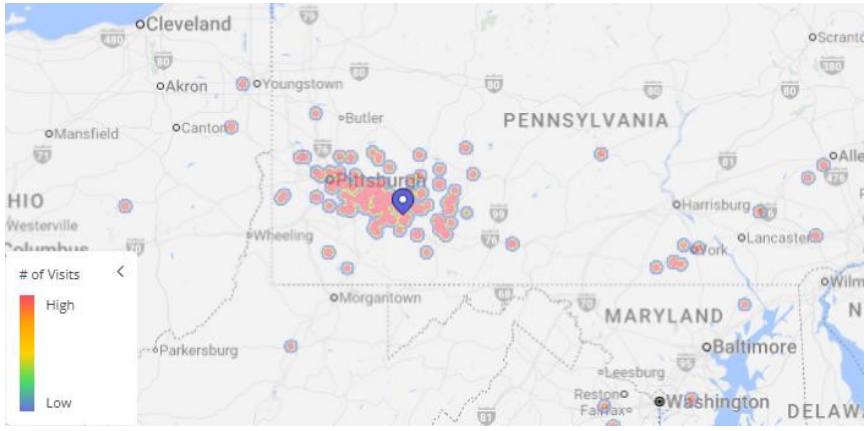
# Visitor Home Locations (2019 & 2024)

As LHE has attracted more unique visitors over time, the museum's trade area has expanded.

2019

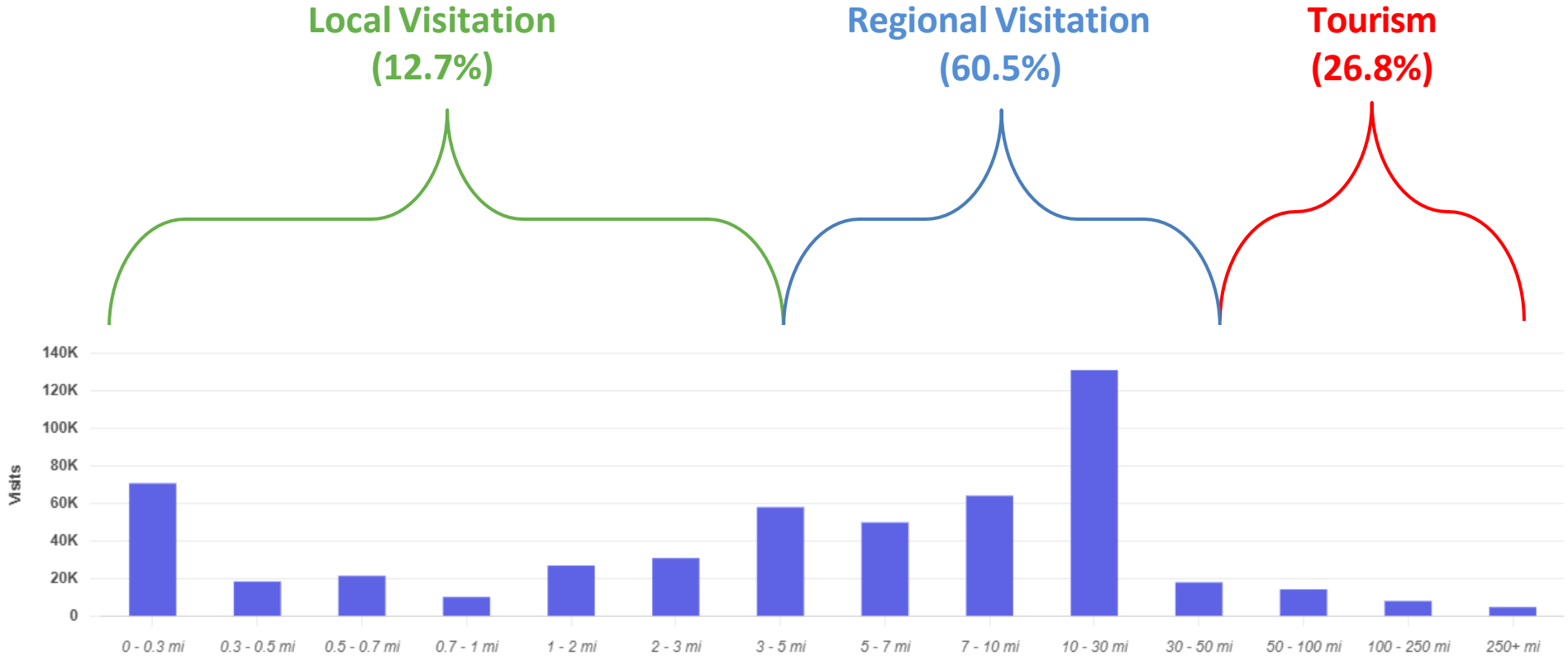



2024




FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Trade Area (2024)




While there is some LHE visitation by locals, the largest visitor base comes from the surrounding region. 42% of visitors come from 10-30 miles away, which includes the Pittsburgh metro area. Tourism accounts for 26.8% of visitation.

# Tourism Impact

**951 Tourist visits** × **$419 per visit** = **$398,469**

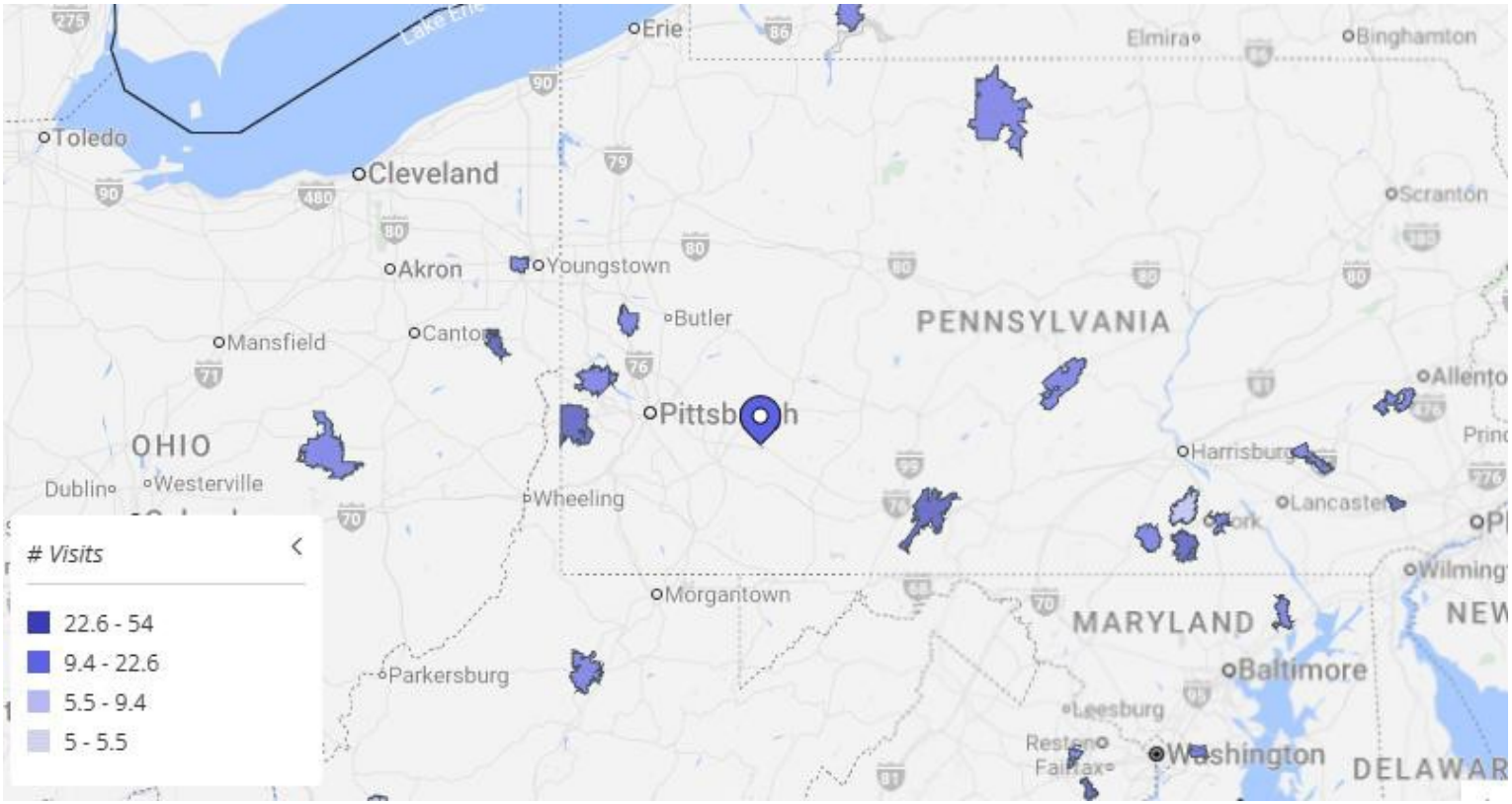
The 26.8% of visits attributed to tourism amounts to a projected **951 tourist visits in 2024** alone and 4,835 tourist visits between 2019 and 2024.

Based on the PA Tourism Office's estimate of $419 in spending per tourist visit, LHE helps sustain an estimated **$398,469 in tourist consumer spending** each year an estimated $2,025,865 during the 6-year period.

A negligible percentage of tourist visits originate directly from home, indicating that tourists patronage other businesses and tourist destinations en route to LHE and after visting LHE.

# LHE – Tourism Impact

This map shows the zip codes from which the most *tourist* visitors to LHE originate.



# LHE – Visitor Journey (2024)

In 2024, LHE visitors patronized 89 other businesses and destinations 3,763 times before or after their LHE visit. These are spread across the region, with several concentrated along the Lincoln Highway Corridor. Top destinations include:

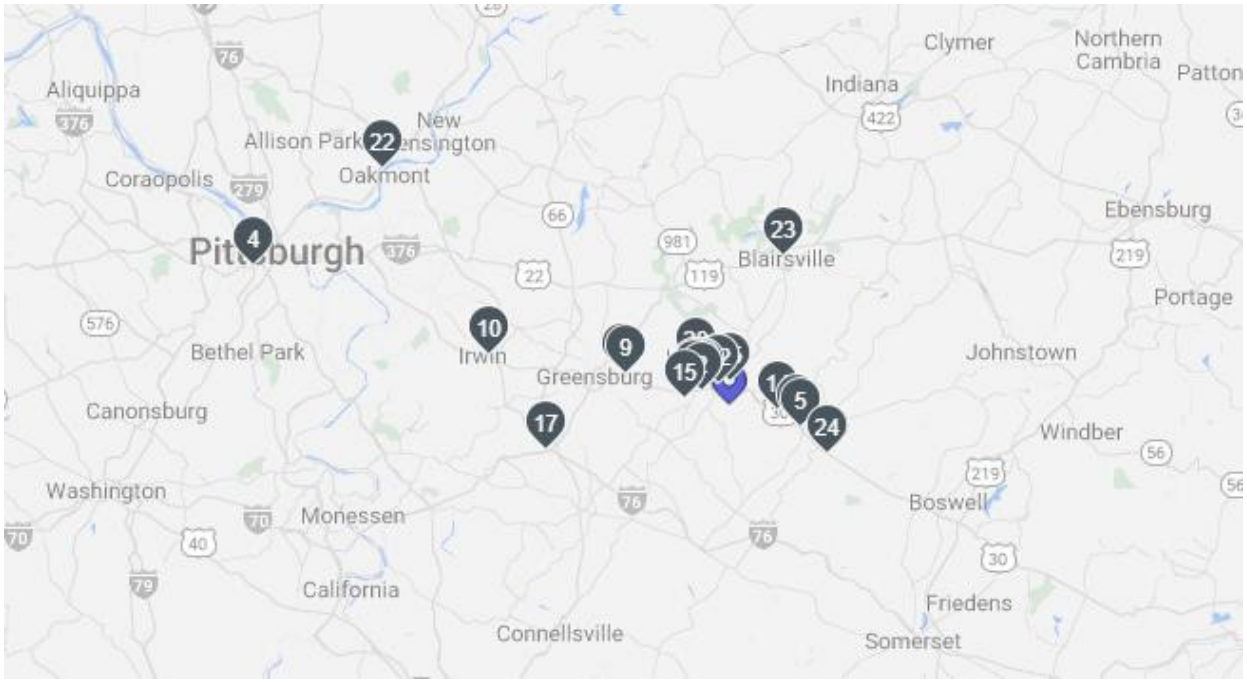
There seems to be a meaningful relationship between visitation to Fort Ligonier and LHE, as well as more limited connections with Compass Inn Museum and Idlewild Park. St. Vincent Archabbey Gristmill is also an associated destination.

In addition to regional and national chains, several local, independent businesses benefit from LHE visitors' patronage.

| Business Name | City | Total Visits |
|---|---|---|
| Fort Ligonier | Ligonier | 278 |
| Sheetz | Latrobe | 202 |
| Walmart | Latrobe | 168 |
| GetGo Gas Station | Latrobe | 144 |
| Laughlintown Antiques | Laughlintown | 116 |
| Pizza Hut | Uniontown | 105 |
| Welfare Beach Lookout | N/A | 104 |
| Giant Eagle Supermarket | Ligonier | 102 |
| Comfort Inn & Suites | Pittsburgh | 79 |
| Valero Energy | Jennerstown | 78 |
| North Huntingdon Square | Irwin | 71 |
| The Country Cupboard & Nature Run Wood Works | Laughlintown | 70 |
| Eat'n Park | Latrobe | 69 |
| Ruthies Diner | Ligonier | 66 |
| Sunoco | Latrobe | 64 |
| Lapp Family Market | Latrobe | 61 |
| Olive Garden | Greensburg | 55 |
| Sheetz | Greensburg | 54 |
| Chef Dato's Table | Latrobe | 51 |
| Compass Inn Museum & Ligonier Valley Historical Society | Laughlintown | 50 |
| Community Market | Hollsopple | 49 |
| Sheetz | Murrysville | 48 |
| Latrobe 30 Shoppes | Latrobe | 44 |
| Main Gate Office @idlewildpark | Ligonier | 43 |

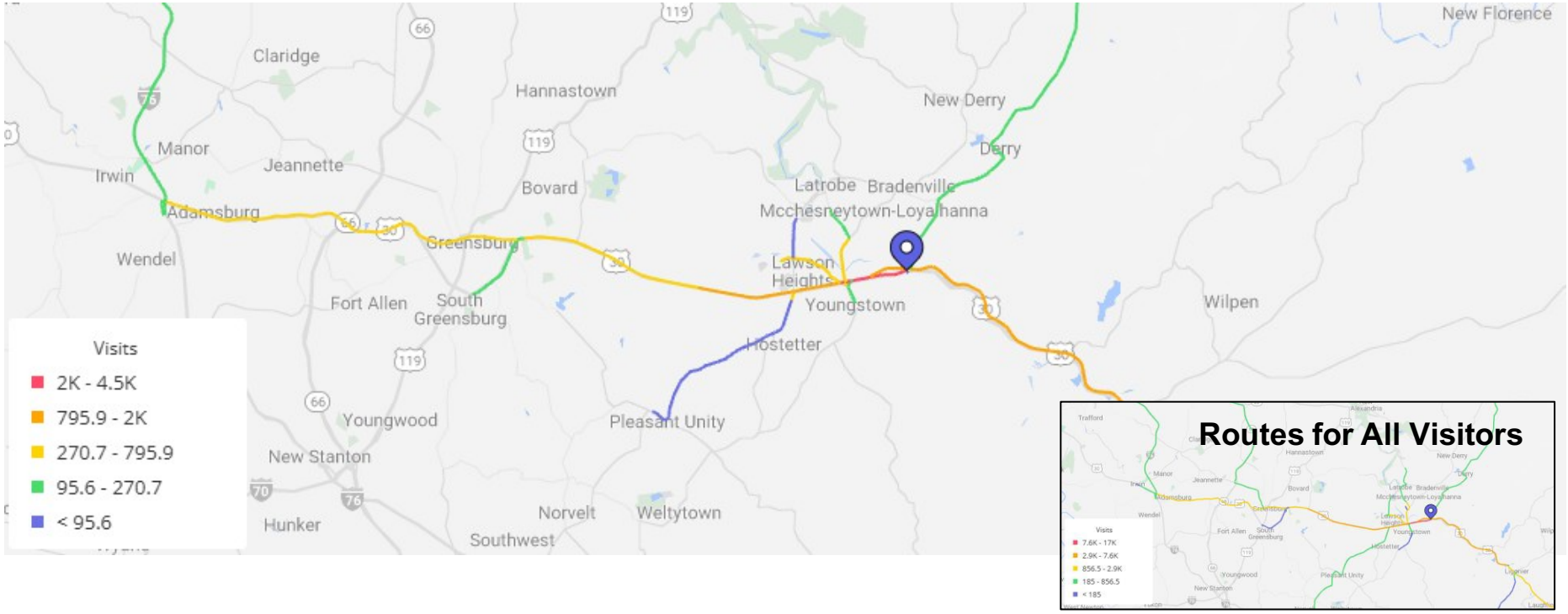
# LHE – Visitor Journey (2024)

This visualization of the top 25 destinations shows some clustering along the Route 30 corridor.



# LHE – Tourist Visitor Routes (2019-2024)

This visualization shows that tourist visitors are predominately traveling to LHE on the Lincoln Highway, although Route 217 is also a popular route from the north. As the inset shows, these are the same primary routes used by non-tourist visitors as well.



# LHE – Tourist Visitation (2024)

In 2024, LHE tourist visitors patronized similar hospitality businesses before and after their LHE visit. The primary difference is that tourist visitors also patronized four hotels, spread across western PA and OH. Interestingly, only one of the hotels is in Latrobe: the Springhill Suites.

It's notable that 9.4% of all tourist visits to LHE in 2024 originated from the Comfort Inn & Suites in Pittsburgh.

| Name | City | Total Visits |
|---|---|---|
| Comfort Inn & Suites | Pittsburgh | 89 |
| DoubleTree by Hilton Canton Downtown | Canton | 33 |
| Springhill Suites Pittsburgh Latrobe | Latrobe | 9 |
| Tara - A Country Inn | Clark | 38 |

Between 2019 and 2024, LHE tourist visitors made 1,181 visits to 12 different hotels across the region.

# LHE – Demographics

The data available on projected ethnicity is ambiguous. The data for 2019 seems to show substantial racial diversity amongst visitors, with 58% White and 38% Black visitors. The 2020 sample size is too small for this analysis. In the post-pandemic period, diversity is more reflective of what we might expect, suggesting mostly White (89%) visitation in 2024.

During the same period, median household income fluctuated, but post-pandemic MHI was much higher than pre-pandemic.

(Again, LHHC staff may have an explanation for why 2019 projects seem to be outliers.)

| Year | Ethnicity | | | | Median Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Black | Hispanic | Asian | |
| 2019 | 804 | 531 | 56 | 84 | $51,000 |
| 2020 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 2021 | 2,068 | 45 | 178 | 47 | $79,000 |
| 2022 | 1,817 | 58 | 34 | 30 | $68,000 |
| 2023 | 3,359 | 31 | 36 | 38 | $69,000 |
| 2024 | 2,512 | 110 | 48 | 34 | $69,000 |
| 2019-2024 Change | 212.4% | -79.3% | -14.3% | -59.5% | |
| 2019 to peak | 317.8% | n/a | 217.9% | n/a | |
| peak to 2024 | -25.2% | -79.3% | -73% | -59.5% | |

# McConnellsburg Business District

# Business District – Visitation (2019-2024)

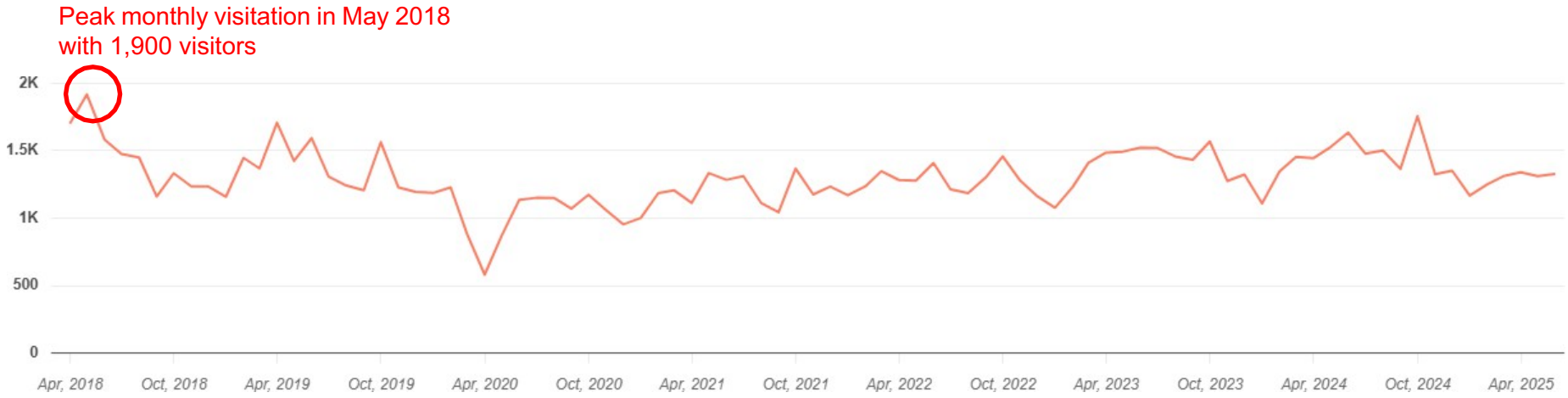
Between 2019 and 2024, total annual visits to McConnellsburg's business district increased by 5.6%, despite a -2.9% decrease in unique visitors. This means fewer visitors overall come downtown, but they tend to make more repeat trips.

These figures indicate visitation to the business district has recovered from a dip during the pandemic.

| Year | Visitation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Visits | Visitors | Frequency | Duration (min.) |
| 2019 | 499,189 | 62,996 | 7.9 | 114 |
| 2020 | 379,134 | 53,093 | 7.1 | 109 |
| 2021 | 436,890 | 56,075 | 7.8 | 112 |
| 2022 | 465,602 | 56,475 | 8.2 | 133 |
| 2023 | 510,882 | 56,406 | 9.1 | 114 |
| 2024 | 527,284 | 61,169 | 8.62 | 118 |

# Business District – Visitation (2018-2025)

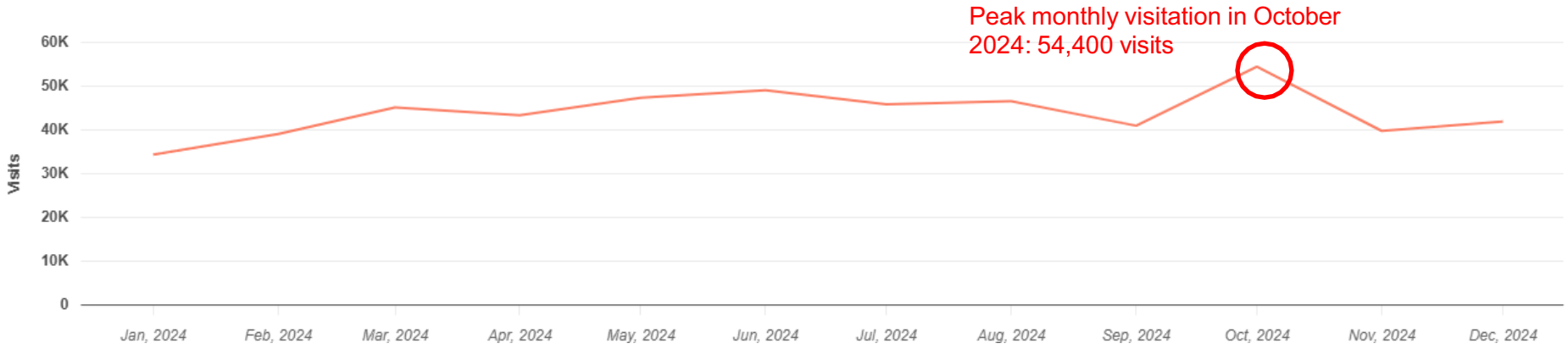
This graph shows monthly out-of-market visitation from April 2018 to June 2025. The decline in visitation during the pandemic is apparent. Peak monthly visitation occurred in May 2018.



# Monthly Visitation (2024)

The monthly visitation chart for 2024 indicates October as the peak visitation month and relatively steady visitation throughout the year with only one substantial peak and no substantial troughs.

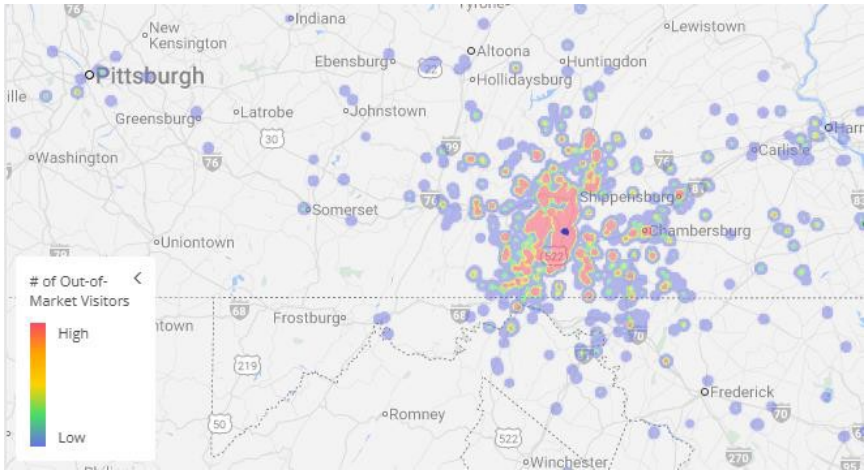
This October visitor spike can be attributed to Fulton Fall Folks Festival.



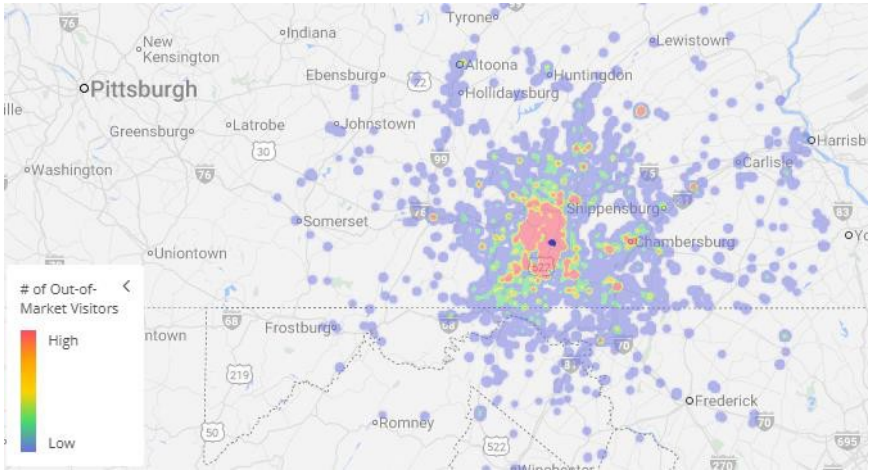
# Visitor Home Locations (2019 & 2024)

Between 2019 and 2024, the density of visitors' home location spread further out from the business district to include more visitors from surrounding counties and northern Maryland.

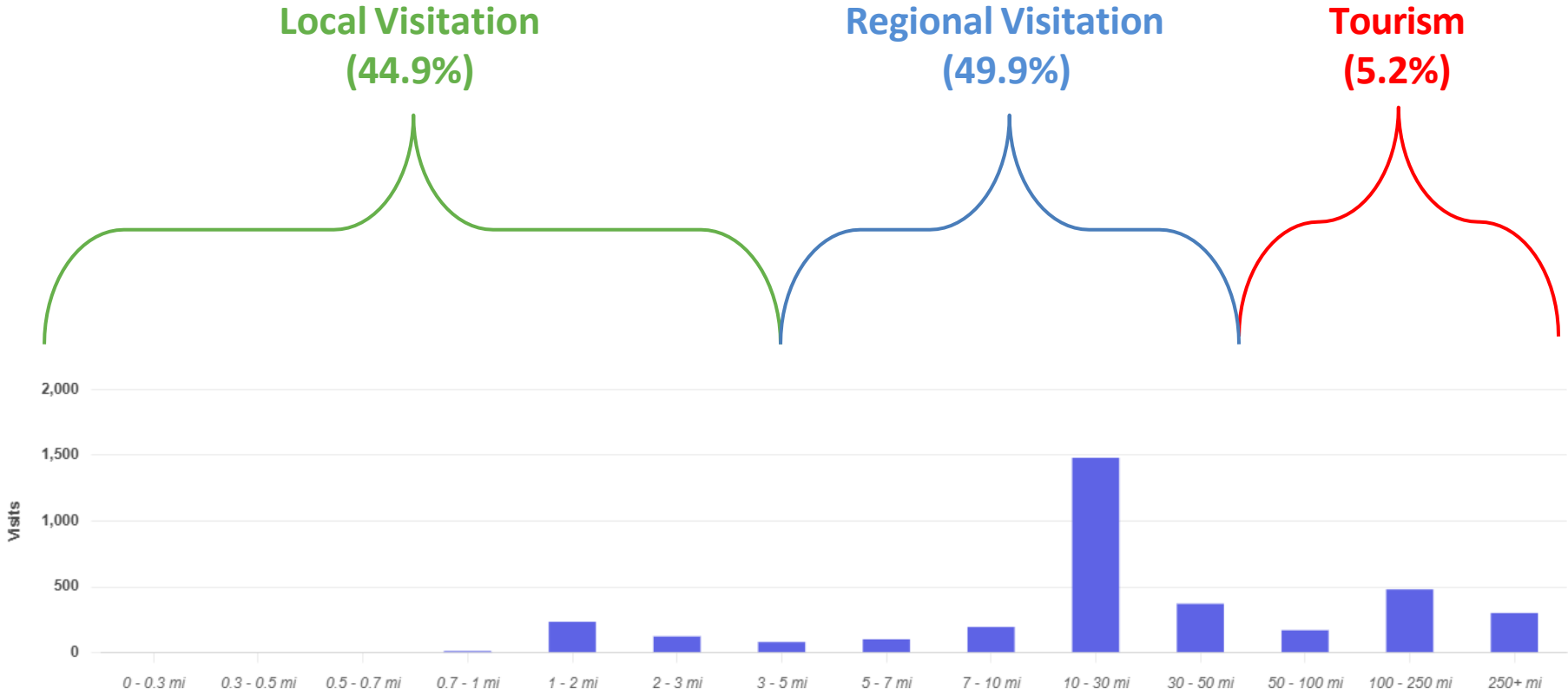
2019




2024



# Business District – Trade Area (2024)




The largest visitor base comes from visitors living 5-50 miles from business district, with approximately 25% of all visits originating from 10-30 miles away. Tourism accounted for 5.2% of visitation in 2024 and 6.9% of visitation in 2019.

# Tourism Impact (2024)

**27,328 Tourist visits** × **$419 per visit** = **$11,450,432**

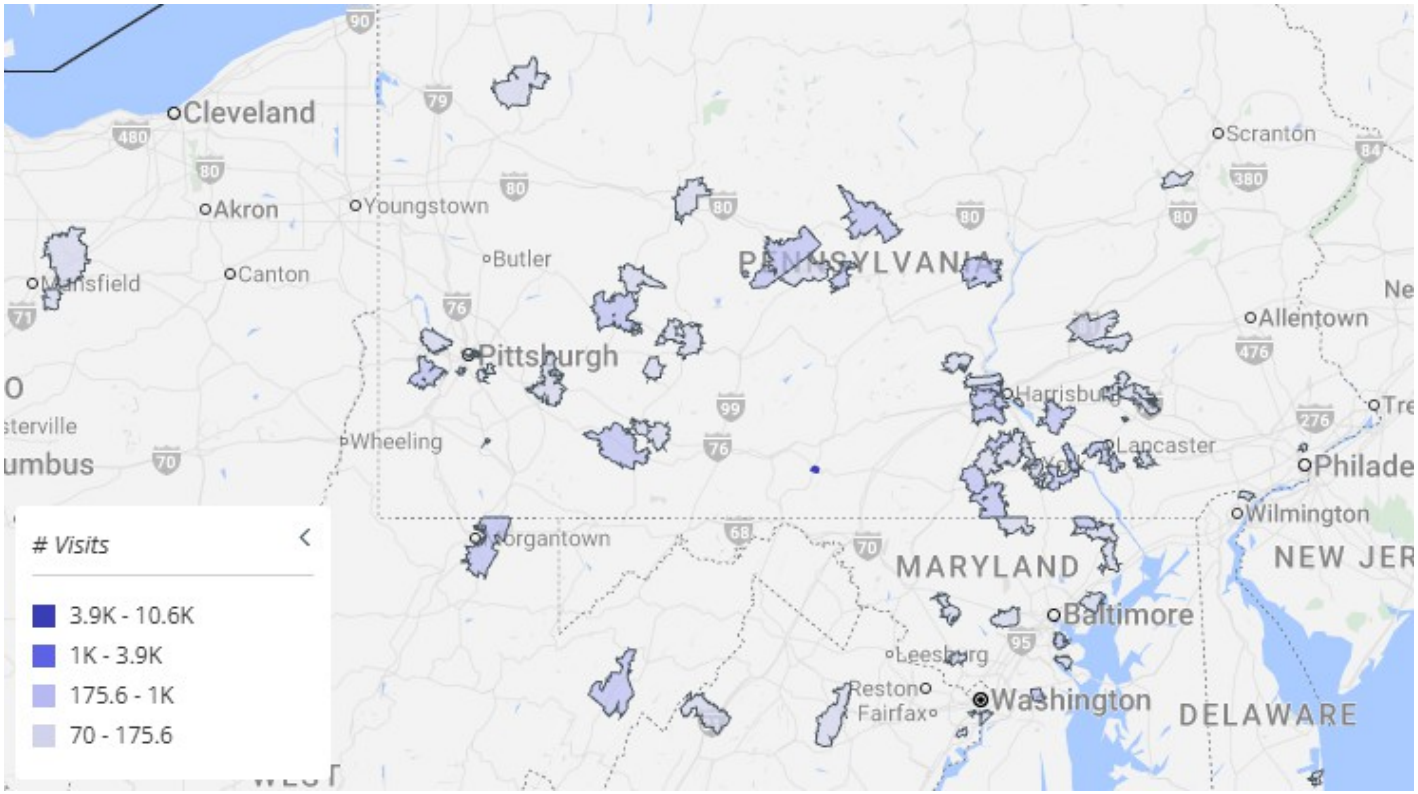
The 5.2% of visits attributed to tourism amounts to a projected **27,328 tourist visits in 2024** alone.

Based on the PA Tourism Office's estimate of $419 in spending per tourist visit, McConnellsburg helps sustain an estimated **$11,450,432 in tourist consumer spending** each year.

Approximately 7% of tourists' visits originate directly from home, suggesting tourists typically patronize other businesses and tourist destinations en route to town and after visiting town.

# Tourism Impact (2024)

This map shows the zip codes from which the most *tourist* visitors to McConnellsburg originate.



# Tourist Visitor Journey (2024)

In 2024, top destinations for tourists before and after visiting the business district included locations spread across multiple communities. Top destinations include:

In addition to regional and national chains, several local, independent businesses benefit from tourism, including:

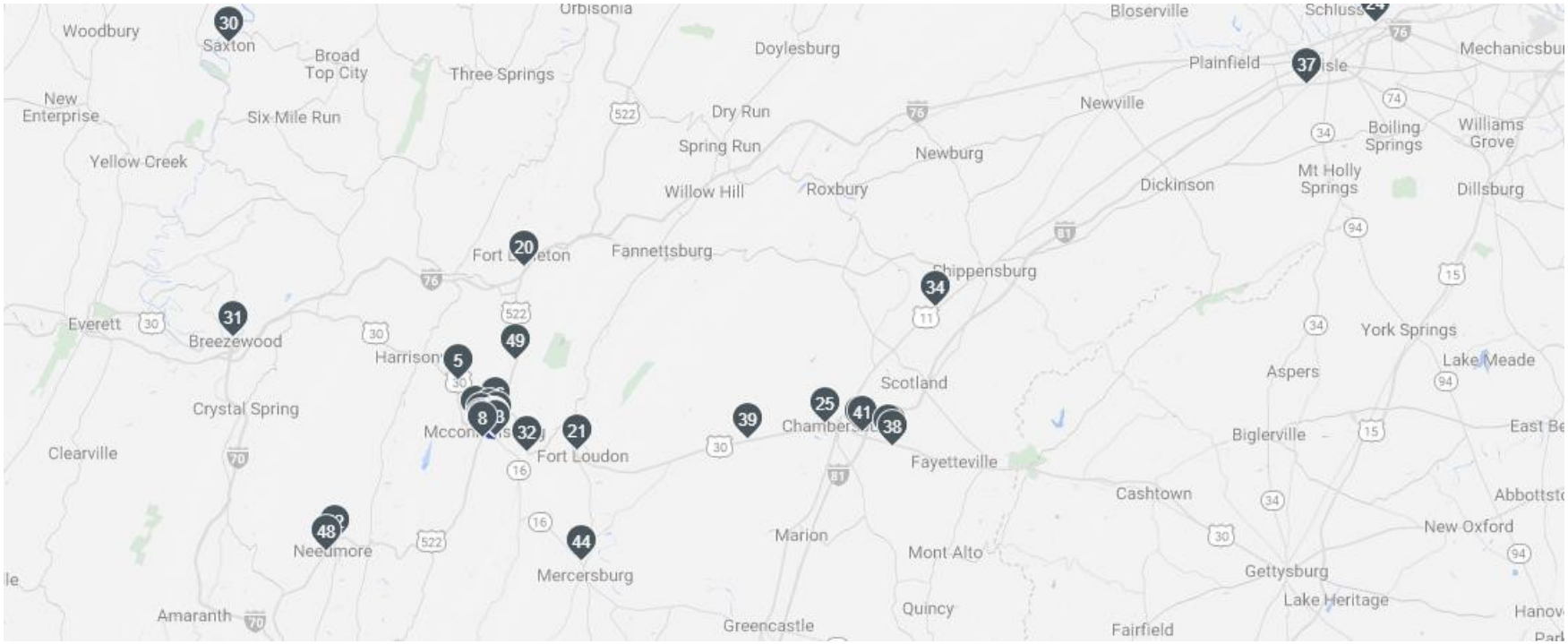
- Wild Annie's: 723 visits
- Main Moon restaurant: 575 visits
- Mountain House Restaurant: 200 visits

The strongest cultural/historic destination is the State Museum with 200 visits.

| Name | City | Total Visits |
|---|---|---|
| Sheetz | McConnellsburg | 9017 |
| McDonald's | McConnellsburg | 3567 |
| Giant Food Store | Mcconnellsburg | 3320 |
| Fulton County Medical Center | Mcconnellsburg | 1268 |
| Tower Ridge Inn | McConnellsburg | 954 |
| Dollar Tree | Mcconnellsburg | 821 |
| Giant Gas Station | Mcconnellsburg | 793 |
| Save-A-Lot | Mcconnellsburg | 696 |
| Main Moon | McConnellsburg | 575 |
| Tractor Supply Co. | McConnellsburg | 570 |
| AutoZone | Mc Connellsburg | 534 |
| Sheetz | Hagerstown | 433 |
| Wild Annie's | McConnellsburg | 421 |
| Love's | Cumberland | 397 |
| Sheetz | Chambersburg | 375 |
| Dollar General | Needmore | 364 |
| Rutters | Mercersburg | 334 |
| Lions Park | McConnellsburg | 331 |
| Parks Gas Station | N/A | 306 |
| Wild Annie's | Mcconnellsburg | 302 |

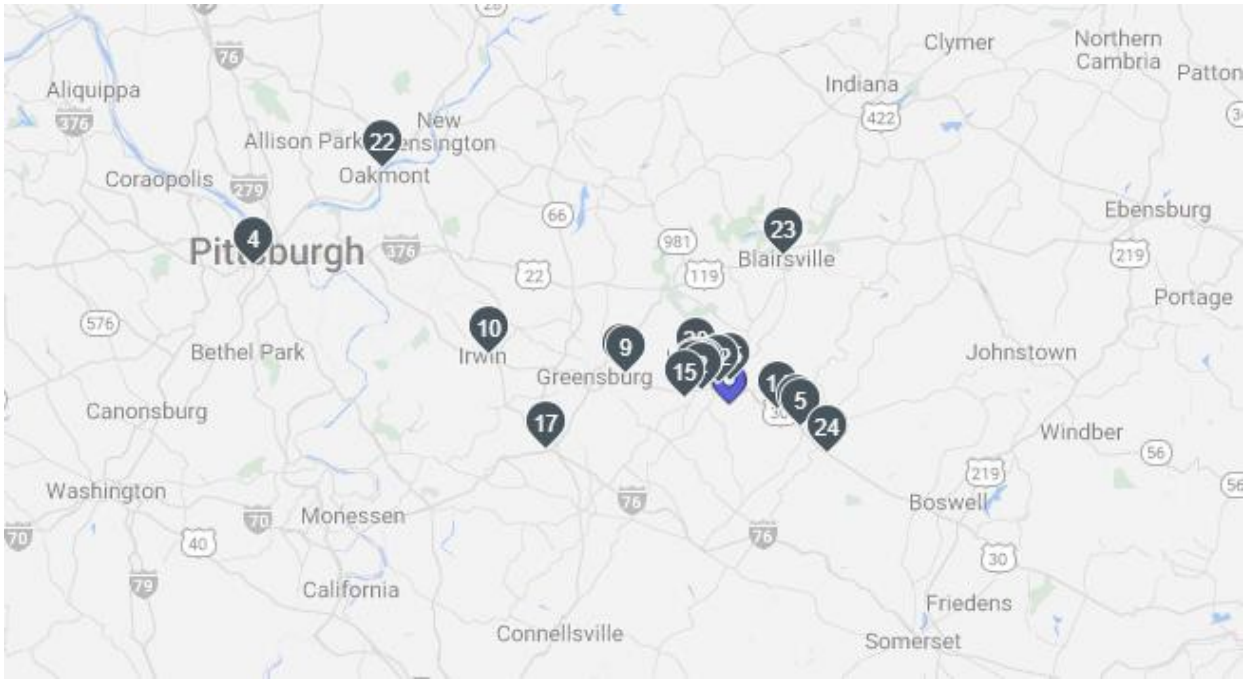
# Visitor Journey (2024)

This visualization of the top 50 destinations for tourists *after* leaving McConnellsburg indicate some visitors continue west and east along the Route 30 corridor, especially to Chambersburg.



# Visitor Journey (2024)

This visualization of the top 25 destinations shows some clustering along the Route 30 corridor.

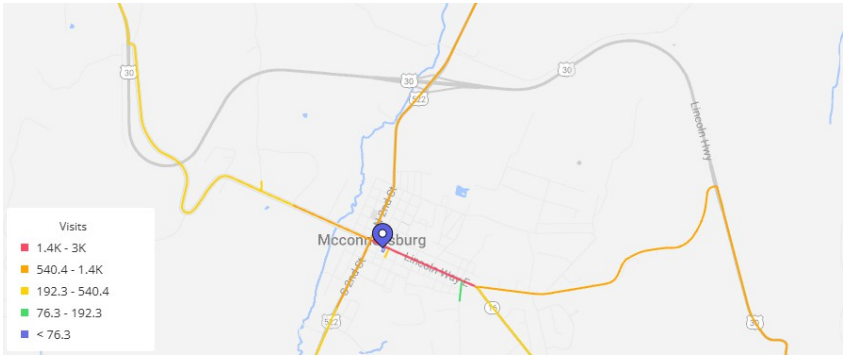


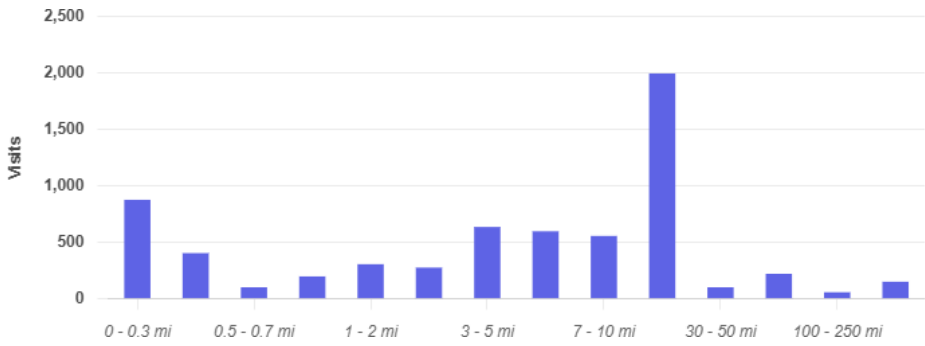
# Fulton County Historical Museum

The Fulton County Historical Museum is one logical LHHC partner. In 2024, the museum's location on the Lincoln Highway hosted 6,473 visits by 2,878 unique visitors, with an average dwell time of 100 minutes.

Most museum visitors (92%) come from less than 50 miles away. The museum is most popular with local and regional visitors living 10-30 miles away. Only 8% (or 532) of museum visitors are tourists.

Museums visitors travel from old and modern Rt. 30 to the site at roughly equal rates.




FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Demographics

The data available on projected ethnicity shows relative stability in the demographic composition of visitors.

During the study period, the average visitor grew slightly more diverse. Asian visitation grew by 20% during the period, but with relatively small overall visitor counts (189 in 2019 to 245 in 2024).

| Year | Ethnicity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Black | Hispanic | Asian |
| 2019 | 57,830 | 1,323 | 1,260 | 189 |
| 2020 | 48,474 | 1,115 | 1,221 | 159 |
| 2021 | 51,197 | 1,290 | 1,178 | 168 |
| 2022 | 51,562 | 1,299 | 1,186 | 169 |
| 2023 | 51,668 | 1,241 | 1,128 | 113 |
| 2024 | 55,847 | 1,468 | 1,285 | 245 |
| 2019-2024 Change | -3.4% | 11% | 2% | 29% |
| 2019 to peak | N/A | 11% | 2% | 29% |
| peak to 2024 | -3.4% | N/A | N/A | N/A |

# Downtown Bedford

# Bedford – Visitation (2019-2024)

Between 2019 and 2024, total annual visits to Downtown Bedford decreased by 16.9%, and unique visitors decreased by 12.3%.

Downtown visitation since 2020 has not been a clear recovery trajectory, with 2021 having more visitation than 2022, 2023 or 2024.

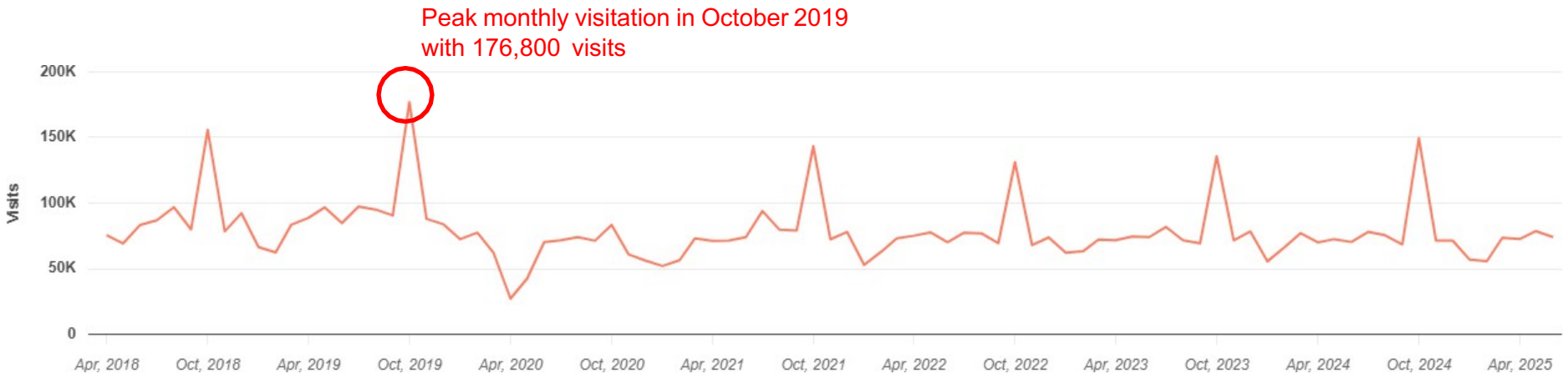
Visitor frequency did not increase during the period, nor did visit duration.

| Year | Visits | Visitors | Frequency | Duration (min.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019 | 1,113,360 | 300,054 | 3.7 | 103 |
| 2020 | 769,052 | 196,657 | 3.9 | 95 |
| 2021 | 944,272 | 270,255 | 3.5 | 97 |
| 2022 | 908,046 | 253,640 | 3.6 | 104 |
| 2023 | 925,518 | 249,313 | 3.7 | 104 |
| 2024 | 925,484 | 263,288 | 3.5 | 96 |

# Bedford – Visitation (2018-2025)

This graph shows monthly out-of-market visitation from April 2018 to June 2025.

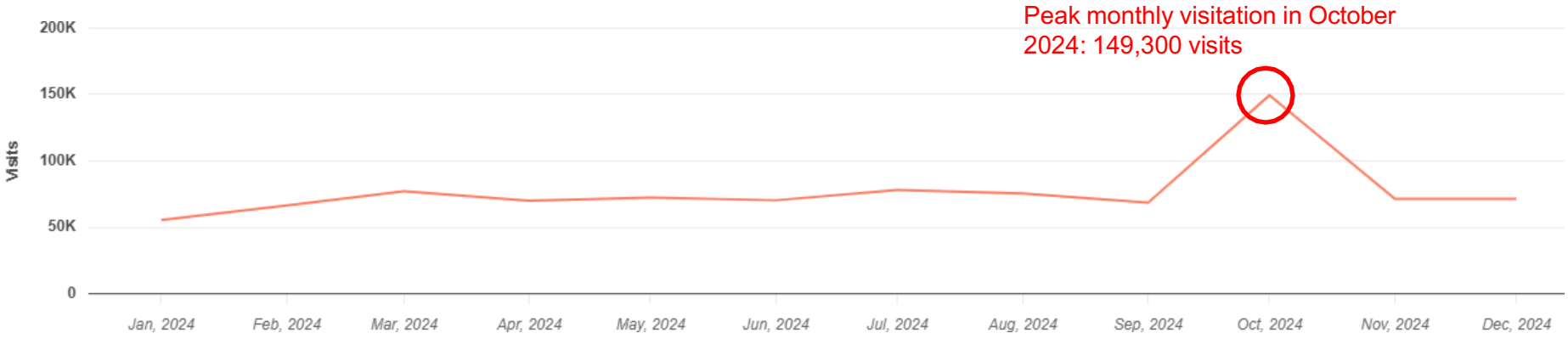
Annual visitation peaks in October represent an influx of an estimated 70,000 visitors for the Bedford Fall Foliage Festival.



# Bedford - Monthly Visitation (2024)

The monthly visitation chart for 2024 indicates October as the peak visitation month and relatively steady visitation throughout the year with only one substantial peak and no substantial troughs.

This October visitor spike can be attributed to the annual Bedford Fall Foliage Festival.

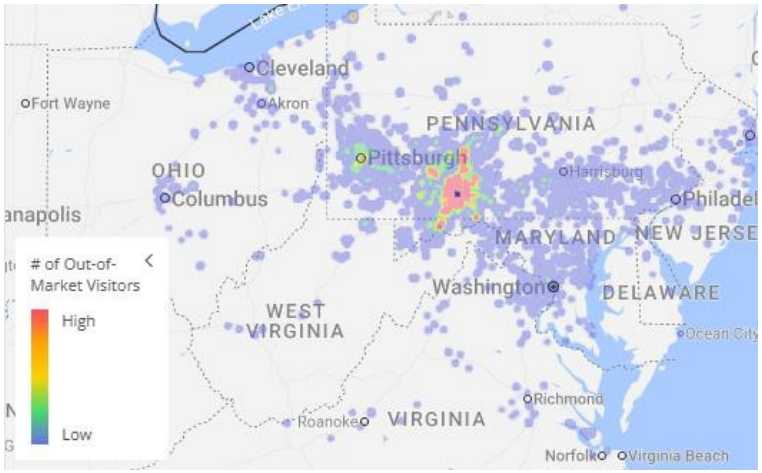



FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

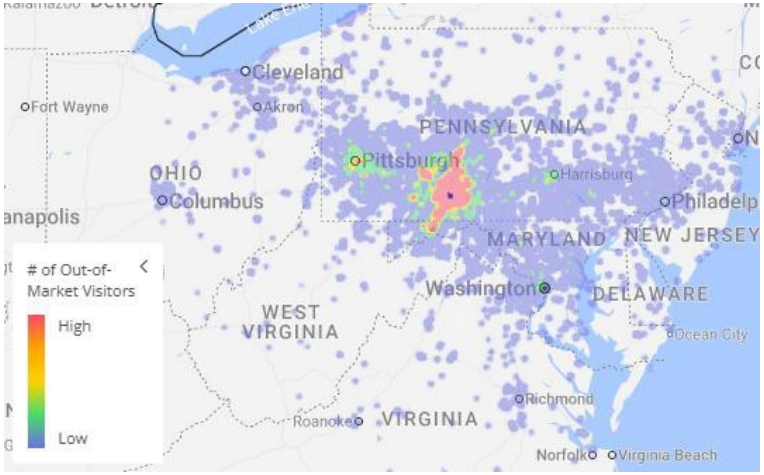
# Visitor Home Locations (2019 & 2024)

Between 2019 and 2024, visitors' home locations were spread across roughly the same geography and major markets, covering a large section of the Mid-Atlantic and portions of the Midwest

2019

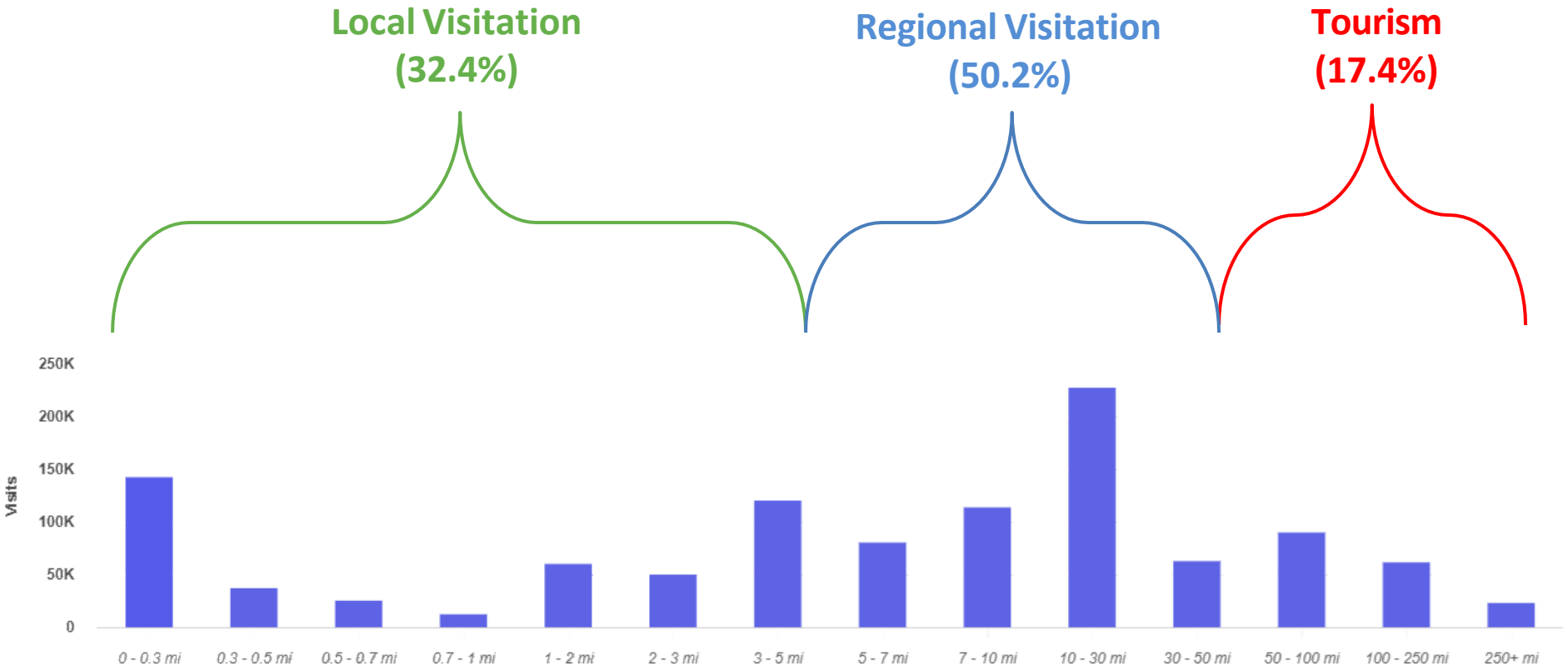



2024




FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Bedford – Trade Area (2024)




12% of downtown visits come from residents of Bedford living with 0.5-mile of downtown. Most visitation comes from less than 50 miles away, but tourism accounted for more than 17% of visits in 2024.

# Tourism Impact (2024)

**160,701 tourist visits** × **$419 per visit** = **$67,333,719**

The 17.4% of visits attributed to tourism amounts to a projected **160,701 tourist visits in 2024** alone.

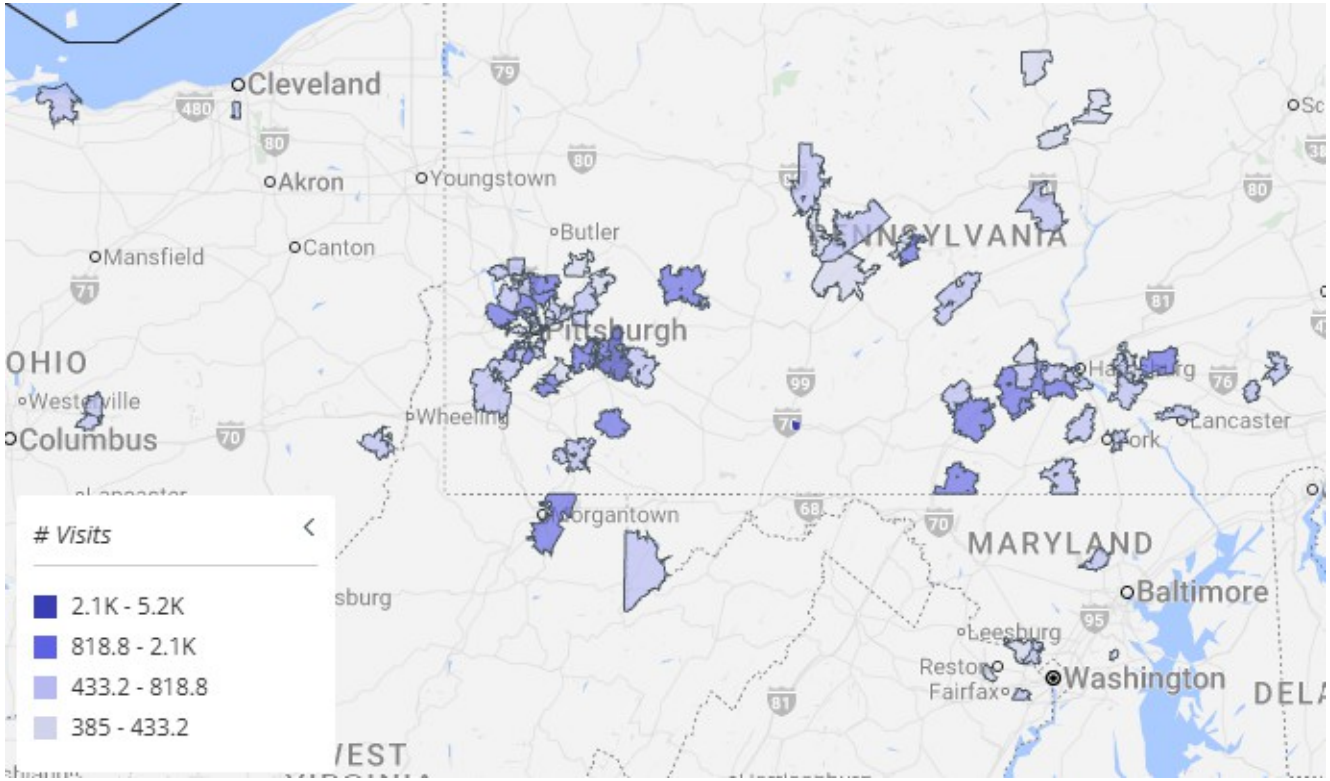
Based on the PA Tourism Office's estimate of $419 in spending per tourist visit, Bedford helps sustain an estimated **$67,333,719 in tourist consumer spending** each year.

Less than 7% of tourist visits originate from home suggesting tourists typically patronize other businesses and tourist destinations en route to town and after visiting town.

As a percentage of visitation, tourism accounted for 1.2% more in 2024 than in 2019, but this masks an overall decrease in tourists from 176,087 in 2019 to 160,701 in 2024 (or an 8.7% decrease).

# Bedford - Tourism Impact (2024)

This map shows the zip codes from which the most *tourist* visitors to Bedford originate.



# Bedford - Tourist Visitor Journey (2024)

In 2024, top destinations for all visitors before and after visiting Downtown Bedford are shown in the chart.

The Omni resort, Bedford Fairgrounds Speedway and several local, independent restaurants have strong visitor connections to the downtown.

In the downtown itself:

- Cove Creek Outfitters is a popular downtown retail destination, with 5,987 visits in 2024.
- Fort Bedford Park is by far the most popular destination in the downtown, with nearly 16% of all visitors going to the park.

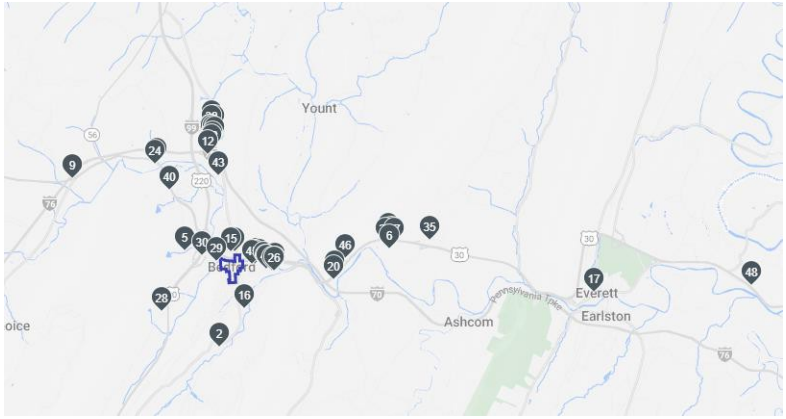
| Name | City | Total Visits |
|---|---|---|
| Sheetz | Bedford | 60765 |
| Omni Bedford Springs Resort | Bedford | 49839 |
| Sheetz | Bedford | 41537 |
| Giant Eagle Supermarket | Bedford | 30998 |
| Burger King | Bedford | 28804 |
| Bedford Fairgrounds Speedway | Bedford | 21400 |
| CVS/pharmacy | Bedford | 17808 |
| Jean Bonnet Tavern | Bedford | 15942 |
| McDonald's | Bedford | 15709 |
| Weis Markets | Everett | 15241 |
| Save-A-Lot | Bedford | 13077 |
| Bits of Time | Bedford | 11513 |
| Hoke-E-Geez's | Bedford | 10865 |
| Fairfield Inn & Suites | Bedford | 10031 |
| Kwik Fill | Bedford | 9949 |
| Family Dollar | Bedford | 9512 |
| Hampton Inn Bedford, PA | Bedford | 9324 |
| Wendy's | Bedford | 9128 |
| Dollar General | Bedford | 8933 |
| McDonald's | Everett | 8529 |
| Thirteen Pines Trading Co. | Bedford | 8465 |
| Truist | Bedford | 7496 |
| Olde Bedford Brewing Company | Bedford | 7350 |

# Bedford - Visitor Journey (2024)

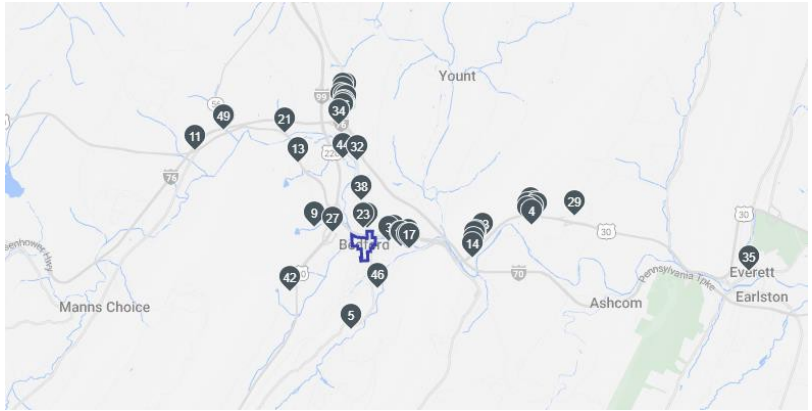
These visualizations show top 50 destinations for tourists before and after leaving Downtown Bedford. Destinations are clustered along the Route 30 and Interstate 99 corridors and their interchanges. Much of this visitation is to gas stations and national chain retail.

The visualization for tourist visitors is roughly the same.

Prior




Post

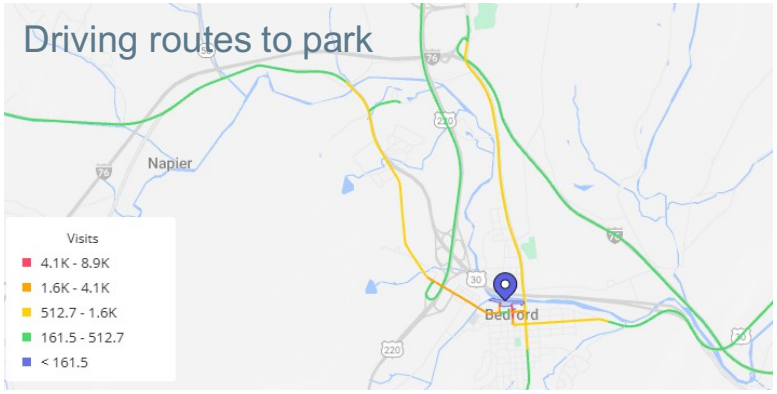


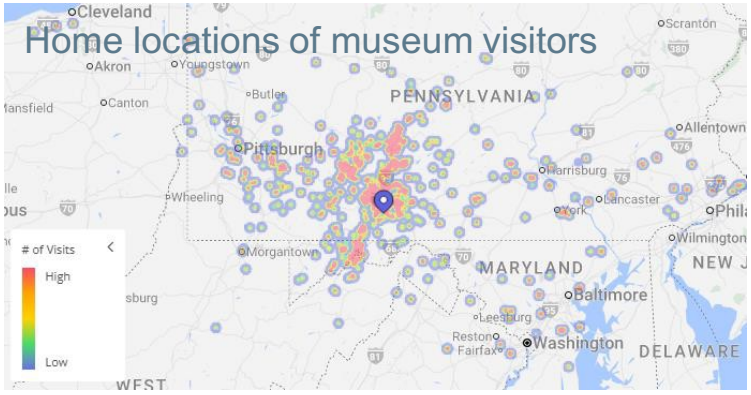

FIREFLY
OUTDOOR + ECONOMICS CONSULTANCY

# Fort Bedford Park & Museum

The Fort Bedford Park & Museum are logical LHHC partners. In 2024, the park alone had 74,500 visits, including 14,100 visits from tourists. The museum had 12,900 visits, with 28% coming from tourists. Importantly, both park and museum experience dramatically higher October visitation that during the rest of the year. Cove Creek Outfitters, one of the most popular retail destination, is also near the park and museum.

Tourist visitors to the park use Route 30 and the PA turnpike (via Business 220) at near equal rates.



# Demographics

Visitation to Downtown Bedford grew less diverse during the study period with declines in Black visitors (-17%), Hispanic visitors (-12%) and Asian visitors (-39%) outpacing the overall decline in White visitors of 12%.

The fluctuations in visitors of color seem extreme only because of the small number of overall diverse visitors.

| Year | Ethnicity | | | | Median Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Black | Hispanic | Asian | |
| 2019 | 279,650 | 5,701 | 4,501 | 3,901 | $63,200 |
| 2020 | 182,891 | 3,736 | 2,950 | 2,557 | $63,500 |
| 2021 | 251,607 | 5,135 | 4,054 | 2,973 | $61,300 |
| 2022 | 236,900 | 4,566 | 4,058 | 2,283 | $64,100 |
| 2023 | 233,357 | 4,488 | 3,740 | 2,244 | $61,600 |
| 2024 | 245,911 | 4,740 | 3,949 | 2,370 | $60,800 |

Appendix I: York-Lancaster Counties
Expansion Feasibility Study

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan Update

### York-Lancaster Counties

### Expansion Feasibility Study

This Memorandum provides a feasibility study of potential expansion of the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC) to York and Lancaster Counties. This assessment was requested as part of the present Management Action Plan (MAP) revision. The Memorandum summarizes outreach efforts to stakeholders in York and Lancaster counties, outlines criteria considered regarding the potential expansion, and provides recommendations for next steps.

# York and Lancaster County Stakeholder Outreach

To inform consideration of a potential expansion to York and Lancaster Counties, Relevant Strategies and Solutions (RS&S) conducted targeted stakeholder outreach to potential partners in both counties. The organizations engaged and a summary of their perspectives on an expansion are provided below.

## Overview of Stakeholders Engaged

1. Susquehanna National Heritage Area
2. PA Chapter – Lincoln Highway Association
3. Discovery Lancaster
4. York County Economic Alliance
5. York County History Center
6. Explore York
7. Columbia Historic Preservation Society
8. Historic Wrightsville

## Susquehanna National Heritage Area

The Susquehanna National Heritage Area (SNHA) covers both York and Lancaster Counties. It works with partners and communities to advance a vision for the Susquehanna River and its region as a national destination for heritage and outdoor travelers. Although the SNHA focused its efforts within the Susquehanna River corridor for much of its history, the 2023 SNHA Management Action Plan called for more of a counties-wide focus.

President and CEO, Mark Platts, recognizes that there are many unique and historic assets along the Lincoln Highway (LH) through York and Lancaster Counties. He sees value in heritage areas connecting and leveraging each other's identities. The SNHA Management Action Plan keys on the strategic theme of "American Identity," and he feels that the LH is certainly part of that identity in York and Lancaster Counties.

The SNHA does have some concern about potential competition for financial resources between itself and the LHHC. It is also possible that there could be confusion amongst stakeholders with two heritage areas operating in the same counties, but this could be alleviated if the LHHC stays fairly focused with the LH corridor.

As SNHA seeks to broaden its interpretation and promotion counties-wide, there could be good workload and cost-sharing to have LHHC carry that load regarding LH interpretation and development. There also could be opportunities to add LH interpretation to existing or developing SNHA assets, such as the new Mifflin House in York County where they will be constructing a Discovery Center. The main interpretive theme for Mifflin House is to be "crossroads," and the story of the LH ties well to that theme.

SNHA is seeking to revise its website practically concurrently with LHHC website update, and there would be opportunities for them to point to each other's content and featured attractions.

The SNHA Management Action Plan calls for the SNHA to engage new partners and help them tell stories through their own lens, and that seems the way that SNHA would welcome collaboration with the LHHC.

Mark suggested some positive initial steps that LHHC could take in York and Lancaster Counties:

1. Come visit the counties to meet with SNHA staff, particularly the Vice President of Visitor Engagement and Vice President of Planning & Projects. This would be a good way to discuss ways to complement each other and avoid possible conflicts.

2. Organize a public event about the expansion. He recommended the Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge as the best location for this given that the only historical marker in the Commonwealth for the LH is found near this bridge.

In conclusion, Mark offered that communication and coordination with the SNHA will be key if the LHHC chooses to expand.

## PA Chapter – Lincoln Highway Association

The Lincoln Highway Association (LHA) is an all-volunteer organization that works on interpretation and preservation of the LH across the country. Tom Davidson leads the PA Chapter.

Tom has found that it is challenging that the LHHC does not cover whole Commonwealth. He feels confident that both the PA Chapter and the National Association would support continued expansion of the LHHC into York and Lancaster Counties.

Tom's ideas for some initial collaborative efforts include:

1. The national LHA conference is in York City in 2026. Bus tours will be heading east and west from the city through York and Lancaster counties. Tom could envision a presentation by LHHC at the conference, particularly if there is a decision to work towards expansion.

2. 2028 is the 100-year anniversary of the concrete LH markers. Perhaps the LHA and LHHC could work together to get some communities to put in replica markers, which might help connect communities along the LH.

3. He is aware that considerable funding was invested into art and wayside exhibits (e.g., the gas pumps) in the 1990s, but nobody really has ownership of them now. He feels there could be collaboration to encourage people to adopt them in local communities.

4. SHNA is working on its Discovery Center at the Mifflin House, and Tom would like to see greater work on the how the LH connects things east to west along "the ribbon" of the LH reflected in the new Discovery Center.

5. The bridge renovation plans are underway between Wrightsville and Columbia. Tom would like to see new interpretation on the Wrightsville side about the LH.

6. Tom could see a lot of possible options for hubs on the eastern end if extended to York and Lancaster counties: Wrightsville/Columbia river towns, SNHA facilities, York County History Center or Agricultural and Industrial Museum.

## Discover Lancaster

Discover Lancaster is the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) of Lancaster County. Joel Cliff is its Director of Communications and Advocacy.

Joel was aware of LH, but he did not realize there was a heritage area dedicated to it or about the Lincoln Highway Experience. He was aware that the Model T Association of Pennsylvania sometimes organizes events to drive part of the LH.

Discover Lancaster works extensively to promote history and heritage. They have some existing byway tours that they promote and like to encourage visitors to move throughout the county. Both right along the LH and within a half mile or so of the route, there are a wide range of attractions that could be promoted. Joel felt that approach would fit nicely with Discover Lancaster's efforts to get people exploring the county. Joel felt that the LHHC would "be a natural fit to extend through this area." There is already a lot of focus on small towns, touring back roads, heritage, and history. It is all about getting people to slow down, take their time, and explore.

Joel did not identify any specific detriments to an expansion of the LHHC, unless it be "stepping on anyone's toes." However, he said that there are many different nonprofits and promotional organizations operating in the region, and although there is sometimes overlap, the community tends to work well together.

## York County Economic Alliance

The York County Economic Alliance (YCEA) integrates a variety of entities and authorities, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Silas Chamberlin is the Chief Strategy Officer of the YCEA.

Silas believes that York County will be welcoming to an expansion of the LHHC. He specifically mentioned that LHA Chapter President, Tom Davidson, lives locally and has sometimes struggled to get traction in the region, even though Tom is very passionate and well-connected. Silas did feel it would be helpful to have some type of tangible presence for the LHHC in southcentral PA.

Silas cautioned that local foundations and governments may be unlikely to support LHHC operations financially, but he thinks with strong funder education, they could be convinced to providing funding support for individual projects, such as interpretive panels or sign installation. He felt there could be a key distinction between York and Lancaster County organizations welcoming the LHHC expansion versus providing resources to the LHHC.

Silas sees good opportunities for cross-programming with the two solidly-based physical locations: the York County History Center and Agricultural and Industrial Museum (Silas serves on the History Center's Board). Silas suggested that another opportunity for impact by the LHHC would be to collaborate with the York and Lancaster EDCs to help with buildings or façade improvements along the LH, perhaps with a round of LHHC mini-grants targeting such business improvement work.

## York County History Center

The York County History Center, a nonprofit organization, inspires the exploration of the rich history, diverse people, and vibrant culture of York County, Pennsylvania, and the United States. Through its extensive collections and historic sites, the History Center vividly narrates the American story from pre-colonial times to present day. The Center operates the History Center Museum (recently constructed), a library and archives, the Agricultural and Industrial Museum, a Colonial Complex in downtown York City, and a Fire Museum. Terri Atland is the Center's Vice President of Engagement, and at the time of the interview was Interim Executive Director.

Terri felt that the Center would welcome the expansion of the LHHC to York County and could see many opportunities for collaboration. She expressed somewhat of a gap in LH-era programming in the region. The LH is mentioned in a few sentences on a transportation kiosk in the Center Museum. The Colonial Complex more so interprets the same route as the Monocacy Trail, from an earlier historical period, but the route does pass directly through downtown York. There are many roadside attractions, boutique hotels, etc. along the LH that could have

potential for connection. Terri could also see the possibility for some lectures or tours focused on the LH in York County.

Terri noted that it can be hard for people in present day to visualize what the LH would have been like in its heyday. She thinks people would be interested to learn about its rich history. There are certainly ways to connect the history of the LH to what the Center is doing already, such as its exhibit of Pullman cars in the Agricultural and Industrial Museum. At times, they have curated driving tours of York County or "Road Rallies." Internally, the Center staff have a sense that the Center is a bit York City-focused, and they would welcome collaboration with LHHC to help them capitalize on expanding to the east and west.

## Explore York

Explore York is the official Tourist Promotion Agency for York County. Laura Wagner is its Executive Director. Explore York works to maximize tourism expenditures and their economic impact in York County, PA, through comprehensive tourism sales and marketing programs. A good proportion of Explore York's efforts are dedicated to promoting and assisting with group tours and events, such as association conferences, sporting tournaments, and motor coach tours. They also support leisure travelers (i.e., families). Explore York is membership based, and a nonprofit membership for LHHC would be approximately $125.

The LH is not promoted as a point of interest across York County at present. However, Laura was able to name many attractions of various kinds that sit on or near to the LH. She could envision themed itineraries, which Explore York creates often, for things like factory tours, snack foods, or wineries.

Laura could not independently think of any tension that a LHHC expansion would cause in the county. Once prompted regarding fundraising, Laura did acknowledge that fundraising could be a tension point with the SNHA and other similar heritage nonprofits. She stated that York County funding for the SNHA flows through her organization, and the decision was recently made to halt funding to SNHA. When asked about the DNCR need for a support letter from the County Commissioners for the LHHC expansion, Laura felt this could be challenging. She cautioned that the relationship between the SNHA and County Commissioners has been somewhat strained over negotiations around funding support, and the County Commissioners may associate the two heritage areas together, and thereby be hesitant to support the LHHC, even if that support does not involve a commitment of funds.

The matter of erected LHHC branded signs was discussed. Laura said that Explore York recently helped erect Civil War Trail signs throughout the county, as well as some other types of branded signs within the city. She expressed that large-scale sign erection of this type can be slow-going and challenging.

Explore York has member and local business networking events several times per year, and Laura would welcome LHHC staff to attend future events. She also said that she and her staff would be very willing to help LHHC with connections in York County, with other members, businesses along the LH, and even funders that support heritage work.

## Columbia Historic Preservation Society

The Columbia Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) operates in the river town of Columbia where the LH crosses the Susquehanna River, on the Lancaster County side. The CHPS was founded in 1981 and operates two museums in town. Much of its emphasis has been on preservation and interpretation about the important role that Columbia played in the Underground Railroad. Chris Vera has been President of the CHPS for 17 years.

Chris would very much like to see more presence by the LHHC and interpretation about the LH in the area and across the Wrightsville-Columbia Bridge. He does not believe many people, other than older generations, even know the LH passes through the town. Chris feels that it "makes a lot of sense" to extend the LHHC to York and Lancaster Counties. He believes the expansion would help with tourism into the small town of Columbia.

Chris notes that the historical importance of the route predates the construction of the LH. It was once called York Road and was very important in the Civil War.

There is an original LH marker within the town limits. As well, there are LH medallions embedded in the sidewalk that parallels the LH through town, for about 15 blocks. However, Chris doubts that many residents or visitors even know what these medallions mean.

Chris could see great benefit to more interpretation in the area about the LH era, as much of the present historic interpretation is Civil War era. The CHPS runs a lecture series and would certainly welcome a LH-themed lecture; they would also welcome a LHHC mobile exhibit. He also encouraged the LHHC to promote history beyond the LH construction and driving era, with the strong ties to Abraham Lincoln's activity in southcentral PA and the activity around the Underground Railroad.

## Historic Wrightsville

Historic Wrightsville is a volunteer organization located in the river town of Wrightsville on the banks of the Susquehanna River, on the York County side. President, Lisa Burk, stated that Historic Wrightsville would wholly support an expansion of the LHHC to York County.

She mentioned her organization's involvement with the SNHA Mifflin House and a possible tie-in there. Lisa encouraged LHHC to reach out to additional stakeholders in the region to gain support.

# Key Expansion Evaluation Criteria and Findings

RS&S developed the following evaluation criteria for the feasibility of expanding the LHHC to York and Lancaster Counties. These are intended to help LHHC's Board and staff consider the benefits and challenges while considering the openness of the York and Lancaster County communities as well as the LHHC's capacity. The criteria also consider how the expansion fits within other plans created in the MAP revision.

## Criteria 1 – Ensure LHHC efforts in the new counties would be complimentary and not redundant to those of existing organizations

- The LH history and story is not presently a focal point of existing heritage, tourism, and history organizations operation in York and Lancaster Counties. Present history interpretation and promotion focuses more on other historical eras and topics, such as the Civil War and Underground Railroad.
- Stakeholders interviewed felt that increased LH interpretation and promotion would be complimentary to existing efforts. Road touring and exploring the counties is a common initiative, so exploration of the LH would be in alignment.

## Criteria 2 – Seek assurance that LHHC presence will not create competition for funding resources

- There is some concern about potential competition for funding, particularly between the SNHA and LHHC. Presently, in the case of Lancaster County, and previously, in the case of York County, the SNHA received significant county-level funding.
- Stakeholders, including the SNHA, feel that if the LHHC stays focused on its unique mission and its role with the LH corridor, potential conflict will be mitigated or limited.
- Some stakeholders feel it is unlikely that LHHC will gain support of funders for LHHC operations, but rather funders may prove willing to support LHHC at the project level, such as for specific interpretive panel or branding sign installations.

## Criteria 3 – Ascertain whether expansion aligns with Goals and Objectives of revised Management Action Plan (MAP)

- Expansion of the LHHC aligns well with other MAP goals and objectives.
- Doing so would create fertile ground for expanding partnerships – all the stakeholders interviewed seemed to be willing and welcoming partners.
- Many stakeholders identified a range of existing attractions and assets either right along the LH or in proximity within both York and Lancaster Counties; thus, there are opportunities to broaden the types of attractions LHHC promotes.
- Several partners expressed interest in guest lectures or a mobile exhibit from LHHC. Several also expressed interest to cross-promote each other on websites and other media. These actions would align with MAP goals around marketing and outreach, helping the LHHC become more visible in York and Lancaster Counties.

## Criteria 4 – Consider existing LHHC staff capacity to support an expansion

- LHHC staff capacity for the expansion remains a potential concern. Staff will likely be occupied working toward the MAP goals and objectives within the existing LHHC footprint.
- The likelihood of willing partners, such as the stakeholders interviewed, could help share the burden of expansion.
- The presence of the new LHHC Development Coordinator in Cumberland County could be an advantage, being close to both York and Lancaster Counties relative to the balance of the LHHC staff in Latrobe.

## Criteria 5 – Identify opportunities for new partnerships

- There seem to be numerous potential partnership opportunities with tourism-focused and heritage/history-focused organizations in York and Lancaster Counties.
- There are a number of popular historic sites, businesses, hotels, and outdoor recreation attractions along the LH in York and Lancaster Counties, offering ample opportunity for promotion and interconnection.

# Recommendation

The overall recommendation of RS&S is that the LHHC expansion into York and Lancaster Counties is feasible and well-considered. However, RS&S does recommend certain efforts be undertaken or accomplished prior to formally attempting the expansion, as follows:

1. The LHHC should first solidify its presence and implement several MAP goals and objectives on the eastern extent of its present footprint (i.e., Franklin and Adams Counties). It was well-recognized during the MAP revision process, both amongst the Board and staff, that the LHHC needs to strengthen its relationships and position in Franklin and Adams Counties. MAP objectives, such as the Hubs Concept or guest lectures, should first be fulfilled in Franklin and Adams Counties.

2. LHHC Board and staff should capitalize on the relationships initiated through the MAP revision process to continue conversations with key stakeholders in York and Lancaster Counties, starting with many of those organizations interviewed for the Feasibility Study. These organizations seem open and welcoming to further discussion with LHHC.

3. The Feasibility Study identified potential early collaboration opportunities in York and Lancaster Counties, as described in the interview notes above. Prior to formally attempting expansion, LHHC should test receptiveness and popularity of LH programming by taking advantage of some of these opportunities, such as the following:
    - Guest speakers from LHHC at lectures series of the town-level historical societies or the York County History Center'
    - Participate in key events in the two counties, such as those hosted by the SHNA; or
    - Seek opportunities to co-sponsor or co-organize historical/heritage events with partners.

    As expansion plans mature, several additional steps could be taken to increase chances of success, such as the following:

    - Cross-promote attractions, tours, or events on the LHHC website and social media platforms;

    - Pursue project-level funding (in partnership with local organizations) for LHHC interpretive displays in high-visitation sites along the LH; or

    - Consider adding a Hub in one or both counties.

    - For a boundary change to take place, the heritage area must secure resolutions of support from all counties affected by the proposed change.

Appendix J: Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Integration

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan Update

### Natural Resources

### and Outdoor Recreation Integration

This Memorandum provides resources and recommendations for integrating natural resources management and outdoor recreation into the work of the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC). This assessment was requested as part of the present Management Action Plan (MAP) revision. This Memorandum summarizes approaches for LHHC to engage in natural resources management and outdoor recreation as well as identifies potential partners.

## Context

The Pennsylvania (PA) Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Heritage Areas Program identifies "recreation and open space" as one of five primary goals of Heritage Areas. Increasingly, open space preservation and outdoor recreation assets are being recognized as critical components in a community's identity and appeal to residents and tourists. Natural landscapes and ample outdoor recreation opportunities play an important role in quality of life and local economies.

Appendix D for the LHHC MAP revision identified outdoor recreation as a common theme across the regional and county planning instruments examined for that Memorandum. To reiterate, Appendix D stated:

> "The momentum behind the improvement of outdoor recreation opportunities and the outdoor recreation economy are strong across the nation, across Pennsylvania, and throughout these planning documents that touch the LH. Many of the counties and regional organizations along the corridor are recognizing the importance of outdoor recreation to their constituents and their work. There are many outdoor recreation assets along or near the LH that provide ample opportunity for the LHHC to embrace an increased focus on outdoor recreational pursuits for both locals and tourists."

The framework for the MAP includes the following goal and objectives:

> *Goal 2. Protect and celebrate the Corridor's cultural and natural assets through proactive conservation efforts and the expansion of unique outdoor experiences, encouraging both stewardship and enjoyment of the historic and natural landscape.*
>
> *Objective 2.1 Emphasize the Lived Experience: Promote outdoor recreation along the Corridor through marketing, programming and storytelling that focused on the lived experience of the Highway and surrounding region.*
>
> *Objective 2.2 Partnerships: Establish and maintain partnerships to help promote outdoor recreation sites and experiences along the Corridor.*

This document supports the above Goal and Objectives that focus on natural resources management, conservation, and outdoor recreation.

# Recommended Integration Approaches

## Objective 2.1.1 – Natural Restoration Efforts on the Museum's Grounds

The Lincoln Highway Experience has recently made efforts in natural restoration and improvements to the biodiversity of its grounds. With 14.1 acres of property and a drainage along the hillslope to the south, the LHHC has opportunities to further conduct ecologically-friendly grounds projects and add native species to its landscape.

Potential projects for consideration include green management of stormwater (e.g., rain gardens), increased native plantings, and environmental education interpretation regarding past and future ecological enhancement projects.

Potential partners for technical resources or funding guidance include:

**Westmoreland Conservation District**

https://westmorelandconservation.org/stormwater/

**Western Pennsylvania Conservancy**

https://waterlandlife.org/

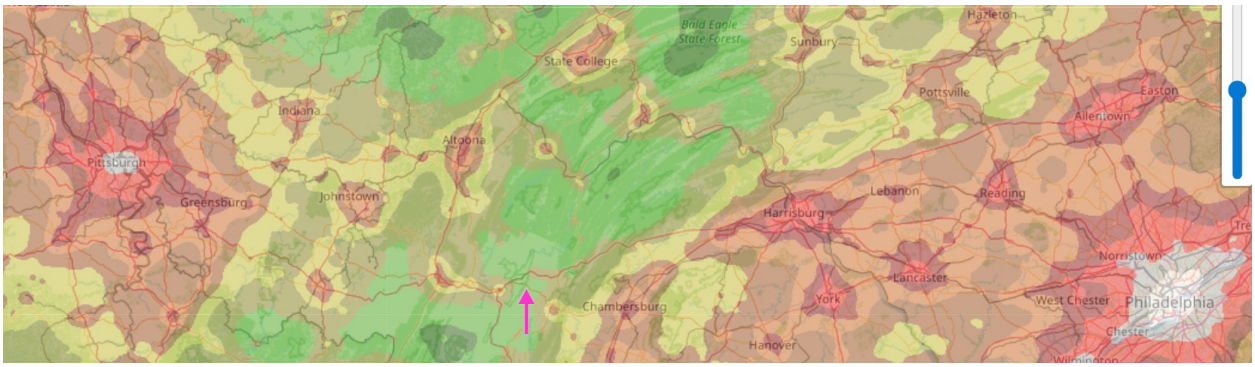
**Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation**

https://xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center

## Objective 2.1.2 - Promotion of Dark Skies

Dark Sky observation is growing in popularity; however, within Pennsylvania the concept is most frequently associated with the northern tier of the state at dark sky destinations such as Cherry Spring State Park.

In remote areas of Fulton County, the LHHC offers some of the best dark sky viewing opportunities across southern PA (see map below). This part of the LHHC crosses a significant area of Buchanan State Forest, and the DCNR Bureau of Forestry could be a willing partner in establishing a dark skies viewing area along the LH in this region.




*World Atlas of the Artificial Night Sky Brightness by David Lorenz (University of Wisconsin-Madison). Pink arrows shows LH in Fulton County.*

Potential partners for technical resources or collaboration include:

**DarkSky International**

https://darksky.org/

**DarkSky Pennsylvania**

https://www.darkskypa.org/

**Buchanan State Forest**

https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-forests/find-a-forest/buchanan

## Objective 2.1.3 – Outdoor Recreation Curated Itineraries

The LHHC intersects or nears a variety of major outdoor recreation attractions along its route. The creation of themed, curated itineraries is a likely outcome of the MAP revision, and there are ample opportunities to create outdoor recreation itineraries throughout the LHHC. A list of major DCNR-managed lands is provided below.

The LHHC also intersects many popular water bodies for angling or boating, such as the Juniata River and Loyalhanna Creek. Local Trout Unlimited Chapters or community watershed organizations/watershed associations can make strong partners related to water resources.

Typically, while these types of organizations have limited financial resources, they have a good capability to mobilize volunteers for water resource improvements and stewardship (e.g., stream clean-ups and riparian buffer plantings). They may be able to provide information on quality stream/lake waters and public access points. A list of such partners is provided below.

Combined with these outdoor recreation assets, LHHC can work lodging and dining attractions into the curated itineraries. There are several private camp grounds along the LHHC for those travelers that prefer rustic lodging experiences.

Examples of major DCNR assets along the LHHC include the following (from west to east):

**Forbes State Forest**

https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-forests/find-a-forest/forbes

**Linn Run State Park**

https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-parks/find-a-park/linn-run-state-park

**Laurel Mountain State Park**

https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-parks/find-a-park/laurel-mountain-state-park

**Shawnee State Park**

https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-parks/find-a-park/shawnee-state-park

**Buchanan State Forest**

https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-forests/find-a-forest/buchanan

**Caledonia State Park**

https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-parks/find-a-park/caledonia-state-park

**Michaux State Forest**

https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-forests/find-a-forest/michaux

Examples of water-based organizations along/near the LHHC include the following (from west to east):

**Trout Unlimited Chapters**

**Forbes Trail Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Westmoreland County)**

https://forbestrailtu.org/

**Fort Bedford Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Bedford County)**

https://fortbedfordtu.blogspot.com/

**Falling Springs Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Fulton and Franklin Counties)**

https://www.facebook.com/fstu234/

**Community Watershed Organizations**

**Turtle Creek Watershed Association (based in Monroeville)**

https://turtlecreekwatershed.org/

**Sewickley Creek Watershed Association (based in Greensburg)**

https://www.sewickleycreek.com/

**Loyalhanna Watershed Association (based in Ligonier)**

https://www.loyalhannawatershed.org/

**Shade Creek Watershed Association (based in Caimbrook)**

https://www.shadecreekwatershed.org/

**Watershed Alliance of Adams County (based in Gettysburg)**

https://www.adamswatersheds.org/

## Objective 2.1.4 – Marketing Around Outdoor Recreation

Destination marketing around outdoor recreation opportunities and natural spaces is strong in Pennsylvania and continuously gaining momentum. At the state level, the theme "Pennsylvania – the Great American Gateway" is leaning hard into the natural beauty of Pennsylvania and its park and nature assets.

https://www.visitpa.com/things-to-do/parks-nature/

Economic development organizations and thereby many local governments are recognizing the importance of outdoor recreation to local economies, and doing more to highlight, connect, and improve outdoor recreation opportunities. Recent data shows that PA's outdoor recreation economy provides vital contributions to statewide and local economies in the form of:

- Over 168,000 direct jobs,
- $8.7 billion in wages and salary, and
- Nearly 3% of the state's total employment.

Due to its sizeable impact on economic development, tourism, and quality of life, outdoor recreation is being highlighted more by regional collaboratives, local governments, and destination marketing organizations. LHHC can tap into this excitement about outdoor recreation and emphasize the role that the LH plays in connecting people to outdoor recreation attractions.

Some examples of existing marketing campaigns around outdoor recreation along the LHHC include the following:

**Discover Westmoreland**

https://discoverwestmoreland.com/play/parks/

**Go Laurel Highlands**

https://www.golaurelhighlands.com/outdoors/

**Visit Bedford County**

https://visitbedfordcounty.com/directory_category/outdoors/

**Explore Franklin County**

https://www.explorefranklincountypa.com/franklin-county-wildlife/

https://www.explorefranklincountypa.com/take-a-walk/

**South Mountain Partnership's "Adventure Guide" (linked on this page)**

https://www.southmountainpartnership.org/who-we-are/our-place/

**Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

https://sapdc.org/bicycle-and-pedestrian-plan-2/

## Objective 2.1.5 – Incorporating Environmental Education

Public interest in environmental issues represents an opportunity for LHHC to engage new and different audiences. Environmental volunteerism could be used at the LHE or at sites along the LHHC in need of clean-up or restoration. The watershed organizations listed above represent potentially good partners for volunteer efforts. Environmental educators could make great partners for guest lectures at LHE or at locations elsewhere along the LHHC, perhaps through co-sponsorship opportunities. Interpretation about the environment could be added to the LHE or at wayside locations along the LHHC.

Potential partners for incorporating more environmental education into the LHHC include academic institutions with strong environmental programs, land trusts/conservancies, and DCNR State Park Environmental Educators. Examples of these partners are provided below.

**Land Trusts / Conservancies**

**Westmoreland Land Trust**

https://westmoreland-landtrust.org/

**Western PA Conservancy**

https://waterlandlife.org/

**Somerset County Conservancy**

https://somersetconservancy.org/

**Potomac Conservancy (to the south of LHHC)**

https://potomac.org/

**Academic Environmental Departments**

**Shippensburg University – Geography and Earth Science**

https://www.ship.edu/academics/cas/geo-ess/

**PennState Extension**

https://extension.psu.edu/

**University of Pittsburgh – Johnstown – Geosciences and the Environment**

https://www.johnstown.pitt.edu/academics/majors-programs/natural-sciences/department-geosciences-and-environment

**Saint Vincent College – Environmental Science**

https://www.stvincent.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/programs/environmental-science.html

## Objective 2.1.6 – Evaluate LHHC's Role in Trail Development

Consideration of trail development along abandoned segments of the LH is a long-term interest of the LHHC. There are many key factors to carefully evaluate regarding trail development, including land ownership or trail easements, user safety, signage, trail surface, parking access, wayfinding, and trail maintenance.

At the point that LHHC begins to deeply consider these and other factors, it is recommended that LHHC staff engage professionals with strong experience in trail planning and design. A couple of statewide resource that may be reliable sources of guidance or resources include the DCNR Office of Outdoor Recreation and PA Environmental Council, a nonprofit that leads many regional trail studies and collaboratives across the Commonwealth.

**DCNR – Office of Outdoor Recreation**

h"ps://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/programs-and-services/about/bureaus-and-offices/office-of-outdoor-recrea:on

**PA Environmental Council**

https://pecpa.org/

## Objective 2.2 Partnerships

This Memorandum has provided a robust set of potential partners for LHHC to consider across its goals for integrating natural resource stewardship and outdoor recreation experiences into future work.

It is recommended that LHHC staff begin incrementally, by exploring these types of partnership at first close to home – the LHE. Go Laurel Highlands is an existing close partner of the LHHC that is strongly emphasizing outdoor recreation in its initiatives and marketing. Thereby, Go Laurel Highlands would be an excellent starting point to begin to consider how LHHC can emphasize outdoor recreation more in its own initiatives.

Another key early partner to consider would be the Western PA Conservancy, as this organization could potentially help LHHC across multiple initiatives, including technical advice on incorporating ecological restoration at the LHE and guest lecturers on conservation or environmental issues.

Lastly, LHHC might consider some county or watershed-based partners close to the LHE, such as the Westmoreland County Conservation District and Loyalhanna Watershed Association.

These early steps to build new types of partnerships and collaborations will help LHHC staff to learn about this environmental space and adapt outreach efforts and initiatives in the future as it expands these types of partnerships eastward along the LHHC.

# Appendix K: Education & Interpretation Framework

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan

RS&S
Relevant Strategies and Solutions

# Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

## Management Action Plan Update

### Education & Interpretation Framework

This Memorandum provides an education and interpretation framework for the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC). This framework was requested as part of the Management Action Plan (MAP) revision. This Memorandum recommends strategies and initiatives for LHHC to consider regarding education and interpretation objectives outlined in the action plan within the MAP.

## Context

The Pennsylvania (PA) Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Heritage Areas Program identifies "education and interpretation" as one of five primary goals of Heritage Areas. Additionally, the revised MAP identified a number of new Action Steps regarding education and interpretation. Effective outreach to stakeholders, visitors, and the general public is a critical role of the LHHC.

The relevant Goal, Objectives, and Action Steps from the MAP framework that are covered by this Memorandum include the following:

> *Goal 1. **Education & Interpretation**: Deliver compelling educational and interpretive programs through the Corridor that inspire curiosity, connect audiences to history, and elevate the lived experience through diverse, inclusive storytelling.*
>
> > *Objective 1.1 **Interpretive experience**: Create and maintain an interpretive experience that advances the mission of LHHC both along the Corridor and at the Museum.*
> >
> > > *Action Step 1.1.3: Create a variety of curated itineraries and brochures based on different themes (military, parks and recreation, etc.) that encourage travel along the Corridor.*
> > >
> > > *Action Step 1.1.7: Create a comprehensive wayfinding and signage plan that includes both the Museum and the Corridor.*
> >
> > *Objective 1.2 **Attracting New Audiences**: Develop programming and experiences that cover a wide range of topics to appeal to new and more diverse audiences.*
> >
> > > *Action Step 1.2.1: Continue to host and coordinate lectures that offer different perspectives.*
> > >
> > > *Action Step 1.2.1.1: Include topics loosely tied to the mission.*
> >
> > *Objective 1.3 **Partnerships**: Establish and maintain partnerships to tell the story of the Lincoln Highway.*
> >
> > > *Action Step 1.3.1: Identify 2-3 "hubs" or areas throughout the Corridor on which to focus concentrated efforts in order to build relationships without straining limited resources.*

# Recommended Strategies and Initiatives

## Action Step 1.1.3 – Curated Itineraries

The MAP revision process identified a desire for curated thematic or audience-specific itineraries that would connect corridor attractions, interpretive sites, and Lincoln Highway Experience (LHE) resources.

One approach for curated itineraries would be to focus on special interests of LHHC visitors. Potential special interests conducive to itineraries along the LHHC include the following:

- Outdoor recreation enthusiasts,
- Foodies (potentially cuisine-specific, such as ice-cream),
- Antique or art shoppers, and
- History enthusiasts (potentially era-specific, such as colonial times or thematic such as military history).

The outdoor recreation assets along the LHHC are well-documented in Appendix J. LHHC could choose to highlight outdoor recreation assets along the entire corridor, or could focus curated itineraries on a local or county basis, tying in both state-owned and county or municipal open space assets. The outdoor recreation itineraries could also focus on a specific type of outdoor recreation or a type of natural landscape feature, for example mountain biking or viewing scenic vistas.

A curated itinerary that is food/cuisine-based or shopping-based offers the strong opportunity for partnership with small businesses along the LHHC, perhaps by offering coupon booklets for participating restaurants or shops. County Chambers of Commerce may prove useful partners in connecting with local hospitality and retail establishments along the LHHC.

A strong linkage could be made to LHE resources by developing a history itinerary that focuses on stops associated with automobile era landmarks still present from when the LH was in its prime. However, there are additional eras of history with significant landmarks and sites along the LHHC. For example, an itinerary could link the history of the Forbes Road and colonial era sites, such as the Fort Bedford, Fort Ligonier, and Fort Loudon.

**Fort Websites**

https://www.fortligonier.org/

https://www.fortbedfordmuseum.org/

https://www.fortloudounpa.com/

Additional potential partners for history-themed itineraries would be the various **historical societies and history centers** along the LHHC:

https://westmorelandhistory.org/

https://www.somersethistoricalcenter.org/

http://www.bedfordpahistory.com/

https://fultonhistory.org/

https://www.franklinhistorical.org/

https://www.achs-pa.org/

Another approach to curated itineraries could be to appeal to a given demographic group, such as women, veterans, or African-Americans. LHHC could mine its own historical records as well as those of the history organizations identified above to find moving or untold stories about key female or ethnic/racial-minority leaders, and point LHHC visitors to sites or facilities that tell their story.

LHHC could also choose to create well-rounded and diverse curated itineraries that would appeal to a visiting family, which contains family members with diverse interests. Such an itinerary could be focused in a given portion of the LHHC and direct visitors to a range of attractions, giving them perhaps options to see history, to go for a hike, and to get a good meal.

Potential partners for itinerary design or promotion include the **visitors bureaus or destination marketing organizations (DMOs)** across the LHHC's counties and towns as well as the Go Laurel Highlands and the South Mountain Partnership.

https://discoverwestmoreland.com/

https://www.golaurelhighlands.com/ (official DMO of Westmoreland, Fayette, and Somerset Counties)

https://discoverbedfordcounty.com/

https://fultoncountypa.com/

https://www.explorefranklincountypa.com/

https://destinationgettysburg.com/

https://www.southmountainpartnership.org/

## Action Step 1.1.7 – Wayfinding and Signage

The LHHC strategy for wayfinding and signage should account for its relationship with the national Lincoln Highway Association and national highway as well as with very active interpretive signage partners along the LHHC, such as the Laurel Highlands.

The LH route markers, with their large "L" and red and blue bands, are well-recognized and established. However, the wayfinding for the route needs improvement in some areas under the LHHC coverage. In some places there are large gaps between these signs or there are insufficient warnings for upcoming turn-offs to historical LH alignments off of U.S. Route 30. Enhancements to the LH route marker coverage and to these turn-offs should likely be a high priority for the LHHC.

The LHHC Driving Guides direct visitors to a variety of interesting attractions along the route, but outside of the Laurel Highlands (which has strong wayfinding signage), there is very little wayfinding signage to direct drivers to the sites in the Driving Guides. Beyond the extent of the Laurel Highlands, the LHHC should begin to erect wayfinding signs that direct travelers off of the main route to attractions just to the north or south. The choices for wayfinding signs should focus on sites and attractions identified in the curated itineraries discussed above or known from local visitor bureaus to be popular attractions in a given locality.

Explicit LHHC branding, that integrates the corridor and the LHE, should be reserved for the LHE site and interpretive signs and panels at sites along the LHHC. Co-branding of some interpretative signs with the LH brand and the LHHC brand could prove effective in connecting the LHHC to the recognizable route marker signage.

The Google Earth inventory of interpretive panels, piloted as part of the MAP revision process, should be used to restore or replace interpretive panels in need of care. The installation of new interpretive signs or panels, as budgets permit, should, again, be focused on sites and attractions identified in the curated itineraries discussed above or known from local visitor bureaus to be popular attractions in a given locality.

Themes of LHHC interpretation should be diverse, drawing upon the range of primary goals for heritage areas. Displays should not focus solely on the history of the highway in its prime. Rather, LHHC interpretation should touch on various eras of history, economic vitality, partnerships, conservation, and outdoor recreation, depending on the setting of the display/panel.

The LHHC should look for opportunities to incorporate present and emerging technology into its interpretation. QR Codes could be added to new interpretive panels that point to either the LHHC homepage or to additional information on a given site or attraction. Given that it is a travel corridor, the LHHC should eventually consider the development of a mobile app for visitors to track their travel and identify nearby attractions. Go Laurel Highlands has a mobile app, making it a good resource for learning about such applications.

## Action Step 1.2.1 – Lectures

Guest lectures and traveling lectures offer opportunities for the LHHC to reach new audiences and educate the public on its mission and value.

The LHHC should endeavor to diversify the lectures taking place at the LHE. Possible topics that could reach a more diverse audience include:

- conservation and environmental topics,
- retirement planning (touching briefly on planned giving),
- different historic periods,
- societal and cultural issues, and
- partner organizations (inviting guests from partners further east on the LHHC).

Potential conservation and environmental partners were well-documented in Appendix J, as were key academic institutions that could provide guest lecturers. Prime partners for historical topics were provided above in the Curated Itineraries Section.

This same set of history-centered organizations and centers would be good targets to request the opportunity for LHHC staff to travel and perform a guest lecture at their location. Examples might include the 11/30 Visitor Center in Chambersburg or the Beyond the Battle Museum in Gettysburg.

Also consider lectures that align potential partners within suggested hubs, as described below, to strengthen relationships with organizations in these locations. Lectures should be developed that can take place both at LHE and at partner sites in each of the hubs. Lecture topics could be developed in partnership with sites at the hubs.

## Action Step 1.3.1 – Hubs and Partnerships

The MAP revision process identified the concept of "hubs" for the LHHC eastward along the corridor. A hub would be based at a partner organization's location, giving the LHHC a physical presence beyond the LHE but without the capital investment into a new space of its own. Hubs could become focal points or anchors for visitors traveling the LHHC and key centers for outreach and interpretation. Ideally, a hub location would allow space for an LHHC interpretative panel/display and allow LHHC staff to regularly visit for events and community outreach opportunities.

Key factors to consider in selecting hubs include the following:

1. Visitation – A hub should presently be a popular destination in its own right. High visitation to a hub location will ensure that many people are then experiencing the LHHC interpretive material and being exposed to the LHHC mission and brand.
2. Access – The location should be easily accessible and have favorable open hours. A site that is challenging to find or not open many days would not be ideal.
3. Alignment – The hub's own mission or purpose should align with that of the LHHC, focusing on visitor engagement, heritage, recreation, culture, or a mixture of these things.
4. Openness – The management of the hub should be welcoming and receptive to the idea of becoming a hub for the LHHC. Ideally, they would be willing to provide space for an LHHC interpretive panel or display.

Based on the Visitor Analysis performed for the MAP update, the towns of Chambersburg and Bedford seem the most promising to pilot the hub concept. The analysis showed heat maps of visitation to these towns that are expansive and do not much overlap with the home locations of people visiting the LHE. Each has an attractive downtown center that engages both locals and tourists, alike. The Visitor Analysis identified either the Chambersburg Heritage Center or 11/30 Visitors Center as strong candidates for a hub, with the latter having hosted one of the MAP update public meetings. In Bedford, the Visitor Analysis identified the Fort Bedford Park and Museum as a strong candidate for a hub. A recommended strategy would be for LHHC to engage with all three facilities to gauge the key factors identified above, particularly Openness to host a LHHC hub.