Reimagining “Region” & the Role of Trails

Great Allegheny Passage

- “Achievement of a lifetime” complete
  - Over $40 million in annual direct spending
  - $7.5 million in wages
  - 800,000 trips a year
- Now what?
- How can we further leverage trail tourism and recreation?

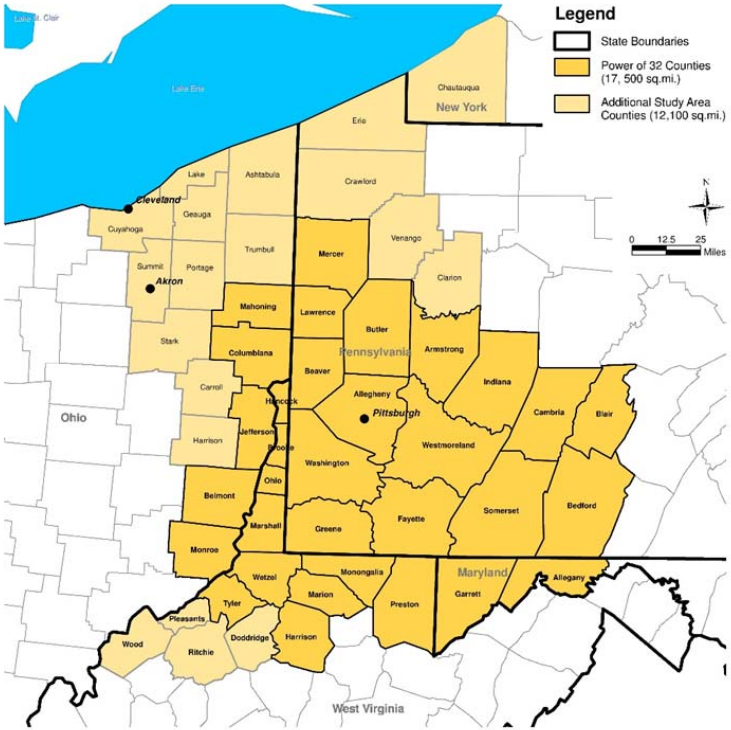
Photos: J. O’Brien

The GAP was just the beginning…

Power of 32 Project

- An unprecedented regional collaboration:
  - Western PA
  - Eastern Ohio
  - Western MD
  - Northern WV
- Economy, education, environment, government, people and community and transportation and infrastructure
- One of effort's 14 initiatives was to develop a regional trail network

Power of 32+ Regional Trail Network



- Another regional collaboration based on the involvement of organizations/entities in Western PA, Eastern Ohio, Western MD, Northern WV and Western New York
- Growing out of regional initiatives such as the GAP, the Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail, Ohio to Erie Trail and others
- P32+ trail meetings began in 2011
- Get more long-distance trails on the ground
- Connect them to each other
- Integrate trails into our communities

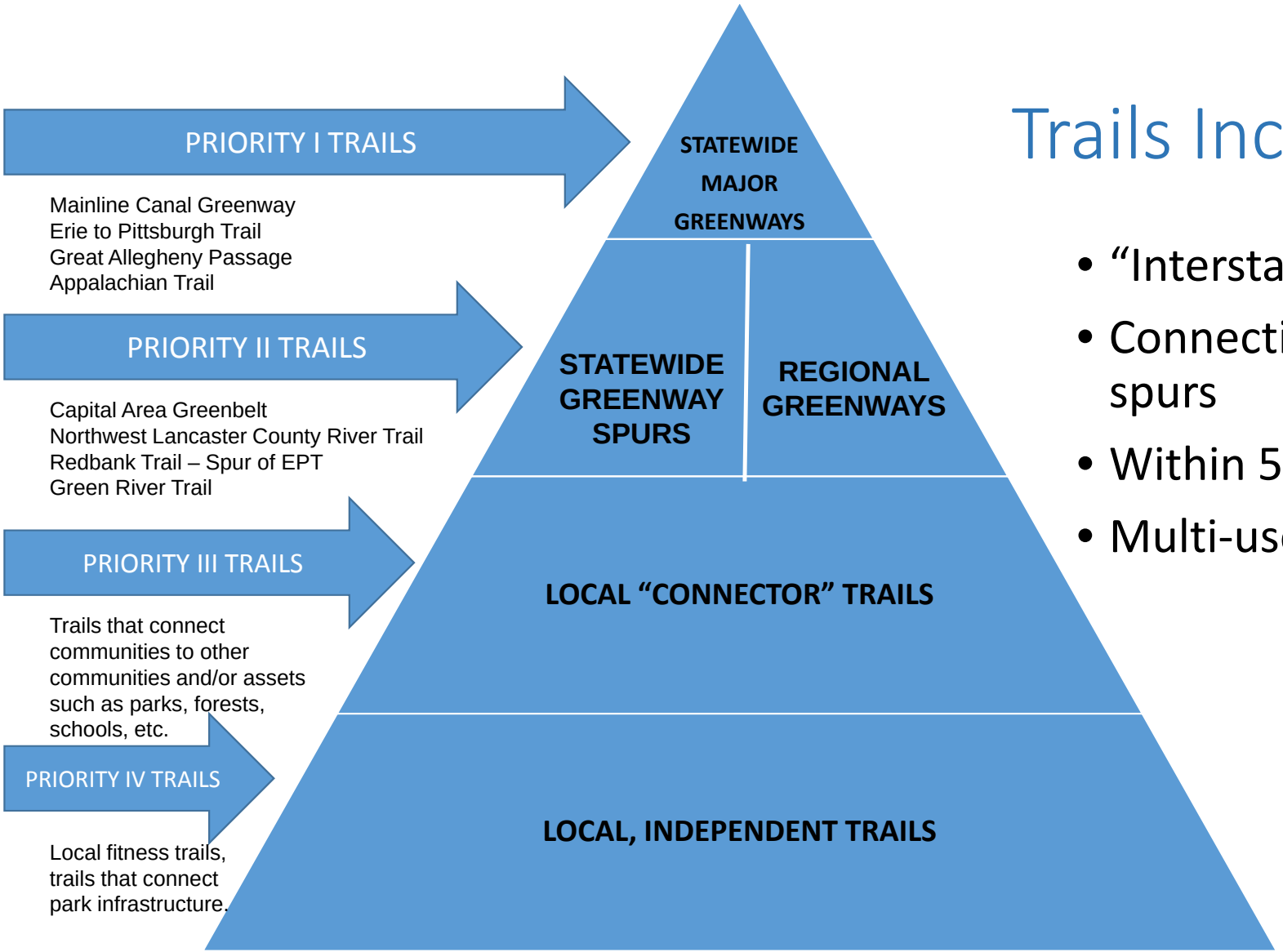
Network Vision

By 2033, after completing and connecting a series of long-distance trails, our 46-county region will be positioned as the epicenter of multi-use trails in the Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, and Midwest.

With this network of trails at the center, it is feasible that at least 12 North American cities across seven states and Ontario will one day be connected by multi-use trails.

Trails Tell the Story of the Region…

Photos: Regional trail partners



Trails Include:

- "Interstate level" trails
- Connecting trails and spurs
- Within 51 county area
- Multi-use trails

Trails in Miles

- Over 1,200 miles of “interstate level” and connecting trails
- ~75% complete
- 3 of 13 trail systems 100% complete
- What’s left? The hardest parts
- Not included: Erie to Cleveland Seaway Trail corridor

Photo: Mon River Trails Conservancy

How They Connect

- Sheepskin Trail will connect the GAP to WV trails
- Montour Trail will connect the GAP to Pittsburgh International Airport
- GAP's terminus in Pittsburgh will connect to Erie to Pittsburgh Trail
- Panhandle Trail connects Montour Trail to Weirton, WV
- Ohio River Trail will connect to Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway
- Portage Trail will connect Lake to River to Ohio to Erie Trail (Cleveland to Cincinnati, 334 miles)

Value of Collaborating

- Regional vision is compelling – easier for local trail builders to get trails on the ground
- Establish a regional brand and market the trails globally
- Advocate collectively on trail issues, raising the profile of trails
- Integrate economic development into trail building
- Identify missed opportunities
- Encourage best practices, elevate the “product”
- What else?

Economic Development Tactics

- Working with trail builders to determine routes conducive to economic impact
  - What corridors promise economic potential?
- Working with trail builders on trail-to-town connections
- Implementing The Progress Fund's Trail Town Program along established routes

Photo: Amy Camp

What Makes a “Trail Town?”

- Located on long distance trails
- Physical connection between trail and town
- Gateway moment
- Services catering to trail users
- Culture of hospitality

For a full list of attributes, contact
The Progress Fund.

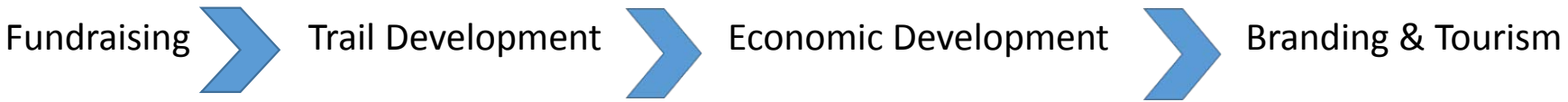
Photo: Amy Camp

Regional Network Components

- A loose collaborative that meets regularly
- Economic development overlay
- Regional brand complete with social / digital media (web, app)
- A GIS mapping tool
  - For planners, tourism professionals, trail builders, economic development community

No Plan, No Progress

- The Circuit in Southeastern PA is a model of regional collaboration
- Understanding the gaps here will facilitate:

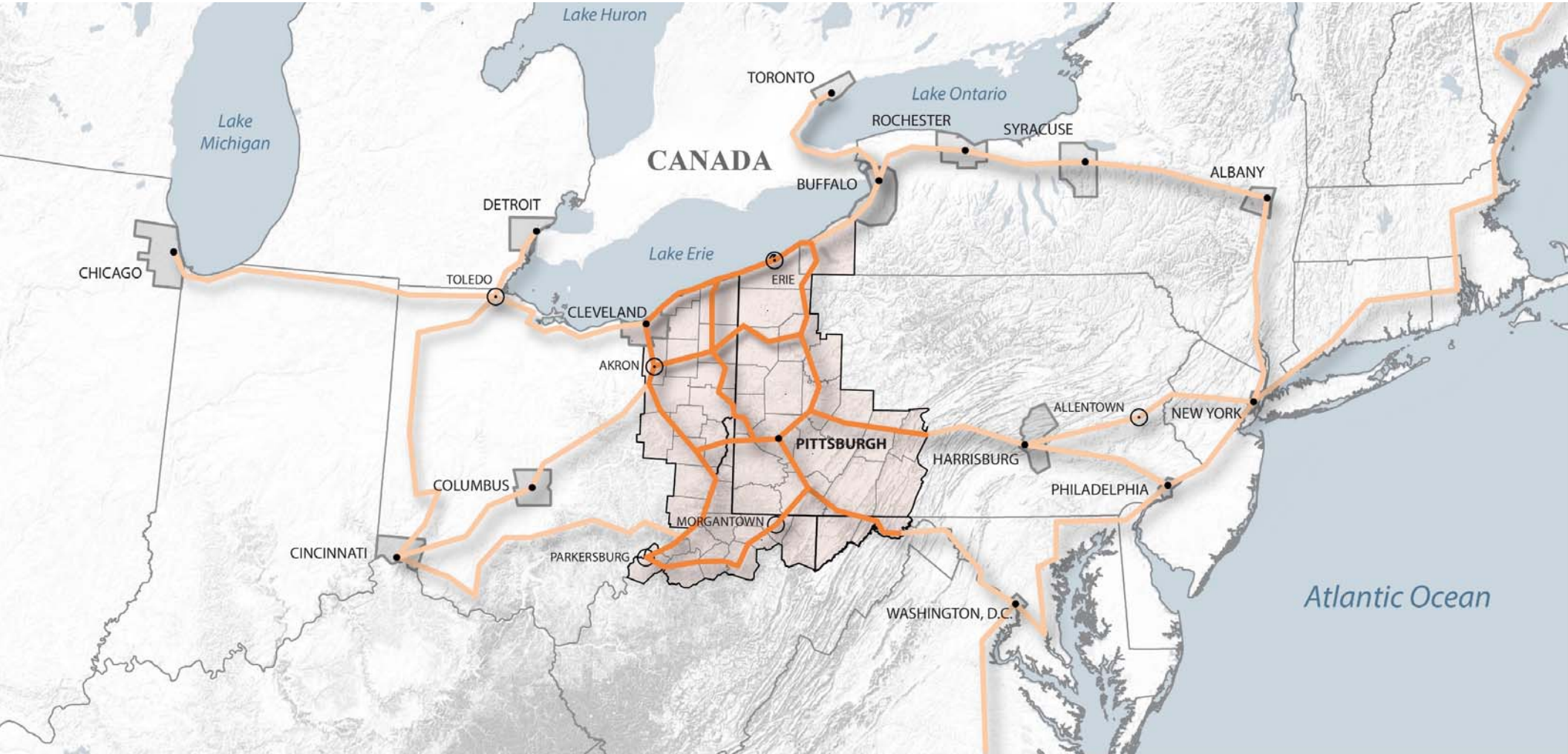


Next Steps

- Define the collaborative
- Compile and integrate existing trail and economic development data
- Identify and prioritize the gaps
- Establish an implementation strategy
- Develop an economic development-centric technical assistance program

Regional Trail Network Vision

Possible Inter-Regional Trail Connections



ESRI On-line GIS Applications

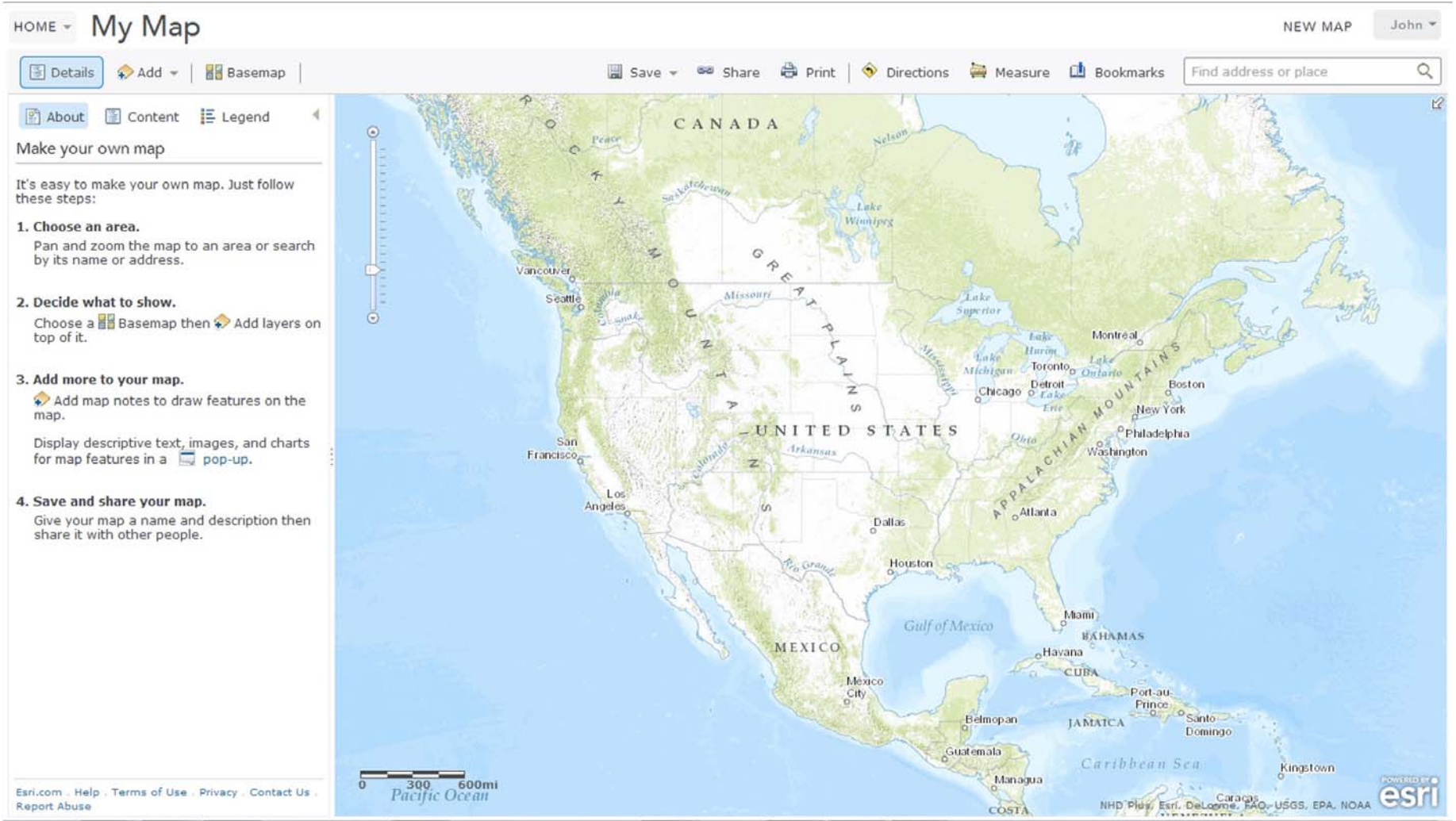
ArcGIS.com Map Viewer

Explore the map-making tool for ArcGIS Online! Maps from world level down to neighborhood can be saved and shared via ArcGIS Online, ArcGIS Desktop for more capacity, or embedded in websites. This is a Javascript-based viewer, so it works in any browsers including mobile devices. No plug-ins needed.

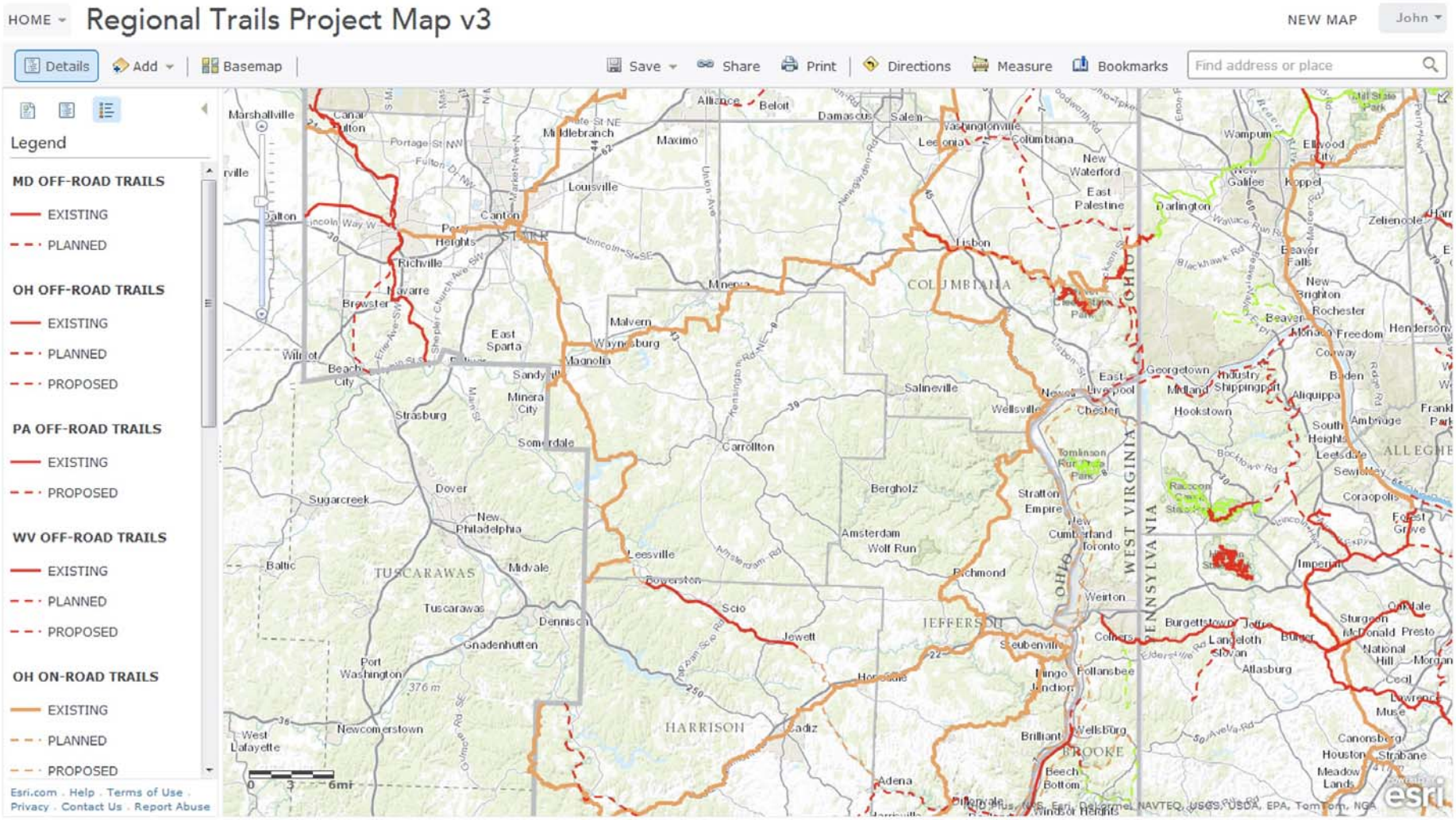
Simple and Customizable

- Allows access to a collection of maps, demographic datasets and images.
- The data is hosted in ESRI's secure cloud server and all ownership/rights are maintained by the data creators.
- Add data, create “mash-ups” with to share with other users. Add photos or links to web pages to highlight information. User groups can be created to publicly share maps and data.

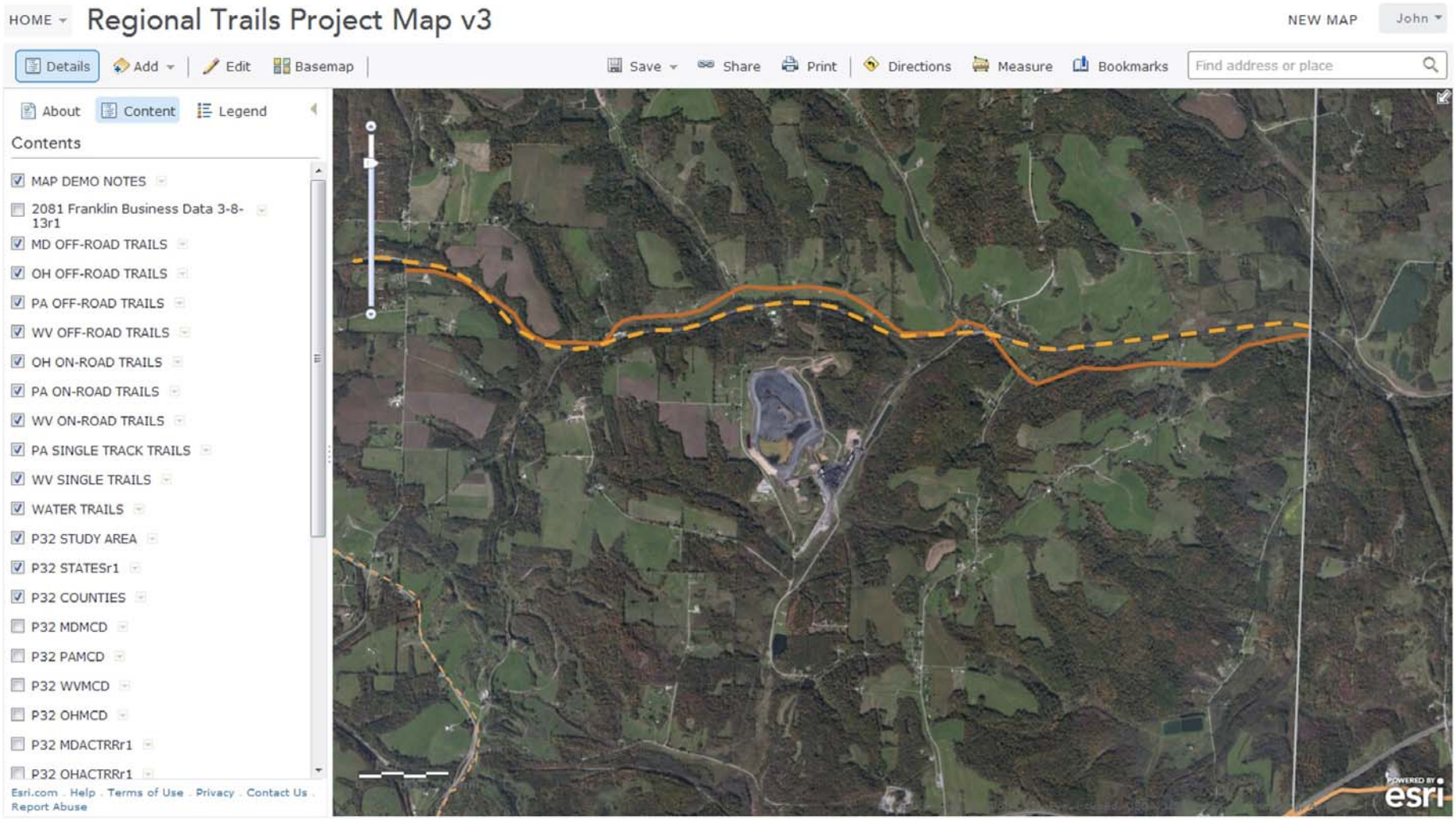
P32+ Regional Trail GIS Database



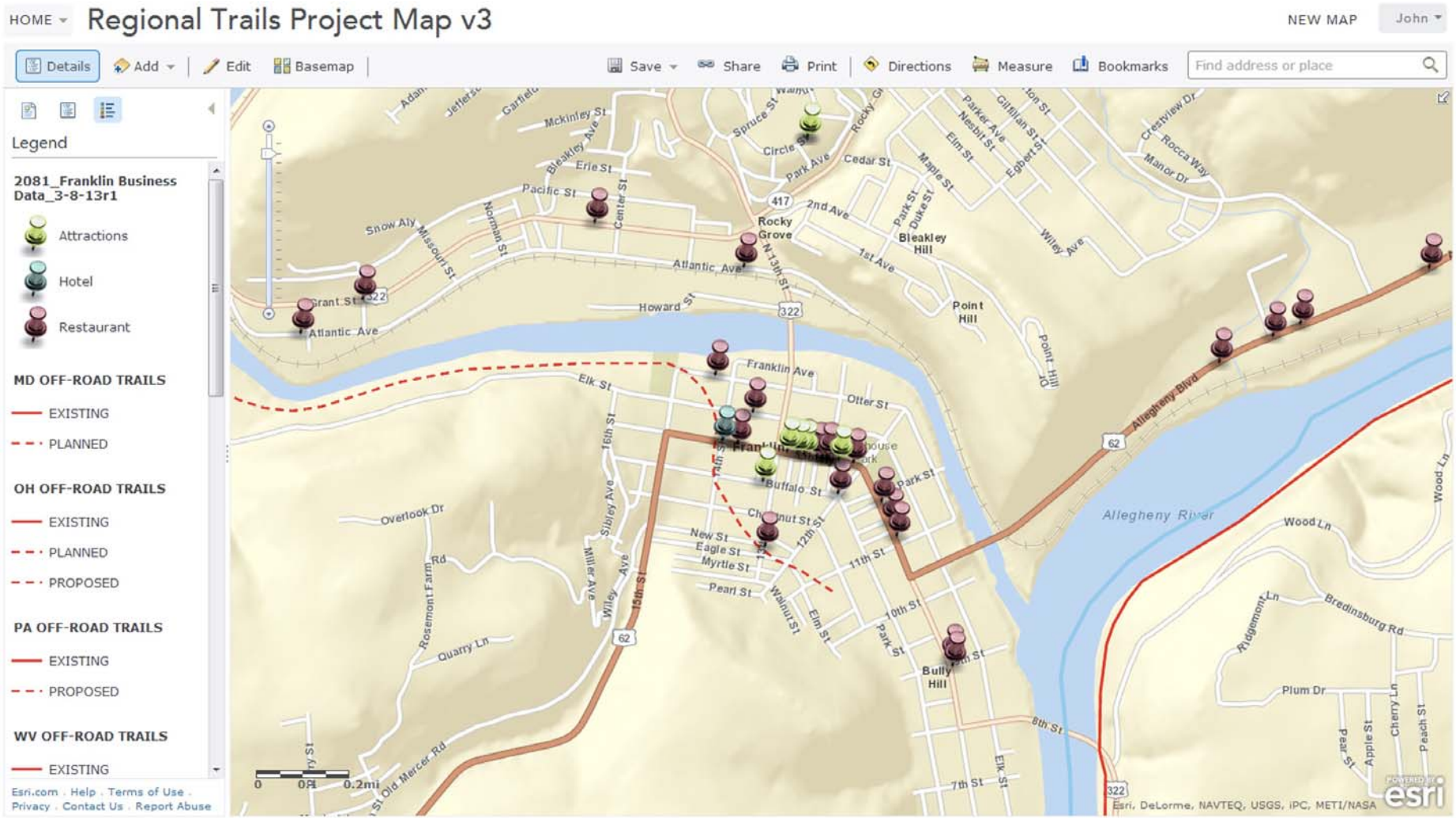
Panhandle Trail Assessment

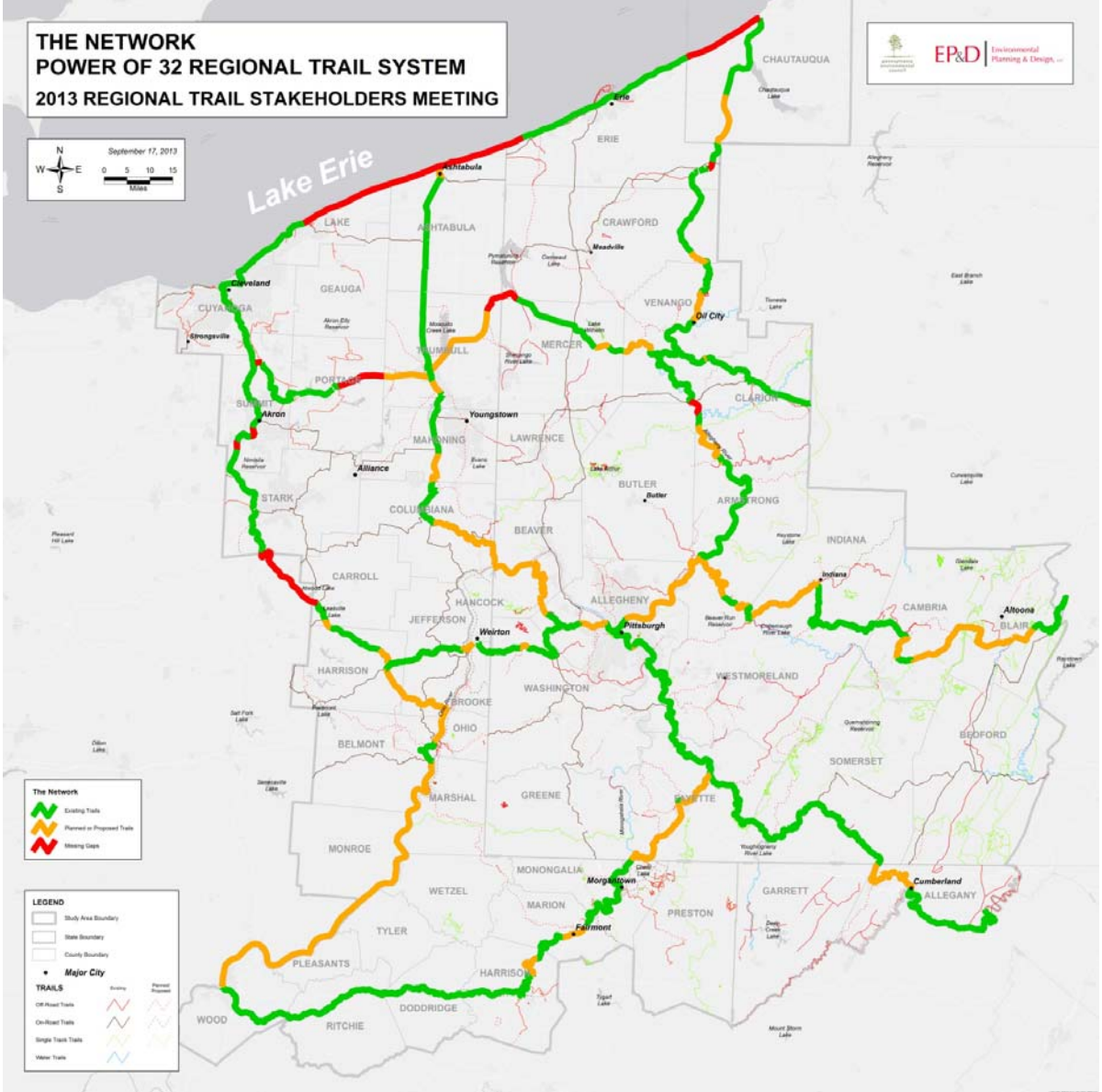


Panhandle Trail Assessment continued

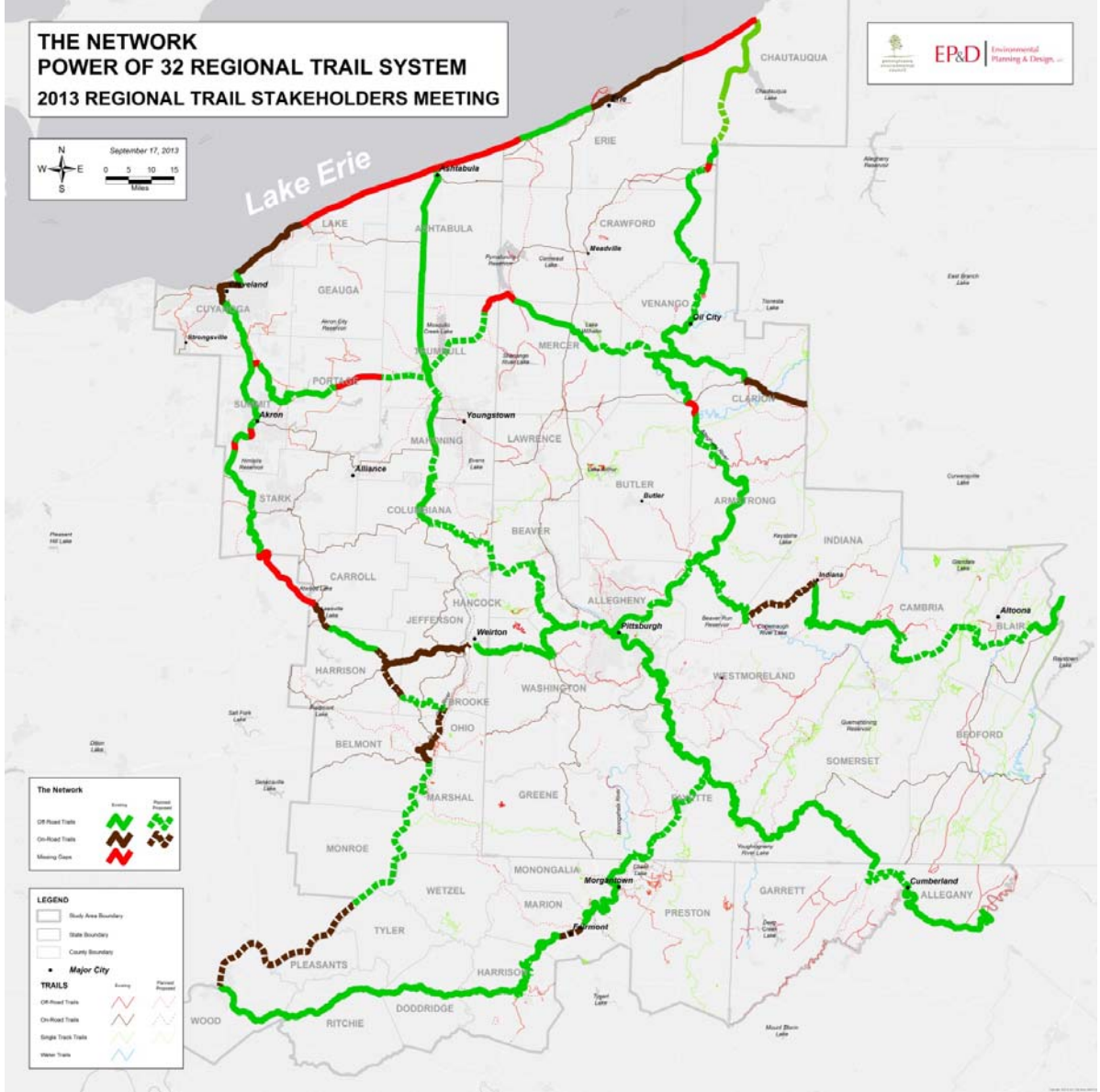


Franklin Business Districts Analysis

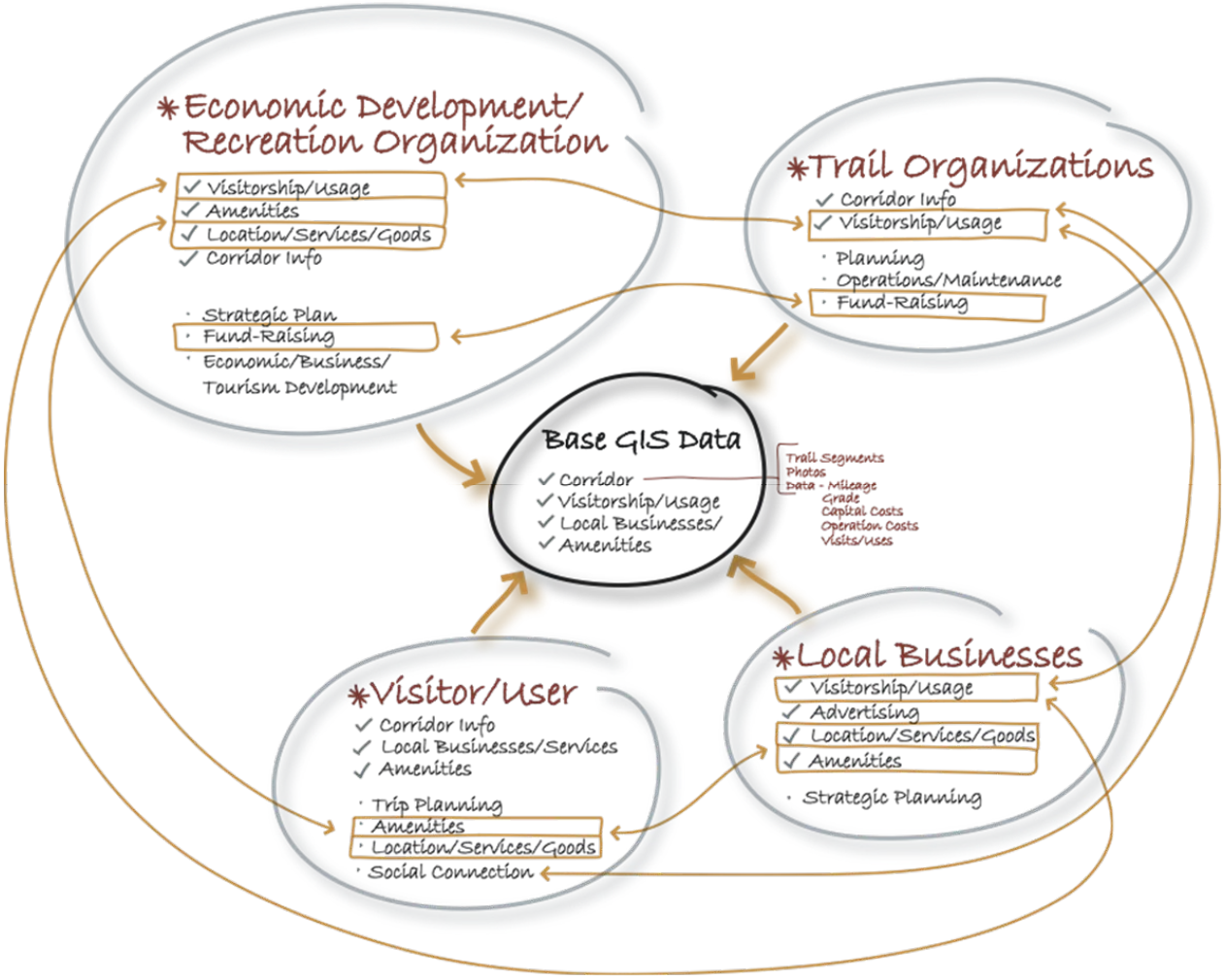




Regional Trail Network with Completion Status Indicated



Regional Trail Network with Trail Type Indicated



Leveraging the GIS Data – More Than a "Map Maker"

Data Engine For Mobile Apps

Trail Navigation

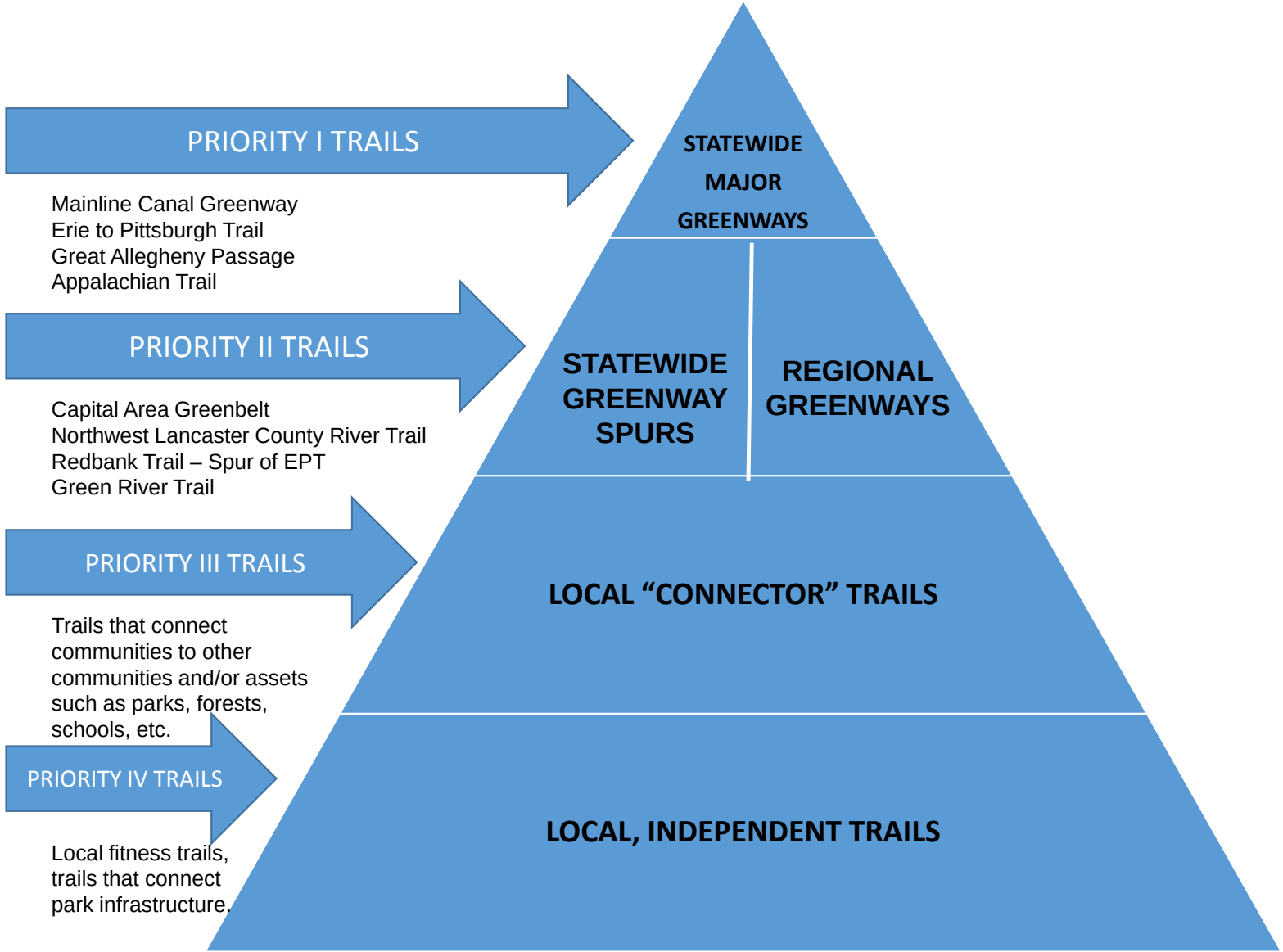
Travel Journal

Route Planner

Trail Service Locator

Trail Maintenance Log

pennsylvania environmental council


PRIORITY I TRAILS
Mainline Canal Greenway
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail
Great Allegheny Passage
Appalachian Trail
PRIORITY II TRAILS
Capital Area Greenbelt
Northwest Lancaster County River Trail
Redbank Trail – Spur of EPT
Green River Trail
PRIORITY III TRAILS
Trails that connect communities to other communities and/or assets such as parks, forests, schools, etc.
PRIORITY IV TRAILS
Local fitness trails, trails that connect park infrastructure.
STATEWIDE MAJOR GREENWAYS
STATEWIDE GREENWAY SPURS
REGIONAL GREENWAYS
LOCAL "CONNECTOR" TRAILS
LOCAL, INDEPENDENT TRAILS