



## **Riverfront Community Linear Greenway Prototype: Riverside**

### **The Community:**

Riverside is a community located along one of Allegheny County's four rivers. Riverside is unique because it does not represent just one type of community. Rather, it includes a variety of communities that can differ greatly from one another in area, population, median household income and other characteristics. Riverside's land uses along the river range from open space with direct river access, to active industrial uses with barge and rail facilities, to brownfields with no river access at all.

### **Recreation and Park Facilities:**

Riverside's recreation facilities along the river may include a marina and boat launch, a pocket park with benches and a pavilion, a playground, or a picnic area. Or, most likely, Riverside has no recreation facilities at all by the river. Neighboring communities may have a walking trail that ends at the Riverside municipal border.

### **Defining and Meeting the Needs:**

Riverside aspires to be a part of a continuous linear greenway and trail system linking approximately 70 municipalities throughout Allegheny County and beyond, to other metropolitan areas such as Erie, Harrisburg, and Washington DC. The first priority for Riverside is to establish a partnership with Friends of the Riverfront, PEC, & Allegheny County to coordinate with the Allegheny County Riverfronts Project. The goals of this Project are:

- To provide continuous access along the four rivers in Allegheny County (the Youghiogheny, the Monongahela, the Allegheny, and the Ohio).
- To conserve biologically, environmentally, and scenically important lands and islands along and in the rivers.
- To help municipalities maintain and/or improve the quality of riverfront development including impacts on water quality.
- To restore certain lands to a more environmentally sustainable state.
- To provide for a positive non-motorized recreational experience on and along the rivers.

If Riverside's current land uses include an active railroad, industrial facility, or highway along the riverfront, however, it may need to find alternatives to a linear greenway project.

The second priority is to adopt the Riverfront recommendations of Allegheny Places as part of a Multi-Municipal or Municipal Comp Plan.

It is important to develop and implement sound and sustainable riverfront planning and development ordinances and practices. Therefore, the third priority is the adoption of the County’s Riverfront Overlay District into the municipal zoning ordinance. This County tool can be used “as is”, or as a basis for Riverside’s own overlay zoning ordinance.

The fourth priority is to adopt an official map to reserve land for a Riverfront Park. This map is a tool for reserving land that the municipality intends to acquire in the future. Another important aspect to consider when reserving land is conservation. Three Rivers Second Nature (3R2N) has identified land within the river corridors that should be conserved for biological and/or scenic values.

The Allegheny Riverfront Project maintains and updates information on land and water trail corridors and access including the identification of priority acquisition properties. The project both seeks out and reacts to opportunities to purchase or receive donations of property (as easements or in fee) and to develop the necessary funding sources.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh priority implementation strategies are listed in the table below. As part of trail construction, there may be a need for restoring the natural character of areas identified by Three Rivers Second Nature (3R2N). This will include efforts to control invasive species (Japanese Knotweed, for example) on riverbanks and islands. Trail amenities should be incorporated into the project by working with communities, businesses and others to ensure that necessary goods and services are available to river and riverfront users. Focus will be on non-motorized uses.

<i>Summary of Recommendations: Riverfront Community Linear Greenway Prototype</i>		
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Goal/Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>
1	Establish a partnership with Friends of the Riverfront, PEC, & Allegheny County to coordinate with the Allegheny County Riverfronts Project.	To facilitate coordination, municipalities can appoint a committee that includes representatives from adjacent municipalities; delegate responsibility to the Planning Commission; utilize the Parks and Recreation board if one exists; or hire a consultant to represent one or more Riverside communities.
2	Adopt the Allegheny Places as to Riverfront recommendations as part of a multi-municipal or municipal Comp Plan.	When municipalities update an existing or adopt a new municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan, or a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, the <i>Allegheny Places</i> recommendations for riverfronts should be incorporated.
3	Adopt the County’s Riverfront Overlay District into the municipal zoning ordinance.	The model “Riverfront Overlay District” ordinance is available in the Allegheny Places eLibrary, in the <u>Model Ordinance Handbook</u> .

4	Adopt an official map to reserve land for Riverfront Park.	Municipalities need to prioritize the acquisition of land identified on the official map and work with land owners to determine the best mechanism for acquiring the property.
5	Develop a funding strategy & development timeline.	Revenue sources for fee-simple acquisition of land may include recreation fees collected as designated in MPC §503(1.1), grants, land or monetary donations, bonds, and other sources. Conservation easements can be used to preserve high-value, environmentally significant lands.
6	Seek additional funding.	See #5 above.
7	Initiate linear park & trail construction.	Complete final design and hire contractor.