



## Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program

*...offering recognition and assistance to the Greenway communities that value the River as an asset for sustainable economic development and healthy living.*

### Susquehanna Greenway Partnership

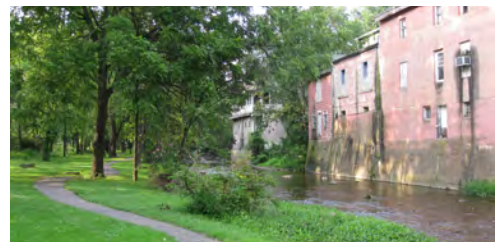
Since 2001, the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership (SGP) has been working to create the Susquehanna Greenway – a corridor of interconnected river towns, trails, parks, river access areas, and conserved lands that link people to the natural and cultural heritage of the Susquehanna River region. Nearly 500 miles in length, it's our State's longest greenway.

The Greenway balances the needs of today and tomorrow, promotes conservation of the environment for sustainable living, and supports the revitalization of healthy and successful communities. We celebrate the Susquehanna and its river towns as places of timeless value, shared memories and experiences – places to use, enjoy and to treasure. To help achieve these goals we have developed the Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program.

### Program Context

Since the time of its early human inhabitants the Susquehanna River has served as a primary resource for transportation, settlement, commerce and prosperity. After decades of reliance on automobiles, our society turned our backs on the river, and our development focused around highways. This has resulted in sprawling development, loss of productive farmland and forests, and a loss of investment in our core communities.

The Susquehanna Greenway mission encourages the conservation of productive farmland and natural resources, and investment in our core river town communities. We promote the exploration of Susquehanna river towns, and provide technical assistance to river town communities for revitalization initiatives.





## Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program

### Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Concept

As historical centers of economic activity, river towns contained the essentials needed for community life within walking distance; home, work and play were conveniently woven together. These community relationships are still valued, and people choose to visit and live in communities with stable economies, walkable and bike-friendly neighborhoods, nearby recreation, and memorable town centers for business and social activity.

The SGP holds a vision for vibrant river towns that are actively connected to the Susquehanna and engaged with each other. To realize this vision, technical assistance is available to help river towns that desire to have:

- A community vision statement for reconnecting with the river.
- Community members and river enthusiasts with diverse interests working together to make the river a vital part of community life.
- Improved connections between the downtown and the river identified both physically and economically.
- Their town unified around a project to reconnect the downtown to the river, and understand what needs to be done to make it happen.

### Becoming a Susquehanna Greenway River Town

This Program provides assistance to Susquehanna Greenway communities that seek to revitalize and celebrate their River connection, based on four key principles:

- Respect and work with the nature of the Susquehanna River
- Connect with the River (physically, visually, emotionally)
- Involve people with the River and with their River Town
- Recognize that economic development favors River Towns

These principles provide a foundation for:

- Conducting a river town assessment
- Defining a community vision and goals
- Developing an action plan for revitalization projects
- Identifying partners for implementation
- Collectively promoting the River Towns of the Susquehanna Greenway



SGP and our Regional Lead Organizations (RLO's) and Regional Greenway Coordinators provide technical assistance to help communities take stock of their assets and look to the future. We can work with your community leaders and local River Town Team to develop a plan of action for your community's revitalization.



## Community Benefits

Short Term Benefits	Long Term Benefits
Assistance with forming a community River Town Team and Community Visioning.	A 'Sense of Place' with revitalized community pride, image, and identity that is attractive to people and business.
Technical assistance for community assessment, planning, project identification, funding, and the next steps for project implementation	A pedestrian and bike-friendly community offering options for healthy lifestyles.
Eligible for DCNR Peer-to-Peer funding and assistance	Protection of water and land resources through implementation of green infrastructure
Designation as a Susquehanna Greenway River Town, including signs and logo usage.	Association and collaboration with a system of river towns for collective marketing.
Community promotion through the SGP website, newsletter, press releases and social media.	Diversified and sustainable economic base.

## Selection Criteria

Any community located within the Susquehanna Greenway corridor can submit an application (view map at [www.susquehannagreenway.org](http://www.susquehannagreenway.org)). The application must be completed by a local town official (mayor, manager, supervisor, council chair, etc.). It will also be necessary to create or assign a River Town Team to work with the SGP-RLO / Regional Greenway Coordinator through this process. The committee should represent a diverse cross-section of your community, and include at least one member from local government. Each applicant will need to work with the RLO/ Regional Greenway Coordinator to complete a Susquehanna Greenway River Town Assessment, which will assist in establishing a benchmark and structure for this initiative.

Your municipal government will be asked to pass a resolution adopting the four (4) Susquehanna Greenway River Town Principles, and to commit to meet at least two (2) of the following criteria:

1. Host an annual river town project, event, or celebration to build volunteer participation in Susquehanna Greenway development.
2. Foster smart low-impact environmental conservation and town development practices to enhance your community's appeal and quality of life. Ensure planning documents and ordinances promote sustainable land use and protection of water resources.
3. Review your river town streets, parks, natural areas, and riverfront to identify impediments to safe walking and bicycling and opportunities for new bicycle and pedestrian connections to the River.



## Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program

4. Collaborate on an educational or service-learning project to broaden citizen awareness about the River and the Susquehanna Greenway and its value to river towns.
5. Engage businesses to stimulate sustainable economic development linked to river town branding and Greenway-focused business development, expansion, and promotion.
6. Develop a river town brochure and website, and advertise through media and social media to promote your community as a Susquehanna Greenway River Town.

## Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by the RLO / Regional Greenway Coordinator and the SGP River Town Committee. Recommendations for acceptance will be submitted to the SGP Board of Directors for their approval.

## Next Steps

Applicants will be notified of their acceptance within one week of the Board decision. SGP’s RLO or Regional Greenway Coordinator will then meet with your advisory committee to complete the Susquehanna Greenway River Town Assessment. Based on the results of the assessment, priorities will be set, and an action plan for community revitalization will be developed.

Once these are accomplished, your community will receive designation as a Susquehanna Greenway River Town, which will be acknowledged with press releases and the presentation of two designation signs.

A waiting list will be developed for the communities not selected, and the SGP will suggest steps for the community to take in preparation for the next application deadline.

This represents the initial steps of an on-going process, intended to provide additional community improvement through continued implementation of the action plan.

The Susquehanna Greenway River Town Program is made possible by the efforts of community leaders and volunteers and the financial assistance of:



Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Chesapeake Bay Commission

Individual and business donors



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES