



Susquehanna Greenway

River Towns

A program of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership



The Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program

Envisioned as one of the longest greenways in Pennsylvania, the Susquehanna Greenway is a billowing ribbon of open space that links the Susquehanna River to its adjacent lands and many river communities. The Susquehanna Greenway—with its parks, boat launches, trails, and other outdoor amenities—provides a multitude of resources to residents and visitors, serving as a foundation of extraordinary value from which communities in Pennsylvania can prosper.

The Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program is designed to help communities enhance and build meaningful relationships to the Susquehanna Greenway and connect to a larger system of support and inspiration. Our collaborative program works with communities to build leadership teams, galvanize support, navigate the planning process, and identify

community-sourced programs and projects that will strengthen these connections.

To jumpstart the process, SGP staff will work alongside your community team and support interdependent work through guided exercises and a step-by-step process that removes the guess work, maximizes resources, fosters your visions, and sets your community up for success.

By investing in the vision of the Susquehanna Greenway, we create healthier and greener communities, grow connections, attract investment, encourage appreciation for nature, and improve the potential for recreation tourism. The result is a more vibrant and connected river town community, enriched by the very resource that runs right through your backyard—the Susquehanna Greenway.

Why should my community become a Susquehanna Greenway River Town?

As a designated Susquehanna Greenway River Town, you will discover the potential of your own river community while joining the ranks of a larger network of Susquehanna Greenway River Towns across Pennsylvania. The River Towns Program offers technical assistance and a step-by-step workbook to foster your vision and relationship to the river, as well as grow your section of the Greenway with new opportunities for engaging with the outdoors. In the long term, these additions will support active, healthy living for residents and enhance the quality of life in your town.



Why should my community pursue the SGP's River Towns Program over other programs?

Your community has a long history with the Susquehanna River. SGP's River Towns Program is tailored specifically to benefit communities like yours by honoring that history and strengthening that historic and existing connection. Our goal is to provide your team with the guidance and support to elevate your river town through the Greenway's resources, making the most of the assets that exist right in your backyard.

Not only do we provide step-by-step guidance, but we also advocate for your river town as a part of the larger network.

Benefits of becoming a Susquehanna Greenway River Town:



Foster a communal sense of place and strong local identity that is attractive to multi-generational residents, businesses, and visitors.



Strengthen regional connections with neighboring River Towns through participation in the Susquehanna Greenway River Town Community Network.



Renew and expand your community's connection to outdoor resources of the Susquehanna Greenway.



Improve community health through increased access to bicycle and pedestrian-friendly opportunities.



Maximize economic opportunities through strengthened recreational culture, outdoor connections, and resource awareness.

What support will my community receive from SGP?



Guidance and technical support throughout all stages of the Susquehanna Greenway River Town Process



Access to a comprehensive River Towns Workbook, as well as facilitated **workshops** throughout the process



Promotion as a designated Susquehanna Greenway River Town and a featured destination on the SGP website and social media platforms



Materials to celebrate and promote your town's designation



Assistance with Action Plan implementation following your community designation

Does my community qualify for this program?

The Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program is open to all communities located within the Susquehanna Greenway corridor in Pennsylvania. Applicants may be individual municipalities or a coalition of multiple adjacent communities. To check if your town is within the Susquehanna Greenway, visit the Susquehanna Greenway Online Interactive Map at susquehannagreenway.org/map.



How long does the program take?

Timelines vary, but a usual period from application through to designation typically takes between 1-2 years, depending on your River Town Team's activities and community process.



How long does designation last?

Upon successfully attaining your community's designation as a 'Susquehanna Greenway River Town' your river town will enter the 'Implementation Phase' of the program. River Towns are asked to complete two activities per year from their action plan and participate in an annual check-in with SGP to maintain good standing in the program. A designation renewal is scheduled every five (5) years. The graphic below represents a visual timeline of the Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program.



Getting Started

So, you have read through our overview and are interested in participating in the Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program. What comes next? In this section, you will find details on starting your journey to becoming a designated Susquehanna Greenway River Town.

The first step is to connect with an SGP staff member to explore your community’s participation. SGP can be reached by emailing info@susquehannagreenway.org or calling 570-478-0178.

During this discussion, we will walk you through the details of what the program entails, allow you the chance to ask questions about the process and ongoing designation requirements, and help you determine whether your community qualifies for the program and is ready to take the next step.

After discussing the program with SGP, a letter of interest is required to initiate your application. Letters of interest are not meant to be elaborate [see page 9 for more details]. Instead, they are your opportunity to introduce your community and tell us why your community would like to join the program. Letters of interest are reviewed by SGP and accepted communities will then be sent an application packet to complete.

Once you receive an application packet, SGP Staff will meet with your community to assist you in navigating the application process.

This process includes answering questions about your community, listing members of your core River Town Team, providing preliminary information on past planning efforts, and submitting an application fee of \$250 to cover processing and participation. Letters of support from partners and stakeholders are welcome. Upon approval by the SGP Board of Directors , your community will be assigned an SGP contact and begin the 4-stage River Towns Process.



Guiding Principles for Susquehanna Greenway River Towns



Respect and work with the natural features of the Susquehanna River and the Susquehanna Greenway corridor.



Strengthen physical and visual connections between River Towns and the outdoor resources of Susquehanna Greenway.



Actively engage community members with the opportunities of the river, the Greenway, and their River Town.



Foster a diverse culture of outdoor recreation that encourages active, healthy living.

The River Towns Process

The River Towns 4-Stage Process: Organize for Success, Discover Your River Town, Strategize & Prioritize, Designate & Celebrate

The Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program is broken down into a four (4)-stage process.

- STAGE
1

Organize, SGP will provide a program orientation to help guide you through initial organization steps to help set the stage for success.
- STAGE
2

Discover, SGP will assist your River Town Team as you conduct the bulk of your town's community outreach, inventory, and planning.
- STAGE
3

Strategize, SGP will help your town to prioritize projects and programs into an Action Plan based on the information learned through the discovery phase.
- STAGE
4

Designate & Celebrate, Following the submission of your summary documents and Action Plan, your town becomes officially designated as a Susquehanna Greenway River Town.

● STAGE 1: Organize

A robust and diverse River Towns Team will be key to your success within the River Towns Program. Following your enrollment, SGP will work with your identified River Town core team to expand your team's membership to include diverse perspectives, populations, and interests from your community. SGP will offer a workshop orientation to the members you have selected and assist you in setting up your team's order of operations and program timeline. This orientation will be an opportunity to familiarize your team with program goals and to introduce the comprehensive River Town workbook, a resource to help guide you through the designation process alongside SGP.

● STAGE 2: Discover

Discovery takes an in-depth look at your community, its opportunities, its challenges, and what your residents envision. SGP will provide support, workshops, and references as your River Town Team conducts a series of assessments and inventories of your community's assets, and hosts inclusive, public outreach activities.

● STAGE 3: Strategize

Informed by the information gathered during Stage 2, your River Town Team will strategize to create an Action Plan – namely, a list of projects and programs to prioritize moving forward. Community adoption of your Action Plan and a municipal resolution complete this stage.

● STAGE 4: Designate & Celebrate

Following the successful approval of your River Town Report by the SGP River Town Committee and SGP Board of Directors, your River Town will be officially designated—it's time to celebrate! A designation fee, based on a tiered system associated with population size, will be required to finalize your designation.

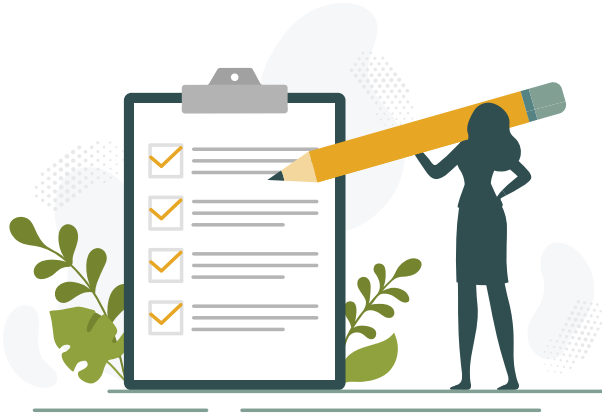
Stage 4 marks the end of the River Towns Process, and the beginning of the important work of implementing your Action Plan and participating in the greater River Towns Community Network of the Susquehanna Greenway.



Is My Community Ready?

To gauge your river town’s readiness for the program, we’ve created a checklist that outlines the key foundational components that your river town should have in place.

	Yes	No	Unsure
My community has contacted the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership to discuss the River Towns Program.			
My community has a core group of residents and leaders interested in the River Towns Program.			
I have municipal support and commitment for my community to engage in the River Towns Program.			
My river town has the resources (human & financial), or is committed to pursuing the resources, to support the first four stages of the River Towns Program.			
We understand that a successful River Town Team consists of a diversity of skills and members, and we are willing to grow our team to reflect the diversity of our community in both skill and composition.			
My community can commit to the 1 to 2-year process necessary for achieving initial designation into the River Towns Program.			
I understand that commitment goes beyond designation and includes an ongoing implementation phase.			



If you’ve checked ‘yes’ to all statements, then you are ready to proceed to the next step in the application process: submitting a Letter of Interest to SGP! If you’ve checked ‘no’ or ‘unsure,’ it may be necessary to reevaluate and take additional steps before proceeding. You may contact SGP at info@susquehannagreenway.org to learn more about how your town can take steps to fulfill the suggested requirements.

Submit your Letter of Interest

To initiate the application process, a letter of interest is requested. Your letter of interest is your opportunity to introduce your community and provide information as to why you are interested in enrolling in the River Town Program. Letters of interest should be authored by a member of your municipal government and submitted on official community letterhead. This entity may include the mayor’s office, a member of borough council, a downtown manager, a municipal authority, etc.

Once your Letter of Interest is submitted, you can expect to hear back from an SGP representative within two weeks. SGP is committed to making the application process as user-friendly as possible; if at any time you have questions, please reach out to an SGP staff member.

Your letter should include the following:

1. Describe your community’s relationship to the Susquehanna River and Greenway. Consider your community’s heritage, history, recreational, and physical attributes as they relate to the Greenway.
2. Outline why your community is interested in applying to the River Towns Program. What specific goals and objectives does your community have for the SGP River Towns Program?
3. Does your community have a team in place committed to the program? Can you tell us about your team, its membership, and skills set?

Your letter of interest may be emailed to SGP at info@susquehannagreenway.org

or mailed to:

Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
Attn: River Towns Program
301 Market Street Unit #649
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Susquehanna Greenway
River Towns Program





The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to growing the Susquehanna Greenway through its mission to connect communities along the Susquehanna River by promoting active healthy living and connection to the outdoors. We work towards our mission through three program areas: Trails (land and water), River Towns, and Education and Outreach, building connections along the Susquehanna River within Pennsylvania that transforms communities into places where people want to live, work, and explore.

The SGP holds a vision for a vibrant River Towns Program where River Towns are actively connected to the Susquehanna River, the Susquehanna Greenway, and engaged with each other. The Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program encourages connections to the Greenway by providing technical assistance to our river town communities that promotes revitalization initiatives that focus on preservation, conservation, and restoration of natural, cultural, environmental, and historical resources.