

# Trail

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which would eventually cross-over with the expanding Gettysburg Interloop Trail in Straban Township and a section of a proposed 9/11 memorial trail, which is part of a larger, national effort to create a trail that links New York with Pennsylvania and D.C., where the four planes went down after the terrorist attacks in 2001. Hickethier said, although the trails would not take followers directly to historic buildings and monuments throughout the county, efforts would be taken to direct trail users to those sites.

"We talked about having one of the trails go right out to Sach's Covered Bridge, but it's very difficult to build a trail that touches all the places in Gettysburg that are historical. So what we envision is that you'll have historical markers and signs to mark historical events along the trail and direct people off-trail to see those places," he said.

Apart from appealing to tourists and history purists, Gogniat says the trails would also provide a boon to the county in other ways.

"Trails are good for three things: They're good for health, they're good for wealth, and they're good for joy," Gogniat declares. "Obviously, the health part you can figure out: You can ride your bike, you can walk, you can jog, you can ride a horse or do other physical activity. The wealth part is that trails are an economic driver beyond your wildest imagination. The Allegheny Passage, according to the Department of Resources and Conservation, has brought in \$50 million for the economic activ-

ity to that area, from Pittsburgh to Cumberland. So this loop will be literally millions of dollars in economic activity to the community. And the joy part is, a trail is the friendliest place there is. It's multi-generational, it's multi-ethnic, it's multi-racial. People nod and say hello and are friendly to each other as they pass them by on trails."

"The idea that people can get on their bike and make a four or five-day journey on the trail is very exciting," Hickethier adds. "Bicycle tourism is really big in the United States right now, so the idea that these people can travel to these historic sites with minimal motor vehicle traffic and pollution and bring in tourism dollars makes this such a great undertaking."

Having received letters of acknowledgment from the municipalities the trail would traverse, HAPBI is currently in the process of raising grant money to have costly feasibility studies performed in order to determine where the trails will go.

"It's not glamorous, but that's what you need to if you want to get money to engineer and construct a trail," Hickethier points out, adding that several community organizations have expressed interest in donating to a capital campaign currently in development. "There is support at the state level, but like with any other grants, you're completing with other organizations."

Apart from money, Hickethier said the biggest obstacle "is using land to create the off-road trail. A lot of people say 'Trails are good, but not on my land or next to my house.' And I would just like them to really think about

what's been done in other parts of the country and how beneficial trails are. It's been shown that having a trail next to your house can actually increase the property value because younger people are looking for those things when they purchase homes. It's very attractive to be able to walk down the block and get on a trail and get exercise and take your kids for a walk or a hike. Trails aren't bringing criminals and bad elements into a neighborhood. They're bringing happy families with kids and older people enjoying exercise and health."

Others agree that bringing the GHT to the area is pretty much a no-brainer, offering many advantages to not only Adams County, but its surrounding regions.

"The Grand History Trail will be a great addition to our county," says County Commissioner Marty Qually. "Not only will it bring visitors from urban areas, who want to enjoy our scenic community, but also with a portion of the trail overlapping the 9/11 Memorial Trail, we will honor modern American heroes."

"I think the best way to describe why this is such an exciting project is that we've seen the success of other trail networks that have developed from individual trails, and how putting a bunch of trails together into a network really creates a dynamic economic engine for small communities," said York Rail Trail Authority Chairman Carl Knoch. "In terms of a recreational experience, you take the Heritage Rail Trail or the Hanover Trolley Trail, that's

a one-day experience. You create a 300-mile, interconnected trail network, and you're talking about a multiple-day experience, which is a much more dynamic tourist attraction for the region."

With links to the larger trail being constructed segment by segment, it could be years before the Grand History Trail makes its way to Gettysburg and York, but its creator says that does not deter his passion for the project: Having watched his idea grow from scribbles on a napkin in 2006 to the organized effort it has become, Gogniat, who is now 68, said he is very happy to have gotten the ball rolling on the project, even if he may not live to see the fruits of his labor realized.

"I'm a retired person, and something like this takes a lot of time, and I may not have much of it left," he laughs. "But it's like planting a tree. You plant a tree because you know they're beautiful when they grow up, but sometimes you don't get to see them grow up. I have a group of people working on this who are dedicated to it and are trying to get their politicians interested, so it's bound to happen at some point, because it's too good to pass up. When will it happen and will I get to see it happen? I don't know, but the harder you work, the luckier you get, and I'm working hard to keep people interested. We just keep pushing forward and pushing forward."

For more information on how to join in the efforts, email those involved via [grandhistorytrail.org](mailto:grandhistorytrail.org).