

## **Position Description: Rail Trail Strategic Planning AmeriCorps Intern**

**Department:** Parks & Recreation

**Location:** Harrison County Parks and Recreation, Clarksburg, WV

**Duration:** 32 weeks

**Schedule:** 40 Hours a week

**Reports To:** Director of Parks and Recreation

**Compensation:** c/o AmeriCorps WV Ready

### **About the Role**

The Rail Trail Strategic Planning AmeriCorps Intern will lead the development of a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Rail Trail system. The plan will identify programming opportunities along the trail to boost local economic development, strengthen small business participation, and unite the community around trail use and stewardship. This is a hands-on role with field engagement, stakeholder facilitation, data collection/analysis, and clear deliverables culminating in a presentation to agency leadership and elected officials.

### **Key Responsibilities**

#### Strategic Planning & Research

- Conduct baseline assessment of the Rail Trail network (segments, conditions, amenities, connectivity, usage patterns, & safety considerations).
- Benchmark programming models from peer trail systems (events, health & wellness, outdoor education, cultural/historic interpretation, art installations, volunteer programs, youth engagement, adaptive recreation).
- Analyze local demographics, tourism trends, and business landscape to identify opportunities for trail-linked economic activity (pop-up markets, trail promotions, guided walks/hikes/rides/tours).
- Map assets and needs (access points, parking, signage, lighting, restrooms, water stations, ADA accessibility, wayfinding, public art).

#### Community & Stakeholder Engagement

- Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan (public workshops, intercept surveys on the trail, online surveys, focus groups).
- Facilitate meetings with public officials, advisory groups, local businesses, chambers of commerce, tourism entities, schools/universities, health systems, law enforcement/EMS, and community organizations.
- Build partnerships that support programming and cross-promotion (health challenges, seasonal festivals, heritage walks, mountain bike groups).

## Programming & Economic Development

- Identify and design a portfolio of trail programs (low-cost pilots and scalable signature events) aligned to community goals: health & wellness, arts/culture, environmental education, accessibility, youth development, and economic vitality.
- Create activation strategies for trailheads (e.g., pop-up vendor zones, performance spaces, kid-friendly stations, interpretive signage).
- Recommend inclusive programming
- Identify sponsorship packages and funding opportunities (grants, corporate/health partners, local foundations).

## Implementation & Evaluation

- Develop a 3–5 year Strategic Plan with phased implementation roadmap and budget ranges.
- Define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and data collection methods
- Pilot up to 2–3 quick-start programs during the internship (as feasible), gather feedback, and refine.

## Communications & Reporting

- Produce professional-quality materials: executive summary, full plan, maps, slide deck, and public-facing one-pagers.
- Present findings to Parks & Recreation leadership, advisory groups, and elected officials.
- Provide recommendations on branding, messaging, and marketing toolkits.

## **Deliverables & Milestones examples**

- Project charter, stakeholder plan, baseline trail assessment, engagement plan, survey instruments.
- Benchmarking analysis; asset & gap mapping; initial programming concepts; draft economic impact framework.
- Community workshops & focus groups; intercept/online survey deployment; partnership development; draft program portfolio.
- Implementation roadmap; budget scenarios; sponsorship/grant targets; risk management and accessibility recommendations.
- Pilot activations (2–3), data collection, evaluation, and iteration; draft strategic plan and executive summary.
- Final plan, slide deck, partner toolkit (branding, event-in-a-box templates), presentation to leadership/board.

## **Qualifications**

### Required

- Currently enrolled in or recently graduated from a program in Parks & Recreation Management, Urban/Regional Planning, Public Administration, Community Development, Tourism & Hospitality, Environmental Studies, or related field.
- Strong research, writing, and communication skills; comfortable facilitating public meetings.
- Experience with project management, data collection (surveys/interviews), and basic analytics.
- Proficiency with productivity tools (e.g., Microsoft 365), and basic mapping/visualization (e.g., ArcGIS Online/QGIS, or willingness to learn).
- Ability to conduct field work on the trail (walking/biking), including occasional evenings/weekends for community events.

### Preferred

- Experience with recreation programming and event planning.
- Familiarity with economic development concepts
- Skills in graphic design/communications (Canva, basic Adobe) and social media strategy.
- Knowledge of inclusive, accessible programming and ADA considerations.
- Grant writing or sponsorship packaging experience.

### Core Competencies

- Community-centered: equitable engagement
- Collaboration: works effectively with cross-sector partners.
- Initiative & ownership: self-directed, organized, and deadline-driven.
- Systems thinking: connects programming to broader health, economic, and environmental outcomes.
- Clear communication: translates complex ideas into practical, actionable plans.

### Work Environment & Requirements

- Field work along the Rail Trail (weather-permitting) and office time for research/reporting.
- Occasional evening/weekend hours for engagement and pilot activations.
- Valid driver's license and reliable transportation.
- Ability to lift up to 50 lbs for event materials.
- Background check.
- The agency is an Equal Opportunity Employer.