

NEWS

From the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Delaware Canal Vision Study Complete and Work Begins

EASTON (April 19) – The ambitious Delaware Canal Vision Study is complete. With a broad scope, extensive public outreach and innovative findings, it's the first study of its kind for the National Historic Landmark located in Bucks and Northampton counties. The vision process involved residents, municipal officials, engineers, architects, landscape architects, planners and environmental professionals who engaged in collaborative discussions about the Canal's history, structure, opportunities for revenue-generation, storm water relief and partnerships.

Acknowledging the fragility of the Delaware Canal and the need for robust public input, Philadelphia based William Penn Foundation provided funds to the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (D&L) for the Vision Study. Conceived by Delaware Canal 21, the project was directed and administered by the D&L with key guidance provided by the PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources and the Friends of the Delaware Canal.

Project leaders have already initiated several strategies outlined in the Vision Study including wide access to the Study on the project website www.delawareacanalvision.org, as well as partner websites. To move study findings forward, research is underway, meetings with key cohorts have taken place and applications are being prepared to bring recommendations to fruition.

Impetus for the project recognized the D&L Trail Delaware Canal Towpath Section as one of the most historic segments of Philadelphia's Circuit Trails. The Study also addresses potential impacts and benefits of the 182 year old Delaware Canal to the larger Delaware River Watershed.

Three 100 Year Floods that devastated large sections of the Canal in the early 2000s left no water in the in the channel that passes through some of Pennsylvania's most scenic and historic landscape. Damages, coupled with state budget austerity, catalyzed Delaware Canal 21 to seek a comprehensive public Vision Study to help reimagine the Delaware Canal as a multi-use economic, environmental, and public utility asset.

The resulting 163-page Delaware Canal Vision Study was prepared by Simone-Collins Landscape Architects of Norristown, PA. Principal Bill Collins, with assistance from urban innovation expert Harris Steinberg, led the partners and hundreds of participants through the visioning process that started in early 2014.

The final study creates a framework for the future of the Delaware Canal that takes into account the regional historic context and operational complexities of the Canal as a man-made environmental system. It addresses how the industrial revolution-era waterway can be optimized to help steward and conserve the region as a working artifact. The Study process brought new insight into the challenges and opportunities presented when multiple civic systems are integrated with recreation and conservation priorities within Pennsylvania's state parks system. Finally, the Delaware Canal Towpath as part of the regional alternative transportation network to interconnect with the Circuit Trail, D&L Trail and East Coast Greenway networks was explored.

For more information about the Delaware Canal Vision Study, please contact Elissa Garofalo at elissa@delawareandlehigh.org or call 610-923-3548 x223.

The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that preserves historic pathway that carried coal and iron from Wilkes-Barre to Philadelphia. Today, the D&L Trail connects people to nature, culture, communities, recreation and our industrial heritage.

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