

First Impressions

First impressions are important. If a trail user is faced with an unknown downtown that is visually unwelcoming, they may return to the trail and continue onto the next convenient stop. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for people who are downtown frequently to stop “seeing” the current conditions in the same way a first-time visitor sees their town. These questions are intended to spark locals to take a look at their community through new eyes.

This worksheet is designed to encourage an evaluation of the first impression of newcomers to your community. You are looking for general impressions more than individual issues. Most questions are yes or no with a column for when the reviewer is unsure. Some questions require a count with space for an answer. The final questions may need a more complete answer on the back of this worksheet. Most importantly, these questions should be sparking more questions and more discussion.

Overall Impressions	Yes	Some	No	?	Comment
FI-1 Is there a "gateway" point to enter & leave town/commercial district? For example, signage, mural,					
FI-2 Do business hours match customers' needs? (i.e. open on weekends, evenings?)					
FI-3 Are businesses clustered in a compact area?					
FI-4 Are customers greeted warmly when they walk through the door?					
FI-5 In general, stores clean and well kept?					
FI-6 In general, are window displays appealing and inviting?					
FI-7 Are there window displays that show off the community's heritage?					
FI-8 Does the downtown feel distinct or special?					
FI-9 Does the town appear economically healthy?					
FI-10 Does your town feel safe?					
FI-11 As a whole, are you enjoying your walk through downtown?					
FI-12 Are walls and storefronts kept free of graffiti?					
FI-13 In general, are vacant storefronts reasonably maintained?					
FI-14 Are the streets swept and maintained?					
FI-15 Are the sidewalks swept and maintained?					
FI-16 Are there street lights that illuminate the sidewalk or just the street?					

**First Impression
Self-Evaluation Worksheets**

Name:
Date:

Town Name:

First Impressions		Yes	Some	No	?	Comment
FI-17	Is there a solid strip of businesses? (eg: not broken up by empty buildings or parking lots)					
FI-18	Are store fronts situated at the sidewalks?					
FI-19	Is there sidewalk or outdoor dining?					
FI-20	Are historic buildings restored and recognized?					
FI-21	Are the structures in town in a good condition overall?					
FI-22	Are there public-accessible restrooms in the town?					
FI-23	Are there public-accessible restrooms in the businesses?					
FI-24	Do the businesses offer information on the town/region?					
FI-25	Can employees answer questions about the town and region?					
FI-26	Do employees answer questions in a friendly manner?					
FI-27	Do shops carry souvenirs, especially related to the town?					
FI-28	Do employees suggest other businesses and/or attractions to visit in town?					
FI-29	Are there street trees and do they offer shade?					
FI-30	Are there banners to delineate the commercial core?					
FI-31	Are there benches and other convenient places to rest in the commercial core?					
FI-32	Are there bike racks convenient and easily accessed?					
FI-33	Are employees familiar with the trail and the nearby trailheads?					
FI-34	In general, are vacant storefronts reasonably maintained?					
FI-35	Does the community enforce building codes?					
FI-36	Are there planters and/or window boxes that are healthy and maintained?					
FI-37	Does the signage present a good image of the business without clutter, faded lettering, etc?					

**First Impression
Self-Evaluation Worksheets**

Name:
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Town Name:

FI-38	Does this community look inviting? Why?
FI-39	What is the most inviting feature in your community? Why?
FI-40	What is the most unattractive feature in your community? Why?
FI-41	If you were a visitor, would you want to explore further or leave? Why?

Historic Preservation

The D&L was commissioned by Congress to preserve and celebrate the history of the transportation route of the coal and iron ore as it passed through the five counties, Luzerne, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Bucks, on its way to fuel the industrial revolution. Consequently, preservation of local history of the Trail Towns along that route, which is part of this nationally-important heritage, is a vital part of the D&L Trail Town Program.

This worksheet is designed to encourage an evaluation of how the history of this community is preserved and shared. Most questions are yes or no with a column for when the reviewer is unsure. Some questions require a count with space for an answer. The final questions will need a more complete answer on the back of this worksheet. Most importantly, these questions should be sparking more questions and more discussion.

	Local Conditions	Yes	Some	No	?	Comment
HP-1	Does your community have a core commercial area that is the downtown?					
HP-2	How many significant commercial buildings can be found in the core commercial area?	Number:				
HP-3	What is the general time frame that the buildings in the commercial core were built?	Years:				
HP-4	Are there any prime examples of the architecture from this period that have been restored or preserved?					
HP-5	Are there buildings in the commercial core that would benefit from restoration to enhance or uncover historic features?					
HP-6	Are there buildings in the residential neighborhoods that could be converted into bed and breakfast or country inns?					
HP-7	Are there ordinances and zoning language in place to enable residential buildings to be converted into B&Bs?					
HP-8	Does the local Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance offer any protections to historic resources or for maintaining the community character with new					
HP-9	Does the County/Regional Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) offer any protections to historic resources?					
HP-10	How does your community address the issue of infill and how it maintains community character?					
HP-11	Are the upper floors in the commercial core occupied by commercial businesses?					
HP-12	Are the upper floors in the commercial core occupied by residential units?					

**Historic Preservation
Self-Evaluation**

Name:
Date:

Town Name:

Existing Plans and Policies		Yes	Some	No	?	Comment
HP-13	Does your community have a Preservation Plan?					
HP-14	Does your County/Region have a Preservation and/or Heritage Plan?					
HP-15	Does your community have a Master Plan?					
HP-16	Does the community have a local historic district?					
HP-17	Does the community have a national historic district?					
HP-18	Are any areas in your community eligible for a potential historic district?					
HP-19	Does your community have an historical society/association? Where is their home?					
HP-20	Is there a HARB (Historic Architectural Review Board) in your community?					
HP-21	Is there a member of the HARB and/or the local historical society participating in this self-analysis?					
HP-22	Are there a Design Guidelines for your community?					
HP-23	Is there any interest in developing Design Guidelines for your community?					
HP-24	Is your local municipal a Certified Local Government by PA Historic and Museum Commission?					
HP-25	Are there any state historical markers?					
HP-26	Are there any D&L interpretation signs?					
HP-27	Does your local school district use the Tales of the Towpath curriculum?					
HP-28	Are there any businesses that display local history in their establishments?					
HP-29	Does the municipal building have a display of local history?					
HP-30	Is your town a Preserve America Community?					
HP-31	Who would be the best local person to advise a property owner about state and federal tax credits, if					

Local History in a Larger Setting	
HP-32	What does the current condition of the buildings in the downtown tell about the story of the community?
HP-33	As conditions stand right now, where could a first-time visitor learn about your community's history front its architecture?
HP-34	How does your community's history contribute to the history of the D&L Corridor?
HP-35	Who officially tells the story of your community to the public in your town?
HP-36	How is your local history shared with the students and newcomers to your community?
HP-37	How does your community's history contribute to the history of the County or region?
HP-38	Why would a visitor find this local history relevant to their exploration of the D&L National Heritage Corridor?
HP-39	What is the 30-second elevator pitch about the history of your town?
HP-40	Other Comments about the history or historic character of your community.

Trail Businesses List

As you are walking through town record the name, address, phone number, and if possible website, for all trail related businesses. There is no set definition of what a trail business is for this exercise. Try to think of what types of goods and services trail users will want and where they can get them in your town. Once you have recorded all the businesses then you can categorize them by type to count the number of each type of businesses you have in town.

Name	Address	Phone	Website	Comments	Type

Shops & Amenities

This set of questions are designed to evaluate the depth of the retail selection within the commercial core and the availability of amenities that are appealing to trail users. The answers will provide an idea of the type of businesses that are missing that may be beneficial, what businesses are already located in the community that should be promoted as friendly to trail users and identify opportunities to expand items or services to be offered by existing businesses. The answers will also serve as a benchmark as the D&L Trail Town Process helps your community expands its hospitality offerings. Use the data collected from the Trail Businesses List to count the number of each type of business.

Storefronts & Amenities	Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
SA-1 Are store windows clean?					
SA-2 Are store windows lit at night?					
SA-3 Are storefronts maintained? (eg: no broken windows, crumbling brick, peeling paint. etc.)					
SA-4 Are there audible amenities-chimes, church bells, music, etc?					
SA-5 Are there banners to delineate the commercial core?					
SA-6 Are storefronts decorated with flowers or hanging baskets?					
SA-7 Are there planters in the streetscape? Are they planted and maintained?					
SA-8 Are there drinking fountains or sources for potable water?					
SA-9 Does the town use decorative lampposts for night lighting?					
SA-10 Is everyone greeted in a friendly manner upon entering businesses?					
SA-11 Boat access for canal?					
SA-12 Boat access for river?					
SA-13 Secure bicycle storage at lodging?					
SA-14 Do restaurants feature local food specialties?					
SA-15 Businesses that provide free water for water bottles?					
SA-16 Potable water at restrooms?					

Trail Town
Self-Evaluation Worksheets

Name:
Date:

Town name:

Storefronts & Amenities continued		Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
SA-17	Access to public wifi / internet service (for example, library)					
SA-18	If YES to SA-17, are they open on weekends?					
SA-19	Are there locations in town to charge electronics for free?					
SA-20	Is this service promoted or advertised with signage?					
SA-21	Do businesses offer free Wi-Fi?					
SA-22	Is there cellular reception in town?					
SA-23	Is there a local Merchants Association or Board of Trade or Chamber?					
Recreational Related		# of each				
SA-24	Bike Rental					
SA-25	Bike Equipment and Repair					
SA-26	Kayak & Canoe Rental					
SA-27	Kayak & Canoe Equipment and Repair					
SA-28	Other Outdoor Equipment Rental					
SA-29	Outfitter w/ transportation					
SA-30	Outfitter without transportation					
SA-31	State Park offices offering recreational programs					
SA-32	Private organizations offering recreational programming					
SA-33	Nearby camping					
SA-34	If YES, ____miles from trail					

**Trail Town
Self-Evaluation Worksheets**

**Name:
Date:**

Town name:

Lodging		# of each
SA-35	Hotel or Inn	
SA-36	Bed & Breakfast	
SA-37	Motel	
SA-38	Hostel	
SA-39	Guest House	
Food		# of each
SA-40	Outdoor vending machines	
SA-41	Grocery or portable food	
SA-42	Coffee shop	
SA-43	Ice cream cone/soft-serve service	
SA-44	Candy/chocolate shop	
SA-45	Family-style restaurant	
SA-46	Fast food or chain restaurant	
SA-47	Informal café with wait service	
SA-48	Breakfast & lunch only cafe	
SA-49	Restaurant with liquor license	
SA-50	Brewpub or microbrewery	
SA-51	Bar or tavern	
SA-52	Restaurants with outdoor seating	
SA-53	Farm Stand	
SA-54	Seasonal Farmers' Market (w/ vendors)	
SA-55	Year-round Farmers' Market (w/ vendors)	

**Trail Town
Self-Evaluation Worksheets**

**Name:
Date:**

Town name:

Services and Amenities	# of each
SA-56 Convenience/Quick Stop Shop	
SA-57 Drug Store	
SA-58 24 hour ATM	
SA-59 Bookstore	
SA-60 Laundromat	
SA-61 Emergency Medical Service	
SA-62 Family Medical Service	
SA-63 Shuttling Service to nearby town (max 25 miles)	
SA-64 Shuttling Service distant locations (max. 250 miles)	
SA-65 Airport within shuttle distance?	
SA-66 Bus station	
SA-67 Train Station	
SA-68 Mass Transit	
SA-69 Taxi Service	
SA-70 Uber or similar car service	
Conclusions	
SA-71 What do you think is missing from the retail mix?	
SA-72 Do you think your town is ready for trail users?	
SA-73 What would you add to the mix in a perfect world?	

Trailhead Amenities

The Trailhead is the gateway into your community from the Trail. This is the first impression that a trail user has of your community. These questions are designed to guide the team in evaluating how welcoming the trail head is and how it helps a trail user transition to your commercial core.

Depending how many trailheads serve your community, you may need to fill this form out more than once. The yes/some/no format allows for the data to be quantified. Open ended questions at the end encourage observation and discussion.

	Signage and Information (Trailhead)	Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
AA-1	Is the commercial core an easy walk or ride from the trailhead?					
AA-2	Is there signage is on the trail that alerts trail users that your community is nearby?					
AA-3	Is there an attractive, well-placed access area sign ?					
AA-4	Is there directional signage when leaving the trailhead?					
AA-5	Is there an attractive informational kiosk or a bulletin board?					
AA-6	Is there directional signage indicating destinations to east/west or north/south?					
AA-7	Is there a rule/regulation/courtesy sign?					
AA-8	Is there interpretive information about the local community?					
AA-9	Is there information about contributing or volunteering for the trail?					
AA-10	Is there information on nearby town amenities?					
AA-11	Is there an amenities map of the town with businesses/services on bulletin board or kiosk?					
AA-12	Is there a take-away map of the town with businesses/services listed?					
AA-13	Is there a take-away map of the trail?					
AA-14	If the trail crosses any roadways, are the crossings safe?					
AA-15	Are there signs to emergency facilities?					

Trail Town
Self-Evaluation Worksheets

Name:
Date:

Town name:
Trailhead:

Parking Lots at Trailhead		Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
AA-17	How many parking spaces are in your trailhead parking lot?	Number:				
AA-18	Is there enough parking to meet summer weekend demand?					
AA-19	Do parking spaces have extra length for hitch-mounted bike racks?					
AA-20	Does your parking lot have extra turning radius for shuttle vans?					
AA-21	Does your parking area accommodate horse-carrying vehicles?					
AA-22	Is there a safe interface between trail users and parkers?					
AA-23	Does parking lot fencing have convenient openings for trail access?					
Amenities at the Trailhead		Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
AA-24	Are there flush toilet facilities?					
AA-25	Is there a portable toilet?					
AA-26	Is there a public water fountain with potable water?					
AA-27	Are there trash receptacles?					
AA-47	Are there recycling receptacles?					
AA-28	Is there a phone number posted to call if there is a problem with facilities at trailhead?					
AA-29	Is there landscaping to provide shade?					
AA-30	Are there picnic tables?					
AA-31	Are there pavilions or shelters?					
AA-32	Are there bike racks?					
AA-33	Are there benches?					
AA-34	Is there security lighting?					
AA-48	Is there a public transportation stop at the trailhead?					
AA-36	Is there cellular reception at the trailhead?					
AA-37	Is there room to do promotions at the trailhead?					

Trail Town
Self-Evaluation Worksheets

Name:
 Date:

Town name:
 Trailhead:

Amenities at the Trailhead Continued		Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
AA-38	Is there also river/ stream access at your trailhead?					
AA-39	Is there any artwork that distinguishes your trailhead from any other?					
AA-40	Is there a bike repair station at the trailhead?					
Conclusions						
AA-41	Is the trailhead offer a good first impression of your local community?					
AA-42	What would you add to the trailhead to make it more inviting and useable?					
AA-43	What needs to be changed to improve the usability of the trailhead?					
AA-44	Is the Trailhead a good transition to your community?					
AA-45	Is there anything distinctive about your trailhead?					
AA-46	Who maintains your section of the trail?					
AA-49	Who is the land owner for the section of trail at your trailhead? Could be two different landowners in different directions					
AA-50	Who is the land owner for the trailhead? Who manages the trail head?					

Town Public Amenities

The D&L Trail is popular with trail users who do not like to interact with automobiles. They prefer the safety offered by a limited access trail. That can make it a challenge to help these same people find their way into your community along sidewalks and busy streets. This set of questions should spark evaluation and discussion about the public amenities that are critical for trail users to feel comfortable leaving the trail and coming into your commercial core.

General Access Between Trail & Town	Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
PA-1 What is the distance between the closest trail head and the business district?	Miles:				
PA-2 Is it easy for visitors to find and access downtown from the trailhead?					
PA-3 Is there an easy grade between the rail and town? (Hint: Ride bike- do you need to use your smallest chain ring?)					
PA-4 Are there visual connections between the trail head and the core commercial area/downtown? For example, signage, banners, etc.					
Signage	Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
PA-5 Is there adequate signage for motorists to find the trailhead from town?					
PA-6 Is there adequate signage for trail users to find the town from the trailhead?					
PA-7 In town, are there sign ordinances?					
PA-8 In town, are sign ordinances being enforced?					
PA-9 Is there sufficient signage for finding businesses and services?					
Safety	Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
PA-10 Not counting the trail, are there bike lanes or share the road signs in town?					
PA-11 Are bike lanes and shoulders free of potholes, kept clean and free of debris?					
PA-12 Are the sidewalks in good shape?					
PA-13 Are the sidewalks wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic?					
PA-14 Do curb cuts have a gentle slope?					
PA-15 Are all sidewalks continuous (vs. stopping abruptly) in the central business district?					

**Trail Town
Self-Evaluation Worksheets**

Name:
Date:

Town Name

Safety Continued		Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
PA-17	Do motorists generally respect pedestrians in the crosswalks?					
PA-18	Are there pedestrian walk/don't walk signals?					
PA-19	Do signals allow enough time for a child or older adult to cross the street?					
PA-20	As a pedestrian, do you feel safe when walking through town?					
Various Amenities in Town		Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
PA-21	Access to public wifi / internet service (i.e. library)					
PA-22	If YES to PA-21, are they open on weekends?					
PA-23	Access to Post office that receives and holds parcels or trail users?					
PA-24	Are there locations in town to charge electronics?					
PA-25	Do businesses offer free Wi-Fi?					
PA-26	Do businesses offer outlets for recharging electronics?					
PA-27	Is there cellular reception in town?					
PA-28	Are there public flush toilet facilities?					
PA-29	Are there public portable toilet?					
PA-30	Are these facilities cleaned and maintained?					
PA-31	Is there a public water fountain with potable water?					
PA-33	Is there landscaping to provide shade?					
PA-34	Are there picnic tables?					
PA-35	Are there pavilions or shelters?					
PA-36	Are there benches?					
PA-37	Is there security lighting?					
PA-39	Is there cellular reception in the town?					

**Trail Town
Self-Evaluation Worksheets**

Name:
Date:

Town Name

Parking in Town		Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
PA-40	Is there sufficient on-street parking?					
PA-41	Are off-street parking lots placed behind stores?					
PA-42	Are curb cuts in front of the businesses limited (in size and number), resulting in a continuous sidewalk?					
PA-43	Are there bike racks near businesses?					
PA-44	Are bike racks in easy-to-find places?					
PA-45	Are bike racks well-placed to prevent interference with sidewalk use?					
PA-46	Are bike racks simple enough for the rookie rider to use correctly?					
PA-47	Are there creative bike racks, eg. Combo bike rack/bench or dual use of decorative metal fencing?					
PA-48	Are there hitching areas for horses, if applicable to your community?					
Clean and Green Town		Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
PA-49	Are there enough benches?					
PA-50	Are there picnic areas?					
PA-51	Are the benches well-placed? (are they in the shade, near high pedestrian traffic areas, etc.)					
PA-52	Are parks/green spaces easily accessible and welcoming?					
PA-53	Do parks have adequate bike racks and benches? Are street trees used effectively?					
PA-54	Are native plants used in green spaces?					
PA-55	Are the sidewalks swept and kept neat and free of debris?					
PA-56	Are there rain gardens or permeable surfaces in the parking lots?					
PA-57	Are there recycling receptacles in town?					
PA-58	Are there sufficient trash cans in town?					

**Trail Town
Self-Evaluation Worksheets**

Name:
Date:

Town Name

Promotions		Yes	Some	No	?	Comments
PA-59	Does the town use special events to encourage people to come to town?					
PA-60	Do businesses use clever marketing to invite people in? (e.g. free ice cream)					
PA-61	Does the town organize or promote town-to-town bike rides or walks?					
PA-62	Is the trail linked to downtown events and happenings?					
PA-63	Is the town linked to trail events and happenings?					
PA-64	Do businesses cross-promote?					
PA-65	Do businesses offer out-of-town shipping for large items?					
PA-66	Does the town offer town-wide gift cards?					
Conclusions						
PA-67	Are there any easy improvements that can be made to improve the connections between the trailhead and town?					
PA-68	What improvements need long-range planning and a capital expenditure?					
PA-69	Who are logical partners for moving these ideas forward?					
PA-70	If the town needs an idea for a promotion to attract trail users, what are some starting ideas?					
PA-71	Who is the land owner for your local trail system? Who maintains your local section of trail?					
PA-72	What major town events / festivals occur in town? List name and date of all in the past year.					
PA-73	What events / festivals use the trails? List name and date of all in the past year.					