



Tremont Towpath Trail

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY R5 | TWD1434 | DECEMBER 2017

Prepared by:



Introduction

The Tremont Towpath Trail opens up new and meaningful opportunities for the neighborhood and its residents. Easy commuting to work or shopping, programming, recreation, and the overall activation of the community are among the many benefits this multi-purpose trail represents. In anticipation of its completion, Tremont West Development Corporation seeks a comprehensive communications plan that speaks to each user group within the neighborhood, educating and encouraging them to take full advantage of the trail, and integrating the trail into the fabric of the community.

What are we trying to accomplish?

This Communications Plan is designed to provide practical recommendations that will serve Tremont Towpath's Trail Purpose: To connect the Tremont community to the outdoors, to resources in and around the neighborhood, and to one another.

- To communicate the value and opportunity presented by the Towpath Trail.
- To remove barriers that prevent people from taking advantage of the trail, perceived or otherwise.
- To inspire reluctant participants to engage.
- To truly integrate the trail into the community, making a resource for all.

Barriers

Like many non-profits, Tremont West does not have the resources to accomplish this alone. Budget and in-house expertise present barriers, but the intention of this communications strategy is to identify the opportunities and sketch out a roadmap with pricing to make it possible to prioritize and plan.

The more complicated challenge is in communicating with less-experienced trail users, specifically low-income, underserved residents in Tremont. This demographic is frequently overlooked in marketing and communications efforts for various reasons, not the least of which is their financial situation; less discretionary income, less influence, and less "in touch." Furthermore, many low income families share a device, do not have a computer or only have internet access on their phones, making it more difficult to connect in the digital age.

- An estimated 5 million American families still lack Internet access
- Over one-in-ten American adults are "smartphone-only" internet users, many of whom earn 30K or less per year
- 42 percent of those without home Internet access said the cost was the main reason they lacked access.

* Pew Research Center, 2017; Opportunity for All Report, Joan Ganz Cooney Center

There is no doubt that it is going to be harder to attract and retain trail users from this demographic. Thoughtful programming, target messaging and a breadth of distribution channels will help us reach this audience and make it clear that the Towpath Trail is for everyone. The recommendations in this plan support communication and marketing efforts that target underserved communities in Tremont, as well as more conventional trail users.

Purpose Lens

Surveys, focus groups and discovery sessions were conducted to garner a deeper understanding of the perceived opportunities, challenges and ultimate Purpose around the Tremont Towpath Trail. This foundational work is used to align efforts and support cohesive, effective and efficient decision-making.

Guide People Through the Experience

Guide trail users and help them navigate to and from the Towpath Trail to help maximize their Tremont experience.

Educate People on How to Use the Trail

Educate people on best ways to take advantage of the trail and inform them of trail usage rules and best practices.

Promote the Trail & Tremont Experience

Promote the Towpath Trail and the Tremont experience to spread the word and bolster trail usage.

The recommendations in this plan are based on the Whats and Hows identified above.

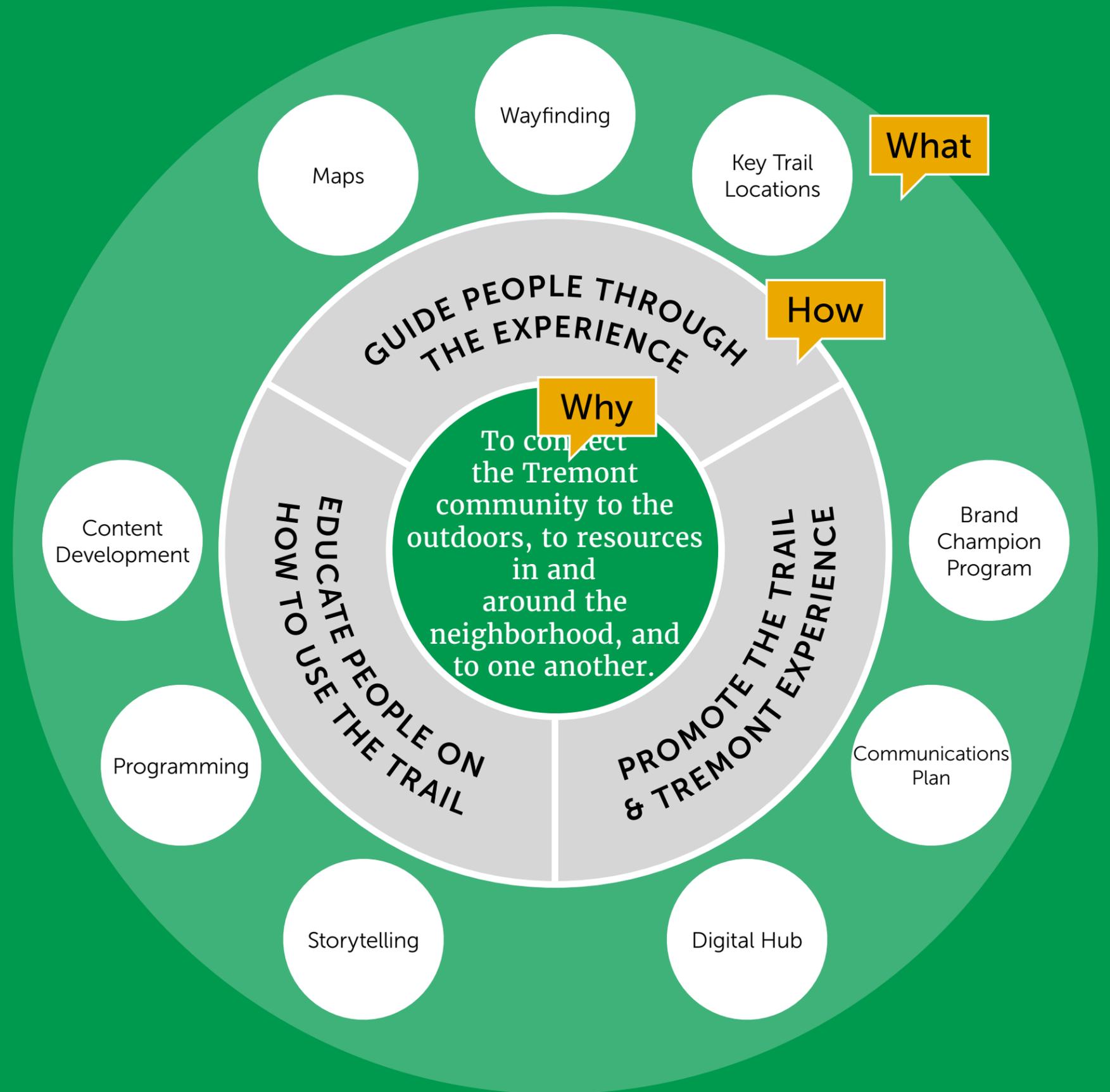
Audiences

INTERNAL

- Everyday Users
- Recreational Enthusiasts

EXTERNAL

- Special Interests
- Urban Explorers
- Recreational Enthusiast



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WHAT

Content Development

Create informational and experiential content to tell the story

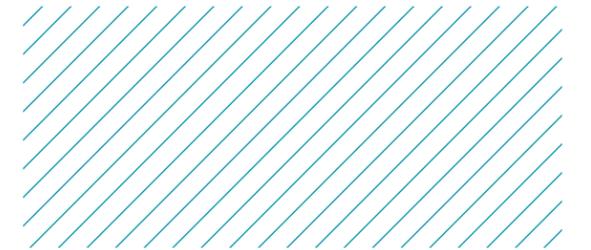
RELATED HOW

Educate People on How to Use the Trail.

Problem to Solve: Get a variety of trail users from Tremont on the Towpath Trail – including people of different ages, income, race and background.

Challenge: Active recreationalists will not hesitate to use the trail. They are comfortable using it and have the equipment to do so easily, but less experienced trail users may not understand the ways in which they can also benefit from the trail.

Value Proposition: Information on how to use the trail removes unknowns and barriers for people who are less likely to use the trail. Beyond the basics, targeted messaging and communication about trail opportunities and benefits will build the case for why people should use the trail.



 **1. General Information** **I** **E**
What is the Tremont Towpath Trail? Where can it take you and how long is it the Towpath Trail in its entirety? Who is maintaining the grounds? This information is available through the Canalway website, but Tremont is responsible for communicating the key information to its constituents, regardless of where it lives or who generates it.

 **2. Trail Usage** **I** **E**
What are the rules specific to the Towpath Trail? Is there a curfew? Are there general best practices for how to use and share the trail and its amenities with others? How do I reserve a picnic table? What are my responsibilities as a trail user? Much of this information will originate with the Metroparks, but your audience will appreciate having all the information pertinent to Tremont trail users in one place and/or served up easily.

 **3. Safety Awareness** **I**
Am I safe on the trail? What measures have the neighborhood and/or the trail stewards taken to protect the people on the trail and the trail itself? Are there seasonal considerations that impact safety? Providing information on trail safety and recommendations for staying safe on the trail will help alleviate this concern, which has come up consistently in focus groups and surveys.

 **4. How to Use It** **I**
Those who bike or run regularly may be comfortable jumping right in, but others will need a little nudge. The Tremont Towpath Trail can be used for recreation, leisure, commuting and more. Illustrating the opportunities, advantages and benefits may be just what people need to try it out and turn into trail supporters.

 **5. Key Messaging** **I** **E**
Thoughtful consistent messaging will help Tremont residents and stakeholders understand the value of the Tremont Towpath Trail and thus become supporters and believers. Key messages are high level, but some can target different trail user types to single out the most relevant messages to each audience. *Key messages are peppered into most communication and content, whether it's a direct statement or just alluded*

to within the body of the content. No matter where and how you incorporate it, these key messages keep communication on-point and help tell the Tremont Towpath Trail story.

OBJECTIVES MET

Remove barriers, alleviate concerns and illustrate the opportunities that will encourage various audiences to take advantage of the trail.

OPPORTUNITIES

While these recommendations are meant to specifically target Tremont residents and stakeholders, some of this work can be repurposed to attract external visitors as well as support Tremont businesses with their own communications around the Towpath Trail.

Also, each audience group has their own set of interests and concerns. Segment messaging by audience to avoid information overload to any single group. For example, Tremont Pointe residents were particularly interested in using the picnic area, so ensure that information about picnic usage, opportunities, rules and regulations are designed and distributed to that specific audience.

CONSIDERATIONS

A strong communications plan unfolds to tell a story. Consider developing a 1-3 year plan that strategically plots out when specific content is produced and through which channels it's distributed. This will help you budget, manage and execute on a communications plan efficiently and successfully. See Recommendation INSERT NAME OR NUMBER for more information on how to leverage these content recommendations through carefully planned content distribution.

Community Programming

Develop neighborhood partnerships to support, build and sustain community programs that leverage the trail

RELATED HOW

Educate People on How to Use the Trail.

Problem to Solve: Information and content alone is not enough to stimulate activity. For many, the opportunities need to be incentivized or organized to solicit participation.

Challenge: Tremont West Development Corporation does not have the resources to build and sustain programming that will encourage residents to use the trail.

Value Proposition: Community programming stewarded by neighborhood businesses and institutions can educate residents on how to use and enjoy the trail through hands-on experience. Will also promote safe use of the trail and create opportunities for low-income communities to have a more integrated trail experiences.



1. Build partnerships.

Identify key stakeholders in Tremont, both for and nonprofit, who share in the Purpose of the Tremont Towpath Trail and will benefit from its activation within the community. Develop a presentation and talking points to illustrate how they can get involved, the benefits to the community and what's in it for them.



2. Help establish programming.

Once you have buy-in from each stakeholder, work with them to identify the best programming opportunities and how they may take shape. For example:



3. Promote programming.

Create and distribute information and content about programming, leveraging your own channels as well as those of your partners to help generate attendance and put the spotlight on participating entities. Furthermore, the attention these partners receive through your own communications as well as earned media can stimulate interest in other area stakeholders who are not yet participating in the program.



4. Pursue grant dollars.

Once you have partners, a structured program that demonstrates proven results and clear benefits, you are well positioned to apply for grant monies to support future programming.

- a. Loop, Coffee Trails, early morning trail commuters can get a free black coffee
- b. Jefferson's Branch of CPL, Picnic Storytime, Seasonal outdoor activity for kids & caregivers to pack a lunch and hear stories related to nature.
- c. Tremont Athletic Club, Bootcamp on the Trail, free outdoor bootcamp classes.
- d. Studio 11, Down Dog at Clark Field, free yoga classes for parents and children
- e. Parishes, Sunday Senior Walks, Church-organized walks for seniors
- f. Public School District, Biology on the Trail, class field trips coordinated with the Metroparks for guided botany tours
- g. Tremont Pointe, July 4 Picnic, Residents to gather and enjoy traditional picnic fair and holiday celebration
- h. Beck Center, Painting or Photography Classes, Students leverage the trail for landscape and cityscape

** Potentially partner with an area gallery to display students' work*

OBJECTIVES MET

Engage both residents and stakeholders in leveraging the Tremont Towpath Trail, and establish programming that is sustained by the community and does not heavily rely on the support of Tremont West Development Corporation.

OPPORTUNITIES

Sponsored programming gives area stakeholders more visibility and be an opportunity to garner attention good will within the community. They may find an uptick in business or visitors, which could entice other area businesses to get involved.

If the programming is successful, it may be extended beyond Tremont to help attract visitors from neighboring communities, and the stories generated from the programming could prove to be excellent PR material.

CONSIDERATIONS

Organizing stakeholders for collaborative effort is not a small task and will require quite a bit of effort up front to engage and develop programming. Once you have established 5+ partners, considering formalizing a Tremont Programming Committee that invites selected participating stakeholders to regular meetings to discuss programming, what's working and what's not, and explore future opportunities and collaborations. This also helps establish commitment and accountability.

WHAT

Storytelling

Demonstrate what the Trail has to offer through relatable stories

AUDIENCES



RELATED HOW

Educate People on How to Use the Trail.

Problem to Solve: Short of using the Towpath Trail yourself, how do you make an emotional connection to the trail and all it has to offer as an incentive or enticement to try it out?

Challenge: General information is critical, programming opens doors to the trail, but how do we get people to seek that information and walk through that door?

Value Proposition: People are inspired by people. Sharing real stories about real trail users can both demonstrate how to use it and also stir an emotional response that can serve as inspiration.

1. Identify themes.

Using your positioning and purpose lens, identify the key messages and themes that are best represented through storytelling. Ensure that themes and messages reference and speak to each of your audience groups. For example:

- a. Tremont Pointe: A Tremont Pointe resident who unites his family for a reunion at the picnic area.
 - i. Audience: Tremont Pointe
 - ii. Message: The Towpath Trail enhances quality of life for everybody.
- b. Middleclass mom who bikes her child to daycare before taking a 20-mile ride to train for a triathlon.
 - i. Audience: Recreational Enthusiast
 - ii. Message: Accessible practical options for exercise and recreation.
- c. A Cleveland Clinic doctor who bikes to the main campus downtown everyday and uses that time to clear his head before starting a stressful day and returning home to his family.
 - i. Audience: Commuter
 - ii. Message: Get where you need to go in an enjoyable way.
- d. An area business who has found creative ways to invite trail users off the path and into their storefront.

- i. Audience: Stakeholders
- ii. Message: Towpath Trail provides opportunities for area businesses to connect with the public.

2. Find your stories.

Now that you have a general sense of the stories you want to tell and the message you hope they convey, you need to source the stories. Surveys and campaigns are a good way to enlist support and gather information from a large group of people at once, and if you get a good response, you can save some stories in the “parking lot” of your editorial calendar (reference recommendation #INSERT NUMBER) to revisit them another time. If you need to be more proactive with your story sources, conduct intercept interviews on the Towpath Trail.

3. Create your stories.

Use seasoned journalists or writers to help weave the story in a way that both conveys the information and hints at the underlying message. Ensure that the story is told in such a way that it features the person more so than the Towpath Trail and use quotes, backstories and photos to help readers establish a deeper connection.

4. Use formats creatively.

Stories can be told in different formats with varying degrees of detail. Consider short form stories or a collection of snippets that tell a larger story, and leverage your content to fit in various distribution channels. For example:

- a. Capture video of programming on the Towpath and interview participants.
- b. Give Towpath users shout-outs on social media, congratulating them on meeting recreational milestones or acts of kindness or environmental conscientiousness related to the Towpath.
- c. Photograph real Towpath users in Tremont to build an archive of images that collectively tell the story, to be used in various communications and across platforms.

5. Shout it from the rooftops.

Once you have your stories and content crafted, you can easily share on any and all owned platforms (see Recommendation # INSERT NUMBER), but these public interest stories can also be pitched to local media and shared with stakeholders to distribute on your behalf.

OBJECTIVES MET

Bring the Towpath Trail to life through the lens of residents who are taking advantage of the trail, and demonstrate the different ways in which it can be used to positively impact quality of life in Tremont.

OPPORTUNITIES

Because you are using real people to illustrate your message, there are inherent opportunities to share that message with a larger audience. For example, the person featured in the story has his/her own networks through which to share it. Related stakeholders may also be interested in these stories, for example, if you're doing a story about a woman who is training for the triathlon, the organization or sponsors of the triathlon may choose to feature or share the content.

Storytelling is a natural fit with other recommendations, specifically around education and promotion. Stories help support the claims made about the trail, for example:

- Seeing women on the Towpath Trail by themselves can speak to the safety of the trail.
- Stories of commuters demonstrate how easy it is to get to work.

CONSIDERATIONS

Consider leading communications with storytelling. Stories about people are always more compelling than claims made by an organization or a business. People are entertained, inspired and connected to real stories and you may capture their attention and inspire their action more effectively through stories.

We also encourage you to consider using visuals and video to tell stories to help people connect to the story more easily and with more resonance. Video is more seductive and less taxing than other formats as well, which means that it's frequently preferred over written word.

- 65% of people are visual learners (Social Science Research Network)
- Visuals are processed 60,000 times faster than text (3M)
- Consumers are 39% more likely to share content if it's in video format (UserV)
- Landing pages that contain video see 800% more conversion than those without (FunnelScience)

WHAT

Content Distribution Plan

Make sure the right information is reaching the right people

RELATED HOW

Promote the Trail and Tremont Experience.

Problem to Solve: There's a lot of information to disseminate to a lot of audiences.

Challenge: We have a diverse audience that may not engage with us through a singular distribution channel.

Value Proposition: A coordinated distribution plan ensures information and messaging unfolds to tell the right story and reaches different audiences via the channels with which they engage.



1. Identify your distribution channels.

This may include a digital hub (see recommendations), social media, newsletters, brand champions and PR among others. Align these distribution channels with your defined target audiences.



2. Content mapping.

Pulling together your distribution channels and related audiences, match up targeted messages from the original Tremont Towpath Trail Framework to identify which messages are pushed through each channel to reach the right people.



3. Communications calendar.

Combine your content map and editorial calendar (See Storytelling recommendation) to create a comprehensive roadmap for what to communicate, how to communicate it and when you communicate it to ensure that your audiences are receiving the right information in concert.



4. Tremont Pointe communications plan.

This audience may have not have the same access to digital and print distribution channels as other audiences, in which case leveraging communication vehicles specific to Tremont Pointe will help ensure they receive pertinent information. Using feedback from the Tremont Pointe focus group, share targeted communications that specifically address their interests and concerns, as well as practical information on how to use the Towpath Trail, access equipment or participate in programming.

OBJECTIVES MET

Ensures that information and messaging reaches each of the audience groups at the right time(s).

OPPORTUNITIES

These exercises are good practice for managing a communications program and can be replicated on a quarterly basis, expanding or contracting as needed with the objectives of your work and demands on your budget. Also, the time put in upfront into designing the approach and building the tools, saves time and headache in execution phases.

CONSIDERATIONS

While a small internal team or a single person may be responsible for setting the communications plan upfront, create a small subcommittee of community/stakeholder volunteers to execute/manage the distribution of the content.

WHAT

Brand Champion Program

Leverage area businesses to spread the word



RELATED HOW

Promote the Trail and Tremont Experience.

Problem to Solve: How do we sustain strong communications with such a large and diverse audience?

Challenge: Budget and staff resources are limited.

Value Proposition: Enlist area stakeholders as brand champions to help promote the Tremont Towpath Trail to their customers, consumers or patrons, thus making your audience larger and your voice louder.



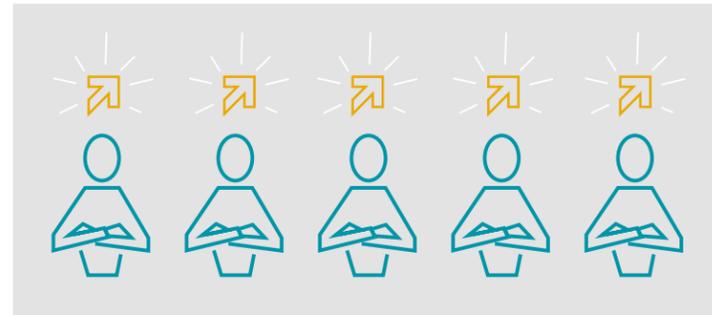
1. Identify your Brand Champions.

The best brand champions are those who share in your mission and Purpose, and/or stand to benefit from the work you are doing.

- a. Create a list of area business owners, organizations and institutions that fit this description.
- b. Invite these folks to a presentation and discussion on what the Towpath Trail is expected to do for the community.
- c. Explain their personal opportunities to benefit from participating in the program, and from the overall success of the Tremont Towpath Trail.

2. Establish a program.

Develop the structure and expectations around their volunteer responsibilities, establish a regular meeting schedule and create a system for sharing information and updates with the team.



4. Develop an arsenal.

Create and distribute the resources your brand champions will need to speak to the Tremont Towpath Trail in a way that aligns with the overall messaging strategy. This may include logos, copy, maps and printed materials, window decals or t-shirts – whatever they can use to promote the Towpath Trail.

5. Train your team.

Use one of your regular meetings to share the Tremont Towpath Trail Purpose Lens and Framework with the team, and train them on how to use the resources from your brand arsenal to ensure that your message stays on-point, even when spoken and distributed by many.

3. Set expectations.

Be clear about how your brand champions can steward the brand and what their regular activities may include. Examples may include:

- a. Programming or special promotions (see Community Programming, Page 6)
- b. Newsletter or website content
- c. Maps and other printed sales materials in their storefronts
- d. Event promotion and sponsorship
- e. Creative outreach

6. Reciprocate.

Your Brand Champions will want to participate because they believe in what you're doing and/or because they expect to benefit from it as well. That said, it's a big ask and you should find ways to thank them for their participation by using your own channels to distribute their news or promote their events, etc.

OBJECTIVES MET

Two for the price of one: this program allows you to (1) reach a broader audience through your brand champions and spread the word faster and better, and (2) engage area business owners and stakeholders in the Purpose and value of the Tremont Towpath Trail to support community integration.

OPPORTUNITIES

Brand Champion work may overlap with some programming efforts, allowing you to combine meetings and build-in efficiencies and deeper engagement with stakeholders. Speaking of efficiencies, selecting a chairperson or Brand Champion liaison from your team can relieve some responsibility and burden from Tremont West, while enlisting deeper engagement from the stakeholders.

CONSIDERATIONS

Identify those Brand Champions from your wish list who you believe can make the biggest and best impact. Make personal "sales calls" or take these folks out for coffee to personalize the ask and share your thoughts on the mutual benefits of the Tremont Towpath Trail.

WHAT

Digital Hub

Make it easy for current and prospective trail users to find information



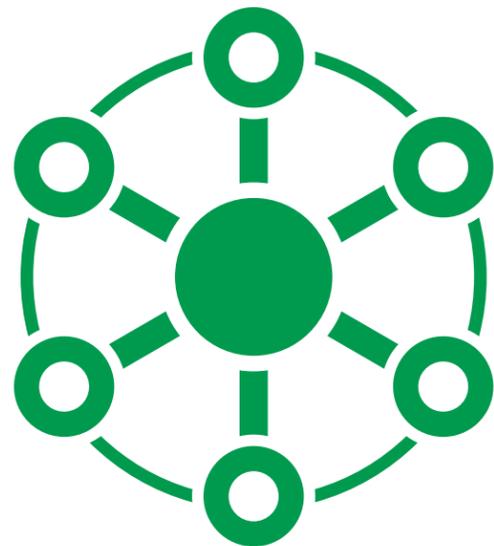
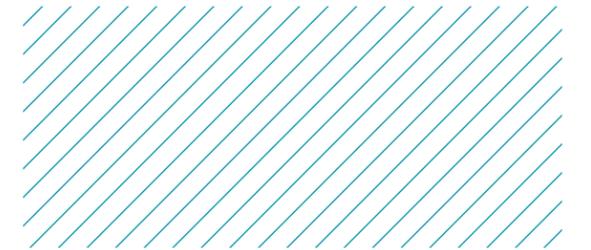
RELATED HOW

Promote the Trail and Tremont Experience.

Problem to Solve: Where does all this information and content live?

Challenge: The website dedicated to the Towpath Trail speaks to all 100 miles that extend from New Philadelphia to Cleveland, which does not provide adequate focus on the 2.6 miles that extend through Tremont.

Value Proposition: A digital hub or dedicated website can speak not only to the Tremont Towpath Trail, but also to the Tremont experience as it relates to the Towpath Trail, giving both the community and visitors a holistic picture of how to take full advantage of what we have to offer.



1. Employ a smart content strategy.

It doesn't need to be complicated. A smart content strategy can simply make information easy to find, considering the experience we want people to have on the website, the path they take when entering the website, and how to organize a content hierarchy and internal links to support that journey.

2. Keep information up-to-date.

With different programming, events and things to do in Tremont, Towpath Trail travelers will have a reliable source of information that is current and relevant. *You run the risk of having outdated information when relying on a third party website to maintain and update your content.

3. Connect all assets.

Like the trail itself, you need to connect all your digital properties and platforms to your hub, including social media, sister or parent organizations, partner stakehold-

ers, make your website or landing page, easy to find.

4. Give them a reason to come back again.

Tease upcoming events, maintain a programming calendar and registration (as needed), and share news and stories that relate to the Towpath Trail.

5. Launch like you mean it.

Follow a thoughtful launch plan that unfolds information in a timely matter.

- a. Leverage existing distribution channels and those of partners to tease the new website.
- b. Develop graphics and messaging for a launch campaign that resonates and sticks.
- c. Create compelling calls-to-action that leverage the extra attention at launch.

OBJECTIVES MET

A centralized hub that speaks to, not only the Tremont Towpath Trail, but also the Tremont experience it offers and opens up to both the community and visitors.

OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the obvious benefits of building awareness, educating people on how to use the Tremont Towpath Trail and making information readily available, a digital hub is also helpful in terms of gaging interest and success in Towpath Trail-related activities, such as programming and events. Clear analytics will help you get a deeper understanding of what trail-users are interested in and what types of information they are seeking so you can continually improve your offerings.

CONSIDERATIONS

Collect contact information to begin building a database that you can use for future newsletters and/or event promotions and blasts.

WHAT

Mapping

Describing the lay of this “Cleve”-land neighborhood

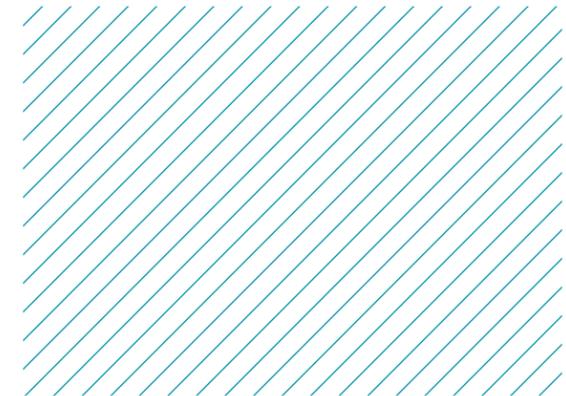
RELATED HOW

Guide people through the experience.

Problem to Solve: The Towpath Trail through Tremont is a new asset to both the residents and experienced users of the trail. Without having experienced Tremont before, a new visitor will not know what amenities the neighborhood has to offer and may feel uncomfortable exploring the area without information to orient them to the area amenities. Area Asset maps are an important informational tool that will aid in orienting new Towpath Trail visitors to where they are and what amenities they can access when coming through the neighborhood on the Towpath Trail.

Challenge: Area Mapping systems — especially for visitors are challenging to develop and difficult to maintain — and they need to be maintained to guide a consistent, high quality experience. Destination Cleveland launched a Pedestrian Wayfinding program — which at its foundation contains a robust orientation mapping system. They launched the program in Downtown Cleveland in 2016 plan to incorporate this system into Downtowns surrounding neighborhoods.

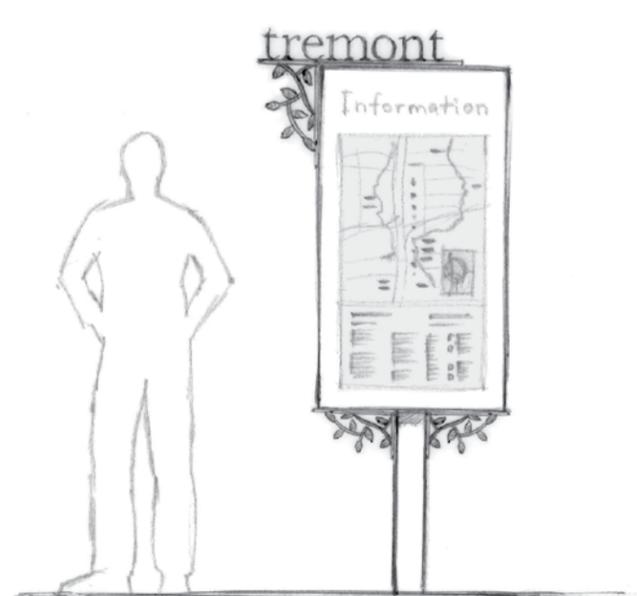
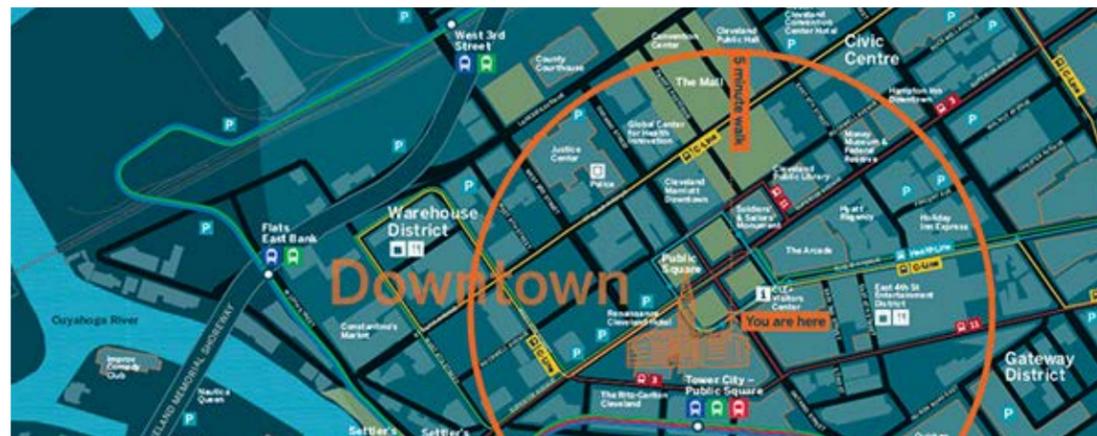
Value Proposition: Destination Cleveland’s mapping system not only will document and orient to the experience that can be had in the Tremont neighborhood, but will also build connections to experiences in surrounding neighborhoods providing the backdrop required for promoting a well-rounded Cleveland Towpath Trail Experience. Their program includes the development of the mapping system for the neighborhood as well as the maintenance required to keep the system up to date.



1. Utilize Destination Cleveland’s pedestrian wayfinding program to create a robust and experiential map system to help orient visitors to the Tremont neighborhood and to the broader Cleveland experience.

2. Destination Cleveland will work with Tremont to build a neighborhood map that is integrated into the larger mapping structure used for Downtown Cleveland and other neighborhoods that are adopting the pedestrian program. They will also work with the neighborhood to identify key locations for the placement of these signs that will serve not only the Towpath Trail but other key visitor destinations within the neighborhood.

3. Cost of the program includes the yearly maintenance to update the accuracy of the maps.



OBJECTIVES MET

The creation of a maintainable mapping system that is accurate to the neighborhood and connects Tremont to both the Towpath Trail and the greater Downtown Cleveland area.

OPPORTUNITIES

Tremont may enter the program and purchase the kiosks that are part of the Downtown Cleveland Sign Program, or incorporate the maps into custom neighborhood kiosks.

CONSIDERATIONS

The map created for the kiosks in physical locations throughout the neighborhood may also be used on Tremont West’s website as well as printed material used to promote the neighborhood. The fact that the design and information will look and feel the same as information people may see from maps in downtown Cleveland and other neighborhoods makes it legitimate, accurate and trustworthy in the eyes of a visitor.

WHAT

Wayfinding

Directing to and from the trail and neighborhood assets

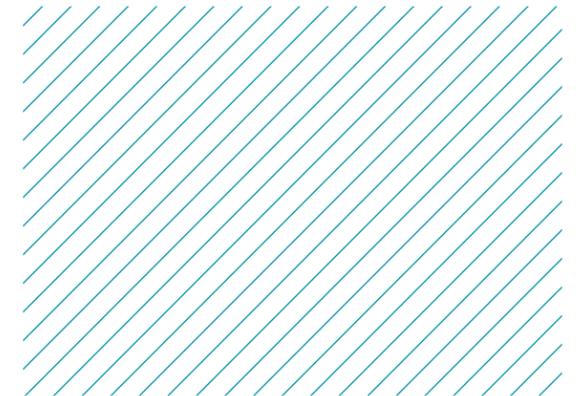
RELATED HOW

Guide people through the experience.

Problem to Solve: The Towpath Trail through Tremont is a new asset to both the residents and experienced users of the trail. Residents are not currently familiar with entry points and access routes to the trail, visitors will not be familiar with Trailheads that will put them on the trail or get them out into the neighborhood. While the Canalway/Metroparks are responsible for directing visitors who are on the trail, it is the neighborhoods responsibility to pick up and provide a safe and comfortable wayfinding experience while in the neighborhood.

Challenge: The Towpath Trail through Tremont has several on/off access points for residents and trail users. The neighborhood itself is a challenge to navigate for those who are not familiar with the crisscrossing streets and busy urban atmosphere.

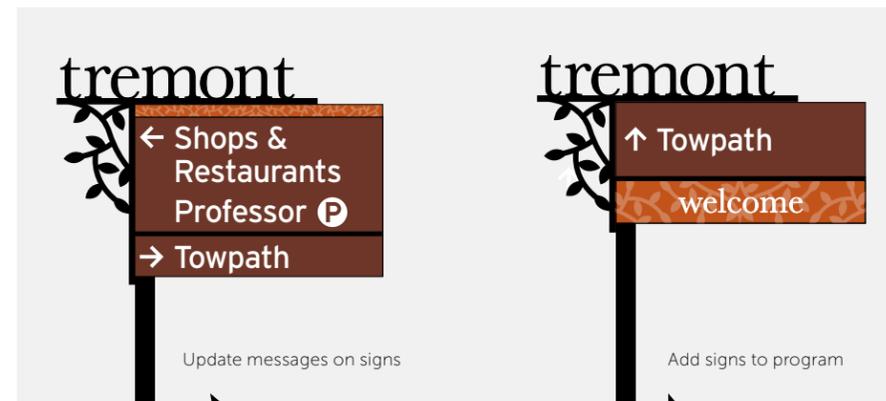
Value Proposition: The Tremont neighborhood currently has a wayfinding program in place to help visitors make better sense of this compact urban neighborhood. By updating/adding messages to the existing signs, or adding signs already developed from the system, it will make the neighborhood easier for visitors to navigate using already familiar existing signs and will reduce costs in developing a new sign program.



Identify new travel paths from key trailheads that may be used by visitors to get to the Towpath Trail and into the neighborhood.



New routes should be carefully vetted with neighborhood groups as they have the potential to bring in an influx of new visitors and people to areas where more privacy was previously enjoyed.



Utilize Tremont's existing Wayfinding Program

OBJECTIVES MET

Provide safe and familiar navigation through the Tremont neighborhood to both the trailheads that visitors may use as well as to neighborhood amenities for visitors coming off the trail.

OPPORTUNITIES

While we are providing a new travel path for consideration, the neighborhood should look at each potential new route and identify opportunities for experiential improvements along those routes.*

CONSIDERATIONS

New routes should be carefully vetted with neighborhood groups as they have the potential to bring in an influx of new visitors and people to areas where more privacy was previously enjoyed.

TRAVEL PATHS	DECISION POINTS	EXISTING SIGN TYPES
Stage 3 - Towpath	Public Trailhead/Connectors Entry	Gateway Sign
Stage 4 - Towpath	Neighborhood Trail Connections	Directional A
Existing - Towpath	Decisions/Directions required	Directional B
On Road Connector - Towpath	New Messaging required	Branded Street Signs
Towpath Connectors - Towpath	New Messaging/New Sign Type required	Footbridge Signs
Proposed Neighborhood Connector		Wayfinding Kiosk

WHAT

Key Trailhead and Route Locations

Separating resident use and visitor use for comfort and safety

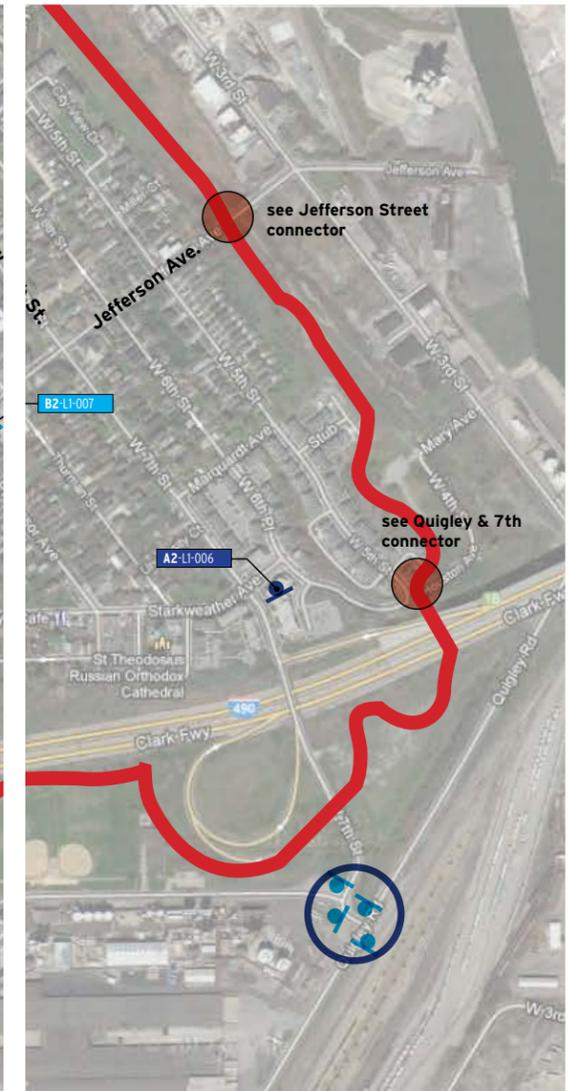
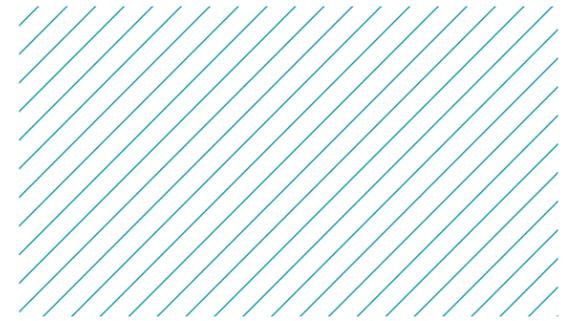
RELATED HOW

Guide people through the experience.

Problem to Solve: The Towpath Trail through Tremont is a new asset to both the residents and experienced users of the trail. To give residents a sense of ownership over this asset, measures need to be taken to ensure that they understand that the Towpath Trail is safe, easy to use and a special asset for those who choose to make this neighborhood home.

Challenge: To ensure that the trail segment through Tremont is not positioned for use by users of the Towpath Trail, or for those who only choose to recreate but usable and within reach to all residents of Tremont.

Value Proposition: An asset like the Towpath Trail provides the opportunity for truly enhanced and healthy lifestyles. Usability has many components, but promoting feelings of ownership and pride through specialized entry points and routes designated for neighborhood use will go a long way to ensure residents feel they are welcomed to use the trail system as part of the fabric of their neighborhood.



Create neighborhood specific trailblazers and trailhead signage for the entries meant for residential access

Identify and mark neighborhood routes that connect to the Towpath Trail

Identify specific Towpath Trail heads for neighborhood use

OBJECTIVES MET
Provide opportunities to increase sense of ownership of the Towpath Trail within the neighborhoods. Sense of pride and ownership will increase diligence in care and decrease crime and vandalism associated with the Towpath Trail.

OPPORTUNITIES
Neighborhood groups can lead efforts to identify safe routes from different neighborhoods to help encourage use of the Towpath Trail.

CONSIDERATIONS
Provide opportunities to use public art created by the residents to identify connection paths and entry points for neighborhood use. (see H.E.A.L Project)

Summary of Recommendations

PAGE	RECOMMENDATION	What	ESTIMATED COSTS	DONOR POTENTIAL	PARTNER POTENTIAL	INCOME POTENTIAL	PROJECT DURATION
EDUCATE PEOPLE ON HOW TO USE THE TRAIL							
5	Content Development	Information on how to use the trail removes unknowns and barriers for people who are less likely to use the trail. Beyond the basics, targeted messaging and communication about trail opportunities and benefits will build the case for why people should use the trail.	\$5,000 – \$7,000		✓		5-7 weeks
6	Community Programming	Community programming stewarded by neighborhood businesses and institutions can educate residents on how to use and enjoy the trail through hands-on experience. Will also promote safe use of the trail and create opportunities for low-income communities to have a more integrated trail experiences. (This estimate reflects the planning effort, but does not account for execution or the cost of internal resources.)	\$5,000 – \$7,000	✓	✓		year long effort
7	Storytelling	People are inspired by people. Sharing real stories about real trail users can both demonstrate how to use it and also stir an emotional response that can serve as inspiration. (Estimate reflects the cost of external support for story ideation/identification and the cost to interview and produce 6-10 stories).	\$10,000 – \$13,000	✓	✓		12-16 weeks
PROMOTE THE TRAIL & TREMONT EXPERIENCE							
8	Content Distribution Plan	A coordinated distribution plan ensures information and messaging unfolds to tell the right story and reaches different audiences via the channels with which they engage. (Estimate includes an editorial calendar and channel development as outlined in the recommendation).	\$5,000 – \$7,000		✓		6-8 weeks
9	Brand Champion Program	Enlist area stakeholders as brand champions to help promote the Tremont Towpath Trail to their customers, consumers or patrons, thus making your audience larger and your voice louder. (Estimate includes costs of hiring external support to kick-off the program and meetings, and produce a toolkit of materials to support Brand Champion communications to their audiences.)	\$12,000 – \$14,000		✓		10-14 weeks
10	Digital Hub	A digital hub or dedicated website can speak not only to the Tremont Towpath Trail, but also to the Tremont experience as it relates to the Towpath Trail, giving both the community and visitors a holistic picture of how to take full advantage of what we have to offer. (Estimate includes the strategy, design and development of a content-driven website, comparable in size and scope to existing Tremont West Development Corp. site.)	\$10,000 – \$15,000			✓	16-20 weeks
GUIDE PEOPLE THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE							
11	Mapping (4-6 proposed) Tremont Kiosk Destination Cleveland maps:	Destination Cleveland’s mapping system not only will document and orient to the experience that can be had in the Tremont neighborhood, but will also build connections to experiences in surrounding neighborhoods providing the backdrop required for promoting a well-rounded Cleveland Towpath Trail Experience. Their program includes the development of the mapping system for the neighborhood as well as the maintenance required to keep the system up to date.	\$5,000 (design) \$3,500 – \$5,000 (fabrication custom) \$5,000 (Custom Designed Map) \$0+ (Destination Cleveland Map) \$20,000 – \$40,000	✓	✓		16-24 weeks
12	Wayfinding Vehicular (8 signs proposed, 4 new faces proposed) Pedestrian (6 proposed)	The Tremont neighborhood currently has a wayfinding program in place to help visitors make better sense of this compact urban neighborhood. By updating/adding messages to the existing signs, or adding signs already developed from the system, it will make the neighborhood easier for visitors to navigate using already familiar existing signs and will reduce costs in developing a new sign program.	\$1,400 – \$1,600 (veh. existing posts) \$2,200 – \$2,400 (veh. new posts) \$40 – \$60 (new sign face only) \$1,000 – \$1,300 (pedestrian) \$12,000 – \$25,000	✓			16-24 weeks
13	Key Trailhead and Route Locations	An asset like the Towpath Trail provides the opportunity for truly enhanced and healthy lifestyles. Usability has many components, but promoting feelings of ownership and pride through specialized entry points and routes designated for neighborhood use will go a long way to ensure residents feel they are welcomed to use the trail system as part of the fabric of their neighborhood. <i>An example for a program is the H.E.A.L sign program: \$8,000</i>	\$5,000 – \$10,000	✓	✓		32-50 weeks
			TOTAL				\$84,000 – \$138,360
* Recommend the inclusion of a 20-25% Contingency added to the total.							

THE FOUNDATION

The research, findings and interpretation that influenced the communications recommendations.

The Communication Strategy developed for the Tremont Towpath Trail were born from a series of discovery sessions, surveys and focus groups to deepen an understanding of the opportunities and concerns through the eyes of our audiences: Tremont residents and stakeholders.

The insights uncovered in this research combined with the ultimate goals for the community were brought together to create a Positioning Statement and Purpose Lens – the foundational tools for decision-making and marketing/communications related to the Towpath.

In the pages ahead, this information is presented in the following segments:

- Summary of Findings
- Positioning and Purpose Lens
- End Benefits



Design a plan that builds community support by...

- Communicating the purpose and value of the Towpath to the Tremont community.
- Garnering broader acceptance and support for the project
- Inspiring residents and business owners to champion the Towpath and play a role in its success.

Advantages & Challenges

ADVANTAGES

Towpath Users

- Active restaurant & bar scene
- Independent & boutique retail
- Historical buildings
- Unique cityscape views
- Outdoor recreation: biking, walking

Neighborhood

- Supports tourism
- Enhance community safety
- Increase property value
- Recreational opportunities
- Tremont Pointe picnic area
- Connect residents to neighborhood destinations
- Easy access to Steelyard Commons
- Commute downtown by bike

CHALLENGES

- Safety concerns
- Apprehension of over-gentrification
- Infrastructure needs (signage, bike racks, etc.)
- Managing & communicating construction

Community Advantages

What will the Towpath do for the neighborhood?



Getting Around

Biking to work, shopping at Steelyard Commons or simply finding a better path to the nearest playground—the Towpath is a practical solution for connecting the community to destinations both within and neighboring Tremont.



Economic Vitality

The Towpath can strengthen tourism with more visibility, promotional opportunities and foot traffic for neighborhood restaurants, storefronts and businesses, bringing an influx of visitors (and visitors' money).



Safe Neighborhoods

Crime is lower in well-populated areas. More foot traffic will help residents and visitors feel safe in our neighborhoods and elevate public perception.



Quality of Life

The Towpath is for everybody. Young and old, affluent or not, the Towpath creates opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors, encouraging more pedestrian activity, therefore enhancing neighborhood vibrancy. Take a morning jog, walk the dog, meet a friend for an evening stroll or bike to the store.



Property Values

Improvements to the neighborhood make Tremont an even more desirable place to be, raising both commercial and residential property values.

Audiences Overview

An overview of current and aspirational audiences

The value of the Towpath is dependent on how much and how well it is utilized.

- Who will take advantage the Towpath?
- Why? What motivates them?
- How will they use it? What will they do?

Audiences

EVERYDAY USERS

WHO:

Demographic

- All Ages (children, adults, families, seniors, etc.)
- Socio-economically Diverse

WHY: Motivations

(Want to :: Have to)

- Urban Lifestyle (“That’s Why I Live Here”)
- Convenience
- Efficiency & Economy
- Doesn’t Own a Car
- Socially Motivated

HOW:

What are they doing?

- Shopping
- Dog Walking
- Running/Jogging
- Social Gathering
- Commute to Work
- Walking/Jogging with a Stroller

Audiences

RECREATIONAL ENTHUSIASTS

WHO:

Demographic

- 25–55 years old
- Upper and Middle Income
- Have Gear, Will Travel
- Upbeat, “Glass Half Full” Outlook

WHY: Motivations

(Want to)

- Fitness
- Recreation, Entertainment
- Exploration
- Socially Motivated

HOW:

What are they doing?

- Jogging, Running
- Biking
- Rollerblading
- Group Exercise

Audiences

SPECIAL INTEREST

WHO: Demographic

- 45–75 years old
- Upper-income Professionals
- Retirees (fixed income)
- Volunteers, Docents, Red Coats
- Conservationists, Nature Enthusiasts
- Content, Peaceful
- Interested, Curious

WHY: Motivations (Want to)

- Unique Opportunities
- Socially Motivated
- It's Something to Do

HOW: What are they doing?

- Organized Group Activities
- Bird Watching
- Photography
- Special Events (gallery hop, etc.)

Audiences

URBAN EXPLORERS

WHO:

Demographic

- 21–35 years old, Millennials
- Empty-nesters
- Professionals
- Disposable Income
- Plugged-in
- Influencers
- Foodies
- Open-minded, Curious
- Fun-seeking, Adventurous
- Weekenders & Weeknighters

WHY: Motivations

(Want to)

- Social Networking
- Experience Something New

HOW:

What are they doing?

- Social Drinking
- Happy Hour
- Dining
- Sports Leagues
- Shopping
- Gallery Hopping

Situation Overview

Part of an 85-mile trail that follows the historic route of the Ohio and Erie Canal, the Tremont Towpath is the only portion of the trail that connects directly to an urban neighborhood, offering dramatic cityscape views and a unique experience that blends the beauty of the outdoors with urban amenities.

While the trail is a tremendous opportunity for the neighborhood to enhance economic vitality and quality of life for residents, change can be disruptive. With this in the mind, Tremont West Development Corporation seeks support in designing a communication plan to both ease concerns and fuel excitement within the community.

Objectives

What do we want this plan to do for us?

- Communicate the purpose and the value of the Towpath to the Tremont community.
- Garner broader acceptance and support for the project
- Inspire residents and business owners to champion the Towpath and play a role in its success.

What perceptions and concerns do people have around the Tremont Towpath Trail and what messaging can we share to help them understand the benefits?

Perceptions

Neg: It's disruptive.

The Towpath Trail could disrupt everyday life with both people-traffic (vehicular, on-foot or by bike). People who don't know where to park their cars to get onto the trail, and bikers who don't respect road rules can cause road congestion.

Pos: It's integrated.

Thoughtful planning and strong communication will mitigate the challenges around integrating the Towpath Trail. Connection points between the trail and neighborhood will be clearly marked and trail access, parking, biking etiquette and road rules will be widely communicated both in the physical space itself as well as through print and digital channels, to help create a cooperative culture around Trail usage.

Perceptions

Neg: It's over-gentrifying my neighborhood.

I like it the way it is. There's history and character to the neighborhood and its people that makes Tremont unique. The Trail will bring an influx of upper middle-class people who threaten to strip Tremont of its authenticity.

Pos: It's enhancing my neighborhood.

The Trail's integration is intended to respect the history, landmarks and landscape of Tremont so that it adds instead of taking away. While the Trail itself will be aesthetically pleasing, it won't take away from Tremont's trademark grit—simply make it more accessible so everyone can enjoy in the rich cultural history the area has to offer. Furthermore, with more people outdoors and lighting along the path, neighborhood safety will be less of a concern.

Perceptions

Neg: It's not for me.

The Trail is meant to attract visitors and their money into Tremont. And many Trail users end up being upper middle-class bikers and runners who have the time, money and gear to exercise.

Pos: It's for entire community.

The Trail will be part of the fabric of the community, not only connecting people from the outside in, but also from the inside in, making it easier for residents to get around Tremont and connect with one another. Whether you use the trail to exercise, socialize, commute to work or shop at Steelyard Commons—the Trail is multi-use and intended for all.

FOUNDATION

What is a Positioning Statement?

A simple and concise internal statement that articulates who you are, what you offer, who it's for and the end benefit, while also identifying what makes you unique within the marketplace.

What is it for? To set a direction for marketing and communications.

“

If you don't care where you're going, it doesn't make a difference which path you take.”

—Cheshire Cat



The Tremont Towpath is the only part of the 85-mile multi-use trail that *connects directly to an urban neighborhood*, creating opportunities for residents to *enjoy the outdoors, access destinations in and around the neighborhood easily, and connect with the community, fueling economic vitality and improving quality of life for all.*

DISTINCT ADVANTAGE

WHAT THE TRAIL OFFERS

END BENEFIT

AUDIENCE

WHY

Your Purpose. Goes beyond “what you do” (your mission); Your reason for existing—for the betterment of human beings

HOW

The actions you, your stakeholders and constituents will take to deliver on your Purpose

WHAT

The things that you offer (products, services, programs, experiences)

FOUNDATION

Purpose Lens

Surveys, focus groups and discovery sessions were conducted to garner a deeper understanding of the perceived opportunities, challenges and ultimate Purpose around the Tremont Towpath Trail. This foundational work is used to align efforts and support cohesive, effective and efficient decision-making.

Guide People Through the Experience

Guide trail users and help them navigate to and from the Towpath Trail to help maximize their Tremont experience.

Educate People on How to Use the Trail

Educate people on best ways to take advantage of the trail and inform them of trail usage rules and best practices.

Promote the Trail & Tremont Experience

Promote the Towpath Trail and the Tremont experience to spread the word and bolster trail usage.

The recommendations in this plan are based on the Whats and Hows identified above.

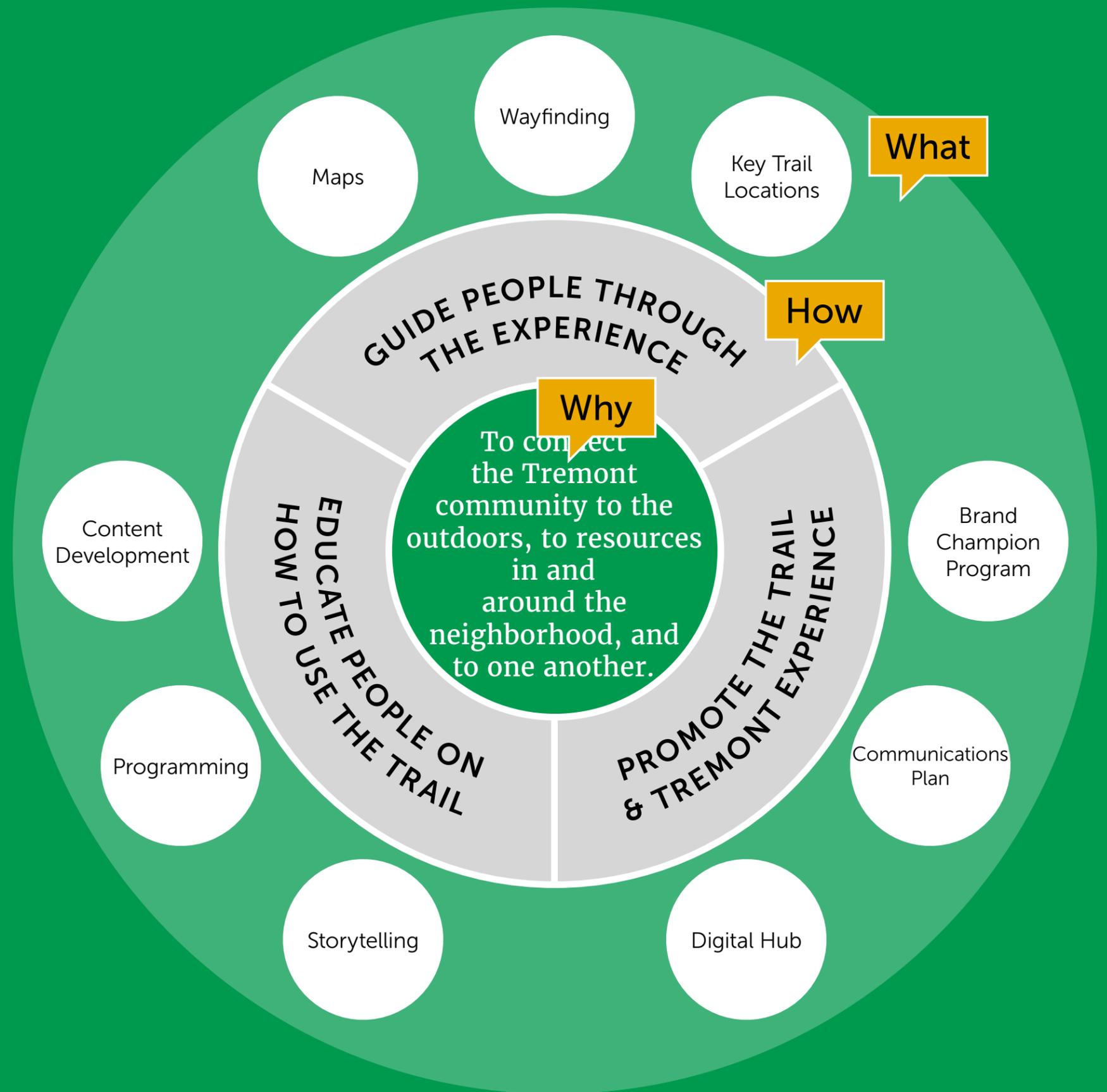
Audiences

INTERNAL

- Everyday Users
- Recreational Enthusiasts

EXTERNAL

- Special Interests
- Urban Explorers
- Recreational Enthusiast



FOUNDATION

End Benefits

The Tremont Towpath opens doors to so many opportunities for residents and business owners, but these three rise to the top as overarching benefits to both individuals and the community overall.



Safety

Lighting along the Towpath Trail along with more people on-foot or on bikes will improve safety both on the path and extending into the neighboring communities.



Quality of Life

Taking a morning run, commuting downtown on bike or meeting friends for a walk—the Trail offers a variety opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors, get around town more easily and connect with the community.



Property Values

Along with enhancements to safety and quality of life, Tremont will become a more desirable place to live and invest, increasing property values for both residential and commercial property owners.

