

# Economic Impact Assessment of the Proposed Cumberland Valley Rail with Trail from Shippensburg to Chambersburg

*A report to the Franklin  
County Planning Commission*

## Executive Summary



**Center for Land Use  
and Sustainability**

SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY



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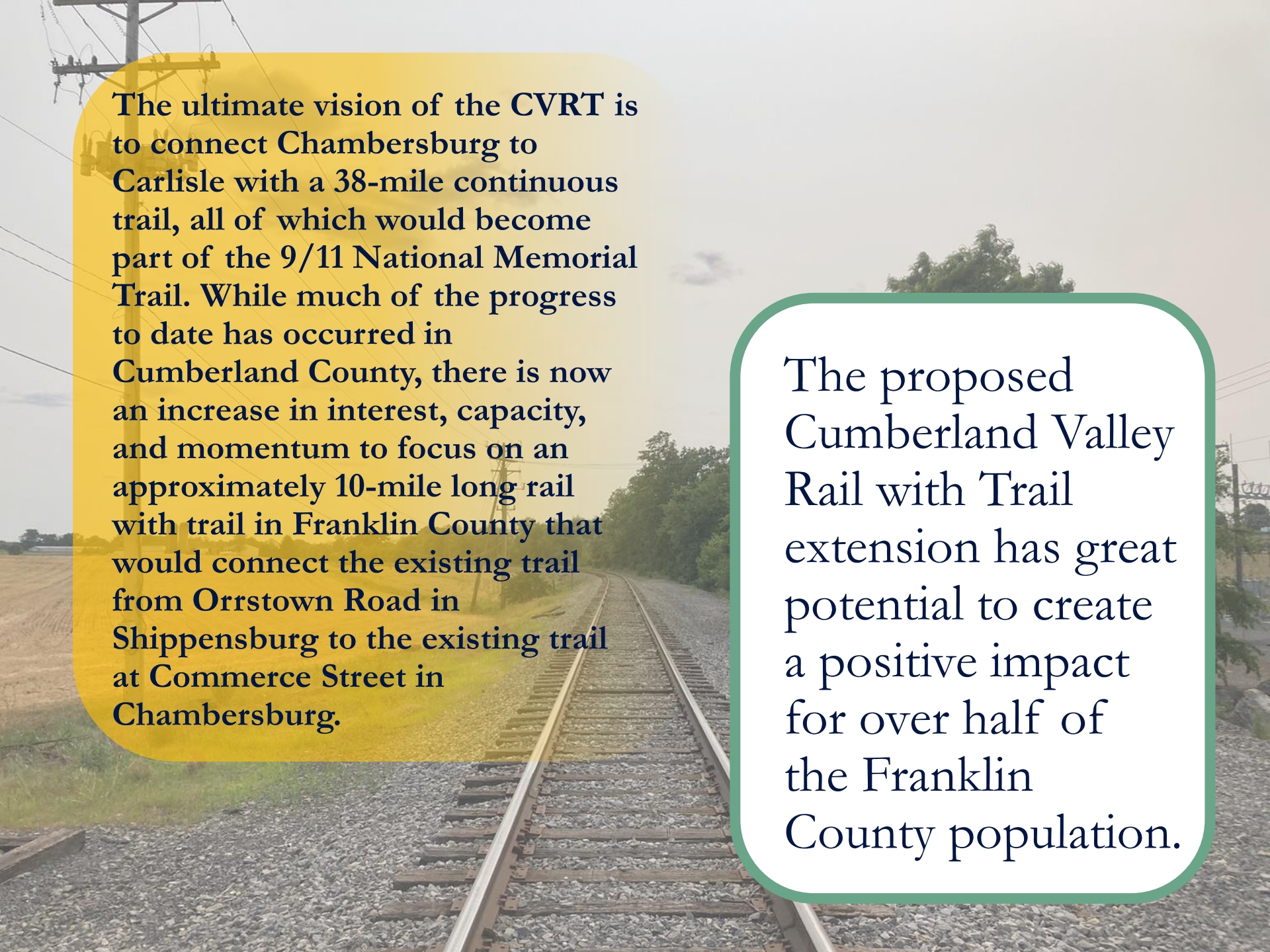
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The ultimate vision of the CVRT is to connect Chambersburg to Carlisle with a 38-mile continuous trail, all of which would become part of the 9/11 National Memorial Trail. While much of the progress to date has occurred in Cumberland County, there is now an increase in interest, capacity, and momentum to focus on an approximately 10-mile long rail with trail in Franklin County that would connect the existing trail from Orrstown Road in Shippensburg to the existing trail at Commerce Street in Chambersburg.

The proposed Cumberland Valley Rail with Trail extension has great potential to create a positive impact for over half of the Franklin County population.



## *The primary objective*

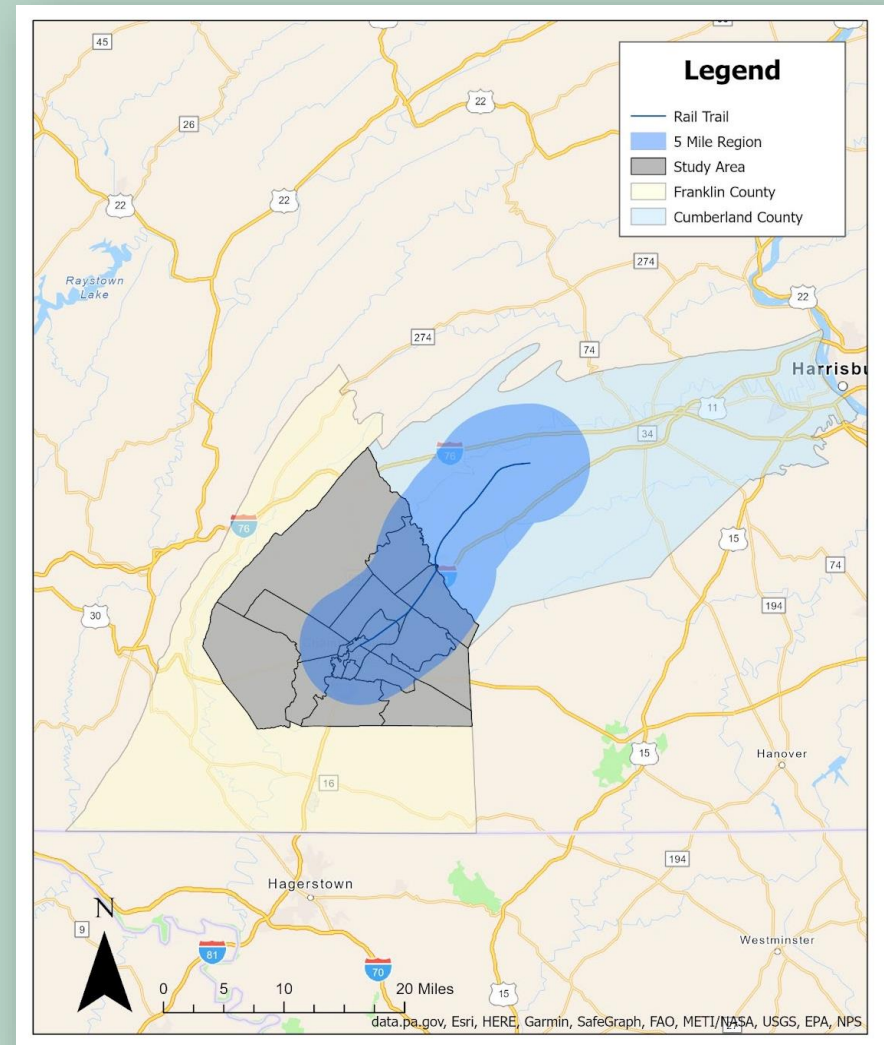
of this work is to conduct a literature-based assessment of the economic impacts of a rail with trail that would follow the existing CSX track and extend from the trailhead at Orrstown Road in Shippensburg to Commerce Street in Chambersburg. We also looked at additional economic and non-economic benefits related to rail trail access, and pulled together data to inform us about the communities that surround the proposed rail trail extension.

This study focuses on communities within 5 miles of the trail extension.

Fifty six percent of Franklin County's population (87,623 people; 35,097 households) live within the study area.

The population in this area has:

- Slightly more diversity than Franklin County due to a higher proportion of Hispanics.
- A population where 43% is made up of children under 18 and seniors 65 and older.
- A higher poverty rate and a higher median income relative to the county as a whole.
- A significant portion (>25%) that is enthusiastic when it comes to regular exercise and seeking out new exercise routines.



Considering the additional 10 miles of trail in Franklin County that would connect Shippensburg to Chambersburg, the economic impact is estimated to range from **\$382,900 to \$1,162,120.**

Considering the 26-mile length of the existing continuous trail in Franklin and Cumberland counties, the economic impact is estimated to range from **\$995,540 to \$3,021,512,** and the economic impact of the full 38-mile length from Carlisle to Chambersburg would range from **\$1,455,020 to \$4,416,056.**

*These economic impact estimates are based on visitor spending and use patterns.*





Outdoor recreation activities in Franklin County result in over \$99 million every year in avoided healthcare costs. This extended trail will fill a gap in trail access, expanding access to outdoor recreation opportunities to over half of the population of Franklin County.



The proposed rail trail extension seeks to connect the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail from Shippensburg to Chambersburg. In this corridor between the two boroughs, there are three areas with businesses that could see a positive impact from increased customer traffic: the village of Pinola, the intersection of routes 433 and 11, and around the North Pointe Business Park.

Railroads offer connections to national and global markets. Preserving and restoring railroad infrastructure is critical given its vital role in Franklin County's economy. Franklin County's rail freight network is expected to move 3.25 million tons of freight in 2040, a roughly 45% increase over 2011. As this proposal is a rail *with* trail that will follow the existing CSX/Pennsylvania & Southern Railway, the rail's economic potential will be maintained.



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**Find the full report here:**

<https://centerforlanduse.org/resources/publications/>



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