



**ms consultants, inc.**  
engineers, architects, planners



# NEWTON TOWNSHIP

## Mahoning River Corridor Plan

Prepared by ms consultants, inc.



# NEWTON TOWNSHIP

## COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

### Overview

The following toolkit explores how the corridor-wide objectives may be specifically applied to the Newton Township river section with an emphasis on the identified opportunity sites. Each community presents its own challenges and potential for revitalization and river restoration. The Community Implementation Toolkits outline these unique traits, provide context on existing conditions, and offer recommendations for the future. The recommendations are supported by action items and potential funding sources to support feasibility and help ensure implementation. The Community Implementation Toolkits should not serve as a stand-alone guide for the local community, but as an additional, specialized resource to the Mahoning River Corridor Revitalization Plan as a whole.

The Newton Township Community Implementation Toolkit includes the following sections:

- Existing Conditions
- Primary Opportunity Site
- Implementation Guide

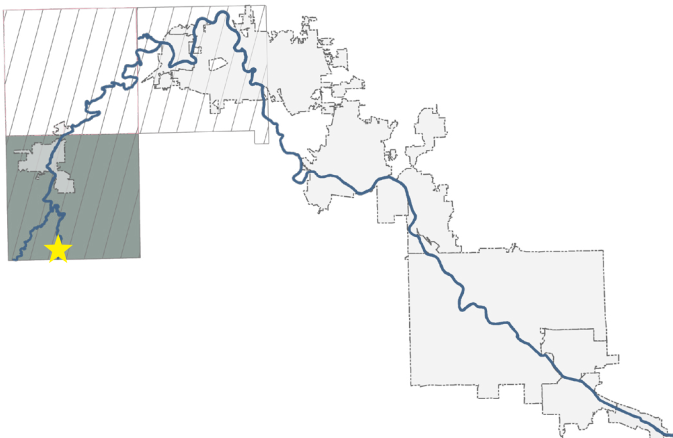
### Existing Conditions

#### OPPORTUNITIES

With the exception of Newton Falls (which has its own community implementation toolkit), Newton Township is primarily rural with vast open, forested, and agricultural land. It serves as the entrance to the Mahoning River corridor within the study area, the beginning of the designated Mahoning River Water Trail, and is located where Trumbull and Mahoning counties meet. As such, there is a notable opportunity to create a gateway experience for riverfront users and regional visitors. The natural beauty, undisturbed wildlife, and tree canopy define the community's relationship with the river and present unparalleled opportunity to connect people to the great outdoors.

#### CHALLENGES

The Newton Township portion of the Mahoning River corridor is predominantly located adjacent to residential property - with the exception of Foster MetroPark. Multiple private landowners present challenges to implementing riparian corridor management and/or providing public access to the water.



### MAHONING RIVER CORRIDOR RIVERFRONT COMMUNITIES

TRUMBULL COUNTY		MAHONING COUNTY
Newton Township 	Newton Falls	Youngstown
Braceville Township	Leavittsburg	Campbell
Warren Township	Warren	Struthers
Niles	McDonald	Lowellville
Girard		

5.2	River Miles
RURAL	Character
8,364	People
1	Launch
< 1	Trail Miles

### Dam Removal & Riverbank Restoration in Newton Township

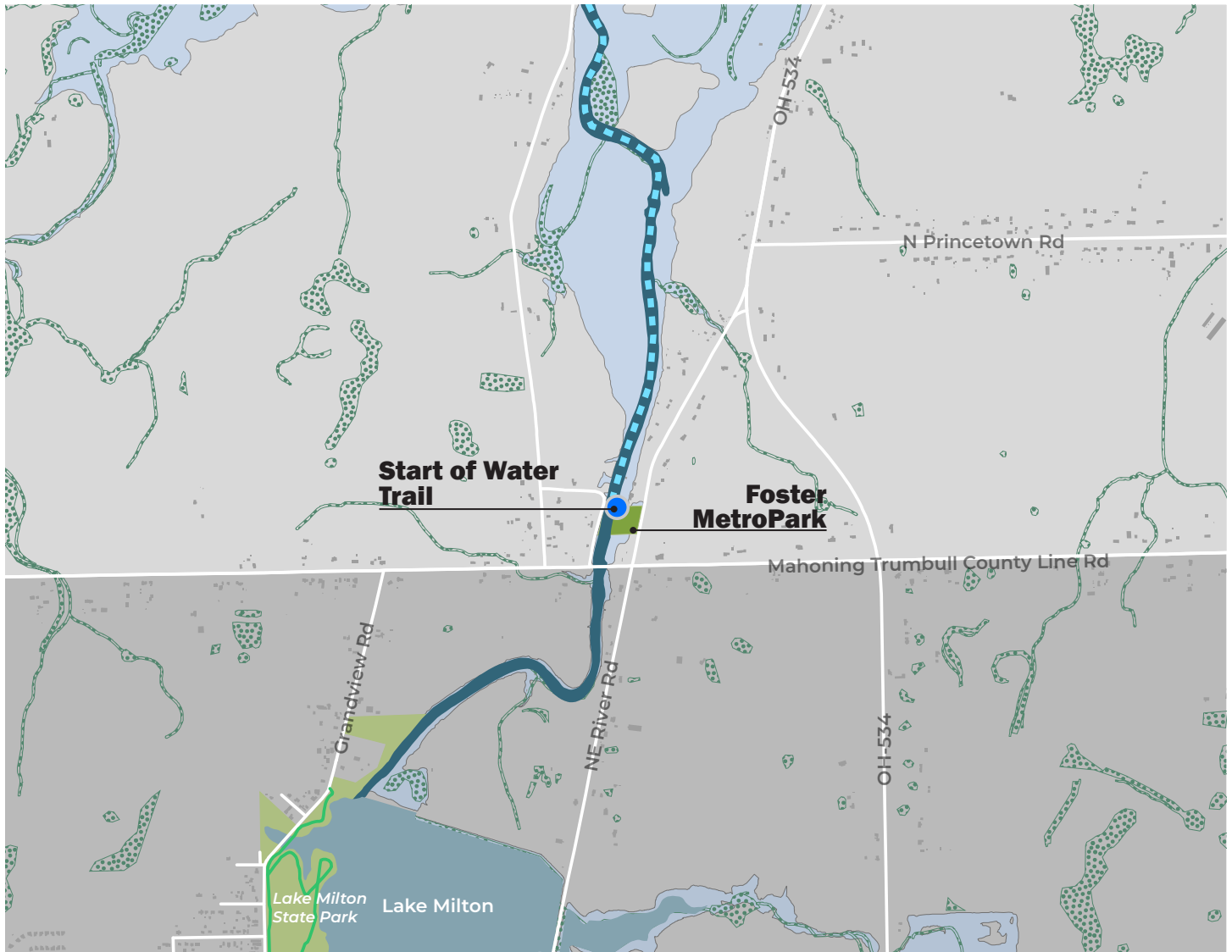
Dam removal is an essential component to re-imagining a natural, restored Mahoning River which serves as a regional asset for recreation and a source of healthy ecosystems. There are no dams present in the Newton Township segment of the river corridor, however, improvements to navigation and river health across Trumbull and Mahoning Counties will benefit the transformation of Foster MetroPark to a welcoming environment to visitors of the regional parks system. Additionally, healthier ecosystems and wildlife habitats will benefit fish species; an important contribution to the fishing sport for which Newton Township is a popular destination.

## NEWTON TOWNSHIP



**MAHONING RIVER**  
Corridor Revitalization  
[www.mymahoningriver.com](http://www.mymahoningriver.com)

FIGURE 1 EXISTING CONDITIONS - ENVIRONMENT



## THE ENVIRONMENT

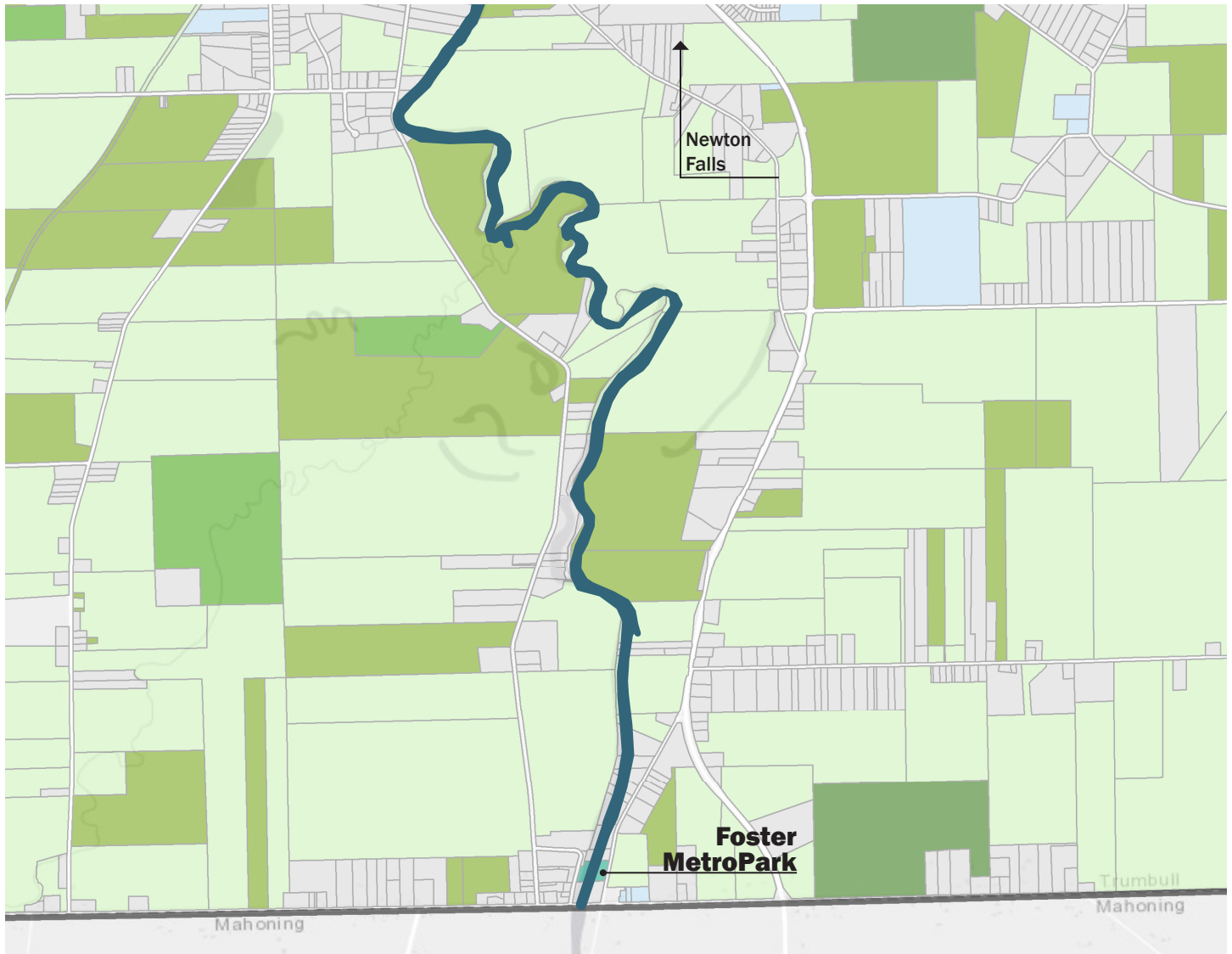
### Existing Conditions

The Mahoning River flows northerly in Newton Township running nearly parallel to OH-534 until Newton Falls. The river is largely hidden from the public eye by tree coverage and privately-owned land. This quiet expanse separates the Newton Township portion from the highly visible branches in Newton Falls and the Lake Milton area.

Lake Milton State Park, located in Milton Township (Mahoning County) about a mile south of Foster MetroPark, marks the beginning of the River's East Branch. It offers a wide variety of recreation activities including boating, swimming, and winter sports. The river is less active across the county line, where the natural environment takes precedent to programmed recreation. The first launch site for the Mahoning River past the Lake Milton dam is located at Foster MetroPark where river users can also access parking, restrooms, and a picnic area.

LEGEND	
	Mahoning River Water Trail
	Existing Launch
	Existing Trail
	Public Park
	Wetland
	100-year Floodplain
	500-year Floodplain
	Newton Township Boundary

**FIGURE 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS - LAND USE**











## ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Existing Conditions

Current economic development initiatives in Newton Township are primarily concentrated in the incorporated portions of the township or within the agriculture sector. The Township’s recently adopted comprehensive plan notes a preference for centering future economic development on aspects of a rural community like agritourism and recreation.

The existing land use for parcels along the Mahoning River in Newton Township south of Newton Falls, to the extent that they may support future agritourism and recreation endeavors, are summarized in Figure 2. Different types of agricultural land can be used for a variety of revenue-generating purposes including demonstrations, activities, and tours. Agriculture attractions such as berry picking, hayrides, petting zoos, and more are excellent compliments to other outdoor attractions like park activities.

LEGEND	
	Vacant Agricultural Land
	Cash Grain / General Farm
	Livestock / Dairy Farms
	Fruit and Nut Farms / Nurseries
	Timber / Forest Land
	All other Agricultural
	Civic & Other Exempt
	Parkland

# NEWTON TOWNSHIP: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

## Foster MetroPark

FIGURE 3 SITE LOCATION WITHIN NEWTON TOWNSHIP

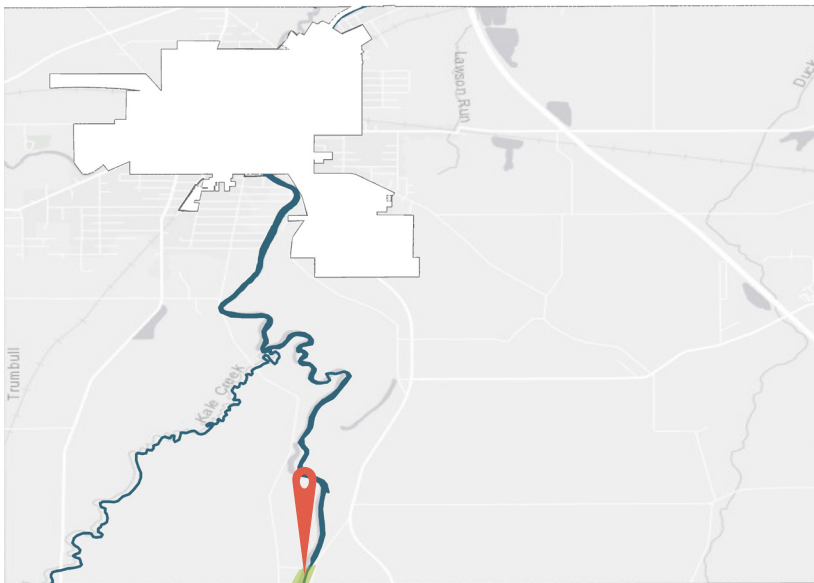


FIGURE 4 EXISTING IMAGERY



### EXISTING CONDITIONS

<b>OWNERSHIP</b>	Trumbull County MetroParks
<b>CURRENT LAND USE</b>	Public Park
<b>LOCAL ZONING</b>	Parks & Recreation
<b>RIVER ACCESS</b>	Foster MetroPark
<b>SIZE</b>	≈ 4 acres

### Additional Notes:

- Entrance to the Mahoning River Water Trail
- Starting point for a 14-mile paddling trip to Canoe City (Leavittsburg) with portage required at the Newton Falls dam
- Current launch is in good condition and can be used for emergency services
- Park includes small internal walking trails
- Future development plans include potential expansion by acquisition to the south with opportunity to extend walking trails and provide additional recreation space as river usage increases

*Current features at the primary opportunity site in Newton Township include a ramp for paddling access, picnic area with grill, parking lot, portable lavatory, and scenic views of the wooded parkland.*

## Primary Opportunity Site Overview

The vision for the future of the primary opportunity site on the Mahoning River in Newton Township is a naturally beautiful and well-maintained regional park destination. Foster MetroPark is already a significant community asset for the region, therefore, the future vision involves enhancing and leveraging its existing amenities. The park includes ample opportunities to admire the native plant species and discover wildlife with the safety and comfort of pedestrians in mind. Birdwatching and fishing are prime activities at this site and would be further supported by a new accessible fishing pier, permanent restrooms, and updates to current infrastructure/services such as drinking fountains, seating, and walking paths.

The park serves as a gateway to the river corridor and invites guests to explore all that the area has to offer. New signage, wayfinding, and a welcome center provide education, awareness, and guidance on enjoying a scenic trip down the river - whether by water or via the proposed regional greenway trail connection. Located at the edge of the Trumbull and Mahoning County boundary lines, the park provides an excellent opportunity for regional

collaboration and attraction of visitors from across the area. This collaboration is especially important with regard to marketing and promotion to heighten public awareness of Foster MetroPark and the MetroParks in general.



FIGURE 5 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: FUTURE RENDERING



# NEWTON TOWNSHIP: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

## Foster MetroPark

FIGURE 6 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS







1



**Proposed Character:**

- A new accessible pier celebrates one of the area’s best fishing spots
- Pier is accompanied by an updated foot bridge and the river and habitat restoration efforts



2



**Proposed Character:**

- A Mahoning River Greenway welcomes a range of users including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with power-driven mobility devices
- A trailhead to offer parking and repairs



3

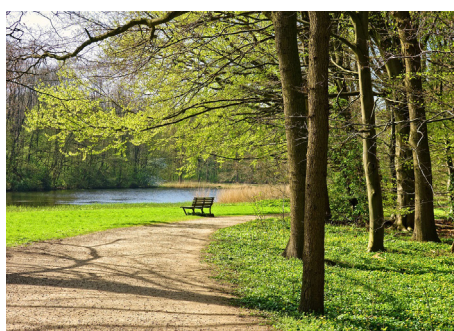


**Proposed Character:**

- Education, safety, and directional information to guide visitors on their journey along the Mahoning River Corridor; both by way of the water trail and the Greenway



4



**Proposed Character:**

- Extension of walking trails and passive park space
- Activities with limited impact on the environment, such as disc golf, are appropriate

# NEWTON TOWNSHIP: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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## Preparing for the Future Now

The recommendations provided within the Mahoning River Corridor Revitalization Plan represent goals for the region over the next few decades. The future vision for the Newton Township river segment should be pursued strategically by breaking down the ideal long-term state into manageable short-and immediate-term projects. The Implementation Guide provides further insight to assist local decision-makers in working together to achieve a revitalized downtown river district with best practices, industry standards, and potential funding sources. Though the guide is designed to be a simple and straightforward reference, these guidelines should not be treated so rigidly as to prevent adaptation should unforeseen circumstances arise during implementation. The Implementation Guide is not an exhaustive list and should be pursued in concert with the corridor-wide objectives identified in the larger Mahoning River Corridor Revitalization Plan. Regional collaboration and coordination is highly encouraged.

*To learn more about funding opportunities, visit Chapter 05 Next Steps of the Mahoning River Corridor Revitalization Plan.*

# SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

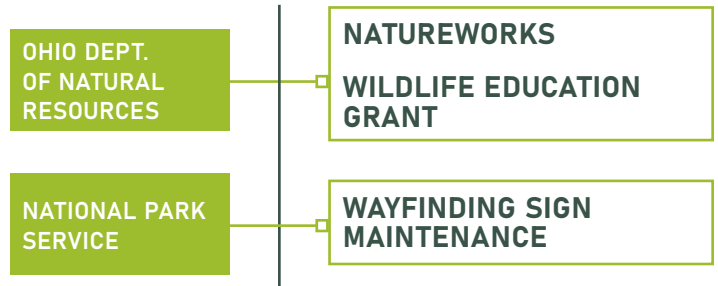
## Defined Project(s)

Enhanced signage and wayfinding will help brand Foster MetroPark as a gateway to the Mahoning River corridor. It should welcome park users, contribute to the region's sense of place, and navigate to points of interest. Current signage at the park should be expanded to include additional wayfinding and contribute to a regional strategy for branding and identity.

Signage refers to information publicly posted about the park such as facility name, the agency responsible for operation and maintenance, education on the environment, historic legacy, other topics of interest to the region, and safety and accessibility information. Wayfinding refers specifically to directional signage which guides travelers throughout a system. Utilizing both standard signage and wayfinding components help ensure that park and trail users can easily identify and locate area attractions. Trail signage should be informative, aesthetically-pleasing, and be oriented to the cyclist so that it is easy to read on bike or on foot. It also presents an opportunity to creatively display the Mahoning River's historic legacy.



## Funding Opportunities



## Design Elements

### SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING PLAN

Sign design standards developed as a family promote a cohesive brand and enforce consistent nomenclature across a park system and/or region. In addition to addressing colors, fonts, materials, and verbiage, a signage family demonstrates how the information should be displayed in different environments, contexts, and at various scales. For example, signage geared toward a pedestrian or cyclist may differ in material and orientation to that of messaging for motorists. In addition to addressing what and how marketing and branding are defined by a system's signs, a master plan should also determine locations for where each type of signage is most appropriate. This comprehensive strategy for signage and wayfinding helps ensure messaging is accurately communicated so that the public can safely and effectively navigate the region's recreational resources.



City of Burlington, VT Parks Department Sign System Family

# PARKS IMPROVEMENTS & PROGRAMMING

## Defined Project(s)

### YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING

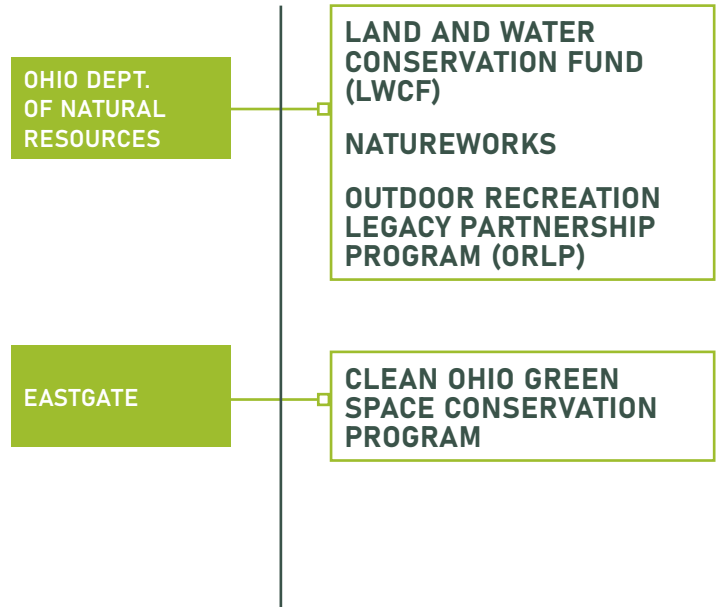
A challenge for parks in Ohio’s climate is maintaining services during colder periods. Examples of fall and winter park activities to keep residents active, healthy, and engaged year-long include:

- Holiday lights
- Cross country skiing
- Winter hikes & birding excursions
- Ice fishing
- Snowshoeing
- Social media campaigns & challenges

### FACILITY UPGRADES

Current restrooms at Foster MetroPark are portable lavatories. While it is not necessary to have permanent facilities at all parks in the region, it is desirable at the launching point of the Mahoning River corridor. In preparation for future growth, a permanent restroom should be designed as part of a welcome center with additional information, education, and seating areas. Revenue-generating additions include rental space and vending. New amenities should accompany repair, improvements, and ongoing maintenance of existing infrastructure and services.

## Funding Opportunities



## CASE STUDY:

### Fall Hiking Spree, Summit Metro Parks

Summit Metro Parks manages several parks and conservation acres in Summit County, Ohio. They also operate a program to encourage residents to get outside and explore nature during the cooler months.

The Fall Hiking Spree is an annual campaign in which participants sign up to hike at designated trails, marking them off as they go. Once eight hikes are completed, hikers drop off their form to receive an award. The award features a badge for that year’s challenge, so that participants can repeat the spree year after year and keep track of their accomplishments. Since its establishment in 1964, the program remains a popular pastime for locals. The Metro Parks also have an annual theme and designated hashtag for the hiking spree so that the public can engage across social media.

Other year-round programming includes guided hikes and classes, and downloadable “Eye Spy” sheets for each of its parks which turns educational material on local natural features into a fun game for all ages.



Summit Metro Parks also sponsors guided hikes with naturalists throughout the year such as the “Winter Tree I.D.” event where participants learn to identify plants and trees by their bark.

# MULTI-USE CONNECTIONS

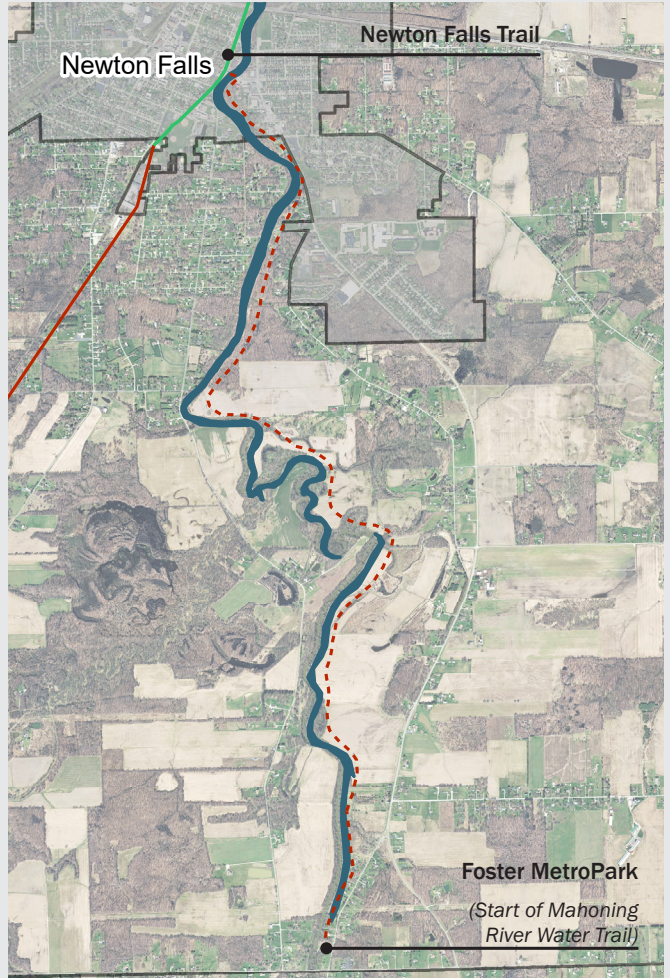
## Defined Project(s)

### REGIONAL CONNECTOR

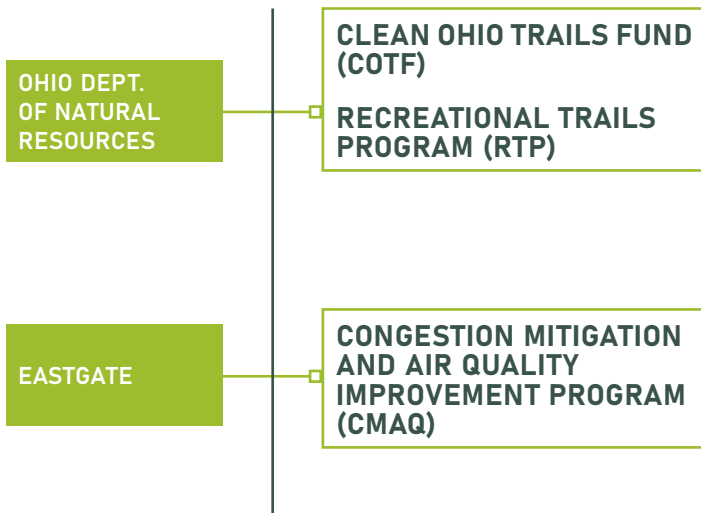
On the southwest quadrant of the Mahoning River corridor, the primary existing bicycle infrastructure is the Newton Falls Trail. The trail is adjacent to the east branch and runs north-south from the community's main park - City Park - to the Newton Falls Reservoir. The trail is an important pedestrian connection and community feature, but is not connected to any external path networks.


A linkage opportunity exists to the south of Newton Falls to the start of the regional corridor study area where Trumbull and Mahoning Counties meet. Filling this gap with a multi-use path on the east branch of the river would allow for pedestrian travel through the rural, natural beauty of Newton Township, including Foster MetroPark, to Lake Milton State Park and its own trail network. Creating the opportunity for recreation and alternative transportation between the entrance to the river corridor (Foster MetroPark) and its first "trail community" (Newton Falls) is a crucial first step in leveraging the existing park as a gateway to regional recreation tourism.

## Newton Township's Mahoning River Greenway Segment



### Funding Opportunities



GREENWAY TRAIL NETWORK	
	Existing Trail
	Conceptual Trail*
	Proposed Trail

\*As identified in previous planning efforts and identified in Eastgate's GIS database

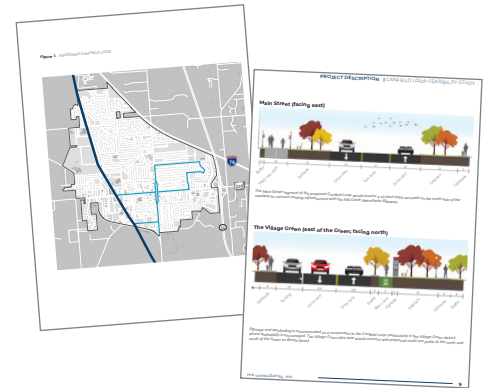
## PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### ENVIRONMENTAL & RECREATION

- A.1** Conduct a feasibility study for proposed trail connections.
- A.2** Coordinate with regional partners to create and implement a parks and recreation signage and wayfinding plan for the Mahoning River Corridor.
- A.3** Develop a site plan for potential southern expansion of Foster MetroPark.
- A.4** Identify and design a riparian zone.

### ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- B.1** Collaborate with Trumbull County Visitors Bureau, Trumbull County Metroparks, and the Ohio Farm Bureau, and other regional partners on opportunities to grow agritourism in the Township.



*A trail feasibility study will identify appropriate types of multimodal infrastructure at each trail segment, right-of-way ownership, and environmental needs. Planning and design work will also position the Township/Park District to apply for recreational grants.*