



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



# NEWTON FALLS

## Mahoning River Corridor Plan

Prepared by ms consultants, inc.



# NEWTON FALLS

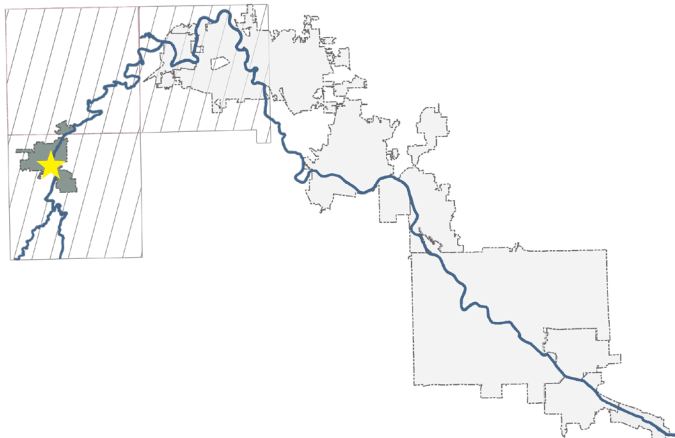
## COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

### Overview

The following toolkit explores how the corridor-wide objectives may be specifically applied to the Newton Falls 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 Falls Community Implementation Toolkit includes the following sections:

- Existing Conditions
- Primary Opportunity Site
- Secondary Opportunity Site
- Implementation Guide



### Existing Conditions

#### OPPORTUNITIES

Unique opportunities associated with river restoration and downtown revitalization abound in Newton Falls. Two branches of the Mahoning River flow through the community, creating potential anchors for pedestrian connections and a commercial main street. The community's namesake - The Falls - and its historic covered bridge are important local assets to preserve and enhance through park and recreation improvements. Existing trails and public spaces support current residents and represent the potential for future regional connections.



#### CHALLENGES

Revitalizing Broad Street as a walkable, commercial destination will require long-term investments in the streetscape and building stock. Public improvements will need to be coupled with economic development efforts to attract and support businesses in the area. The cost, design considerations, and expertise necessary for historic preservation and restoration on Broad Street present additional challenges.

### MAHONING RIVER CORRIDOR RIVERFRONT COMMUNITIES

TRUMBULL COUNTY		MAHONING COUNTY
Newton Township	<b>Newton Falls</b> ★	Youngstown
Braceville Township	Leavittsburg	Campbell
Warren Township	Warren	Struthers
Niles	McDonald	Lowellville
Girard		

1.9	River Miles
<b>SMALL TOWN CHARM</b>	Character
4,471	People
1	Launch
1.0	Trail Miles

### Dam Removal & Riverbank Restoration in Newton Falls

Newton Falls is uniquely positioned among the Mahoning River communities in that its dam is not slated for removal, nor does it serve operations for private industry. The dam is necessary for maintaining “The Falls” which are a focal point of the community, a local attraction, a prime fishing spot, and backdrop to the veterans memorial riverfront park.

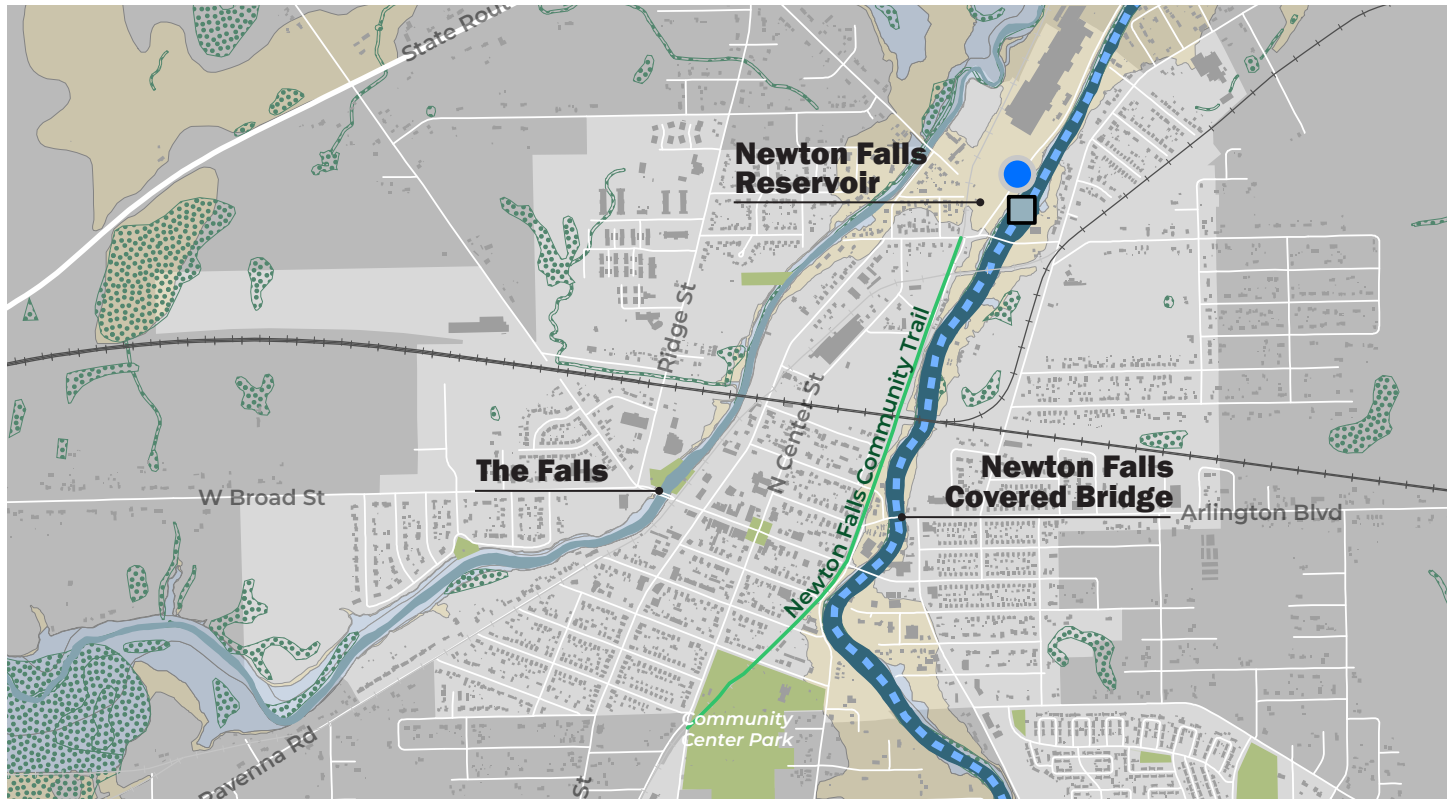
Not removing the dam will require launch sites and clear signage up and downstream of the dam so that paddlers can safely portage when traversing this section of the river.

## NEWTON FALLS



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Corridor Revitalization  
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FIGURE1 EXISTING CONDITIONS - ENVIRONMENT



## THE ENVIRONMENT










### Existing Conditions

Newton Falls is incredibly unique in that two branches of the Mahoning River flow through the community. The west branch features a lowhead dam at Broad Street - a commercial strip in the downtown - where The Falls (the City's namesake) are located. Veteran's Park is situated adjacent to the Falls and features a memorial plaza, gazebo, and seating.

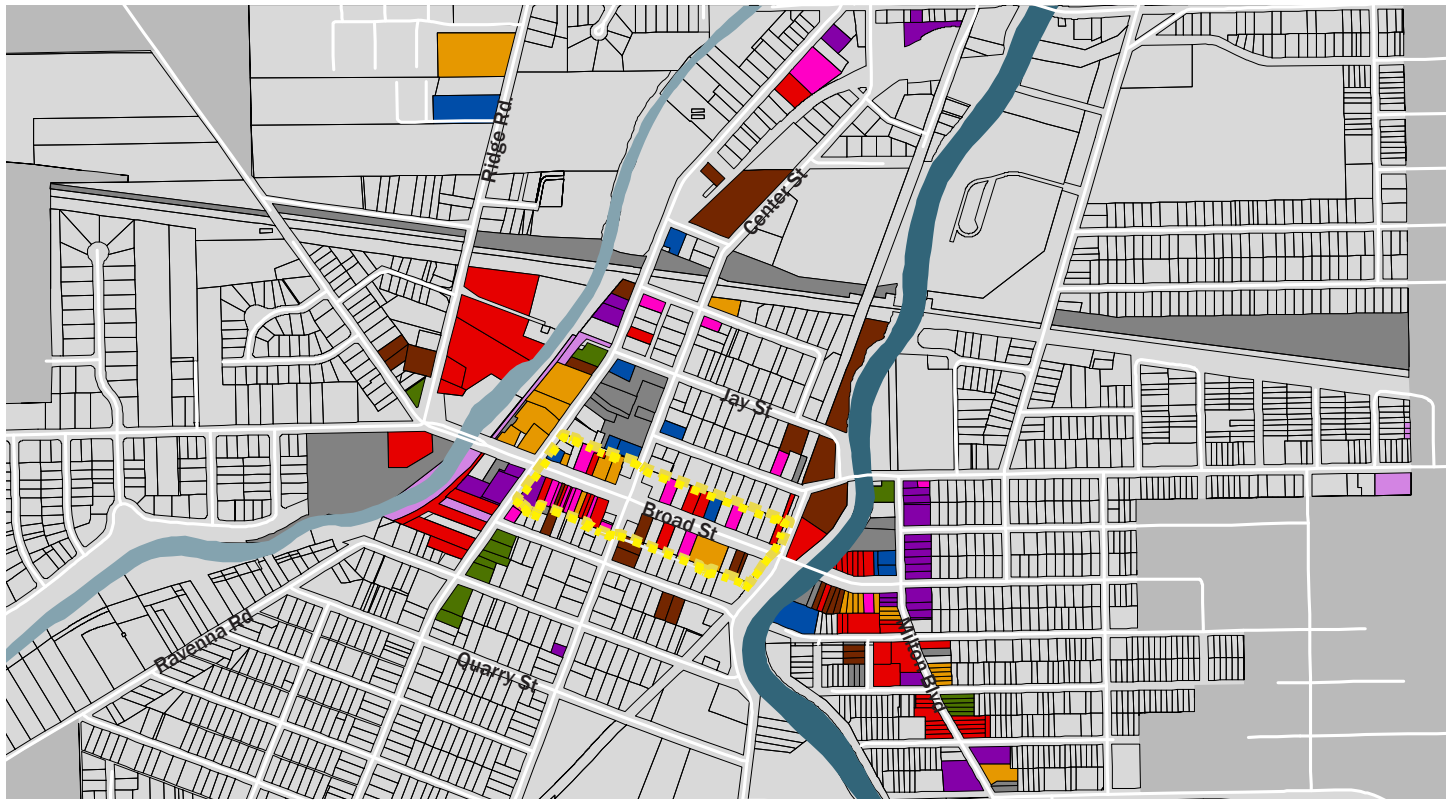
The east branch (downstream from Foster MetroPark) flows under the Newton Falls covered bridge. The bridge holds historic and cultural significance, not only within the community but across the state. Adjacent to the east branch is the Newton Falls Trail which runs north-south from the community's main park - City Park - to the Newton Falls Reservoir.

Both branches contain multiple hazards for paddlers including The Falls, bridges (OH-534 and Main Street), and the Newton Falls dam. Given these challenges, fishing, birding, and passive activities are most common along the river in the area.

Environmentally-sensitive areas, including wetlands and a FEMA-designated floodplain, present opportunities for additional natural areas and/or sustainable, green design.

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

**FIGURE2 EXISTING CONDITIONS - COMMERCIAL LAND USES**



## ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Existing Conditions

Newton Falls is actively engaged with promoting economic and community development initiatives. The Downtown Enhancement Program provides grants to property owners for projects that beautify the downtown area. Examples include facade improvements, landscaping, lighting, and other external enhancements. The entire jurisdiction of Newton Falls is a certified Community Reinvestment Area (CRA), meaning that real property tax exemptions are available for property owners who renovate existing buildings or construct new buildings in the City. As the utility owner and operator (water, sewer, electric), the City of Newton Falls is also uniquely positioned to meet the infrastructure needs of businesses.

A downtown business study conducted in 2019 by YSU found that the types of businesses in the Broad Street / Milton Blvd. area is varied. At that time, about 13% of establishments were retail, 23% food/drink, and 13% personal services. The land use map above demonstrates the potential for commercial vibrancy within Newton Falls by summarizing the types of commercial land uses which are concentrated in the downtown area.

LEGEND	
	Vacant Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Office
	Retail
	Restaurant
	Services
	Car Sales
	Commercial Warehouse
	Other Commercial
	Downtown Enhancement Program Area
	Non-Commercial Use

# NEWTON FALLS: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

## Broad Street Corridor

FIGURE3 SITE LOCATION WITHIN NEWTON FALLS



### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Ownership	City of Newton Falls, Private
Current Use	Varied
Local Zoning	Commercial
River Access	Veterans Park
Size	27.97 acres

### Additional Notes:

- The falls are an important feature of the local community
- On the East Branch, the covered bridge serves as a similar unique asset
- An existing trail traverses the community
- Broad St. development opportunities were explored in a downtown inventory study by YSU (2019)

FIGURE4 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: EXISTING CONDITIONS





## Primary Opportunity Site Overview

The vision for the future of the primary opportunity site on the Mahoning River in Newton Falls is a charming district of small town character which instills great pride for local residents and creates a sense of identity and attraction for visitors. Local shops and eateries line the beautified streetscape of Broad Street while greenspace and park amenities provide ample opportunities to enjoy the river's natural beauty. The Falls on the West Branch and the Covered Bridge on the East Branch anchor Broad Street's commercial opportunities. Site users can access entertainment, leisure, and neighborhood services within the Broad Street district or conveniently traverse the enhanced trail system to local and regional destinations, including the nearby Community Park and Community Center.

FIGURE 5 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: FUTURE RENDERING



# NEWTON FALLS: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

## Broad Street Corridor

FIGURE 6 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: PROPOSED







**Proposed Character:**

- Additional pedestrian connections, amenities, art, and signage enhance the Veterans Memorial Park and improve public access to the river
- Maintained greenspace at the Covered Bridge



**Proposed Character:**

- Commercial uses to attract visitors to Newton Falls and support the riverfront park experience



**Proposed Character:**

- Broad Street revitalization and historic preservation
- Pedestrian connections to nearby parks, trails, and the river



**Proposed Character:**

- Mixed-use anchors of the Broad Street corridor
- Patios and/or walkways to connect users with the river are highly encouraged

# NEWTON FALLS: SECONDARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

## Commerce Park

FIGURE7 SECONDARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: PROPOSED



## Secondary Opportunity Site Overview

The vision for the future of Commerce Park along the Mahoning River at the reservoir is programmed greenspace with enhanced river access. The planned launch provides designated and safe access to the waterway for paddling activities. The site also serves as a critical connection between the Newton Falls Trail and the proposed Mahoning River Greenway.



## Proposed Character:

- Riverfront amenities provide a close and scenic view of the Mahoning River while offering safe, designated access to waterway navigation and sports

# NEWTON FALLS: 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 Falls 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.

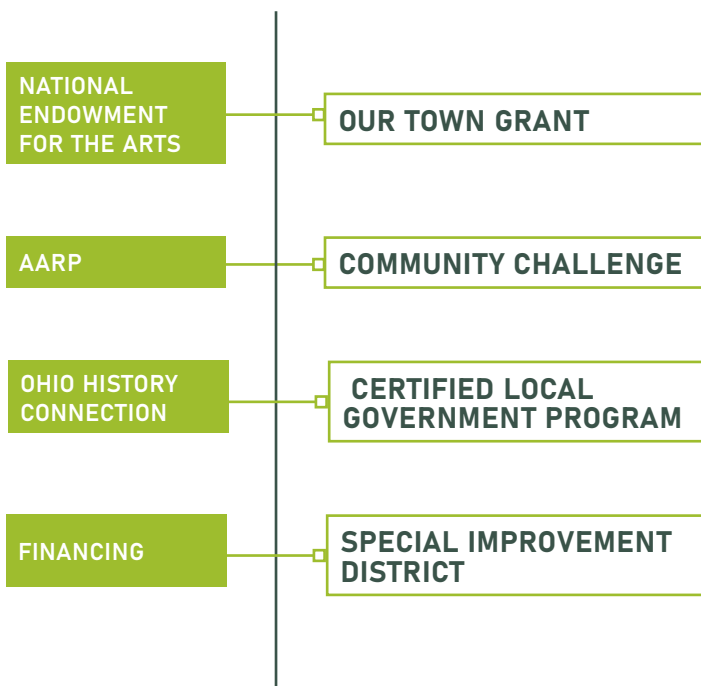
*To learn more about funding opportunities, visit Chapter 05 Next Steps of the Mahoning River Corridor Revitalization Plan.*

# COMMUNITY BRANDING

## Broad Street Placemaking

Broad Street revitalization presents the opportunity to develop and market a sense of place. A “sense of place” describes a distinct character of a community or an emotional response elicited from hearing “Newton Falls”. It explains how a visitor perceives and recognizes its surroundings. The City of Newton Falls can center its community branding efforts in the Broad Street corridor to create a downtown environment that serves as the “face of a community”- a recognizable image to attract visitors and businesses. Prioritizing physical improvements, programming, and branding of one area allows for a streamlined and leveraged approach which can then be used to attract additional funding and resources. A community branding campaign focused on Broad Street revitalization also provides the opportunity to showcase other contributors to Newton Falls’ sense of place: the Covered Bridge on the east end and The Falls on the west end. The ultimate goal for enhanced community branding is to attract visitors and businesses to the area, while creating an environment that encourages them to stay, stroll, and enjoy that Newton Falls has to offer.

## Funding Opportunities



## Elements of Community Branding

### PUBLIC ART

Essential to branding a downtown or commercial district is inclusion of public gathering spaces. Adding local flare and culture to these public spaces can be achieved with integration of public art. Murals can showcase local history or functional art, such as a sculptural bike rack or an interesting bench, serve dual purposes as a useful tool in the streetscape and a way to display the community’s brand. Another method is a rotating art display which can be updated annually to create renewed interest and intrigue.

### SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

Signage refers to publicly posted information such as site name, historic legacy, or other topics of interest to the region, and safety and accessibility information. Wayfinding refers specifically to directional signage which guides travelers throughout an area. Utilizing both signage and wayfinding elements on Broad Street will help promote local destinations and safely guide visitors of all transportation modes. Signage should be informative, aesthetically-pleasing, and be oriented to both the motorist and pedestrian. Signage and wayfinding should be consistent in design across locations to further solidify a coherent and cohesive community image.

### STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

A community brand can be cultivated by deliberate intervention to the built environment. An enhanced Broad Street streetscape can help shape a unified, walkable, and inviting commercial district. Improvements include street trees, benches, bike racks, underground utilities, lighting, crosswalks, bike lanes, and other efforts which increase the attractiveness and pedestrian comfort in the district.

### MARKETING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The physical improvements described above are necessary to spur private investment and create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors. It is also necessary to ensure there are adequate things to do and places to visit when enjoying Broad Street. This requires business attraction and expansion strategies, as well as increased digital and social media engagement. Newton Falls must work with county and regional economic development entities to strengthen its brand presence in an effort to share the messaging of economic opportunities in Newton Falls.

# MULTI-USE CONNECTIONS

## Defined Project(s)

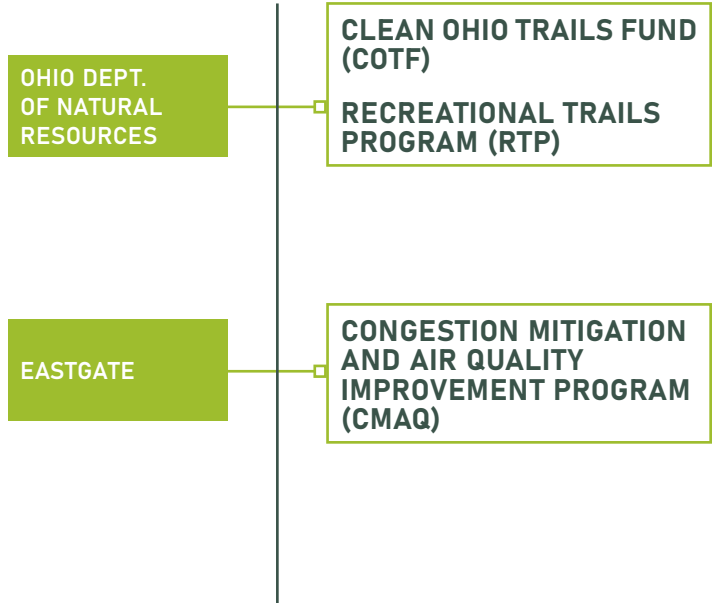
### BROAD STREET CONNECTOR

The existing Newton Falls Trail extends north-south connecting Community Park and the community center to Lock Street along the East Branch of the Mahoning River. Revitalization of Broad Street, as identified in this plan, presents an opportunity to enhance this community asset by expanding its reach to the west branch of the river and the Falls. A new arterial connection across Broad Street in the downtown area would promote pedestrian safety and encourage non-vehicular travel through the downtown area. Providing multi-use connections supports an array of public benefits as local residents and regional visitors alike interact with the community and access its local attractions.

### REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

In addition to expanding the footprint of its internal trail, Newton Falls should work with its county and regional partners to connect the Newton Falls Trail with outlying regional networks. With its Broad Street enhancements, park amenities, and tourist attractions, Newton Falls is well-positioned to attract and support regional trail users as they travel through the Mahoning Valley greenway network. Making sure that trail users can easily and safely get from regional trail sections to desirable locations within Newton Falls will ensure that regional investments are best leveraged for future economic gain.

## Funding Opportunities



## Design Elements

Introducing bicycle infrastructure to Broad Street could be done with different facility types based on further feasibility analysis and community input. Examples of appropriate infrastructure include:



Sharrows are a shared environment, indicated by road markings, in which bicycles are entitled to full access of the travel lane. The simplicity in design translates to low implementation costs, but for safety and comfort, should be limited to low volume roads.



Standard bike lanes are designed for separate bike travel adjacent to automobile traffic. Creating a designated lane encourages cyclists to venture off the trail and prevents collisions with pedestrians.



Protected bike lanes are designed for separate bike travel adjacent to automobile traffic, protected by a physical barrier such as planters, bollards, or parking. The barriers can improve safety and user comfort.

## PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### ENVIRONMENTAL & RECREATION

- A.1** Conduct a feasibility study to determine bicycle facility needs of Broad Street.
- A.2** Construct launch at Commerce Park and install supportive park amenities (signage, seating, etc.).
- A.3** Enhance the connection between private businesses and both branches of the river with walkways and outdoor patios along Broad Street.
- A.4** Remove invasive species and conduct riverfront clean up to improve public access to the waterways.
- A.5** Connect the existing Newton Falls Trail to planned regional networks.
- A.6** In coordination with regional partners/branding, install signage and wayfinding to direct visitors to local attractions such as the Falls, Covered Bridge, launch, and downtown businesses.
- A.7** Identify and design a riparian zone.



Wayfinding elements should showcase Newton Fall's local brand across different materials, sizes, and intended audiences.

### ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- B.1** Create design guidelines for the priority site area to ensure future development aligns with community goals.
- B.2** Establish a downtown public art program.
- B.3** In collaboration with the Newton Falls Community Improvement Corporation, develop a site plan for a catalytic property in the downtown.



Design guidelines can encourage pedestrian-friendly improvements, protect the environment, or maintain a neighborhood's historic integrity.