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BRACEVILLE TOWNSHIP

Mahoning River Corridor Plan

Prepared by ms consultants, inc.



BRACEVILLE TOWNSHIP

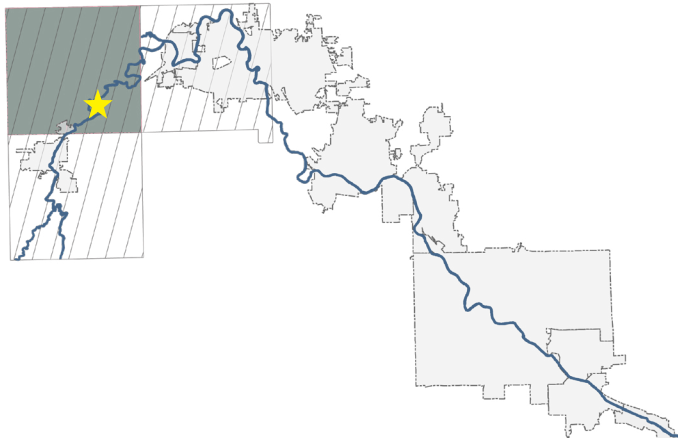
COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

Overview

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

- Existing Conditions
- Primary Opportunity Site
- Implementation Guide



Existing Conditions

OPPORTUNITIES

Braceville Township has a large amount of natural and open green space, including sites designated for conservation through the Clean Ohio program. Trumbull County Metroparks and a golf course currently enhance the Township's natural beauty and additional opportunities exist for new recreation and nature-based uses.

CHALLENGES

The Braceville Township river corridor contains environmentally sensitive land. The floodplain extends beyond the riverbanks, along with wetlands, creating limitations to development and land use. Protecting this area and maintaining its natural state requires coordination with private landowners and long-term investment in environmental stewardship.

MAHONING RIVER CORRIDOR RIVERFRONT COMMUNITIES

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

7.69	River Miles
NATURAL	Character
2,686	People
1	Launch
0	Trail Miles

Dam Removal & Riverbank Restoration in Braceville Township

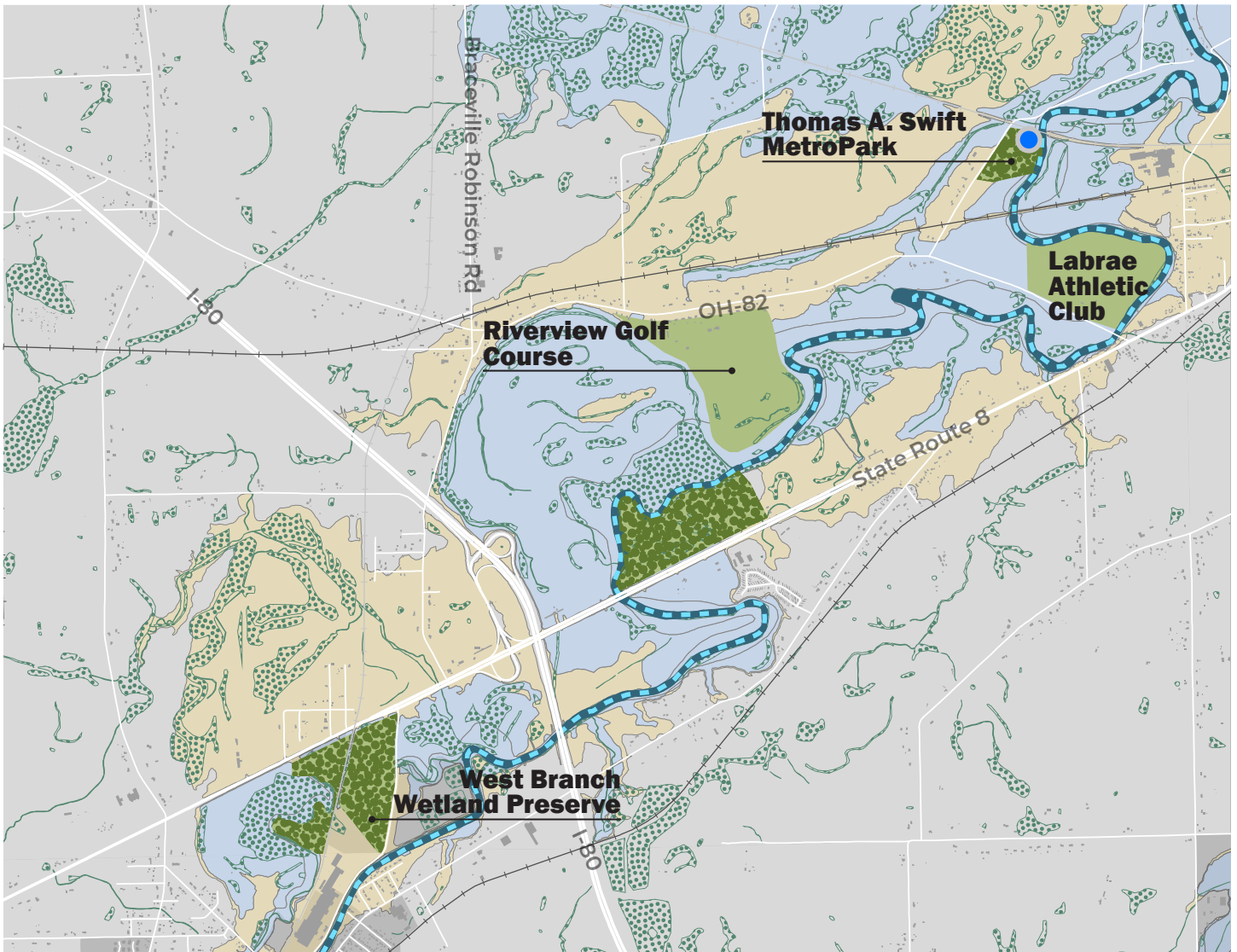
Dam removal is an essential component to re-imagining a natural, restored Mahoning River which serves as a regional asset for recreation and a source of healthy ecosystems. There are no dams present in the Braceville Township segment of the river corridor, however, improvements to navigation and river health across Trumbull and Mahoning Counties will benefit the transformation of Trumbull County MetroPark land and the State Route 5 corridor to a natural getaway for visitors of the regional parks system. Additionally, healthier ecosystems and habitats will benefit wildlife; further supporting the fishing and gaming for which Braceville Township is a popular destination.

BRACEVILLE TOWNSHIP



MAHONING RIVER
Corridor Revitalization
www.mymahoningriver.com

FIGURE 1 EXISTING CONDITIONS - ENVIRONMENT



THE ENVIRONMENT

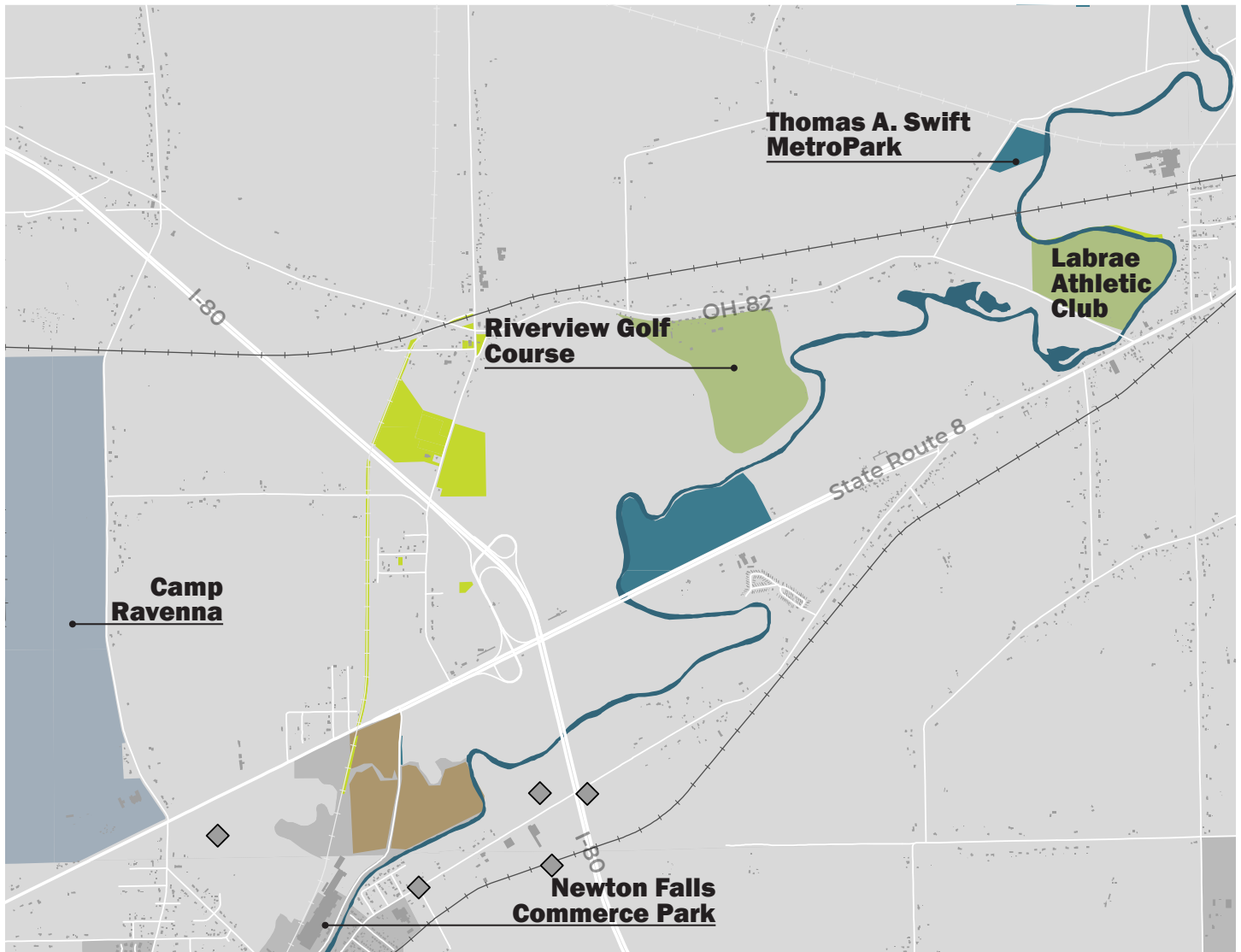
Existing Conditions

Braceville Township’s section of the Mahoning River is part of the designated Water Trail which extends from Foster MetroPark in Newton Township to Packard Park in Warren. It features a wet terrain and several amenities for nature observation and recreation including a golf course, public hunting area, water trail, and metropark. Thomas A. Swift MetroPark is a 12-acre river access site on the Mahoning River Water Trail and features a launch, picnic area, and a botanical garden. Braceville Township’s meadow and forest land create excellent opportunities for birding and experiencing wildlife.

The community currently lacks ample trail connection within the community and to the region at large. Cyclists may brave the streets of Braceville Robinson Rd or State Route 82, but there are currently no separated paths for pedestrians and cyclists in the community.

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

FIGURE 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS - PROPERTY OWNERSHIP



ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Existing Conditions

Braceville Township is primarily residential and open space/agricultural land. Its commercial uses are almost exclusively located along SR-5 and many are centered around the sports and outdoor recreation industry. Examples include Riverview Golf Course, Ridge Ranch Campground, LaBrae Athletic Club, and All4Golf Driving Range. Future development opportunities may continue this trend by further supporting parks and recreation uses. Land designated for preservation through the Clean Ohio program cannot be used for profit, but can help support healthy riparian corridor and ecosystem maintenance necessary for an environment conducive for recreational tourism. There is potential for industrial, manufacturing, office or other commercial businesses to the south in Newton Falls and at the turnpike interchange. Potential economic development tools for future growth not currently employed in the area include joint economic development districts (JEDDs) and tax increment financing (TIF).

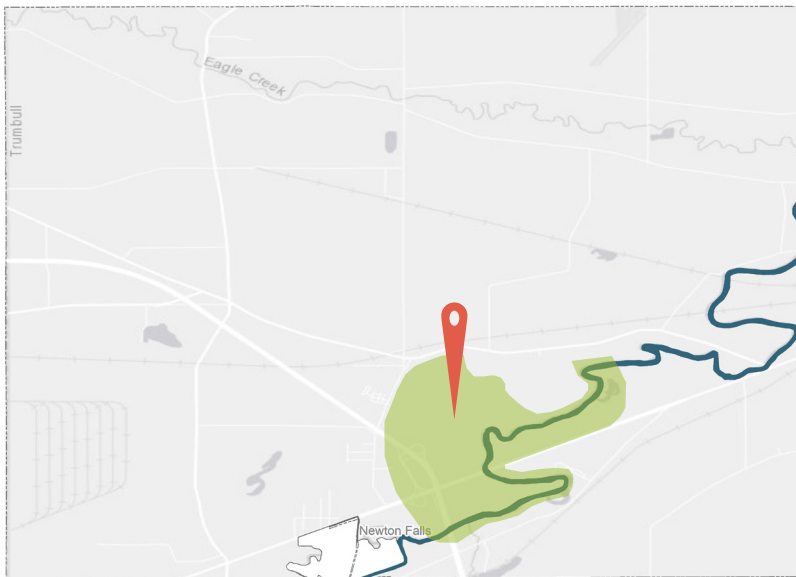
LEGEND	
	Available Development sites*
	Braceville Township Parcels
	Trumbull County MetroPark Parcels
	U.S. Govt Parcels
	Brownfield

**Identified by Team NEO (JobsOhio) and/or the Youngstown-Warren Regional Chamber at the time of this plan*

BRACEVILLE TOWNSHIP: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

Oxbow Lakes

FIGURE 3 SITE LOCATION WITHIN BRACEVILLE TOWNSHIP



EXISTING CONDITIONS

OWNERSHIP	Private, Trumbull County MetroParks
CURRENT LAND USE	Varied
LOCAL ZONING	Industrial, Commercial
RIVER ACCESS	Thomas A. Swift MetroPark
SIZE	≈ 786 Acres

Additional Notes:

- Clean Ohio funded conservation sites
- Development plans for Turnpike may impact future uses
- The Braceville Nature Preserve features more than 71 acres of meadows, wetlands, marshes, and woods
- Future plans for the Trumbull County MetroParks property include a launch, new trails, and a land laboratory

FIGURE 4 EXISTING IMAGERY



Braceville Township offers access to undisturbed and protected natural environments along the Mahoning River Water Trail and in metropark properties.



Primary Opportunity Site Overview

The vision for the future of the primary opportunity site on the Mahoning River in Braceville Township is a natural getaway for recreation and nature-lovers. Its protected and beautiful landscape offers unparalleled access to the unique fish species, wildlife, and plants of the Mahoning Valley. Boardwalks and small-scale lodging (i.e. cabins, treehouses) provide tourists and locals with an outdoor escape. Trumbull County MetroPark land is transformed to a passive park for nature preservation and a new launch allows recreational tourism guests to easily and safely enter the Mahoning River Blueway.

FIGURE 5 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: FUTURE RENDERING



BRACEVILLE TOWNSHIP: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

Oxbow Lakes

FIGURE 6 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: PROPOSED





Proposed Character:

- Highway-oriented commercial development to serve needs of increased traffic



Proposed Character:

- Lodging designed for outdoor enthusiasts including hunters, hikers, and nature-explorers
- Marketed as weekend escape
- Scenic views of the Mahoning River



Proposed Character:

- Land is designated for parks and recreation uses only
- Paths, observation and access areas are designed to limit disturbance of the natural environment

BRACEVILLE TOWNSHIP: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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 Braceville 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.

WETLAND PRESERVATION

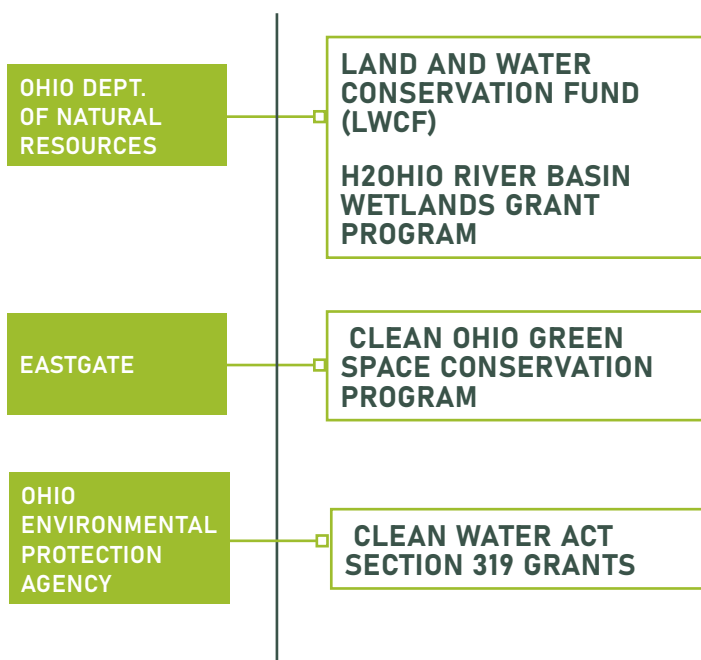
Inventory of Township's Wetlands

Wetlands are defined as areas where water covers soil all or part of the time. Due to their high and long-term capacity to filter pollutants, wetlands are often referred to as “earth’s kidneys”, and are critical to the health and biodiversity of all watersheds.

Braceville Township’s ecosystem is defined diverse the wetlands ecosystem that surrounds the Mahoning River’s oxbows. Primarily situated along the banks of the River within a massive floodplain, there are approximately 2.5 sq miles of land designated as wetlands in Braceville Township, which is over 10% of the Townships total area. They define the community’s ecology and preserving them is essential.

Steps have already been made to preserve Braceville’s wetlands. Clean Ohio is the Ohio’s program for conservation, preservation, and protection of ecologically sensitive areas. This includes the protection and enhancement of riparian corridors or watersheds, including the protection of streams, rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water. There are over 320 acres of clean Ohio sites in Braceville including the West Branch Wetland Preserve, the Mahoning River Corridor Preservation, the Mahoning River Floodplane Preservation, and the Eagle Creek Wetlands Protection Project. Continuing to protect, monitor, and maintain these areas is a concern of regional significance.

Funding Opportunities



Elements of Wetland Protection

IDENTIFYING CAUSES OF DEGRADATION

Existing sources of non-point source pollution, like highways and industrial land use, should be addressed using best management practices to protect the areas.

ANTICIPATE FUTURE CHANGES

Changes in land use, travel patterns, and weather can affect these ecosystems in many ways. Excess stormwater runoff from changes in surrounding development should be understood in the context of its impact on the surrounding environment.

MONITOR AND MAINTAIN

Wetlands and riparian zones require little maintenance. Establishing and executing a routine plan for monitoring the biodiversity and water quality of the wetlands and removing invasive plant species is a key part of protecting and preserving wetlands.

PARTNERSHIPS

Its recommended that communities partner with universities, government agencies, or private nonprofit organizations to establish a long-range monitoring and maintenance plan.



The H2Ohio River Basin Wetlands Grant Program reimburses up to \$500,000 for projects focused on nutrient reduction and water quality improvement within the Ohio River Basin. Comparable projects in the Lake Erie basin include the St. Joseph Confluence Wetland Reconnection (pictured above).

RECREATION LODGING

Defined Project(s)

It is important that Braceville Township offer accommodations near the natural features and recreation attractions it aims to promote. In commercial districts, such as the I-80/SR-5 intersection area, hotels, motels, inns, or bed and breakfasts are appropriate, while the less developed portions of the Township are best suited for recreation lodging of minimal impact. Air BnB, Vrbo, or other short-term rental properties offer property-owners the opportunity to earn additional income without requiring new construction in areas prone to flooding or other environmental hazards. Other ways to offer lodging for recreation tourists while maintaining minimal ecological footprint are cabins, treehouses, and primitive campsites. Lodging should be creative to instill excitement about the area and may double as rent-able event space or a marketing tool.

Lodging Types for Recreation Tourism



VACATION RENTALS



CABINS, LODGES, & COTTAGES



CAMPGROUNDS



CASE STUDIES:

Mohican Treehouses, Glenmont, OH

The Mohicans is a lodging and event venue nestled in the Mohican Valley (Holmes County, Ohio). The resort features unique lodging experiences ranging from family-sized cabins to one bedroom treehouses. Allowing guests an incredible view of the 75 wooded acres, the Mohican Cabins and Treehouses are truly a special way to immerse yourself within a natural environment.

The unique element of the lodging options has made the Mohican Treehouses a popular mention on travel blogs and in the “glamping” (i.e. glamorous camping) community. Adding to the tourism aspect, the Mohicans also feature a wedding venue, general event space, and catering services.



Themed treehouses in the woods in Holmes County, Ohio allow tourists to experience a unique camping experience.

Floating Tents, Troy, OH

Located on the Great Miami River in Miami County is a first-of-its-kind camping experience. Inflatable, floating rafts with tent toppers are anchored in the water and available to the public to rent, creating the opportunity to safely sleep on the river. The floating campsite is adjacent to Treasure Island Park with a restaurant, amphitheater, restrooms, and the Great Miami River Bike Trail. Each rental includes equipment to travel to the tent, oars, and life vests. Floating fire pits are even available for campers to enjoy the full camping experience.

The tents are made by a local manufacturer and have drawn media attention - and visitors - to Troy’s downtown riverfront.



Floating tents sit along the Great Miami River allowing campers to enjoy the river like never before.

MULTI-USE CONNECTIONS

Defined Project(s)

REGIONAL CONNECTOR

Northeast of the Newton Falls Trail, the Mahoning River corridor experiences a large gap in connectivity through Braceville Township's rural landscape. The area is primarily agriculture with mostly privately-owned land along the river. Trumbull County MetroParks land in Braceville Township and Clean Ohio preserved sites present landing spots for trail construction in this section.

The protected and natural wilderness of Braceville sits between Newton Falls and Canoe City - a popular park destination in Leavittsburg where planned dam removal will expand opportunities for recreation and nature observation. Braceville should embrace the opportunity to work with neighboring communities and regional partners to support cross-jurisdictional connectivity.

Funding Opportunities

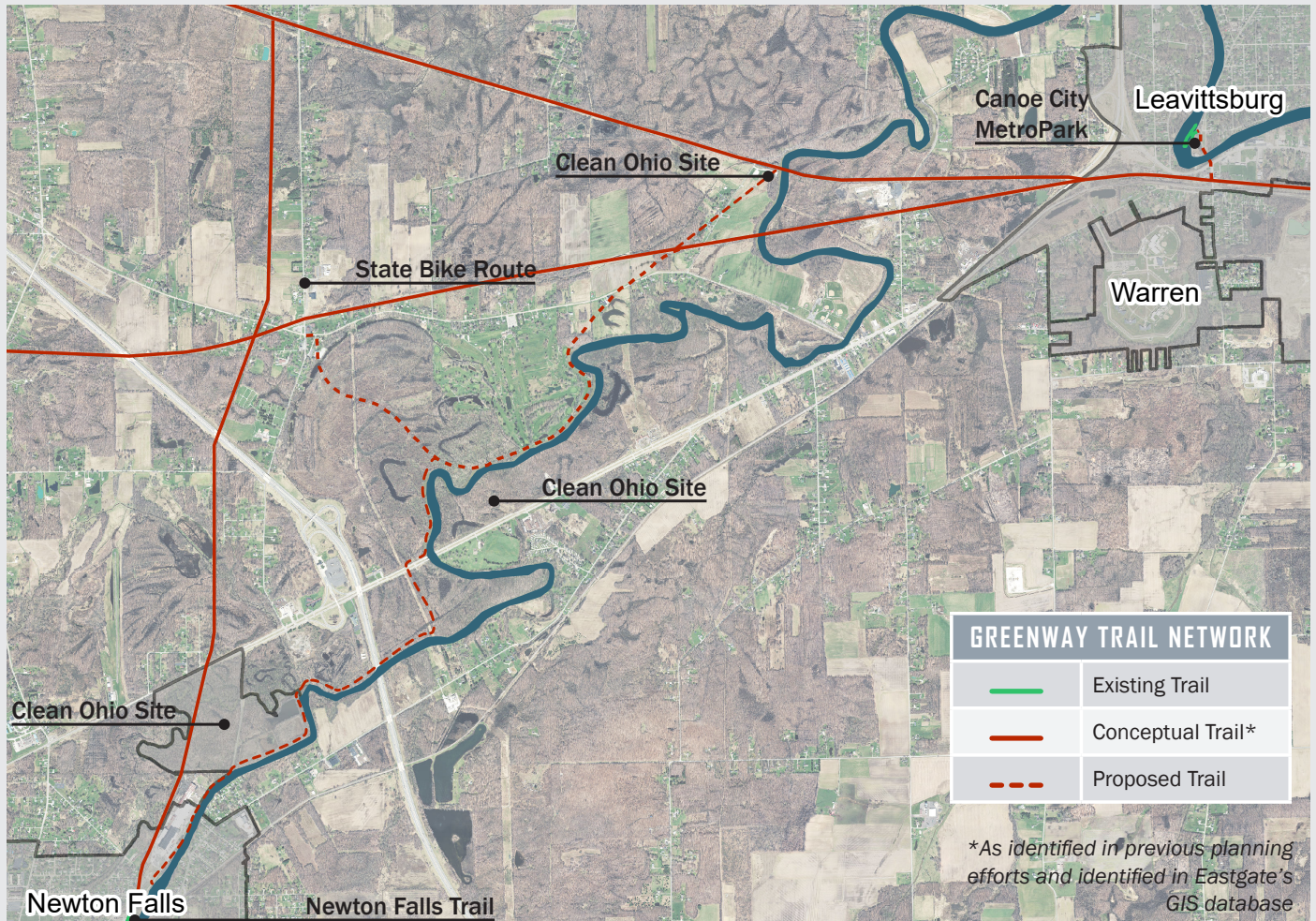
OHIO DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

CLEAN OHIO TRAILS FUND (COTF)
RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP)

EASTGATE

CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ)

Braceville Township's Mahoning River Greenway Segment



PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL & RECREATION

- A.1** Construct the planned rails-to-trails Newton Falls to Braceville Trail project.
- A.2** Conduct a feasibility study for remaining proposed trail connections.
- A.3** Coordinate with the region's Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC) on parks improvements feasible on preserved land (i.e. trails, benches, observation areas, etc.)
- A.4** Establish a conservation zoning overlay to promote preservation and protection of environmentally sensitive land.
- A.5** Identify and design a riparian zone.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- B.1** Collaborate with local economic development partners on a strategic development plan for the Turnpike.
- B.2** Develop a marketing piece to advertise available parcels for recreational lodging.



Business retention and attraction strategies associated with the river corridor in Braceville Township should target neighborhood and regional commercial at the Turnpike and outdoor recreation on SR-5.