



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



# MCDONALD

## Mahoning River Corridor Plan

Prepared by ms consultants, inc.



# MCDONALD

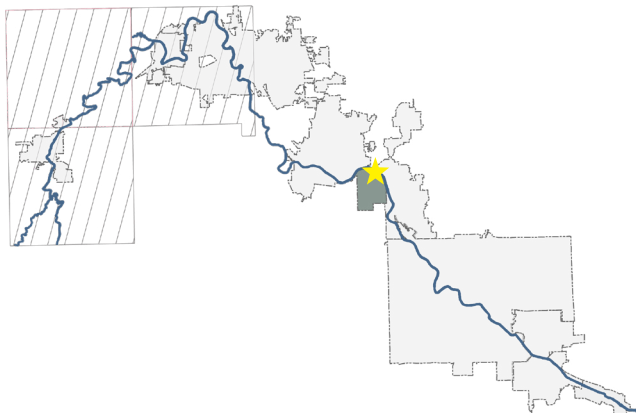
## COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

### Overview

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

- Existing Conditions
- Primary Opportunity Site
- Implementation Guide



### Existing Conditions

#### OPPORTUNITIES

The Village of McDonald is a charming small town and one of the few communities along the river which still supports steel industry operations. The local economy is heavily supported by McDonald Steel and has the industrial park infrastructure for new investments.

#### CHALLENGES

With the economic opportunity of industrial growth comes continued environmental concerns for future river health and air pollution. Regional restoration and riparian corridor improvements will be instrumental in ensuring the long-term health and safety of the community. Additionally, public access to the Mahoning River is restricted in McDonald due to private ownership of the industrial land and railroads.

### MAHONING RIVER CORRIDOR RIVERFRONT COMMUNITIES

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

1,344	River Miles
INDUSTRIAL	Character
3,040	People
0	Launches
0	Trail Miles

### Dam Removal & Riverbank Restoration in McDonald

Removal of the remaining lowhead dams along the Mahoning River will be a monumental leap forward toward the environmental and recreational goals of the region. Lowhead dams, though small, significantly disrupt the natural flow of water, negatively affecting the river's ecosystem and recreational opportunities.

These dams break the Mahoning River into segments requiring river-goers to have to spot and avoid these dams which are often almost impossible to see and are notoriously dangerous drowning hazards. Removal of these dams will also open Mahoning to safer kayaking, fishing, and light boating and could create an economic spark for the communities along the River's banks.

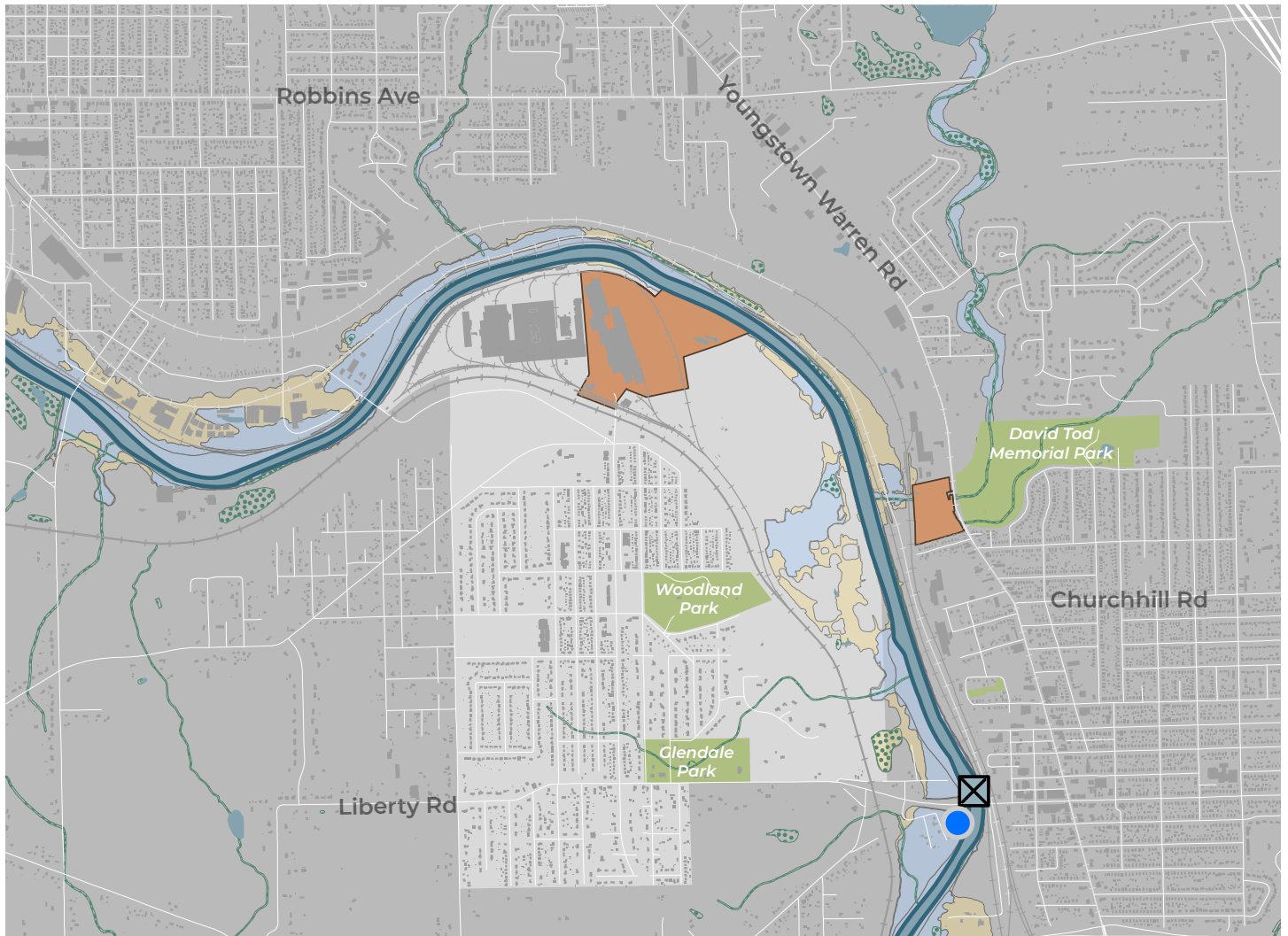
Currently, the Mahoning River Water Trail terminates just before the Summit St Dam at Packard Park in Warren. Removal of upstream dams can open the blueway to extend into McDonald, spurring recreational and commercial opportunities for the community and region at large.

**MCDONALD**



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

FIGURE1 EXISTING CONDITIONS - ENVIRONMENT



## THE ENVIRONMENT

### Existing Conditions

McDonald's existing industrial uses along the Mahoning River are a key part of the community's economy. Located on a large remediated brownfield, the McDonald Steel Corporation has a long history in the community, producing hot rolled steel special shapes since the 1980s.

With operation of industrial facilities so close to the river's banks, utilizing best management practices for treating non-point sources of pollution leaving the site will protect the river and its ecosystem. Currently, a small riparian edge exists along the banks that varies in width between 80 ft. and 150 ft. Maintaining this edge and expanding it to a 100 ft. minimum width is a concern of regional relevance, especially if industrial activity along the site expands in the future.

The community's two parks - Woodland Park and Glendale Park - are densely forested areas that sustain the community's wildlife and provide access to greenspace for McDonald citizens. McDonald should focus on creating multi-use trails to allow walkers and bikers to better navigate the community.










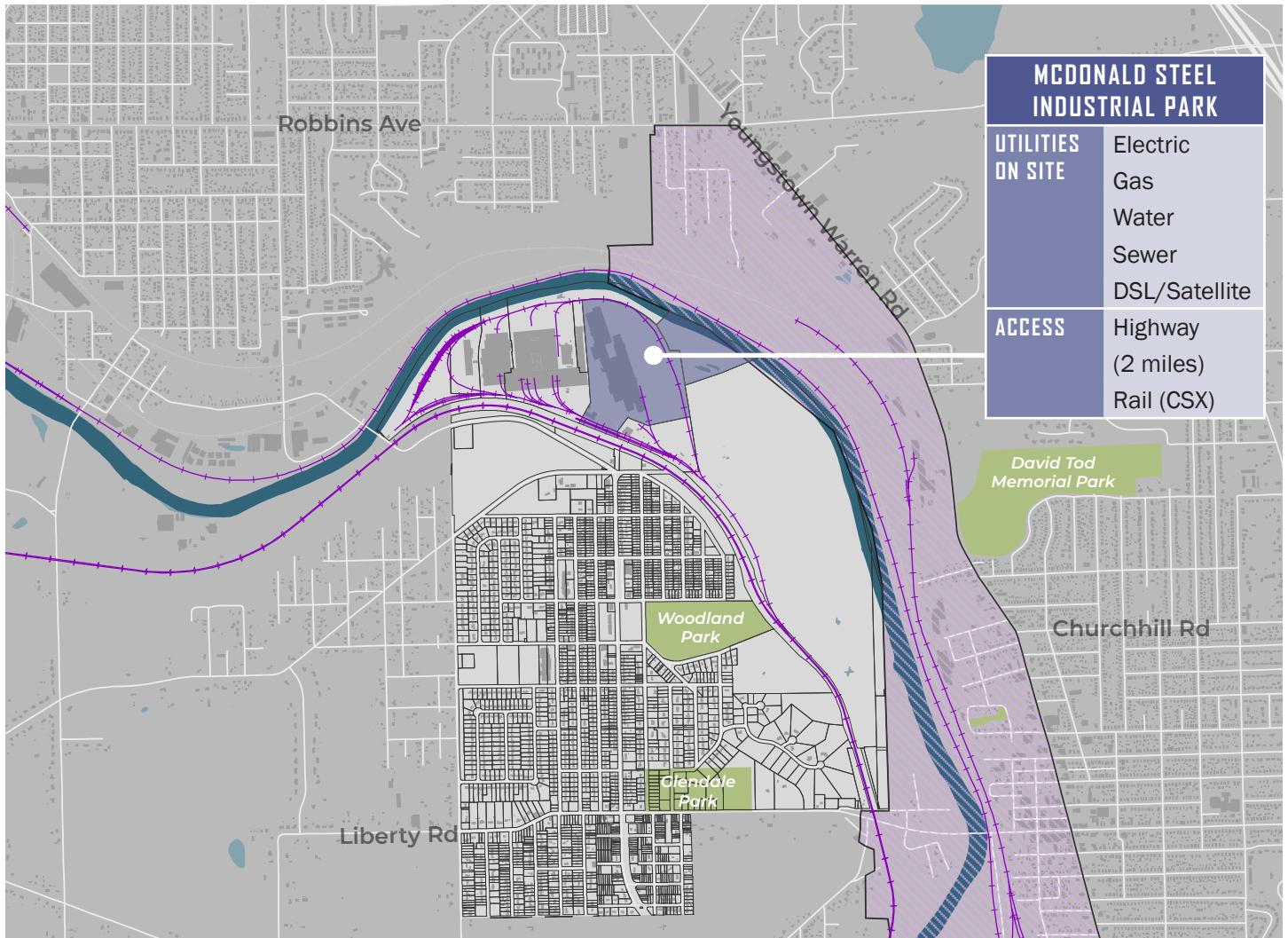
LEGEND	
	Mahoning River
	Dam
	Existing Launch
	Public Park
	Wetland
	Brownfield
	100-year Floodplain
	500-year Floodplain
	McDonald Boundary

FIGURE2 EXISTING CONDITIONS - ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



## ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Existing Conditions

Encompassing roughly one-third of the Village and the entirety of its riverfront, the McDonald steel property is of immense economic importance to the community. As noted in the environmental existing conditions section, the property is at various stages of brownfield remediation. The riverfront features current industrial operations, vacant land, and industrial park properties available for development. McDonald’s parcels fronting the Mahoning River are split among multiple owners, including utility providers and railroad companies.

As the Village of McDonald and its economic development partners continue to revitalize and market the vacant industrial land on the river, consideration should be given to how new users may support community development efforts relative to river restoration and recreation.

LEGEND	
	Opportunity Zone
	Active Rail Line
	Available Sites*
	McDonald Parcel
	McDonald Boundary

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

# MCDONALD: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

## McDonald Steel

FIGURE3 SITE LOCATION WITHIN MCDONALD



### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Ownership	Private
Current Use	Industrial, Vacant
Local Zoning	Industrial
River Access	N/A
Size	≈ 352 Acres

### Additional Notes:

- The Mahoning River bisects the Girard and McDonald communities
- Primary site is surrounded by active rail lines
- The McDonald Steel plant utilizes the Girard Mills Dam southeast of the site

FIGURE4 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: EXISTING IMAGERY



## Primary Opportunity Site Overview

The vision for McDonald’s opportunity site seeks to exemplify balance between nature and industry. The site is defined by the mile stretch of the Mahoning River on its northern border, creating opportunity for both river recreation and cutting edge industrial facilities.

Recreational trails are not currently accessible to the people of McDonald within their community. The Niles Greenway is over a mile away, and only accessible by car. With this in mind, a landscaped riverside trail becomes the defining recreational feature of this site. Hugging the river’s bank, this trail will invite users of all kinds to enjoy a secluded afternoon by the river. This new trail also connects to the Niles Greenway, linking local communities and opening access to the greater regional trial network without packing equipment in your car.

The remainder of the site preserves the existing industrial use with the McDonald Steel Corporation as its centerpiece. Expansion and modernization of the sites industrial facilities can spark momentum for the region’s economy.

Due to close proximity to the river and the proposed riverside trail, this industrial focus must have a sustainable design. An industrial buffer zone and strong riparian edge are recommended to protect the river from runoff pollution and enhance trail user’s experience by distancing them from the active site.



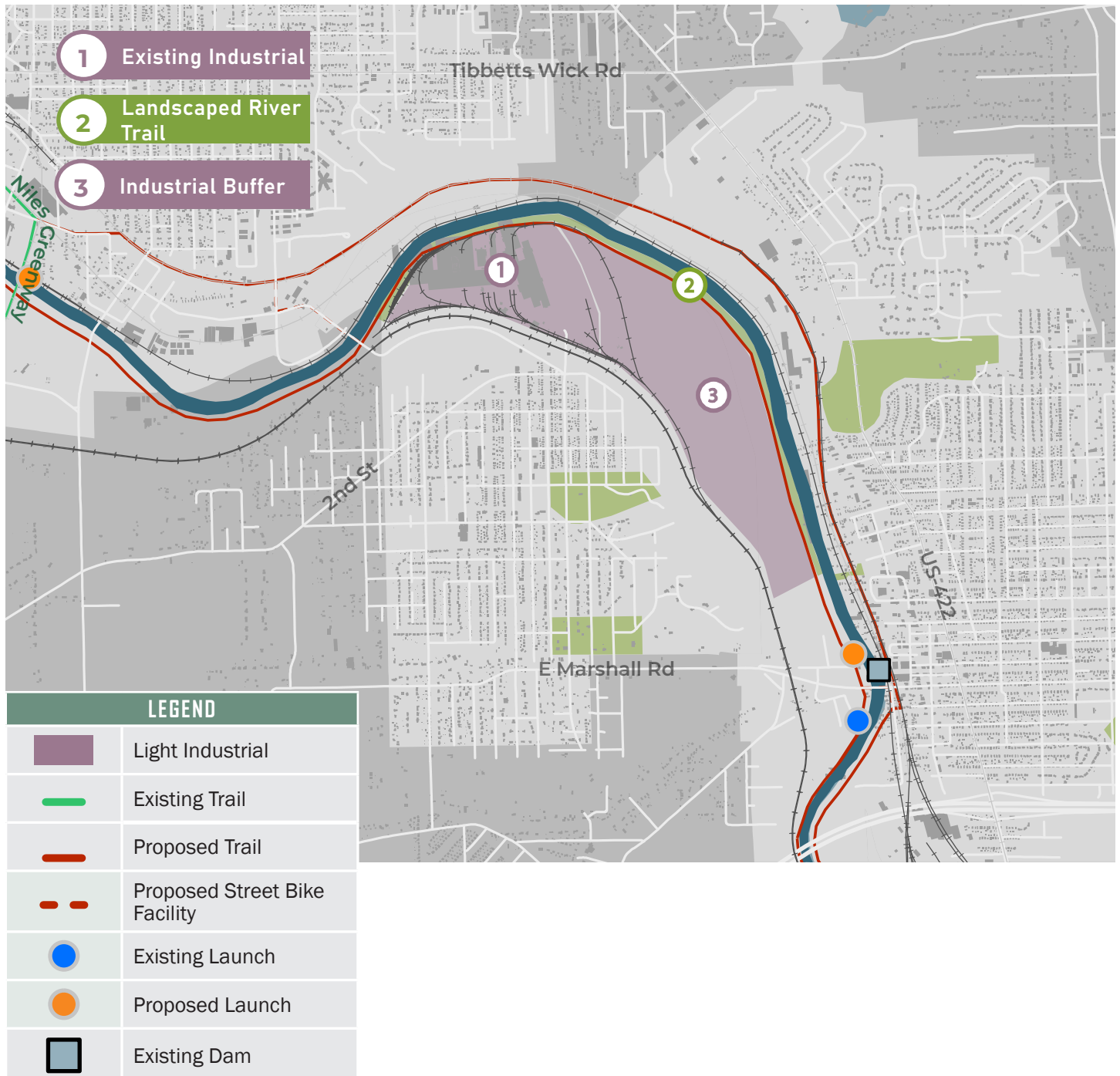
FIGURE5 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: FUTURE RENDERING



# MCDONALD: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

McDonald Steel

FIGURE 6 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: PROPOSED







### Proposed Character:

- Secluded and landscaped multi-use trail
- Provides safe access to the river and connects McDonald to neighboring communities and the regional trail network



### Proposed Character:

- Site remediation makes way for new quality jobs in light industrial and clean manufacturing
- Environmental clean-up and ongoing riparian restoration support healthy river functions

# MCDONALD: 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 McDonald 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.*

# MULTI-USE CONNECTIONS

## Defined Project(s)

### CENTRAL CONNECTOR

McDonald is a critical gap in the regional trail network. Investing in local infrastructure would connect Niles with Youngstown and ultimately support the goal for a continuous Mahoning River Greenway.

The Niles Greenway traverses the Mahoning River at Meander Creek before returning to the Western Reserve Greenway. A lack of east-west connector prevents safe, designated travel for cyclists and other trail users from Niles to the remainder of the Mahoning River corridor. The riverfront in its central segment, including McDonald and Girard, is very industrial in nature, requiring careful attention to buffering and environmental remediation. Potential connections exist along both sides of the river in this segment, as shown by the conceptual pathways below.

## Funding Opportunities

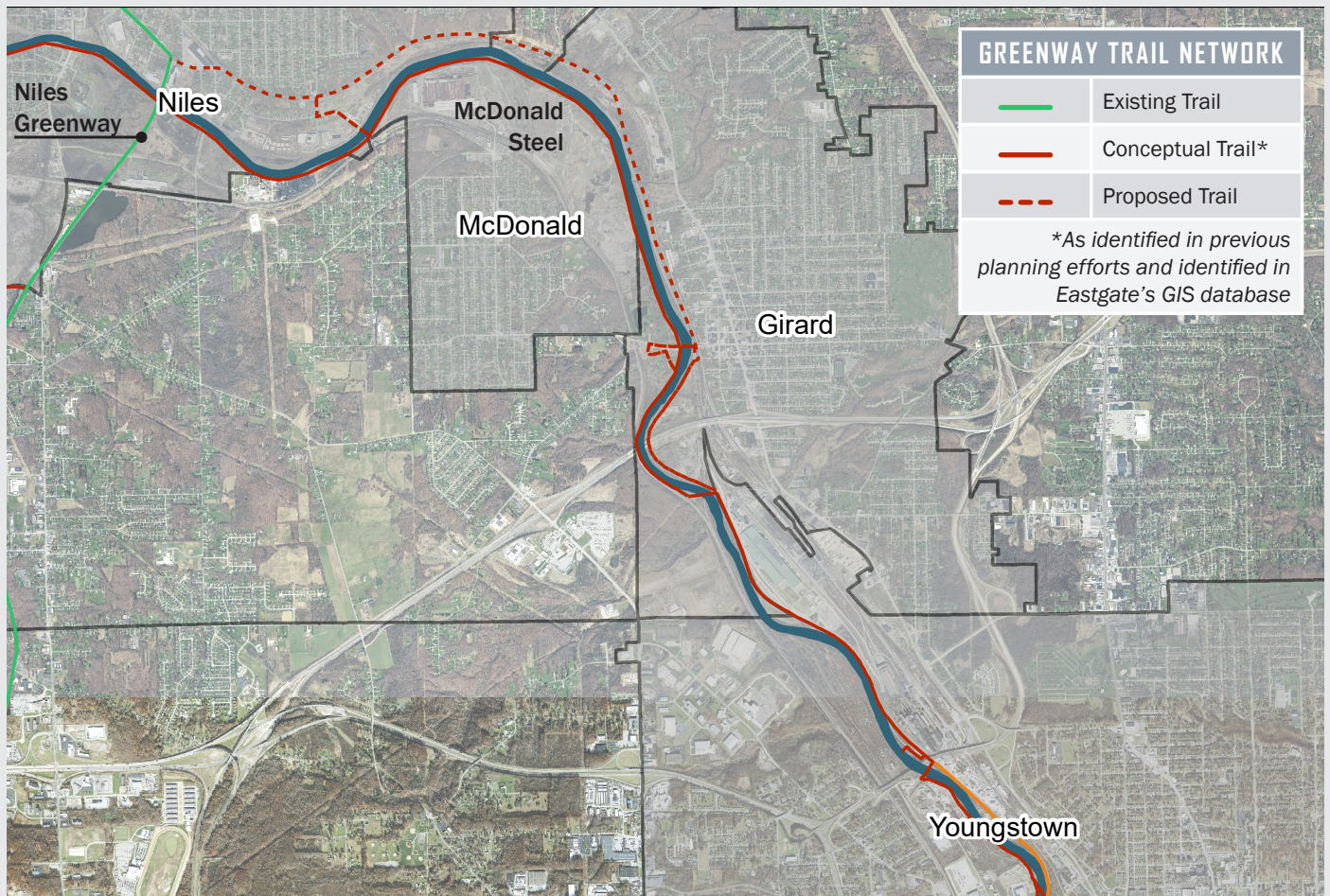
OHIO DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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

EASTGATE

CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ)

## McDonald's Mahoning River Greenway Segment



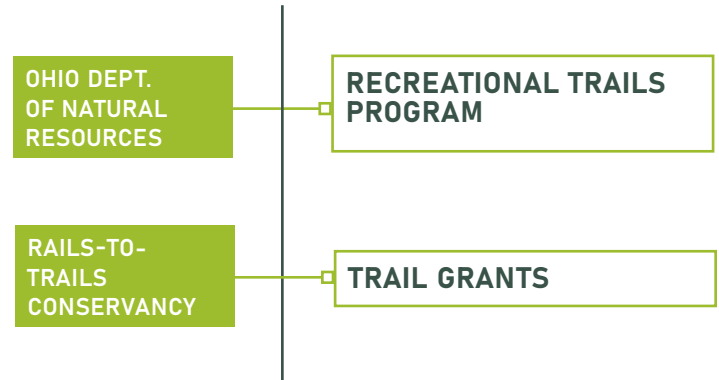
# EQUESTRIAN TRAILS

## Defined Project

Equestrian trails are a specific type of path infrastructure which provide recreational opportunities to individuals who enjoy horseback riding. There are limited designated bridle trails in Northeast Ohio, missing an opportunity to attract riders to the area and requiring local equestrian enthusiasts to travel out of the region.

Equestrian trails can be developed on a scale ranging from dirt to concrete. The materials depend on the setting of the trail and the end users. A more rural trail may use dirt or grass while a more urban trail may use concrete, allowing cyclists and pedestrians to also use the infrastructure. When located in close proximity to other types of existing trails, they can share infrastructure and users. Rural equestrian trails usually take on the form of a grassy area near rivers and creeks, perfectly aligning with the natural environment within McDonald. The Village, with its beautiful views of the river, is an excellent location for an equestrian trail which could provide a sporting experience unique in the area.

## Funding Opportunities



## CASE STUDY:

### Shaker Trace Bridle Trail, Cincinnati, OH

Shaker Trace Bridle Trail is a 7 mile trail located within the Miami Whitewater Forest Park. The trail is horse only, prohibiting cyclists and pedestrians. However, it sits adjacent to a busy asphalt walking and biking trail.

Primarily constructed from grass and maintaining a flat and wide terrain, the trail is very suitable to horses. Additionally, there are few water crossings, making it an easy trial for novice riders. At the trailhead, there are many locations for trailer set up.



Signage depicting right of way on trail



Shaker Trace bridle trail, Cincinnati OH



Shaker Trace bridle trail, Cincinnati OH

# INDUSTRIAL SITE DESIGN

## Defined Project(s)

The decline of the steel industry and heavy industrial in the Mahoning Valley has created several brownfield sites across the region. Once remediated and safe to occupy, these sites are generally best suited for industrial or commercial uses. McDonald differs from other communities in that its largest development opportunity site is not entirely vacant, but includes current industrial operations. Future improvements to the area can incorporate and support existing private industry, while expanding economic opportunities for the community.

As regional economic development partners collaborate on the future of developable sites, it will be important to promote a site design which showcases a high quality of development and can serve to encourage similar development styles across the Valley.

Parking should be relegated to the side or rear of buildings, well-screened, and well-lit. Individual curbcuts should be limited to promote access safe and efficient roadway access. For smaller commercial sites, shared parking is encouraged. Sidewalks and paths are also encouraged, where appropriate, to promote connectivity within and between uses.

It is especially desirable for pedestrian connections to offer public access to the Mahoning River for residents and workers. Landscaping and green space should be integrated throughout the site. Green infrastructure, including retention basins and parking islands, are also encouraged.

## Design Elements

Light industrial, clean manufacturing, and office parks should be designed with respect to the area's environmental constraints and as a catalyst for regional economic transformation.



Rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement, street trees, etc. support environmental design.



Open space is integrated throughout and campuses are well-connected with internal paths and external connections.



Parking is screened, well-lit, and landscaped.

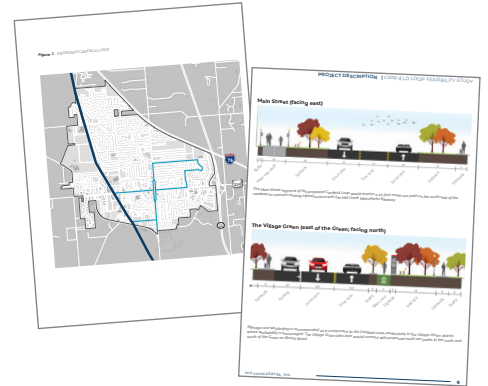
# PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

## ENVIRONMENTAL & RECREATION

- A.1** Identify and design a riparian zone.
- A.2** Conduct a feasibility study for proposed trail connections.

## ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- B.1** Update zoning regulations to support identified site design elements at the primary opportunity site and other industrial areas.
- B.2** Continue prioritization of brownfield remediation and site preparedness.
- B.3** Work with regional economic development partners to identify and attract desired business types on the river.



*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 McDonald to apply for recreational grants.*