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LOWELLVILLE

Mahoning River Corridor Plan

Prepared by ms consultants, inc.



LOWELLVILLE

COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

Overview

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

- Existing Conditions
- Primary Opportunity Site
- Implementation Guide

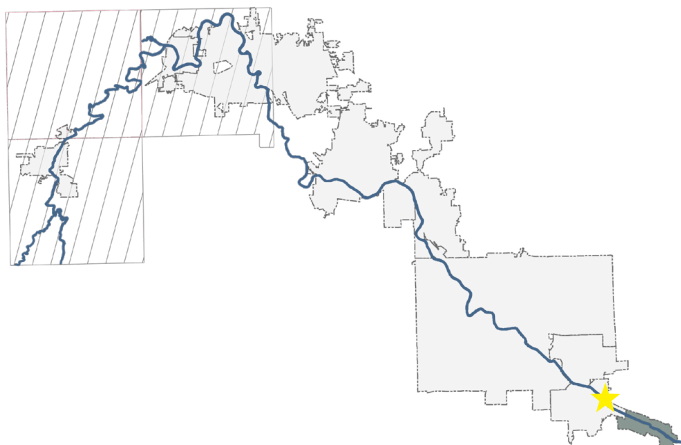
Existing Conditions

OPPORTUNITIES

The Village of Lowellville is a small, close knit community with an abundant amount of riverfront property. The Village and its development partners are highly engaged with redevelopment efforts to attract new businesses and residents to the area. The vast amount of riverfront access, existing trails, and proximity to Pennsylvania’s trail networks provide the ideal environment for recreational tourism.

CHALLENGES

As a small community - both in population and geography - creating vibrant mixed-use development will require attracting new residents and investment to the area. Cultivating a destination-oriented environment is a long-term endeavor and will involve physical improvements, marketing and branding initiatives, and regional collaboration. Lowellville has made extensive progress in dam removal and river restoration, but it faces similar challenges as the rest of the riverfront communities in translating that restoration to local pride and confidence in the Mahoning River as a worthy local asset.



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		

2.1	River Miles
SMALL TOWN CHARM	Character
1,092	People
0	Launches
1.8	Trail Miles

Dam Removal & Riverbank Restoration in Lowellville

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 of the natural

There was only one dam in Lowellville that was an impediment to a prosperous and healthy river. The removal of the dam will create many opportunities for the area and increase safety and recreational use of the river. The dam was composed of eight short piers whose cost to be removed was calculated and funded through WRRSP funds.

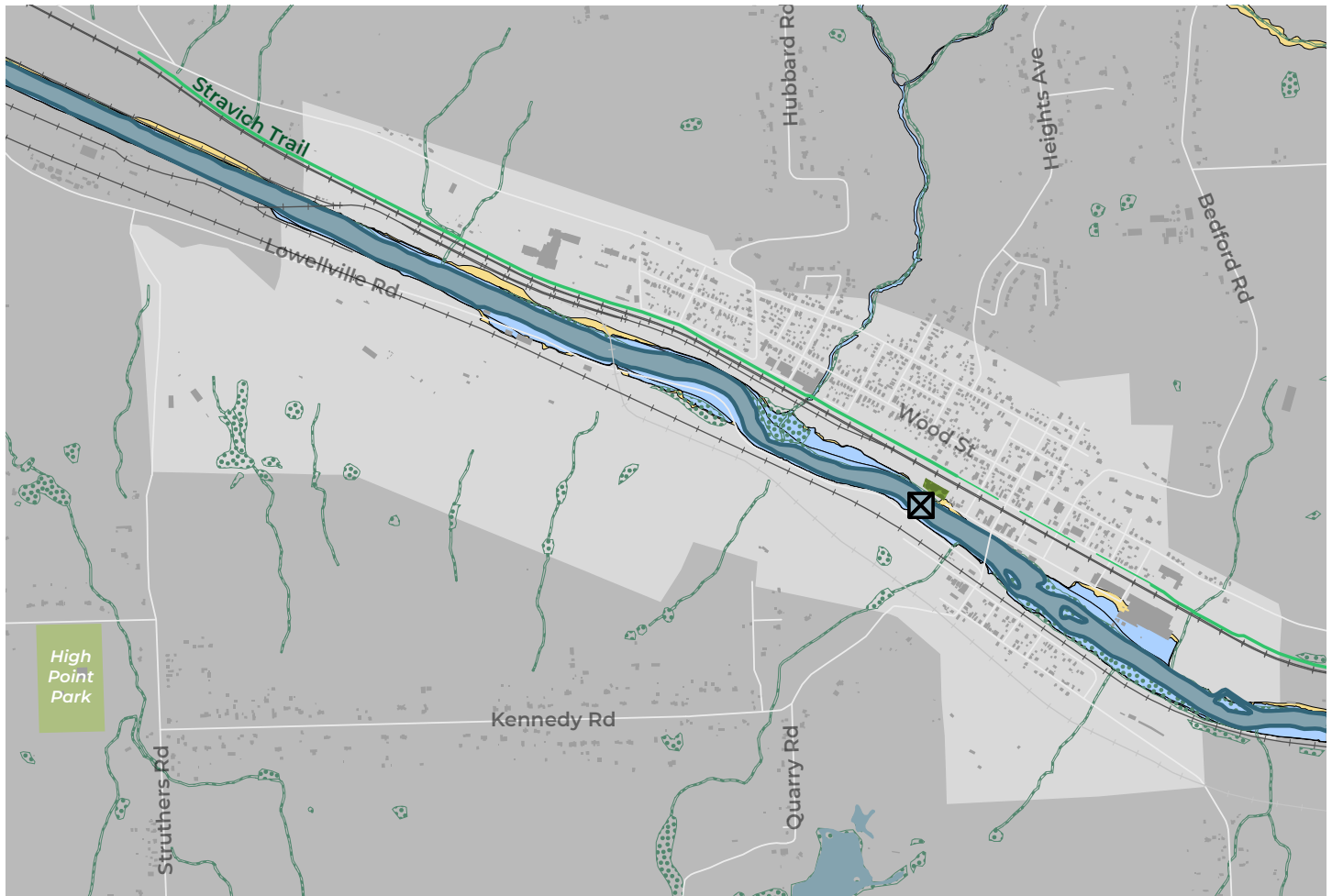
The dam was officially removed in 2020 and makes the start of a new future for the Village of Lowellville. The community envisions this moment as a launching point to spur development and economic growth for years to come!

LOWELLVILLE



MAHONING RIVER
Corridor Revitalization
www.mymahoningriver.com

FIGURE 1 EXISTING CONDITIONS - ENVIRONMENT



THE ENVIRONMENT

Existing Conditions

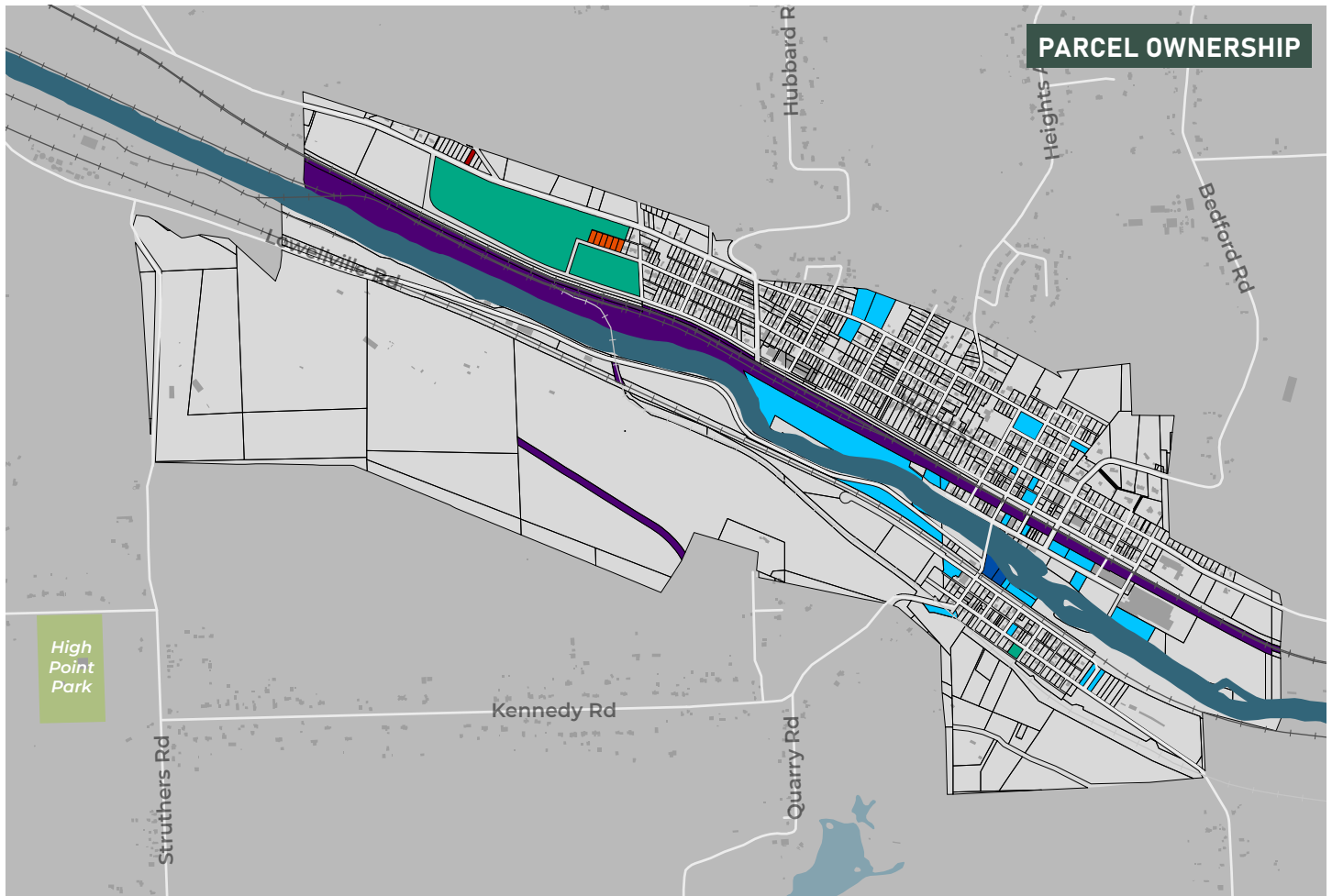
Located deep in the Mahoning River Valley at the border of Ohio and Pennsylvania is the Village of Lowellville. An emerald gem of the region, the community is situated on the Valley's slopes and largely shaded by dense tree canopy.

The Village's downtown development is situated directly on the River's northern bank. As the central zone of activity, the Village's downtown is the main threat to river health. Currently, a riparian edge of variable width is established throughout the community. Maintaining this edge as the community evolves will be critical to supporting river activity well into the future.

Lowellville has been a regional leader in dam removal, placing the removal of its single lowhead dam at the center of its longterm plan for economic growth. The dam was recently removed and is just the first step in drawing people from the community and the region at large to the River's banks to fish, kayak, and visit its future lively and riverside park. The residents of Lowellville should be excited for what the future holds.

LEGEND	
	Mahoning River
	Removed Dam
	Existing Trail
	Public Park
	Wetland
	Clean Ohio site
	100-year Floodplain
	500-year Floodplain
	Lowellville Boundary

FIGURE 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS - ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT







ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Existing Conditions

There are currently multiple projects underway to beautify and enhance the river corridor in Lowellville, including an ODNR bathroom grant to improve facilities at the park west of the primary site. The Village’s forward-thinking approach includes consideration of land control through parcel acquisition and consolidation. Figure 2 shows select owners of parcels on and around the riverfront relative to future development opportunities.

As is common with former industrial communities, active rail lines run along the Mahoning River in Lowellville, complicating public access to the water and requiring partnerships on riparian health and greenspace maintenance.

The vacant industrial land south of the river in Lowellville presents opportunity for continued environmental clean-up and job growth. Site design standards and proactive business attraction policies can help ensure that economic development in this area compliments initiatives on the north side of the river and the downtown. For example, the Village may look to attract clean manufacturing, office, or light industrial operations rather than heavy industrial uses.

LEGEND	
	Village of Lowellville
	Lowellville School District
	State of Ohio
	CSX
	Mahoning County Land Bank
	Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority

LOWELLVILLE: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

Riverfront Community Park

FIGURE 3 SITE LOCATION WITHIN LOWELLVILLE



FIGURE 4 EXISTING IMAGERY



EXISTING CONDITIONS

OWNERSHIP	Village of Lowellville / CSX
CURRENT LAND USE	Varied
RIVER ACCESS	N/A
SIZE	≈ 20 Acres

Additional Notes:

- The Stavich Bicycle Trail begins on the western edge of Struthers and continues for about 12 miles through Lowellville to New Castle, PA
- Village was awarded ODNR NatureWorks funding in 2017 to construct a livery on site
- Plans for a mixed-use downtown district were completed for the Village

Dam removal and clean-up in Lowellville make way for a restored, free-flowing river and beautiful natural environment.

Primary Opportunity Site Overview

The vision for the future of the primary opportunity site on the Mahoning River in Lowellville is a lively recreation destination attracting visitors of all ages to explore the restored waterway and walkable downtown district. The Village of Lowellville and its development partners are actively engaged in riverfront revitalization efforts, and as such, the primary opportunity site leverages existing work and uses river corridor-wide recommendations to support ongoing initiatives.

The community nature center offers educational and play opportunities for residents and visitors, showcasing the community’s commitment to habitat restoration and environmental protection. A path leads down to the riverfront trail which completes the Stavich Bicycle portion of the regional Mahoning River Greenway. The launch and lively bring entertainment to the water. Offshore in the downtown, mixed-use development of shops, restaurants, and services cater to regional visitors.



FIGURE 5 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: FUTURE RENDERING



LOWELLVILLE: PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE

Riverfront Community Park

FIGURE 6 PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY SITE: PROPOSED





Proposed Character:

- Public gathering space
- Promotes community engagement and access to nature
- Venue space for riverfront activities



Proposed Character:

- Capitalizes on the river restoration benefits of dam removal
- Convenient access for recreation and water sports



Proposed Character:

- A charming downtown characterized by a mix of shops, restaurants, and services
- High-quality design and historic architecture encourage visitors to stroll the district



Proposed Character:

- Modern living amenities with beautiful riverfront views provide new housing choices; particularly in support of aging residents and young professionals.

LOWELLVILLE: 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 Lowellville 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.

HISTORIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

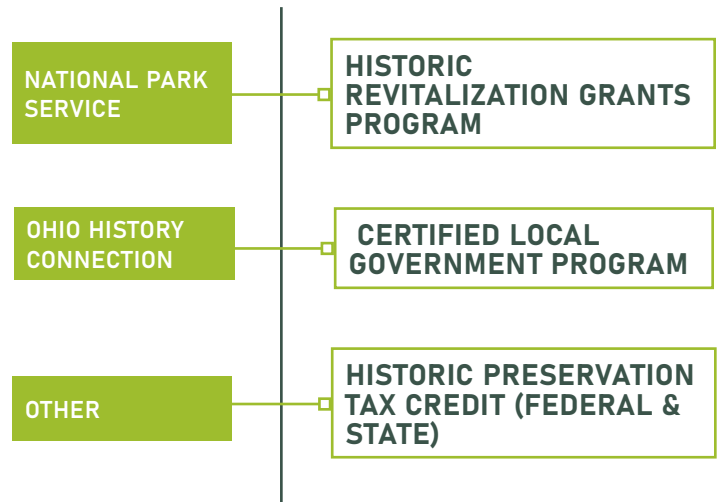
Description

The Village of Lowellville provides historic significance to the Mahoning River Valley and its centuries of culture. Historic design guidelines are a tangible resource for the Village to have cohesive and consistent ideas for the aesthetic and architecture of buildings, streets, and public spaces. Historic design guidelines can range from landscaping to roofing materials to ensure the consistency between developments.

Historic design guidelines are important to preserve the historical integrity of the area and protect the character its residents associate with the community. Creating, developing, and keeping a common aesthetic in Lowellville helps to ensure resident retraction and fuels a sense of pride in a community by giving it a unique, historic feel.

Ensuring a comprehensive sense of place through historic design guidelines pays tribute to the rich history in the Village of Lowellville. Design guidelines can take many different forms and work together to create a special, hometown feel.

Funding Opportunities



Examples of Historic Design Guidelines

- Building orientation: building to be taller than wide
- First floor height: 16 feet minimum
- Building signage: signage shall be flat against the building not protruding more than 6 inches
- Landscaping: street trees and window boxes are encouraged
- Roofing materials: roofs can be any material besides flat asphalt shingles



Goose Neck lighting from the building



Landscaping with planters

TRAIL TOWNS

Description

With its dam removal, proposed launch, and overall river restoration, Lowellville is well-positioned to support recreational tourism. Water activities are one way in which the community may enhance the quality of life of its residents and attract visitors. The Village may also pursue characterization as a trail town. The term “trail town” generally describes a community which supports and promotes trail use. A successful trail town:

- maintains a high-quality path,
- connects the trail to community points of interest,
- ensures accommodations for travelers,
- and coordinates with regional partners to market and preserve the trail network.

As a Mahoning River trail network is established, trail users will need places to rest and refuel. Users are also more likely to extend their trip if they can conveniently visit shops, parks, and other attractions as part of their journey on the trail. Lowellville can fulfill this potential in Mahoning County and for users of Pennsylvania’s trail system.

Lowellville already has internal infrastructure (i.e. Stavich Bicycle Trail), but should use on-street facilities to connect its two branches. This can be done physically and/or with signage and wayfinding. Examples include sharrows, boulevards, and activated signal crossings.

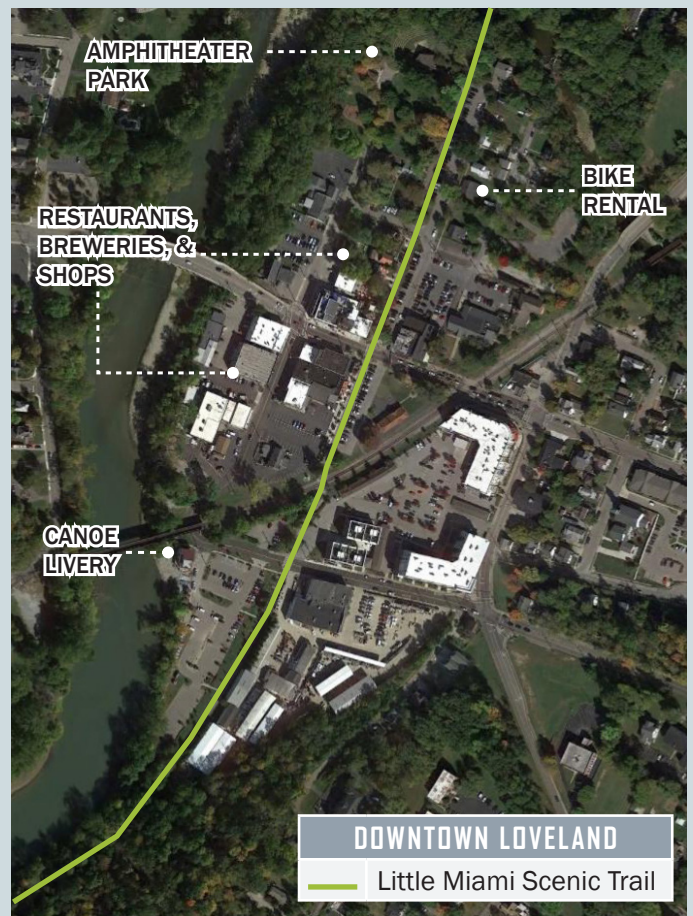
As a trail town, Lowellville can capture additional revenue from trail users and improved property values near park and trail sites, while supporting regional efforts to grow recreation tourism.

CASE STUDY:

Little Miami Bike Trail, Loveland OH

The Little Miami Scenic Bike Trail, created from an abandoned railroad corridor, features a scenic river, state parks, historic sites, and local destinations. Several modes and activities are supported on the trail and the river provides opportunities for paddling. The vast amount of recreation and commercial attractions within its corridor make the trail an important regional marketing tool and a driver for economic development.

The Village of Loveland leveraged these trail benefits and made the Little Miami Scenic Bike Trail a central feature of its downtown. The trail traverses parks, shops, restaurants, and a brewery. Trail users enjoy easy access to restrooms, seating, bicycle rentals and repair, outdoor apparel, public parking, and more. The trail is also seamlessly integrated in the urban fabric with signage, wayfinding, and activated signal crossings. The public improvements and private amenities work together to create a comfortable and memorable experience for cyclists and pedestrians.



COMMUNITY BRANDING

Description

Trail town qualities are a specific type of community branding related to recreation tourism. However, Lowellville may also aim more broadly to leverage its existing parks and recreation space and its development sites as a way to strengthen the community’s riverfront area as a walkable, lively center for a mix of uses. A strategy to create a recognizable and successful district to serve residents and uplift the economy should include the following elements.

PUBLIC SPACES

Public gathering spaces and municipally-owned land present the opportunity to support private investment and set the tone for the type of aesthetics and quality of experience that Struthers is hoping to achieve. The Village should continue to utilize its public spaces including parks, right-of-way, and government property, to attract and retain visitors to the area. Public spaces also present the opportunity to showcase the Mahoning River and connect the downtown to other attractions. Examples of using public space to support community branding include lighting, signage, buried utilities, outdoor seating, and landscaping. Beautification projects can be supported by economic development tools, like the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA), which allows establishments to have outdoor dining and alcohol in the public right-of-way abutting their properties without the need for fencing.

PUBLIC ART

Adding local flare and culture to public gathering spaces can be achieved with integration of public art. Murals can showcase local history while 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.

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 riverfront area.

MARKETING & BRANDING

The physical improvements described above are necessary to spur private investment and create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors. The physical

development of a downtown riverfront district must also be supported through a strategy to build brand identity. Online engagement (i.e. website, social media), signage and wayfinding, and print materials (i.e. brochures, visitor guides) are all necessary platforms to encourage residents and tourists to visit the area and guide the perception of the Village. Public-private partnerships - both local and regional - are essential to streamline a singular brand and identity.



Public gathering spaces, like the Downtown Cuyahoga Falls Amphitheater and Pavilion (above), attract visitors to the area and help build brand identity.

Funding Opportunities



