

A VISION, A MISSION AND A PURPOSE

Information for this article was obtained from the Jefferson County Trails & Greenways Plan Executive Summary.

There are some in Jefferson County who have a vision—a vision that will benefit everyone. They have a mission: “To develop trails and protect our greenways while enhancing the quality of life by providing healthy outdoor recreation and economic opportunities linking and strengthening our communities.” They have a purpose—“to implement a Jefferson County Trails and Greenways system.”

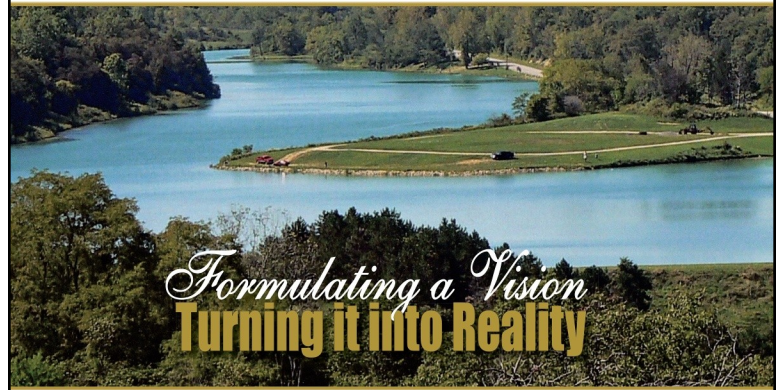
The Jefferson County Trails & Greenways Plan is the outcome of the Jefferson County Community Investment Plan—A Partnership for Growth (CIP) completed in 2008. That plan identified three major goals: (1) enhance the quality of community and family life; (2) improve and expand infrastructure and (3) stimulate workforce and economic growth. A key outcome for each goal was to “improve the overall health of Jefferson County citizens.” The long-term strategy was “to create trails linking communities (biking, walking, running, etc.).”

How was the plan developed? A Sub-Committee of the Community Investment Plan, representatives from the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, the Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District and BHI explored the long-term strategy “to create trails linking communities (biking, walking, running)”. The sub-committee sought assistance from the Crossroads Resource Conservation and Development Council and the National Park Service—Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. These organizations formed the Working Group that set goals, created a process document and invited interested stakeholders from the community to be part of a Steering Committee.

Through public meetings and various survey tools, public participation generated support and new ideas and identified opportunities for implementation.

Jefferson County is rich in opportunities for trail development. Example: Under-used rail corridors could be converted to rails-with-trails or using floodplain areas along streams thereby conserving green space. Connecting to other trail and greenway opportunities in neighboring counties and states would create a regional network.

Jefferson County Trails & Greenways Plan



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is a Greenway or Greenspace?” A *greenway* is a linear connection along a natural or manmade feature connecting people to places. Greenways offer recreational, ecological and positive economic benefits for the communities they serve. They preserve important natural habitats and provide wildlife migration routes.

A *greenspace*, on the other hand, is an uninterrupted tract of forest and field important for environmental and wildlife reasons, as well as aesthetic and scenic appeal.

In Jefferson County, there are many such areas—Austin Lake, the Brush Creek area, Cross Creek, Foxes Bottom wetlands, Friendship Park and Fernwood State Forest. There is also Jefferson Lake State Park, the Ohio River waterfront, reclaimed strip mine areas and the riparian corridors of Short Creek and Yellow Creek.

The vision of this group can be realized with local support and involvement. What can you do?

- ◆ **Contact** community officials, agencies, organizations and user groups.
- ◆ **Talk** to your neighbors, businesses and schools
- ◆ **Volunteer** and attend community meetings, help on clean ups and other special events
- ◆ **Contribute Ideas**—Look for opportunities to make the vision a reality.

JEFFERSON COUNTY TRAILS & GREENWAYS PLAN

A small sample of the Regional Goals include:

North Region

Explore possible trail connections between:

- * Amsterdam—Bergholz
- *Hammondsville - Irondale
- *Springfield Township and Wintersville to Jefferson Lake State Park and Austin Lake

Central Region

Development of a trail from Wintersville to Bloomingdale and beyond to Harrison County

Incorporate a bike route along old Route 22

Connect Friendship Park to Bloomingdale, Smithfield and Fernwood State Forrest

South Region

Create an off-road trail along abandoned rail corridors

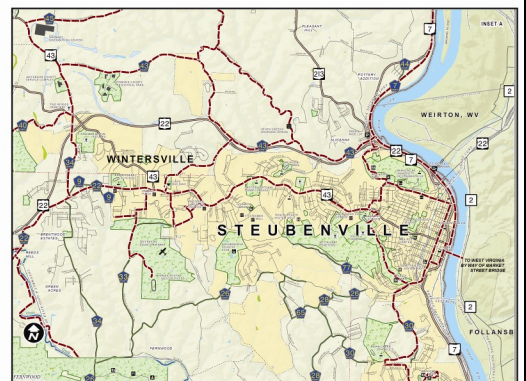
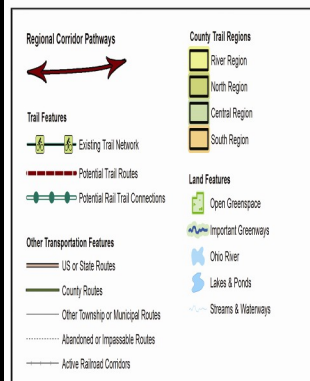
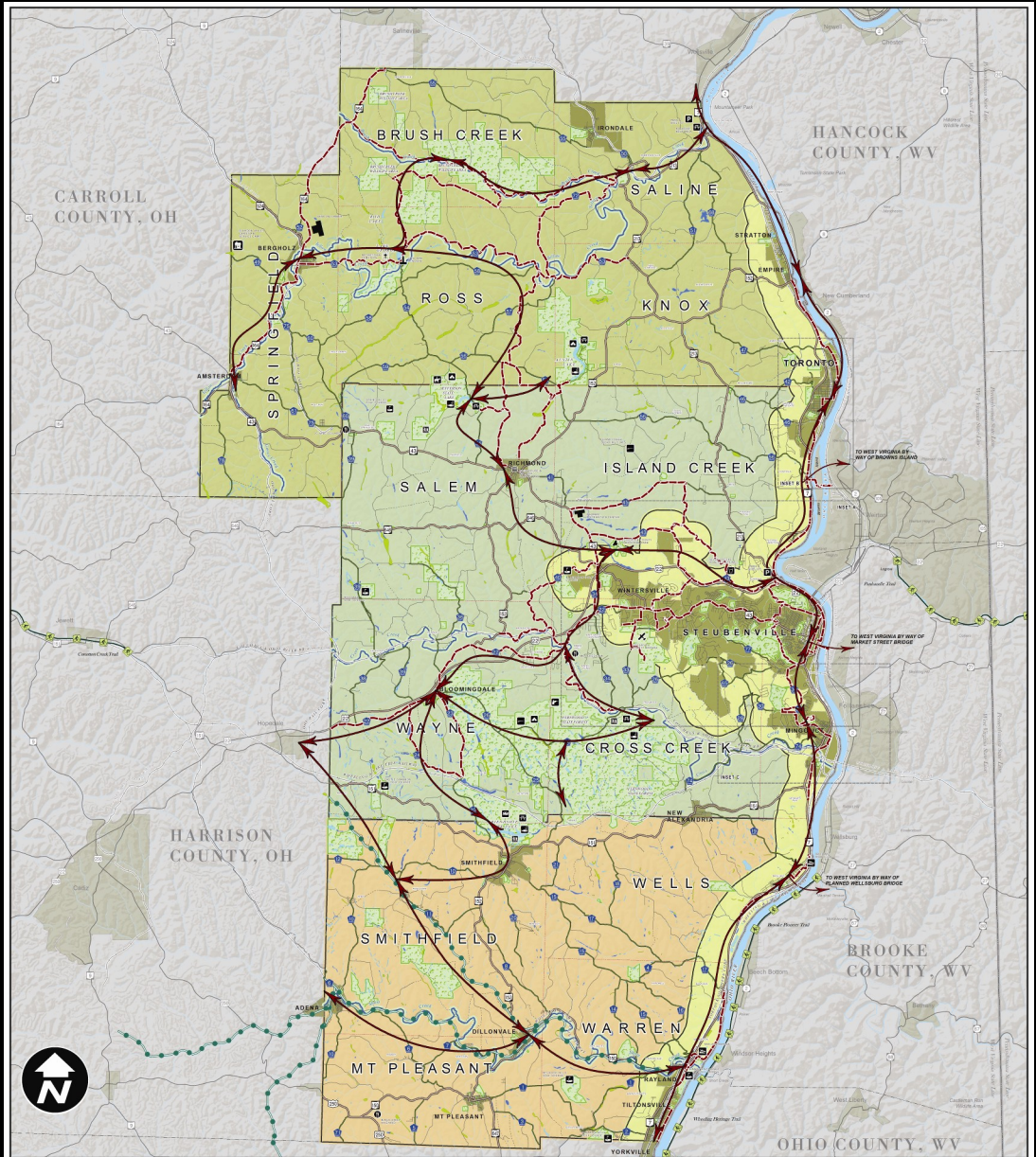
Engage local residents in trail planning between Mt. Pleasant and Dillonvale

Engage neighboring counties of Belmont and Harrison in making regional connections

River Region

Explore possibility of restoring Browns Island to a recreational facility

Encourage development of and improvements to marinas and recreational access points along the river



For a complete list of goals and more information, contact BHI for a copy of the Jefferson County Trails & Greenways Plan Executive Summary. Phone (740) 282-3685 or e-mail mikepap@bhjpc.org.