



TRAIL TOWN FRAMEWORK

Leveraging the Strength of
the Central Ohio Greenways

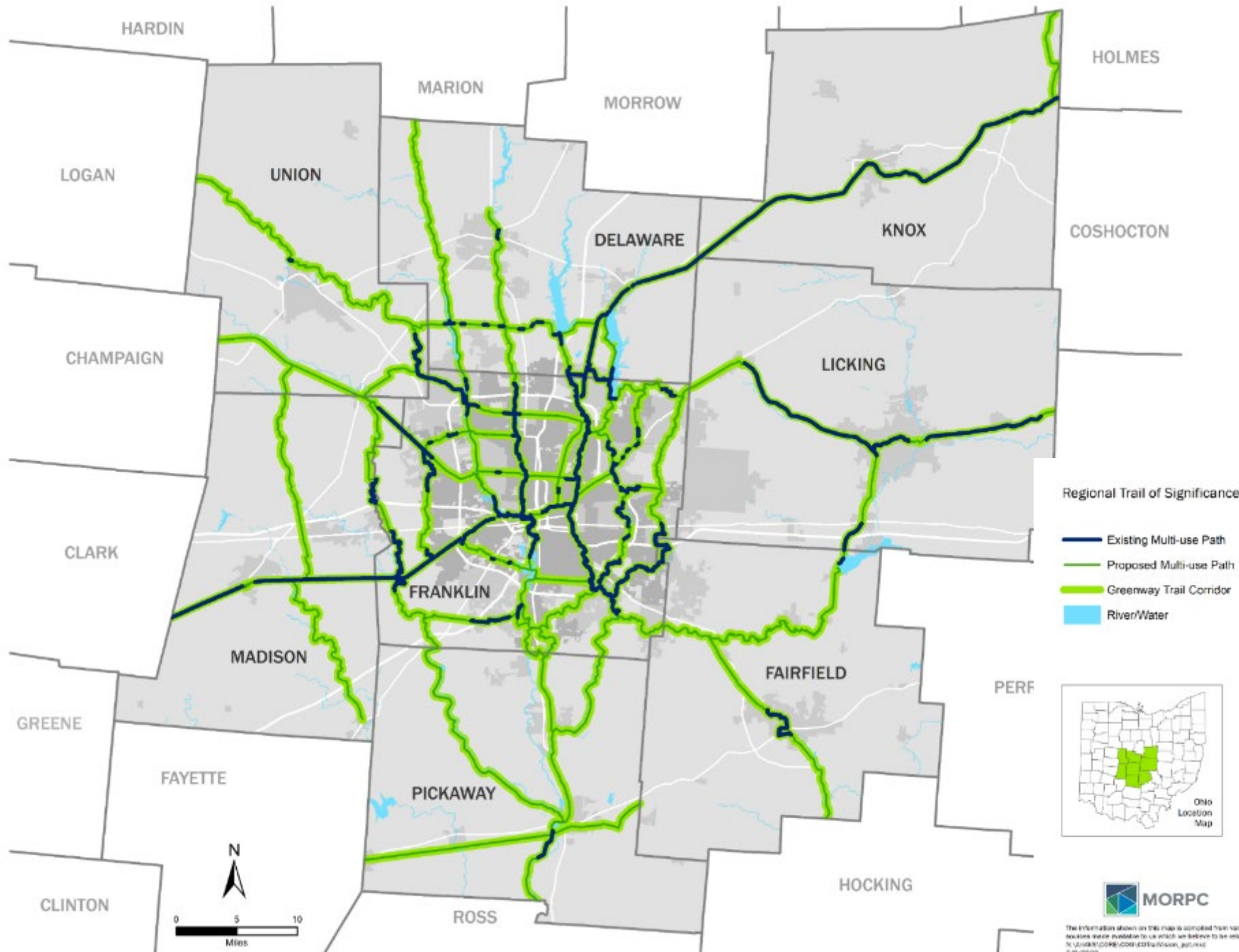


MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

Regional Trail Vision

500+ Proposed Trail
Miles

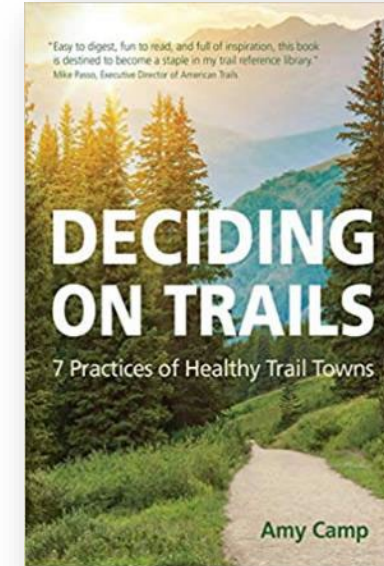
230+ Existing Trail
Miles



TRAIL TOWN FRAMEWORK



MORPC

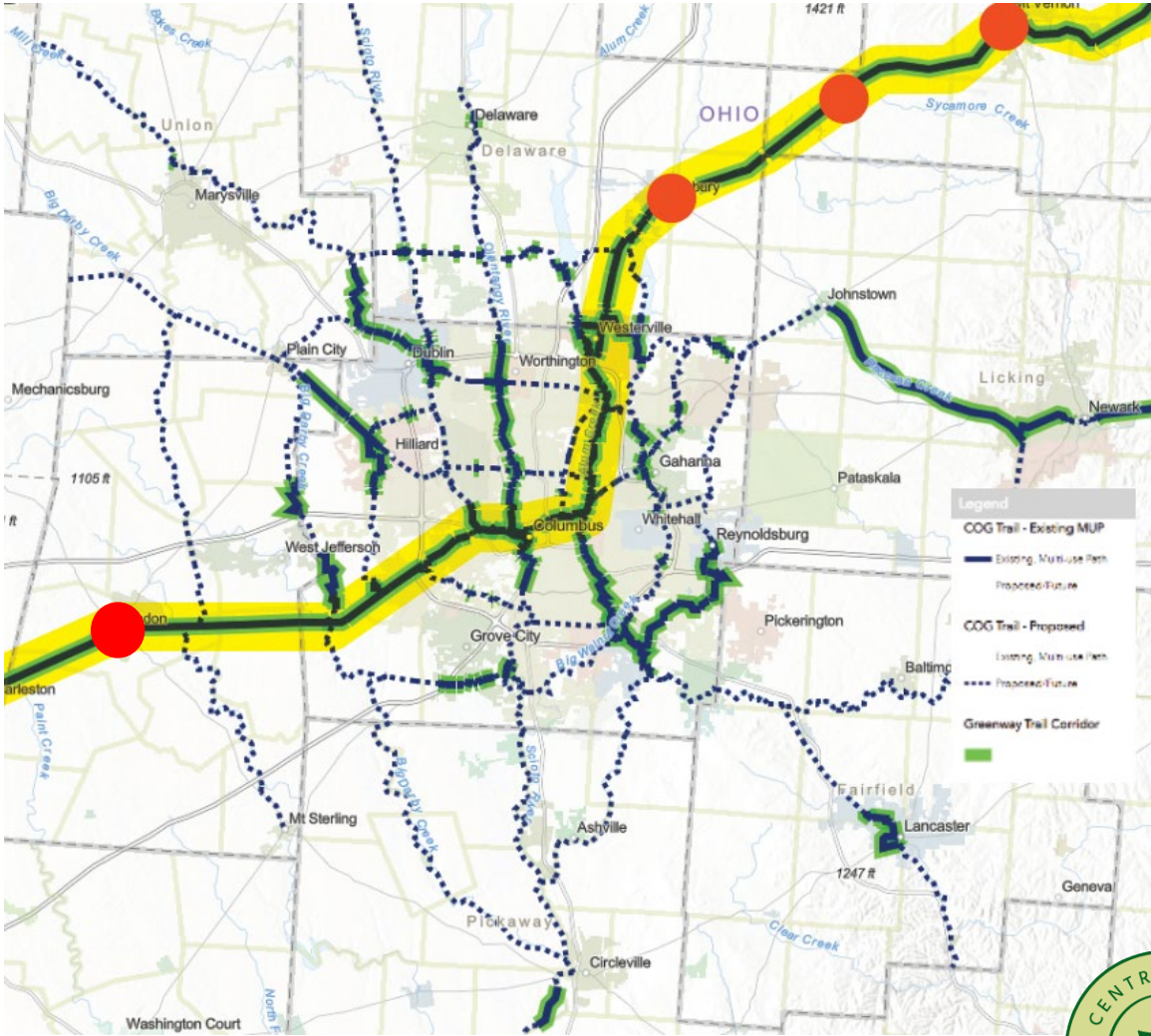


A Trail Town is a community through which a trail passes that supports trail users with services, promotes the trail to its residents, and embraces the trail as a resource to be protected and celebrated.

--North Country Trail Coalition (adapted)



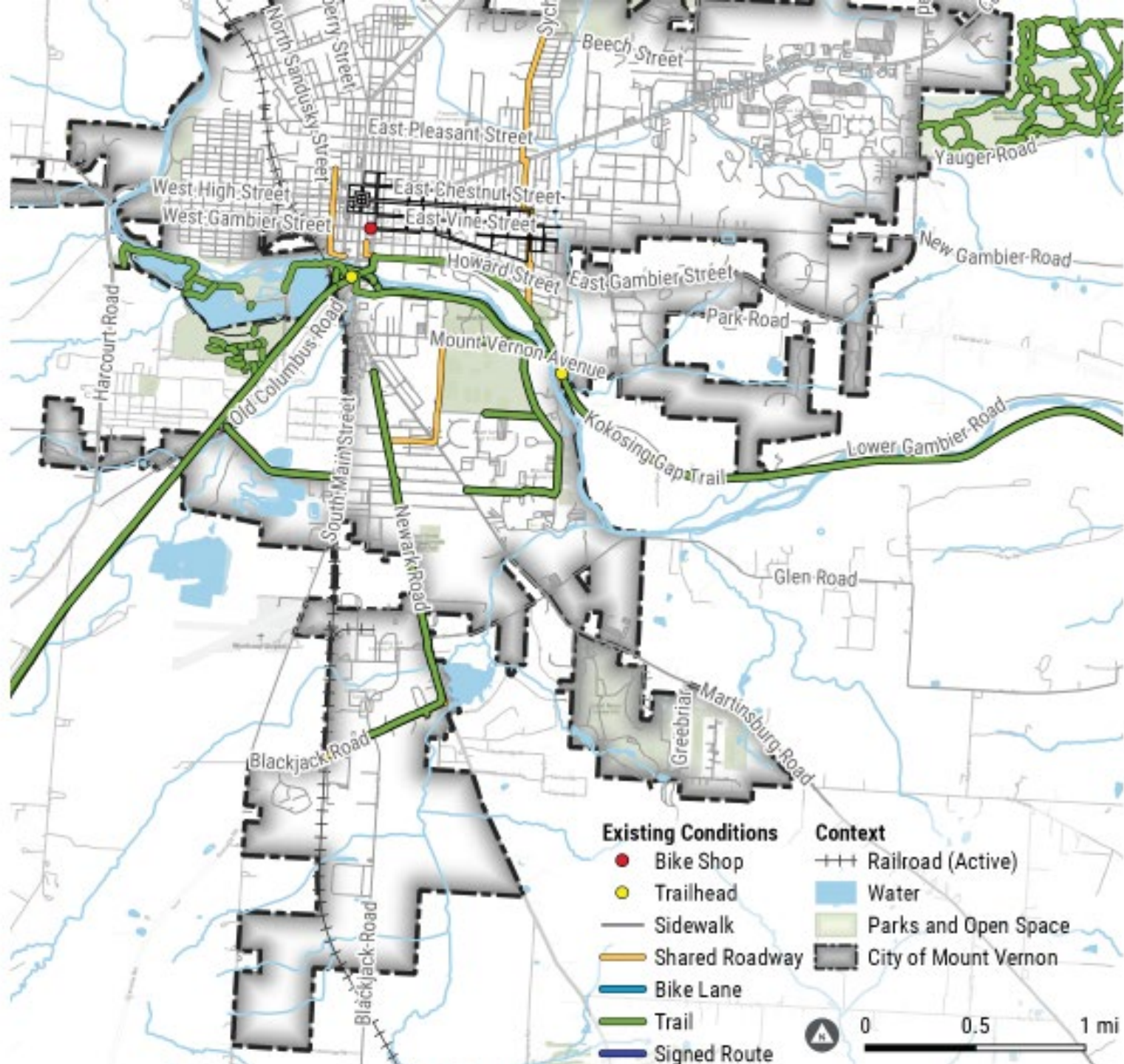
RURAL TRAIL TOWN FOCUS AREA



TRAIL TOWN FINDINGS

DRAFT MAY 2022

CENTRAL OHIO
TRAIL TOWN FRAMEWORK



TRAIL TOWN FRAMEWORK PROMOTION



MORPC



WHAT IS A TRAIL TOWN?

LEVERAGING THE STRENGTH OF THE CENTRAL OHIO GREENWAYS

Central Ohio Greenways (COG) is a trail network of national significance spanning 230+ miles, connecting Central Ohio to other parts of the state and country. These trails are traveled more than 12 million miles annually and provide economic, quality of life, and health benefits to the community. With Central Ohio expected to be a region of 3 million people by 2050 – bringing an increased demand for more walkable neighborhoods, transportation options, and outdoor recreational opportunities – trails have become even more critical to the livability of our growing region. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC) COG Board is committed to a vision to add over 500 miles of trails to the region while simultaneously celebrating the region as a hub of beautiful, scenic, nationally recognized trails that have the potential to draw tourists and deepen Central Ohioans' pride of place.

Recognizing the trail town approach as a way of leveraging trail tourism opportunities, as well as active transportation and quality of life benefits, COG sought professional consulting services from Cycle Forward and Toole Design to develop a framework for a regional initiative.

The consulting team and MORPC staff worked with a Steering Committee comprised of local community representatives and regional trail advocates to understand the appetite for supporting a regional trail town designation program and developing a framework for implementing the program.

"Trail towns" is both an investment and an attitude. To be a trail town is to pay attention to trails, to invest in them, and make a concerted community-wide effort to improve trail-to-town connections. This includes both physical connectivity and feelings of connection. Conceived 20 years ago in Pennsylvania, the trail town model for community development empowers communities to make critical infrastructure improvements, better serve trail users, and adopt a hospitable trail culture."
– Amy Camp, Cycle Forward

REGIONAL READINESS

Surveys, focus groups, site visits, and interviews with local leaders and community members have affirmed that communities across the region have beautiful trails, amenities, and cultural destinations that they are eager to share with tourists, cyclists, and hikers from across Central Ohio and beyond. Serving as the backbone of the local and regional active recreation and transportation network is the Ohio to Erie Trail. The State's longest trail connects its northern border to its southern border and travels through major Central Ohio communities. Four communities in particular (Mt. Vernon, Centerville, and London), already offer a variety of trailside amenities ranging from camping, dining, entertainment, and cultural experiences. A survey revealed that residents truly value the trail and view their community as a "Trail Town." In addition, partners in tourism, local government, and advocacy are ready to formalize partnerships to draw more people to trails and trailside amenities in the form of a trail town program. Focus group conversations revealed that communities have expressed support for the concept of developing a trail town program.

"Do you think of your community as being a 'trail town' along the Ohio to Erie Trail?"

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

A trail town designation program will be most successful when the regional collaborative approach is supported by local community action.

Local Placemaking "Menu"
While launching a trail town program is a substantial undertaking that will require dedicated regional and local support, a "lighter, quicker, cheaper" placemaking approach will realistically allow individual communities to advance their local efforts. Each item on this menu of placemaking options is anticipated to cost less than \$3000.

- Painted Trail Crossings
- Trail Day Festivals
- Curated Walk and Bike Routes
- Group Trail Recreation
- Organized Fitness Classes
- Bike Friendly Business Designation
- Safe Routes to School
- Trailhead Kiosks
- Light Features
- Children's Activity Programming
- Staff Tours
- Fix-It Station Instructional Signage
- Website/Social Media Marketing
- Shuttle Program
- Pop-ups
- Welcome Centers

Eligibility Requirements
Communities interested in participating in the program must:

- Accommodate trail users with business services;
- Be located within 2 miles of a Central Ohio Trail of Regional Significance;
- Declare a commitment to designation as a trail town via city or village council;
- Maintain designation from year to year; and
- Commit to active transportation infrastructure that allows people to safely walk and bike between the trail and community.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Communities in six categories that will establish a sustainable designation program to be renewed annually will apply annually to renew their support.

- Economic Catalysts**
- Infrastructure**
- Wayfinding**
- Art Installations**

Wayfinding: Improve wayfinding to and from participating communities and within the larger COG trail system.

A thoughtful wayfinding system offers much more than signs pointing to locations. Instead, the system influences decisions and behaviors and is mutually beneficial to local and visiting stakeholders. Wayfinding systems can even include non-signage elements such as public art, "gateway moments," and painting and line markings on trails and sidewalks.

Brand Identity

Business Collaborations

Economic Catalysts

Infrastructure

Wayfinding

Art Installations

ENCOURAGING TRAIL USE



Get Moving. Check In. Get Rewards.

Experience Columbus has teamed up with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission for a great outdoor trail pass program to enjoy with friends or family. These trails are perfect for hiking, biking, jogging, and even paddling! Try them all now—what are you waiting for?

Check out these links for more information and directions!

[Central Ohio Greenways Map](#)
[Central Ohio Biking Map](#)
[Rapid 5](#)

COLUMBUS OUTDOOR TRAILS PASS

Hike, Bike and Paddle Trail

- Mobile exclusive
- Instantly delivered via text and email
- No apps to download
- Experience the nature of Central Ohio

[Explore Now](#)



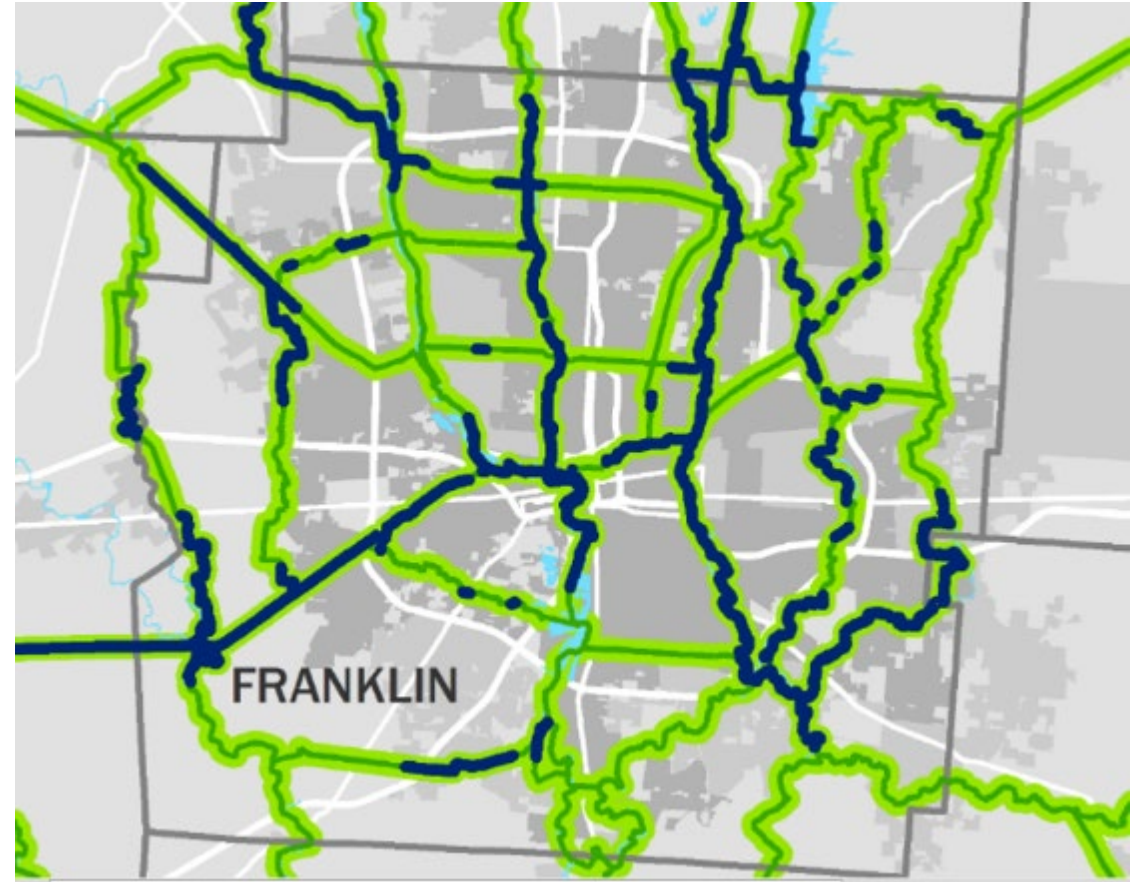
URBAN TRAIL TOWNS



URBAN TRAIL TOWN COMMUNITIES



Any community who lives within 2 miles of a regional trail will have the opportunity to participate in it. This will include nearly, if not every, large community within Franklin County.



WAYFINDING – ODOT SPECIAL PROJECTS & RESEARCH



MORPC

to develop an intuitive cohesive wayfinding strategy for Central Ohio Greenways that both unifies the region's network and celebrates its diverse communities.



THANK YOU!

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