

Chapter Three
Implementation Strategies for
Development



COVER: Towpath Trail, CVNRA

This guide plan provides a base for the development of the Towpath Trail extension route from Harvard Road to Lake Erie. The actual construction of this segment may be three to five years away. In the interim, details of the proposed concept plan may alter due to factors such as property ownership changes, infrastructure projects, and development opportunities. This plan however, can serve as a tool to continue the momentum of the Towpath Trail development in the Cuyahoga River Valley.

This section outlines strategies to guide this trail concept through the next phases of design, construction, and use.

Funding

The cost estimate of approximately \$12 million for this five mile extension of the Towpath Trail is higher than the average cost per mile for most trails due to its urban setting and existing conditions. Therefore, funding for this segment will need to be an ambitious endeavor, with the likelihood that moneys will be combined from various sources. To provide sufficient funding, phasing the trail by segment may be an option. The following are potential funding opportunities that may be available to assist in developing the Towpath Trail extension.

Federal Funding Sources

DOI - Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor Grant Program

This program provides funding to projects that “help preserve and interpret the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historical and cultural lands, waterways and structures and encourage a broad range of economic opportunities enhancing the

quality of life for present and future generations within the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor.” A substantial portion of the approximately \$1 million annual allocation to the National Heritage Corridor is assigned to this grant program. The grants are administered through the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Grant awards have a maximum of \$150,000, and there is a 50% match requirement. The current funding preference is for the design stage of a project.

FHWA- Technology Deployment Innovative Bridge Construction Program

This program offers funding through the Federal Highway Administration to “demonstrate the application of innovative material technology in the repair, rehabilitation, replacement and new construction of bridges and other highway structures.” The program also includes the goal of “developing cost-effective and innovative techniques to separate vehicle and pedestrian traffic from railroad traffic.” If the design of a structure is approved by the program, design costs are reimbursed and construction funding is provided. This funding program may be an option for the elevated section of the route from Old Harvard Avenue to Holmden Avenue.

FHWA – Transportation Enhancement Activities Program

This program was established through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, which authorized Federal surface transportation programs for the period 1998-2003. The program funds enhancement activities, which are defined by three categories: historic and archeological, scenic and environmental, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The program provides 80% of the construction or implementation cost of a project, with a 20% match requirement. The Towpath Trail is an

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eligible applicant for this funding, because it provides alternative modes of transportation and is an enhancement to the community.

USEPA - Sustainable Development Challenge Grants Program

This fund is administered through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It focuses on the “encouragement of creative, locally developed projects which address serious environmental problems through sustainable development strategies.” Congress has appropriated approximately \$4.7 million nationally for funding of projects. Generally, individual projects are awarded up to \$200,000, with a 20% match requirement. The combination of innovative design opportunities and environmental challenges on the proposed Towpath Trail extension route may be applicable to this grant.

State of Ohio Funding Sources Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Lake Erie Protection Fund

This program provides funding for “activities that serve to protect and enhance Lake Erie, including research, monitoring, demonstration, education and implementation of coastal management projects concerning Lake Erie, its shoreline and watershed.” There are two grant cycles available through this program. The quarterly cycle has a funding limit of \$7,500, with a 10% match requirement. The annual cycle does not have a specific dollar maximum, and also has a 10% match requirement. The annual fund has two cycles, research and implementation, which are utilized in alternate years.

Land & Water Conservation Fund

Congress is in the process of reestablishing this fund in 2001 or 2002. The fund may have approximately \$15 million available annually statewide for park and recreation projects, including construction and acquisition related costs. The program requires a 50% match.

NatureWorks

This is a matching grants programs focusing on parks and recreation projects. The year 2000 will have \$3 million available statewide for these specific projects. This program will continue over the next few years higher funding amounts, estimated at \$5 million in each of 2001 and 2002. The program requires a 25% match.

Ohio Coastal Management Assistance Grant Program

This program focuses on Ohio’s Lake Erie coastal area. Its purpose is to “integrate management in order to preserve, protect, develop, restore and enhance the lake’s valuable and sometimes vulnerable resources.” The U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration oversees this program, which is administered by ODNR. Ohio receives approximately \$200,000 annually for this program. There is a 50% match requirement. This program may be a funding source for sections of the Towpath Trail that are within the Coastal Zone area.

Recreational Trails Program

This program provides funding for the “development of urban trails, of trail head and trail-side facilities, maintenance of existing trails, restoration of trail areas, improving access for people with disabilities, acquisition of ease-

ments and property, development/construction of new trails, environment and safety education programs related to trails.” The amount of funding to be allocated annually from 2000 through 2003 is estimated at \$1.2 million. The program requires a 20% match.

Ohio Department of Transportation

Central Viaduct Project

Over the next ten years, major improvements will be undertaken on the infrastructure of the Central Viaduct and its related transportation network. The area for the Major Investment Study extends from the West 25th Street exit of I-71 through Dead Man's Curve on I-90.

Situations may arise when the Central Viaduct and the Towpath Trail projects interact. The trail sponsor should be aware of funding sources that may become available for these infrastructure improvements and how they may relate to the trail route.

Cuyahoga County Funding Sources

Brownfield Redevelopment Fund

The Brownfield Redevelopment Fund assists in funding cleanup and redevelopment of environmentally compromised properties, including land or buildings. This program is a combination of loans and rebates. This fund may be suitable for use if any environmental remediation is needed in conjunction with trail construction.

Partnerships With Local Resources

Design and Construction Assistance

From the standpoint of design, two potential local partners are the Environmental Studies program at Oberlin College, and the Green Building Coalition. The Environmental Studies program at Oberlin is a regional leader in the field of sustainable development. The Green Building Coalition is a new organization of architects, developers, builders, engineers, city planners, facilities managers, and other persons interested in advancing the development of green design in Cleveland.

From the aspect of construction, local manufacturers may be a source of partners. For example, numerous firms in the steel, metalworking, asphalt, and concrete fields have had, or currently have, facilities in proximity to the proposed trail route. For example, LTV Steel has indicated an interest in discussing the design and construction of the elevated sections of the trail route relative to the product lines of their corporation.

Community Building

Public involvement in the planning, design and construction phases of the trail project is essential. The input of the public, neighborhood organizations, local businesses, and elected officials will provide direction that will lead to a more successful and sustainable trail. Volunteer efforts, partnerships and public meetings are suggested strategies to involve people in the process and create a sense of ownership.

Management and Maintenance

Management

Selection of an official agency sponsor for the Towpath Trail extension route will be an important step for continuing the planning process and eventually constructing the trail. This entity will need to have an established capability to build, manage, and maintain a complex linear trail route. The Cleveland Metroparks may provide this capability, although there has been no official commitment at this time. Metroparks continues to create and manage successful recreational areas that have become an identifying element in the landscape of the Cleveland metropolitan area. Cleveland Metroparks would be a qualified choice as a lead sponsor for this segment of the Towpath Trail, with the potential to foster partnerships for appropriate roles with entities, such as the National Park Service, Ohio & Erie Canal Association, Ohio Canal Corridor and the City of Cleveland.

Maintenance

Maintenance and operation issues for the Towpath Trail extension route will need to be considered early in the planning process, because they may influence design and construction de-

isions by the project sponsor. Access for emergency vehicles and various safety precautions may also need to be reviewed to determine the best strategies to provide solutions along the trail route. As part of maintenance and operation issues, the sponsor will need to determine staffing needs, as well as potential partnerships, to meet the desired goals.

Summary/Recommendations

- ✓ Explore programs from various sources for funding assistance for the design and construction of the trail route.
- ✓ Establish a management sponsor to take responsibility for the implementation of the trail route.
- ✓ Develop partnerships and emphasize public involvement along the proposed route to assist in achieving a successful project.
- ✓ Determine maintenance, operation, and safety needs as part of the design phase to help ensure the long-term success of the trail route.