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### **Clean Ohio Trails Fund Grant**

The City of Wadsworth announces it has been awarded funding in the amount of \$372,185 from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Clean Ohio Trails Fund, which will allow the City to construct a trail that could ultimately connect to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail.

"The City of Wadsworth has been looking at implementing a trail project for some time, and we are very excited to obtain this funding to move forward with the first major trail in Wadsworth," said Mayor Robin Laubaugh. "This grant opportunity is a great example of why community planning is important to the future of a community. Our City Council had the foresight to adopt a Multi-Modal Transportation Plan in 2010, which included planned trails and bike routes within the City. That plan served as the basis of our application to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for this award." Part of the Multi-Modal Plan included a concept plan for a multi-use trail following an abandoned trolley line from downtown to the corporation limit at Silvercreek Road.

The project, totaling approximately \$506,685, would allow the City to construct the trail from a new trailhead at the City's SW Parking Lot in the downtown; heading southeast following South Blvd and Ohio Avenue to Miller Park; and, continuing along Chestnut Street to South Blvd. and Durling Drive, where it would run roughly parallel to the railroad and terminate at a Silvercreek Road trailhead. From there it could connect to trail projects being considered in Norton and Barberton, which could then lead to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail.

In addition to the obvious recreational benefit, the project will result in economic advantages to the downtown area with visitors to the new trailhead. "Other cities have benefited from such trailheads", said Assistant Director of Public Service and Economic Development Director Harry Stark. "Not only are they attractive additions to the community, but they are continually packed with users of the trails. People walk and bike from their homes, and new residents look for properties near these trails. Business owners, also, look to locate in cities with vibrant recreational opportunities."

The City had actually applied for the grant in 2011; and, while it did not receive the award at that time, it was considered again in ODNR's 2012 and 2013 funding cycles, resulting in this award in 2014.