



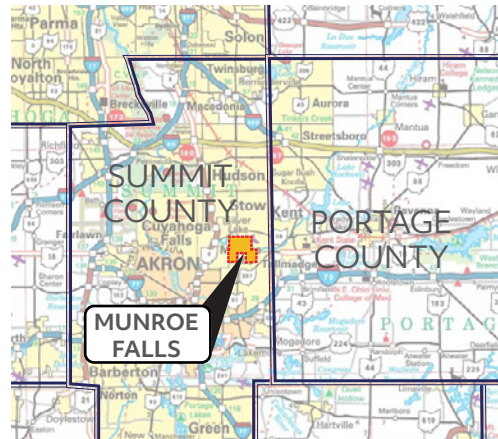
Trails Master Plan Munroe Falls



AMATS 2026 Connecting Communities Planning Grant

1 Applicant/Sponsor

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2 Project Co-Sponsor

A formal project co-sponsor has not been engaged for this project to-date. We do anticipate significant stakeholder partnerships and participation from AMATS, and Summit Metroparks. Community outreach will play an important role in the execution of a successful planning process. We have identified the following entities as additional groups to support our planning effort: Rails to Trails Conservancy, Summit Bike Share, Summit Cycling Center, Stow Munroe Falls Chamber of Commerce.

3 Planning Study Summary

Munroe Falls Trails Master Plan

The City of Munroe Falls is home to many public destinations within its 2.74 square miles footprint including two of Summit County's primary trails, a Summit County Metro Park, two city parks and a vibrant commercial corridor. The community is split in half by major rail lines and the Cuyahoga River. Despite the presence of inter-city connector trails and trails within the Metropark, the City lacks an alternative transportation network and the associated quality of life benefits as a result of safe, accessible routes.

Munroe Falls is prepared to develop the framework for a comprehensive multimodal network, and with AMATS support and partnership, we wish to pursue preliminary design for a city-wide multimodal centric network. The study will determine acceptable routing for shared use paths, bike lanes, and/or sidewalks as the primary facility types explored for this project. Munroe Falls is committed to providing its residents and visitors with safe routes through the community via multiple transportation options.

4 Study Area & Map

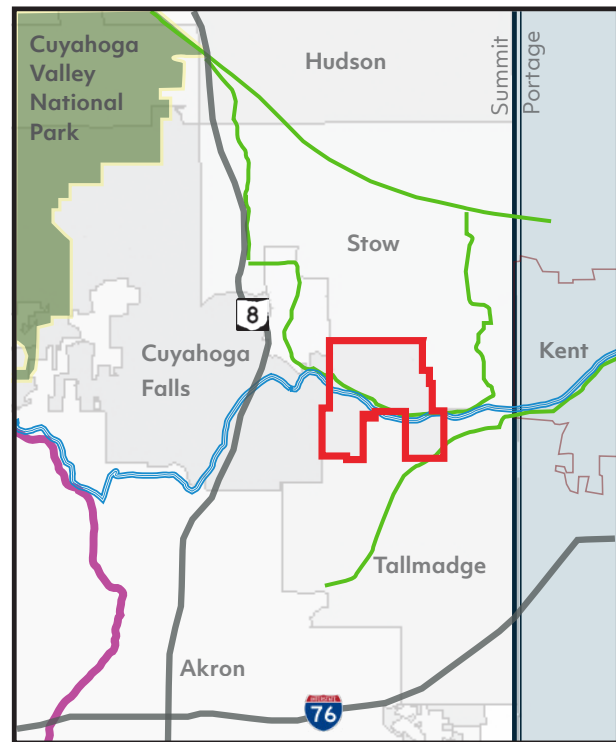
The Munroe Falls municipal boundary is the study area with significant attention given to regional resources such as the Freedom Trail, Summit Metroparks, and Summit Metropark Bike & Hike Trail. This study will take a comprehensive assessment at improving the multi-modal opportunities and connecting residents and visitors to places within the entire City and its relation to adjoining municipalities.



5 Purpose & Need

Munroe Falls recognizes the numerous issues within its existing infrastructure when it comes to non-vehicular travel along with the opportunities within its boundaries. The City has the Cuyahoga River and two major rail lines running east/west, splitting the city in two. There are also many amenities, including “Float the River” livery and developable space along SR-91, the Summit County Metroparks Bike and Hike Trail running along the north side of the river and the Munroe Falls Metro Park south of the river which connects to the Freedom Trail.

This project will support and allow the City to establish a pedestrian and cycling-centric plan to contribute to the framework and future development of Munroe Falls as an alternative transportation hub. Safety, health and the wellbeing of the community are the highest priorities through improved access to well planned transportation options.



The existing trail networks that exist in Munroe Falls offer nonvehicular connections to the broader region, however we currently lack trailheads to access these trails and connections to and through the City to allow bicycles, walkers, runners dedicated routes. At present, only one trailhead location exists to the Bike & Hike Trail at Brust Park.

The City has a strong interest in improving and creating accessible and safe routes for our aged population. The population of residents over age 65 is 31.7% vs. 20.2% for Summit County (2024 ACS 5-year estimates). In its 2024 Active Transportation Plan (formerly the Regional Bikeways Plan) AMATS ranks Munroe Falls #4 in the region for “Elderly Population” and #2 in percentage of “Adults with Disabilities.” Perhaps related is its rank as #5 for households that are “carless.” Multiple senior living and health care centers are located along the SR-91 corridor. There are also destinations such as markets and parks within walking distance of residential areas, but pedestrian or other alternative transportation infrastructure is lacking to desired destinations. This study will look at supporting the health, independence and wellbeing of all ages with a specific interest in the older residents, those with disabilities, and/or households without access to private motor vehicles.

Major barriers exist exacerbating the safe movement through the City. SR-91 is a heavily trafficked vehicular route with intermittent sidewalks. The Cuyahoga River presents a constraint with an existing sidewalk only on one side of the one public bridge crossing the river. There are two active rail lines that cross at-grade due south of the river that currently lack pedestrian and bicycle crossing features. At this time, there may be additional impediments that are not yet known or explored from the standpoint of an alternative transportation user or those who want to become such users. Public input will help to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multiple constraints existing within the City. This will better inform the preferred and applicable solutions to improve the safety and wellbeing of users and residents.



Multiple impediments exist such as the rail crossing along SR-91 which lacks an accessible route

For its relatively small size, Munroe Falls has significant regional resources in the Summit Metro Parks Munroe Falls Metro Park and adjacent Tallmadge Meadows Area with miles of loop trails. Just beyond the city border numerous destinations likewise exist such as the Summit County Fairgrounds and Waterworks Park. Munroe Falls is also one of the closest points where the Freedom Trail and the Bike and Hike Trail pass each other, but do not directly connect. These existing resources connect people to broader areas from Cuyahoga National Park to Kent to downtown Akron. Munroe Falls is one of the crossroads of Summit County and the study intends to seek ways to improve the opportunity for non-vehicular movement in our region. These include both greater access to existing trails and, in partnership with other organizations, improved connectivity of regional trails that can also enhance local connectivity. For example, the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition's Summit County Trails Plan identifies a "system of interconnected trail corridors" within their plan as a primary goal.

This study will look at previous, ongoing and emerging proposals to see how the City can help enhance the plans for interconnection such as shared paths between locations and trails within Munroe Falls. In fact, three Munroe Falls locations are listed in AMATS 2025 Active Transportation Plan Shared Use Path Recommendations, including: 1) a Metro Park River Crossing Connector from Munroe Falls Metro Park to the Bike and Hike Trail; 2) Munroe Falls Metro Park Connector from Tallmadge Meadows Area Metro Park to the Bike and Hike Trail; and, 3) S. River Road Trail from S. Main St. to the Freedom Trail. This study will evaluate partnerships for funding and developing these connections that can also improve local access to the regional trail system.

6 Outcomes

This planning study will provide the City with a guiding document to identify priorities and strategies for implementation. This comprehensive planning will assist in the necessary funding pursuits beyond AMATS through such entities as ODOT Active Transportation Fund, ODOT Safe Routes to Schools Program, ODOT Highway Safety Funding Program, ODNR Recreational Trail Program, ODNR Clean Ohio Trail Fund, and local funding opportunities from the Summit County Trail and Greenway Plan Community Grant Program. Partnerships will also be sought when a joint interest with another community or organization is identified.

A master plan document will have the following components

- o A city-wide trail network and conceptual opinions of probable construction costs for identified recommendations
- o Assessment of existing pedestrian network and identification of gaps and or/constrained situations.
- o Safe and accessible crossings of existing roadways, rail lines, waterways, etc

The ultimate goal is in improving accessible routes and opportunities for residents and visitors to experience key destinations in Munroe Falls and the region. Improving access to existing trails, providing non-vehicular alternatives including connections to bus routes, waterways, and bike trails.

The planning process will determine where a trail or shared use path is feasible. It is understood AMATS typically does not fund the construction of 5-foot sidewalks that are not part of a larger roadway improvement project. A sidewalk improvement plan will be separated for future consideration by the City.

Priority Roadways Daily Traffic Counts

Road	Avg Vehicles Daily
SR-91	15,100
Munroe Falls Ave	9,260
N River Rd	6,990
N. Moreland Ave	3,430
S River Rd	1,350
N Munroe Rd	1,150

Traffic data from AMATS Traffic Count Map, 2024 data

Munroe Falls has identified 6 priority roadways as the focus of this study. These roadways receive at least 37,280 daily vehicle users, more than 7 times the city's population. Improvements to these routes will positively impact non-vehicular users experience and safety throughout the City as users can more freely access the areas amenities.

7 Connecting Community Principles

Increase alternative transportation options to connect people and places

Investing in a city-wide connectivity plan will promote a more livable, walkable community and provide alternatives to vehicular transportation. Munroe Falls is fortunate to have both the Bike and Hike Trail and the Freedom Trail within its boundaries. These regional trails also provide a connection to the Cuyahoga National Park, other regional parks and historic landmarks, and neighboring cities. However, multiple constraints including tight infrastructure, a built-out environment and lack of pedestrian and/or bike infrastructure within its current street network discourages alternative transportation access within the City and connection to the trails and other nearby amenities

There is an opportunity for Munroe Falls to be a hub of the Summit County trail network, however there is only one trailhead within the City to access the Bike and Hike trail located at Brust Park. The newer Freedom Trail has no trailheads within the City and it is separated from the bulk of Munroe Falls residents by its location in the southeast corner with no safe on-road route to connect with it. Numerous county and regional plans over the years have stressed the importance of local access to trails as well as interconnectivity of the regional trail system toward offering a seamless alternative transportation network.

Promote Complete Street principles to create vibrant and safe places for all users

Complete street principles will be a standard applied to the planning study. While parts of the City have neighborhood sidewalks, there is a lack of consistency in pedestrian, biking and transit opportunities, and safe connection to the existing local and regional trails without the use of motor vehicles. Amending the existing infrastructure to accommodate an expanded set of user groups will improve safer multimodal access within the community. A review of Munroe Fall's sidewalk inventory as well as a walking study of city streets can demonstrate where complete street infrastructure is adequate and where it is lacking – particularly on routes to desired destinations.

We need to better understand the available toolkit of solutions from widened sidewalks, on-road bicycle lanes and improved sidewalk networks to realistically reach all land uses, destinations and neighborhoods within the City. We see much of the focus on improvements occurring adjacent to roadways, which can offer safe, easy and convenient multi-modal options to all users, i.e. following complete streets principles. We have already identified primary roadway corridors as focus areas for this study (See Map)

Leverage transportation projects/funding to develop places which support alternative transportation and complete streets through land use and design

Munroe Falls will integrate the findings from this planning study into its future improvements. The study will prioritize SR-91, Munroe Road, S River Road, Northmoreland Ave, Munroe Falls Ave, North River Road corridors.

Additionally, the City has pursued planning into the following project areas that this study will complement:

SR-91 Trail Improvement to the SR-91 corridor has been a priority for the City as its central spine to the community with connections to Tallmadge and Stow, the Bike & Hike Trail, Cuyahoga River and adjacent parks, and the city's commercial business corridor. A portion of this route has been identified by the AMATS Shared Use Path Recommendation #41 'Munroe Falls Metropark Connector'

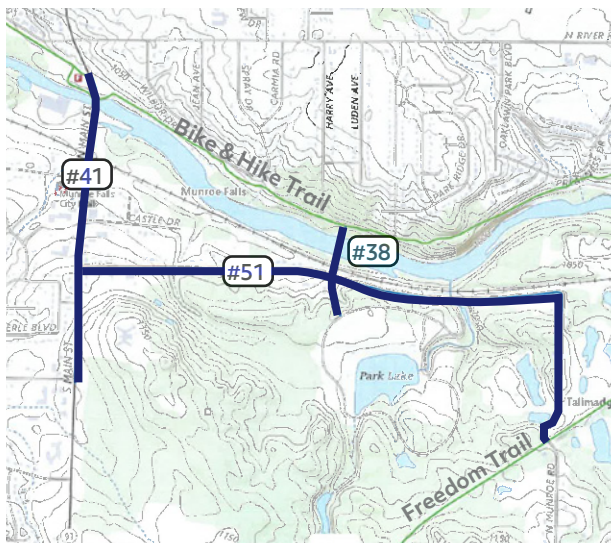
South River Road Trail – Improvement to non-vehicular access along this roadway promotes connection to two of the primary resources located in eastern Munroe Falls. Munroe Falls Metropark and the Freedom Trail are currently isolated due to limited roadways and development in the eastern portion of Munroe Falls. An enhanced ROW corridor will expand the opportunity to access these amenities and provide steps in linking the Bike and Hike Trail and Freedom Trail. This route has been identified by the AMATS Shared Use Path Recommendations #38 & #51.

8 Level of Use

Munroe Falls is less than 2 miles square with a population of 5,044 (2020 Decennial Census). This study will provide findings that can benefit the entire population, including older adults, people with disabilities and households without cars. Improving pedestrian and other alternative transportation access along the primary roadways alone would give a vast majority of residents access within a quarter mile of an improvement.

The positive impact of the project will include:

- Improved safety for all users within the corridor by better accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.



AMATS 2024 Active Transportation Plan Recommended Routes

The SR-91 corridor is the main connector of north and south Munroe Falls and provides the only river crossing in the city. A majority of commercial entities are along it along with a large number of residents within walking distance.

South River Road provides a scenic route skirting the metropark and becomes N Munroe Road intersecting the Freedom Trail

- Increased alternative transportation choices.
- Reduction in use of cars for short trips such as to local trailheads or parks, reducing congestion and use of limited parking.
- With local access and potential linkage of local and regional trails, expand choices for residents for usage of trails to connect to regional amenities and commute between communities for work and recreation.
- Identify investment priorities to incorporate complete street principles within existing built environments.
- By improving access, increase healthy behaviors such as walking or biking in natural settings
- Develop Munroe Falls to be a central hub of alternative transportation, increasing access to the region of the recreational, natural, cultural, historic and commercial amenities within and near the City.
- Exploring and deepening partnerships with Summit County communities and organizations that can support further connectivity of the trail and alternative transportation network.

9 Legislation

Munroe Falls is currently in the process of approving legislation as required for this grant. Signed documentation will be provided to AMATS ahead of the indicated June 1, 2026 deadline.

Funding Request

Munroe Falls is committed to improving the safety and access to all users and abilities.

Requested Funding: \$50,000

Munroe Falls will take responsibility for any unanticipated costs beyond the funding request



Munroe Falls Existing Condition Photographs

SR 91 Corridor



The SR-91 corridor has varying conditions within the ROW including narrow roadway shoulders, steep slopes, curbed and uncurbed edges, and multiple above and below grade utilities.



The Cuyahoga River valley presents significant grades along the roadway and to its sides. The bridge crossing and embankment result in intermittent and varying grades for walkways.



SR-91 is the primary access point for many of Munroe Falls' destinations including Brust Park and access to the Bike & Hike Trail and the city's commercial district.



South River Road Corridor & Brust Park Bike & Hike Trailhead



The South River Road corridor is a natural setting with multiple restrictive conditions including no roadway shoulder, steep grades to the sides with an adjacent railway and waterway/ditch crossings.



South River Road is the primary access point to the Munroe Falls Metropark



Brust Park is a major multimodal intersection that can be enhanced where the Cuyahoga River water trail, Bike & Hike Trail, and SR-91 sidewalks converge at the center of Munroe Falls.



Existing Infrastructure and Crossing Obstructions



An at-grade rail line with two tracks presents a major impediment. Current non-vehicular crossing is very limited with no accessible route.



The existing sidewalk network is intermittent and interrupted with multiple drive crossings, widths, and obstacles.



SR-91 bridge over the river is the only opportunity in the City. A pedestrian route exists on the east side of the bridge.

