

# Community Connection in Alliance



- **Type of trail** – Multi-purpose including on-road and off-road sections
- **Length** – 12 miles
- **Cost** - \$3 million
- **Funding Sources** - Clean Ohio Trail Fund & Recreational Trail Program (ODNR), American Recovery and Reinvestment Act fund (ARRA), and Alternative Funding through the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)

Stark County



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## The Good Stuff

- **Amenities** – The Iron Horse Trail has an established trailhead with shared amenities at the First Christian Church in Alliance. Deer Creek Reservoir, a 334-acre reservoir nestled among nearly 1,000 acres of forest serves as a trailhead and destination of the northern trail system.
- **Connections to other non-project assets** – Through the creation of this trail system, Stark Parks has physically connected many cultural organizations in the Alliance community, including the Haines House, the Mabel Hartzell House, and the Glamorgan Castle. The trail systems have also created a link with the city’s excellent park system, and a top Midwestern private university – the University of Mount Union.

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- **Benefits to the Public** – One of the greatest benefits to the public was the creation of a trail system that connected existing natural spaces and places of interest in the community. Individuals, clubs, sports teams, and other groups now had a space to hike, bike, and run in their city.
- **Environmental enhancements** – We constructed a boardwalk over sensitive habitat that paralleled the Mahoning River, protecting the area rather than cutting in a limestone trail.
- **Social Equity** – From a standpoint of social equity, these trail systems have provided equal access and availability to all people, and have cultivated community ties, all of which have better connected people to their community.



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**Buzz on the Street** — In planning for trail expansion that would connect the southern trail system (the Iron Horse Trail) with the northern trail system (Mahoning Valley Trail and Deer Creek Reservoir), Stark Parks put out a public comment form early in 2018. The comments were overwhelmingly positive and in support of any future trail connections (see Notes). In addition, we've received an outpour of photo shares on social media, with users showing their experiences with scenic trail views and lake vistas.

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**Setting** – Urban, Suburban, and Rural

**Project champion** – Stark Parks

**Planning process** – planning for expansion in northeastern Stark County began with the creation of the Trail and Greenway Master Plan in 1999.

Construction on the Mahoning Valley Trail (northern section) was completed in 2010 and on the Iron Horse Trail (southern section) in 2015.

**Next steps** – In January of 2018, Stark Parks applied for Clean Ohio Trail Funds through the Department of Natural Resources that would allow for the development of the crushed limestone off-road portions of this trail, connecting the two existing systems.

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