



Contact Information

Scott Timmer, City Manager
stimmer@fairfieldoh.gov
513.867.5350

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grant Awards to Jumpstart Two Critical Neighborhood Connectivity Projects

The City of Fairfield is excited to announce the award of nearly \$2.5 million in Federal transportation grant funding to support two priority shared use projects within the City's neighborhoods. The funding was announced by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) on October 12, 2023 as part of a \$50.4 million package of transportation projects within the region.

"The City is excited and appreciative of the funding to advance these two critical projects," said Scott Timmer, Fairfield City Manager. "With these funds, we will improve the connectivity of our neighborhoods with major park facilities, Fairfield's Town Center, and other regional trail networks. The opportunity to improve our connectivity is crucial for continued vitality in Fairfield."

Both projects were identified as priorities in the Fairfield Connects plan, a connectivity master plan adopted by Fairfield City Council to identify opportunities to improve the walkability and bikeability of the City and its neighborhoods. The Fairfield Connects plan was prompted in response to significant community input received during creation of the Fairfield Forward Comprehensive Plan. During the Fairfield Forward planning process, many residents suggested improvement to the City's network of sidewalks and shared use paths to better connect residents with local amenities, parks, and adjacent neighborhoods.

The two projects include:

1) Great Miami River Trail Extension

OKI approved funding in the amount of \$750,306 towards extension of the Great Miami River Trail (GMRT) from its current terminus at Waterworks Park to connect with the existing trail segment within Marsh Park. This extension, to be constructed in 2027, will bring the trail south to the roundabout at River and Gray Roads, facilitating future expansion to the Furfield Dog Park.

The City has been strategically acquiring property in recent years to create a path for the trail extension. The trail is seen as a critical component to the long-term plans to enhance and activate Marsh Park. Unlike many sections of the GMRT that follow the Great Miami River, Fairfield's segment will be unique in that it will move away from the river, providing stunning views of Marsh Lake and improved connections to the surrounding neighborhoods.

The GMRT is a regional multi-use trail envisioned to extend from Shawnee Lookout Park in Hamilton County north to Sidney in Shelby County. Completion of the Fairfield segment is critical in achieving this goal. Neighboring jurisdictions have secured funding to close the remaining trail gaps between Hamilton and Middletown, connecting Fairfield and Piqua with more than 80 miles of unbroken trail.



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2) Pleasant Avenue Shared Use Path

OKI approved funding in the amount of \$1,738,290 towards construction of a shared use path on the west side of Pleasant Avenue/US 127 between Hunter Road and Wessel Drive. This project, to be constructed in 2027, will create a separated shared use path in coordination with traffic calming improvements planned for the corridor.

As currently configured, Pleasant Avenue effectively only facilitates motor vehicles usage as the primary transportation method of the corridor. The path will connect neighborhoods with two major anchors on each end. To the north, the new path will connect the Fairfield Town Center area, providing residents with the option to walk or bike to reach local restaurants, retail stores, Village Green Park, and the Town Center DORA district. On the south end, the path will end at Hunter Road, which provides a direct connection to Harbin Park.

As the first shared use path parallel to an existing roadway in Fairfield, this project will be a model for future shared use path projects identified in the Fairfield Connects plan. Contingent on funding, future plans include a shared use path parallel to River Road between Groh Lane and the Town Center Area, providing a link between the Pleasant Avenue Shared Use Path and GMRT Extension.

Now that OKI has approved funding for both projects, the City's Public Works Department will advance engineering and detailed design in preparation for construction when the OKI funds become available. The City's Public Works Department has been key in applying and securing outside funding for these critical projects.

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Fairfield covers 22 square miles in Southwest Ohio just north of Cincinnati with 44,000 residents and more than 1,200 corporate, retail, service and light industrial establishments. For more information, visit www.fairfield-city.org, and like or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram