PEACEFUL COMMUNITY CONNECTION

COAL RUN GREENWAY

PHOTO CREDIT: KEVIN FUNK
Fairmont is enjoying a period of investment and growth. Now is the time for the implementation of bold plans and for creating the landscape that will shape our future. As we anticipate population growth and business development, neighborhood investment and quality of life improvements, our best step forward is to bring that future into the present and develop for that reality.

Coal Run Hollow represents asset-based development. This linear open space is a natural corridor providing neighborhood and community connections, providing health and wellness opportunities for residents and visitors. It’s a natural greenway and it represents educational and recreational resources for the City of Fairmont and it should be protected, enhanced, and leveraged for the good of the community.
Coal Run Hollow, located along Benoni Avenue between 5th Street and Kirkway Drive, got its name from the small stream that hugged the hollow and from the banks where residents dug coal right out of the ground. It currently serves as an access point for kids walking to and from school and to the local 5th Street Park, clients and visitors of the Disability Action Center, visitors and caretakers of Fairmont’s Community Garden, and patrons of the Mid-City Bowling Alley. It also serves area residents making high-speed shortcut connections between neighborhoods.

With the construction of the 3rd Street Bridge, the Coal Run section of Benoni Avenue has been closed to vehicle traffic. For more than 12 months, drivers have successfully navigated alternate routes, making cross-town connections in spite of this closure. In line with the goals and objectives outlined in both Fairmont’s Comprehensive and Connectivity Plans, it is proposed that this local asset remain closed to vehicular traffic and re-open as a linear park - a greenway corridor - safely connecting people and places.
COAL RUN GREENWAY ALIGNS WITH FAIRMONT'S VISION
IN 2005, THE CITY RECOGNIZED COMMUNITY DESIGN AND RECREATION AS CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR THE HEALTH, VITALITY, AND GROWTH OF FAIRMONT.

Specifically, the City committed to supporting projects and investments that would:
- create a unified, readily apparent and positive image for the community;
- protect, enhance and integrate natural amenities and features;
- create functional and visual linkages;
- preserve and enhance the community’s quality of life

Additionally, benefits associated with the reuse of Coal Run Hollow align with goals and objectives highlighted in chapters addressing Public Services, Economic Development, Historic Preservation, Transportation, and Tourism. The Coal Run Greenway is an answer to Fairmont’s vision for a city: presenting the City as a community committed to health and sustainability through thoughtful and progressive design.

Coal Run Greenway represents continued growth marked by short, mid, and long-term impacts for Fairmont. In the short-term, this transition means immediate benefit and impact for both the Disability Action Center and local non-profit organization Learning Options.

Additionally, neighborhood schools, Fairmont Catholic and Fairmont Senior High, will gain access to this “outdoor classroom” and safe recreation space.

In the mid-term, with developments marked by lighting installation and increased neighborhood access, provides increased connectivity to Fairmont’s three emerging neighborhoods: University District, Historic Downtown, and the Riverfront. The Coal Run Greenway provides a critical pedestrian and bicycle connection between these districts as increased connectivity leverages development across all area.

In the long-term, the established presence of the Coal Run Greenway represents a significant economic development opportunity for Fairmont. The ongoing regional development effort surrounding the Industrial Heartland Trail Corridor represents economic growth potential for the City of Fairmont. Once established, the Fairmont section will be known as the North Central Connector Trail and will intersect the Coal Run Greenway at Kirkway Drive. This opportunity to engage local and regional trail users positions Coal Run Greenway to serve as an urban trailhead, complete with amenities and services catering to this population.
PROGRAMMING & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

DISABILITY ACTION CENTER PROGRAMS IMPACTED BY THE COAL RUN GREENWAY PROJECT

GO! Program (Get Outdoors): The GO! Program’s primary focus is to increase recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities with focus on accessibility and inclusion. The closing of Coal Run (Benoni Ave.) between the DAC and 5th St. Park will allow for greater access to the park and Fairmont Community Garden. Clients from the DAC will have a safe, accessible outdoor space for health and wellness programs and fitness activities, and will continue volunteering at the Oliver Ave. site of Fairmont Community Garden. In years past, the clients of the DAC have volunteered in partnership with Learning Options, Inc. and those opportunities would increase with greater, safer, access to the garden site.

RURAL Project (Rural to Urban Agriculture Learning) in partnership with the Homestead Farm Center is a new project intended to develop farm, agriculture, landscaping, and gardening skills of clients. Clients from the DAC will participate in a 12 week outdoor education program, during which they will receive a weekly stipend for their work. Classes will be divided between the Homestead Farm Center and the DAC. At the farm, trainees will receive on the job training in the areas of gardening, horticulture, landscaping, crop production, and raising livestock. They will connect these skills to the urban setting by attending afternoon classroom activities at the DAC where they will be instructed in nutrition, food preparation, farm market operation, and other hands on lessons. The skills learned in both the rural and urban setting can be applied to stewardship and maintenance of the park, community gardens, stream and trails, and surrounding areas.

Park Stewardship/Work Based Learning/Paid Employment for DAC Clients: The project opens doors for both volunteer and paid employment for clients of the DAC to apply the skills and training learned in the RURAL program, gain experience, give back to their community, and when applicable, become employed.
A PROJECT FOR TODAY

Implementing the Coal Run Greenway is a project for today. Benoni Avenue from Fifth Street to Kirkway Drive is already a greenway. Trees line both sides of the path. Coal Run flows alongside most of the distance from Kirkway to Fifth. Small foot paths traverse into the forest along the contours. All that is missing is a few elements that make this truly a pedestrian corridor. At Fifth Street and at Kirkway Drive, the asphalt will be narrowed at the entrances.

The narrowing suggests the remaining asphalt is no longer the path of travel it once was for vehicle. It suggests a path for slower movement and for the pedestrian who only needs a much smaller path for travel, whether by foot or by bicycle. Yellow Bollards are set five feet apart to allow ease of pedestrian flow but to clearly signify to traffic they aren’t to use this path. The bollards will have pull pins that can be hastily removed to allow the bollards to fold down and driven over top of for emergency access or for entering to haul in supplies for events on the greenway. Reflective striping will be placed down to signal to bicycle riders and runners that there is reason for them to come to a stop before proceeding outside of the Coal Run Greenway.
The stop signs for vehicular traffic is reconfigured to allow proper flow of traffic. All of these small elements create the new pedestrian pathways.

Beyond these initial elements, the greenway can be enhanced much further. Outdoor lighting will be added to create an even safer environment for pedestrians and to grant use during more hours of the day. The lighting will be low in Kelvins to prevent to hampering of users night vision and to reduce potential light pollution. A minimum of ten lights will be need to cover the entire greenway.

Many possibilities can come from this now. Pavilions can be added to be rented by the city parks boards. New paths can be trail blazed through the forest. Information plaques can be provided for the types of flora growing on the greenway. A bike station can be constructed where cyclists can perform a tune up and take a break. The possibilities for the community are vast.

SO MANY POSSIBILITIES
IT STARTS WITH A CHOICE AND SOME ELBOW GREASE...

this is for YOU
COAL RUN GREENWAY
A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT FOR COMMUNITY GROWTH

FRIENDS OF MARION COUNTY TRAILS & WATERWAYS
DISABILITY ACTION CENTER
MARION COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION
CITY OF FAIRMONT PARKS COMMISSION
NORTHERN WV BROWNFIELDS ASSISTANCE CENTER