



Your Back Yard for 100 Years

## NEWS RELEASE

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### SUMMIT METRO PARKS ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF FREEDOM TRAIL PHASE III AND ADDITIONAL AMENITIES

Freedom Trail Phase III is now complete, offering bikers and hikers a newly paved path extending from Eastwood Ave. to East Mill St. Also this year, the park district reconstructed the Middlebury Rd. Trailhead in Tallmadge and built an extension of Freedom Trail Phase I to the new parking lot.

Freedom Trail is a multipurpose trail that follows an unused railroad corridor on land owned by METRO Regional Transit Authority, the University of Akron and Summit Metro Parks. When complete, the trail will stretch nearly 10 miles from the Portage County line in Tallmadge to the Towpath Trail in downtown Akron.

Supported by a grant from Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS), the next phase of the project is divided into two parts, IVa and IVb. Phase IVa construction is scheduled to begin as early as summer of 2023 and is expected to last about six months. It will include a new trailhead and parking lot at East Mill St., extending to East Buchtel Ave. When complete, Phase IVb will connect Freedom Trail to the Towpath Trail near Spaghetti Warehouse and will include a bridge over South Broadway St.

A future Middlebury Connector Trail also benefits from AMATs funding and will cross an existing CSX railroad line via a new bridge, connecting Freedom Trail to the Portage Hike & Bike Trail via switchback-style path.

Construction on the Freedom Trail began in 2011, with the first phase being 4.2 miles. The second phase was two miles, the third phase 1.8 miles and the fourth phase will be 1.4 miles.

To view Freedom Trail project updates and share feedback, visit the park district's website: <http://ow.ly/aY6x50JKzbT>.

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Established in 1921, Summit Metro Parks celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2021. The park district manages more than 15,000 acres throughout 16 parks, three nature centers and over 150 miles of trails, including 22 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance is approximately 5.5 million visits. Find us online at [summitmetroparks.org](https://summitmetroparks.org).



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