

Two Types of Trails

Dedicated Trails are designed and built off-road for the exclusive use of pedestrians, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, skaters, people in wheelchairs, equestrians, or motorized use such as snowmobilers. Surface treatment and width may vary, depending on the usage of a specific trail or segment. Permitted usage is established by the organizations and public agencies involved in the acquisition, development, and maintenance of each trail. Although more than one type of non-motorized use is allowed on most trails, typically the use by motorized recreational vehicles is segregated by location and/or by season.

Shared-Use Trails are low-volume streets or rural roads designated to be shared by existing vehicular traffic with proposed bicycle and pedestrian use. Generally shared-use trails will require at least some signage and perhaps paint striping to identify the routes and to alert motorists. Where the right-of-way is of sufficient width and suitable configuration, some shared-use roadways may accommodate other uses such as equestrians or snowmobiling within the right-of-way, although not on the pavement. State law and local ordinances govern which uses may be allowed on roads and streets.

Portions of routes that originate as shared-use roadway trails could in the future be replaced by construction of dedicated off-road trails, either within the public right-of-way or on parallel easements. The limitations on such conversions include existing development and land uses, drainage ditches and stream crossings, and vehicular traffic patterns.

Lee County's Unique History & Geography

The location of our county on many important travel routes into the Old Northwest Territory figures prominently in the development of the Lee County Greenways & Trails Plan. Some were ancient Indian trails that became crowded with lead miners and early settlers in the years following the Black Hawk War. The pattern of rudimentary roads, indicated on the original Federal Land Survey in the early 1840's, is reflected in the present-day road map of the county. Historic routes are the roads that angle across the open prairie spaces, now filled with working farms. Their destinations near and far include the original river fords and ferries that grew to become the centers of commerce and population in northern Illinois. The geography of Lee County's streams, great swamps, and the dissected terrain of a glacial moraine that spans the county dictated that many early roads would remain in spite of efforts to impose the survey grid on subsequent development.

Inspection of key roads that align with the old trail routes indicates that a greater number of scenic views, historic buildings, and cultural sites occur along these roads linking the earliest settlements. Consequently, this plan recommends that wherever possible the proposed shared-use trails coincide with historic roads. These trails offer the greatest interest for recreational use by residents and visitors alike.

Foremost among them are:

- The Galena Trail between Peoria and Galena, crossing the Rock River at Dixon
- The Chicago-to-Galena route through Paw Paw and Inlet to the ferry at Dixon
- The route between the shallows of the Illinois River at Peru, crossing the Rocky Ford on the Green River en route to Dixon
- The Green Wing route from LaMoille to Inlet crossing, through Lee Center and Franklin Grove, passing north toward Daysville and Rockford.

Similarly, most greenspace opportunities lie along the slanting, parallel pattern of the original river corridors, swamp lands, and the high, rolling moraine with its glacial features and sand deposits. The unique qualities of the recommended combined greenways and trails plans are that:

- historic patterns are preserved and exploited

continued
Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan

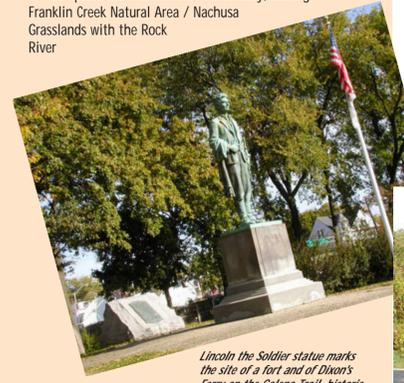
trails do not conform solely to east-west trending greenway and railway corridors; instead they follow historic precedent by cutting across the grain geographically to link communities, public sites, and scenic destinations located in the natural corridors.

A prominent exception will be the Rock River Trail. It will follow the greenway on the Rock River in order to provide Lee County with a connection to the Grand Illinois Trail.

The Top Priorities

Prioritizing development is the key to winning broad local support for implementation of individual projects. It is essential to attract state, federal, and private funding. This plan gives highest priority to 14 proposed greenways or trails, four of which are integral components of the Rock River Trail that will link Lee County to the Grand Illinois Trail system (G7). A total of 38 are shown on the map and described in more detail in the written report that accompanies the Lee County Greenways & Trails Plan:

- 1- Complete the Franklin Creek Greenway, linking Franklin Creek Natural Area / Nachusa Grasslands with the Rock River



Lincoln the Soldier statue marks the site of a fort and of Dixon's Ferry on the Galena Trail, historic resources within the Dixon Park District riverfront parks, now a link in existing and proposed regional bicycle/pedestrian trails.



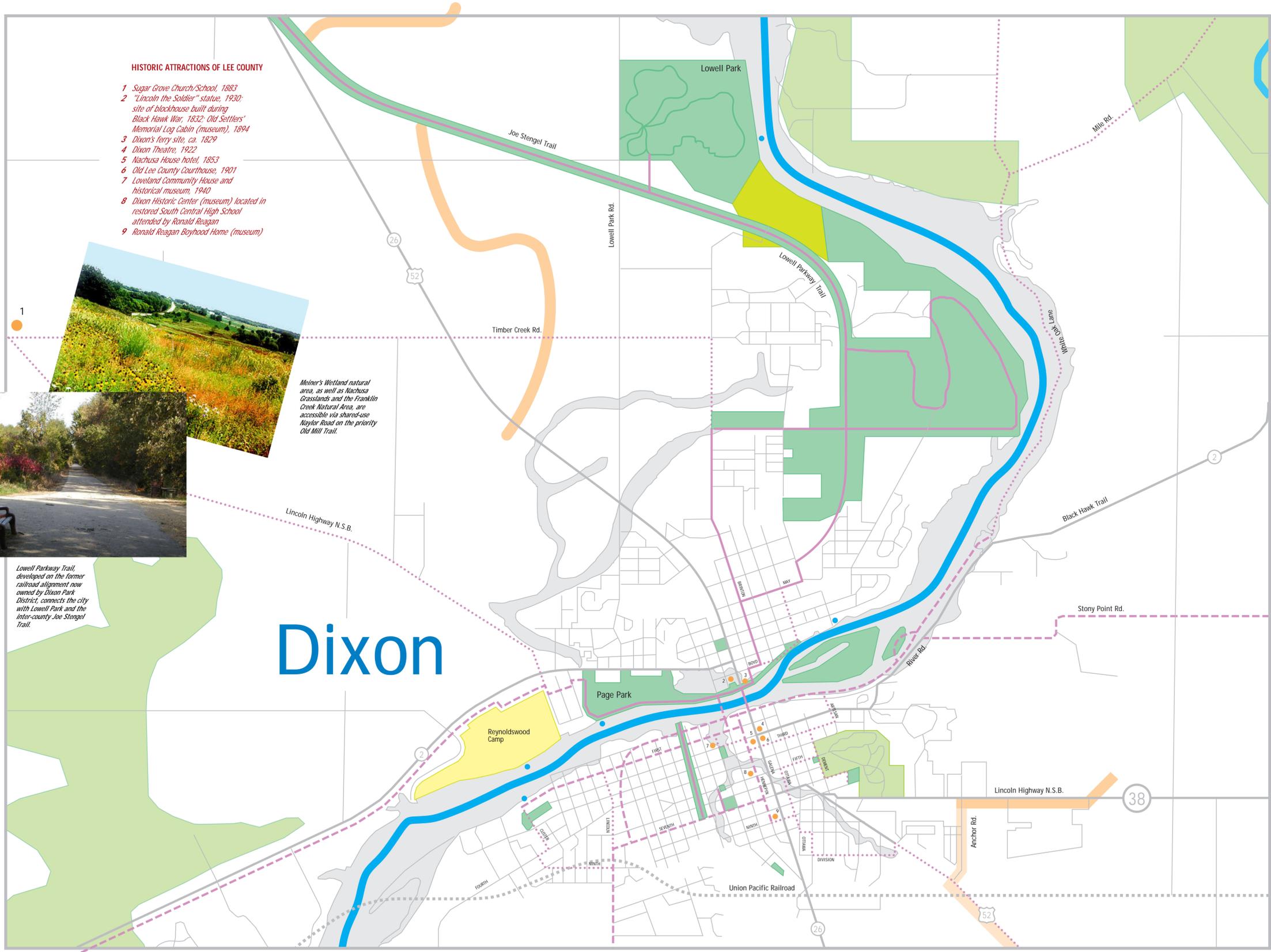
Meiner's Wetland natural area, as well as Nachusa Grasslands and the Franklin Creek Natural Area, are accessible via shared-use Naylor Road on the priority Old Mill Trail.



Lowell Parkway Trail, developed on the former railroad alignment now owned by Dixon Park District, connects the city with Lowell Park and the inter-county Joe Stengel Trail.

HISTORIC ATTRACTIONS OF LEE COUNTY

- 1 Sugar Grove Church/School, 1883
- 2 "Lincoln the Soldier" statue, 1930; site of blackhouse built during Black Hawk War, 1832; Old Settlers' Memorial Log Cabin (museum), 1894
- 3 Dixon's ferry site, ca. 1829
- 4 Dixon Theatre, 1922
- 5 Nachusa House hotel, 1853
- 6 Old Lee County Courthouse, 1901
- 7 Loveland Community House and historical museum, 1940
- 8 Dixon Historic Center (museum) located in restored South Central High School attended by Ronald Reagan
- 9 Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home (museum)



Dixon

Legend

- Flood plains
- Public Greenspace
- Existing Trail
- ~ River & Streams
- Roads, etc.
- Potential Greenspace
- - - Potential Recreational Trail
- ~ Potential Canoe Trail
- Snowmobile Corridor
- Private Greenspace
- ... Secondary Trail (potential)
- Canoe Site
- Potential Snowmobile Trail
- Recreational Areas (private and commercial campgrounds, religious, etc.)
- ... Rail Roads
- Historic Site



Participating planning organizations are:



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