The Freeport and Stephenson County

Greenways and Trails Plan

Plan Sponsor:
Partners in Planning
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Revisions
November, 2000 (RFC-1,2,4)

Contributing Agencies:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Stevenson County
Freeport Park District
City of Freeport
Stevenson County Visitors Bureau
Pearl City Park District
Northwest Illinois Trails Association
Lena Park District
Winslow Township Park District

Scale 1:63,360

Base map adapted from U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangles
Missing marginal tics refer to the Illinois Coordinate System, West Zone. Interval is 10,000 feet

- Federal Highway
- State Highway
- Other Roads
- Railroad
- State Line
- County Line
- Section Line
- Section Number
- Proposed U.S. 20, Freeway Option
- Proposed U.S. 20, Expressway Option
- Proposed New Roads, Freeway Option
- Proposed New Roads, Expressway Option
- Proposed Cul-De-Sac & Bridge, Freeway Option
- Proposed Cul-De-Sac & Bridge, Expressway Option
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Unincorporated Community
- Existing Facility
- Priority Park/ Greenway Area
- Critical and Sensitive Area
- Private Open Space or Farm Preservation Area
- Existing Regional Trail
- Proposed Regional Trail
- Existing Secondary Trail
- Proposed Secondary Trail
- Scenic Driving Route
- Illinois Natural Area Inventory Site
- Grand Illinois Trail
- Rest Stop/Wayside
- Canoe/Boat Launch

WHAT IS A GREENWAY?

Broken down, the word "greenway" denotes two separate images: **Green** suggests natural amenities, such as parks, forest preserves, wetlands, cultural and historic sites in communities; **Way** implies a route, path, or corridor. Together they describe a vision of natural circulation of plants, animals, and people across a landscape that has been otherwise transformed by development. Many of Illinois' greenways border waterways, deserted railroads, swampy wetlands, urban rights-of-way, or rural roads, providing long, linear passageways that join existing open spaces, both public and private.

Fox River Grove

A CRITICAL NEED FOR PLANNING

Lena Driving Route

Today, less than 1% of Illinois' native habitat remains. The forests, savannahs, prairies, and wetlands of Stephenson County are continuing to be degraded or destroyed. Current conservation practices can slow the rate of loss, but can't reverse the process.

The total land area of Stephenson County is 568 square miles or 363,734 acres. Since 1870, more than 90% of the county's land area has been developed.Only about 12% or 43,000 acres can be classified as woodland, upland prairie, lowland marsh or wetland.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has designated four Illinois Natural Areas Inventory sites that are listed for their high quality prairie communities or significant geological features. These natural area inventory sites, parks, and nature preserves, it should be noted, include both public and privately owned properties and account for less than 1% of the County's total land area.

Thus, it is easy to see how a Stephenson County and Freeport Area Greenways and Trails Plan will create opportunities to address rural, suburban, and urban sprawl, as well as provide a plan for growth management and preservation. A long-term plan such as the Greenways/Trails Plan will ultimately provide a basis for discussion and resolution of greenway planning issues among government, regional, local, and private organizations.

A STATE-WIDE PLAN

Illinois River

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, recognizing a need and growing interest in metropolitan greenway and regional trail planning on a nation-wide basis, created the Illinois State Trails Plan in May of 1995.

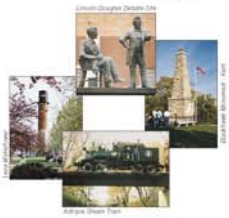
At the Governor's Workshop on Greenways and Trails (1995), Edward T. Mahon, Director of the Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program, said "... these places in this country that have successfully protected their uniqueness - whether natural or man-made - are those places that have used vision, planning, and management to protect their special characteristics. To work, a community's vision must accommodate change and development, as well as conservation and environmental protection." In July 1997, Illinois Governor Jim Edgar approved $3.4 Million in grant money to go toward bike/recreation paths, boosting support for Illinois communities interested in greenway and trail planning.

The Grand Illinois Trail Plan, adopted in December of 1997, is a network of existing and proposed trails in northern Illinois linking Lake Michigan to the Mississippi, as well as trails into Wisconsin and southern Illinois. The proposed trail plan provides a 475-mile loop connecting people, places, and communities of northern Illinois.

NATURAL AREAS/HERITAGE SITES

Illinois River

- Allrelkey Road Prairie Dakota/Wirth Prairie (Dakota Township)
- Artesian Well/Paradise cove (Winslow)
- Blackhawk Monument (Kent)
- Central House (Orangeville)
- Civil War Monument (Freeport)
- Ester Parrott Trust Property (Harlem Township)
- Freeport Prairie (Freeport)
- Freeport Southeast Geological Area (Silver Creek Township)
- Grand Illinois Trail
- Historical Museum & Arboretum (Freeport)
- Indian Gardens Nature Preserve (Freeport)
- Jane Addams Homestead (Cedarville)
- Jane Addams Trail
- Kellogs Pioneer Trail
- Le-Aqua-Na State Park (Lena)
- Lincoln/Douglas Debate Square (Freeport)
- Oakdale Nature Preserve (Freeport)
- Old River School Historic District (Freeport)
- Pecatonica Prairie Path
- Silver Creek & Stephenson Antique Railroad & Museum (Freeport)
- Stageconch Trail (Lena)
- Tutty Baker's Home Site (Freeport)
- Van Buren Avenue Bridge (Freeport)
- Wetlands Preserve (Freeport)



Lincoln-Douglas Debate Site

Lincoln Statue

Stephenson Monument - East

Antique Steam Train

Stephenson County Park Districts

Pecatonica Prairie Path

Grand Illinois Trail

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