



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Greenways & Trails Planning Assistance Program

Working together to build a network of greenways and trails for Illinois.

What are Greenways & Trails

Greenways are corridors of protected open space managed for conservation and recreation purposes. Greenways often follow natural land or water features, and can link nature preserves, parks, cultural features and historic sites with each other and with populated areas. Greenways can be publicly or privately owned, and some are the result of public/private partnerships. Trails are paths used for walking, bicycling, horseback riding or other forms of recreation or transportation. Some greenways include trails,

while others do not. Some appeal to people, while others attract wildlife. Many people may not realize that trails may also be on water. Streams and rivers can become water trails for canoeing and kayaking.



Why establish greenways and trails?

Greenways and trails positively impact individuals and improve communities by providing not only recreation and transportation opportunities, but also by influencing economic and community development. Some of the many trails and greenways benefits include:

-making communities better places to live by preserving and creating open spaces;
-encouraging physical fitness and healthy lifestyles;
-creating new opportunities for outdoor recreation and non-motorized transportation;

-strengthening local economies;
-protecting the environment; and
-preserving culturally and historically valuable areas.

Greenways and Trails:

- Stimulate Economic Development
- Promote Healthy Living
- Protect the Environment
- Preserve History and Culture
- Create Partnerships and Community Pride

Stimulate Economic Development

On the Katy Trail, in Missouri, visitors to the trail spent an average of \$230.16 with half being spent on food and lodging; almost half (49%) of those visitors were from states other than Missouri.



Greenways and trails provide countless opportunities for economic renewal and growth. Increased property values and tourism and recreation-related spending on items such as bicycles, in-line skates and lodging are just a few of the ways trails and greenways positively impact community economies.

In a 1992 study, the National Park Service estimated the average economic activity associated with three multi-purpose trails in Florida, California and Iowa was \$1.5 million annually.

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Protect the Environment

Greenways protect important habitat and provide corridors for people and wildlife. Greenways and trails help improve air and water quality. For example, communities with trails provide enjoyable and safe options for transportation, which reduces air pollution. By protect-

ing land along rivers and streams, greenways prevent soil erosion and filter pollution caused by agricultural and road runoff.

Greenways also serve as natural floodplains. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, flooding causes over \$1 billion in property damages every year. By restoring developed floodplains to their natural state, many riverside communities are

preventing potential flood damage.

Finally, greenways and trails are hands-on environmental classrooms. People of all ages can see for themselves the precious and intriguing natural world from which they often feel so far removed.

Promote Healthy Living

Many people realize exercise is important for maintaining good health in all stages of life; however, many do not regularly exercise. The U.S. Surgeon General estimates that 60% of American adults are not regularly active and almost 15% of children are overweight. In communities across the country, many people

do not have access to trails, parks, or other recreation areas close to their homes. Greenways and trails provide a safe, inexpensive avenue for regular exercise for people living in rural, urban and suburban areas.



Preserve Culture and History

Trails and greenways have the power to connect us to our heritage by preserving historic places and by providing access to them. They can give people a sense of place and an understanding of the actions and movements of our ancestors.

Other trails preserve transportation corridors. Rail-trails along historic rail corridors provide a glance at the importance of this mode of transportation. Many canal paths, preserved for their historic importance as a transportation route before the advent of

railroads, are now used by thousands of people each year for bicycling, running, hiking and strolling. Many historic structures along canal towpaths have been preserved.

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Create Partnerships and Community Pride

In Illinois, one network of greenways and trails features all of the above components. The 475-mile Grand Illinois Trail links historic sites, state parks, canal corridors, rail-trail conversions and communities. The

Grand Illinois Trail has become the longest in-state trail in the nation through a successful coalition of state agencies, private organizations, communities, elected officials and trail enthusiasts.



www.dnr.state.il.us/orep/planning

IDNR Planning Assistance Program

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) offers assistance for greenways and trails through the Planning Assistance Program. This program is designed to assist communities, counties and multi-county coalitions with greenway and trail planning. The program is an extension of successful IDNR-assisted greenway and trail planning for northeastern Illinois and downstate metro-areas. The goal of the program is to encourage and facilitate comprehensive, cooperative and coordinated planning to protect high priority greenways and, where appropriate, provide public access to them by developing trails.

While earlier phases of the program have assisted the larger metro communities throughout Illinois, the current phase targets communities with populations of 10,000 or more and non-metro counties. Communities/counties of this size may participate in the program individually, or in cooperation with one or more other eligible communities/counties.

The Application Process

This is the third phase of the IDNR-assisted program. Phase 1 covered Northeastern Illinois. Phase 2 covered 10 downstate metro-areas. Phase 3 covers non-metro communities and counties, including:

Communities greater than 10,000 population that have not already participated in IDNR-assisted northeastern Illinois or downstate metro-area greenway and trail planning.

◆Counties that have not already participated in IDNR-assisted Northeastern Illinois or downstate metro-area greenway and trail planning. These counties may participate in the program individually, or in cooperation with one or more other eligible counties.

◆Two or more northeastern Illinois and downstate metro-area coalitions that have (1) completed regional plans (under earlier Phases and (2) demonstrated significant progress in implementing portions of their plans. The goal for this planning is to connect metro-area networks.

◆Interstate coalitions. The goal for this planning is to

Participants in the program must represent a coalition of agencies, organizations and individuals instrumental to the planning process. The resulting plan must; identify priority greenway and trail projects, include an action plan for completing the projects, and provide a commitment of cost-share. If you are interested in the program or would like to receive more information, please contact the department by using the contact information listed in this brochure.

Once you've decided to participate you will be helping to create a statewide network of trails and greenways to be enjoyed by you, your community, visitors to your community and the generations who will be the residents of your community in the future.

connect greenways and trails within Illinois to greenways and trails within adjacent states.

Conditions for Financial Assistance

1. The applicant, must be a public/quasi-public agency that will be involved in implementing the plan.

- Provide the name and address of the applicant, who will accept and disburse the funds and maintain records of their use in a form that can be audited, and the name and title of the manager of the project.

2. The proposal and plan must be developed by an active, organized broad-based coalition of greenway and trail interests and agencies from the planning area who will logically be involved in the development, promotion and implementation of the plan.

- Provide the name of the work group, task force or coalition.

- List the dates, locations and minutes of the past two coalition meetings and the next scheduled meeting.
- Provide the name of the designated "chair" of the coalition.
- Provide a list of the names, titles and affiliations of the coalition members. The coalition should include planning area representatives from:
 - City and county government
 - Regional planning agency(s)
 - State agencies such as Illinois Department of Transportation, Historic Preservation Agency and Environmental Protection Agency
 - Non-governmental conservation and recreation constituency/advocacy groups
 - Business/community associations
 - Recreation agency(s)
 - Transportation agency(s)
 - Tourism office(s) and economic development agency(s)
 - IDNR Ecosystem Program Local Partnership Councils

3. The applicant and/or other coalition members must demonstrate cost-sharing commitments (either dollars or in-kind services) to develop the plan. The commitment should be a recognizable item in the applicant's budget to insure obligation. The suggested total accumulated cost-share is 25-50% of requested funds in order to substantively expand the scope of the plan beyond the capacity of the requested IDNR financial assistance.

Provide the amount, source and intended use of each cost-share commitment.

- Attach letter(s) or resolution(s) from source(s) formalizing cost-share commitment.

4. The proposal must describe a planning process/methodology that results in prioritized actions for implementation.

- Identifies priority greenways and trails in the planning area that are feasible and have apparent sponsors.
- Identifies priority activities or projects within the identified greenways (trails, linear parks, land acquisition, etc.), some of which may be eligible for funding through IDNR's existing grant programs.

- Considers greenway and trail linkages to attractions and destinations, including DNR, other state sites, an major existing or planned trails, within and nearby the immediate planning area, if applicable.
- Propose a schedule with dates (from time of approval) for key plan components.
- Outline a budget for requested IDNR and cost-share funds

5. The proposal must include evidence that most major local governments that will be involved in implementing the plan are supportive of greenway and trail planning.

- Attach copies of letters or resolutions of support for greenway and trail planning from local governments which cover most of the planning area and other major governmental bodies that must be involved in order to implement the plan.

Financial Assistance

When the applicant has fully complied with the above conditions and submitted a complete proposal, the IDNR will review and approve the proposal. Financial assistance will be in the form of a contract between IDNR and the applicant, not to exceed \$20,000, to complete the greenways and trails plan.

Completed applications should be submitted to:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
 Division of Planning
 Greenways Program
 One Natural Resources Way
 Springfield, IL 62702-1271
 Phone (217) 782-3715
 Fax (217)524-4177
 Email: greenway@dnrmail.state.il.us

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