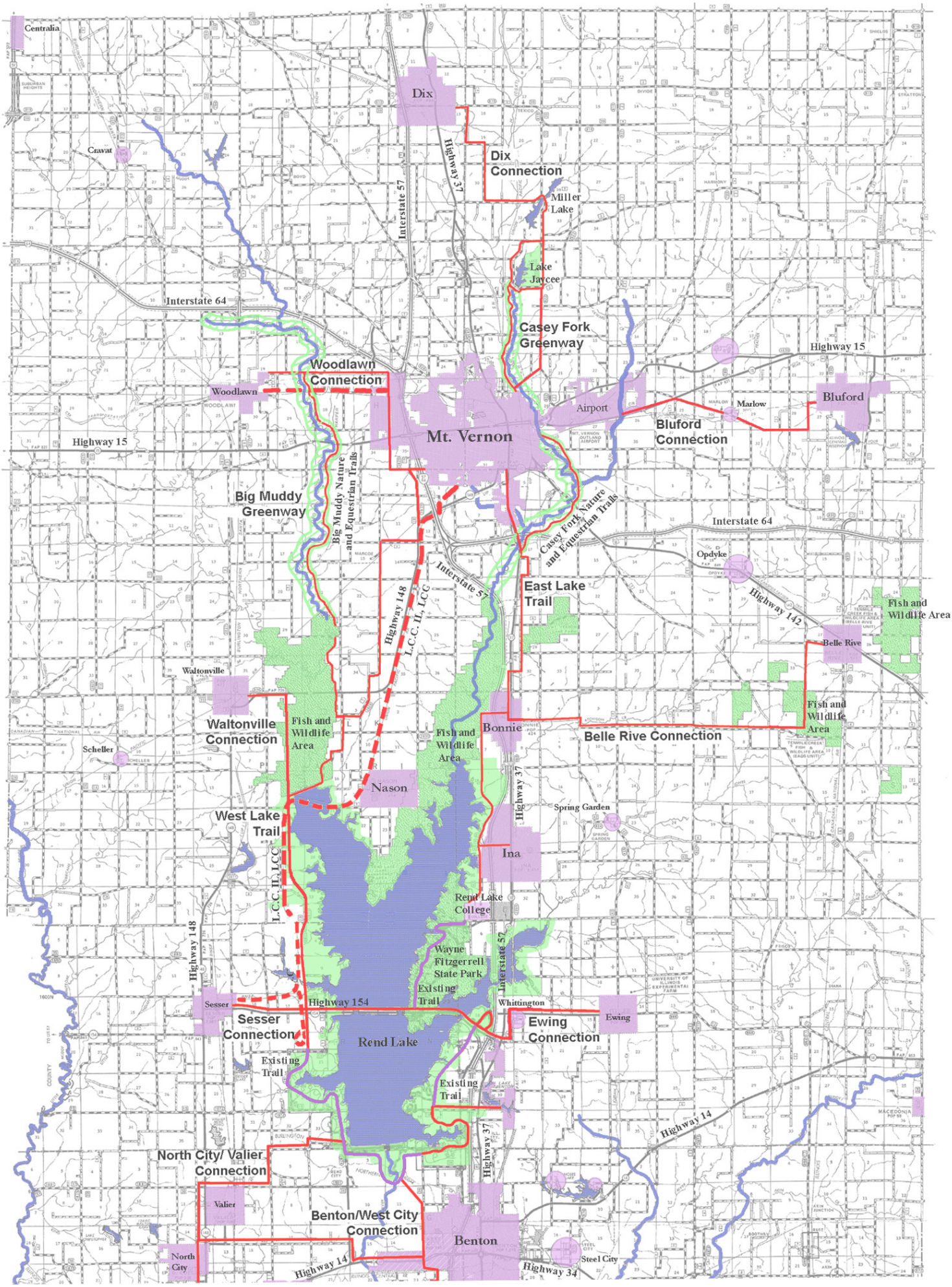
Mt. Vernon Area

Comprehensive Plan for Trails and Greenways

January 2007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Interstate 57
Lake Jaycee
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Casey Fork Greenway
Highway 15
Woodlawn Connection
Woodlawn
Mt. Vernon
Airport
Marlow
Bluford
Bluford Connection
Highway 15
Big Muddy Nature and Equestrian Trails
Big Muddy Greenway
Casey Fork Nature and Equestrian Trails
Interstate 64
Opdyke
Interstate 57
East Lake Trail
Highway 142
Fish and Wildlife Area
Belle Rive
Highway 148
L.C.C. IL LCC
Waltonville
Waltonville Connection
Fish and Wildlife Area
Bonnie
Belle Rive Connection
Fish and Wildlife Area
Scheller
Nason
Fish and Wildlife Area
Highway 37
Spring Garden
West Lake Trail
Ina
L.C.C. IL LCC
Rend Lake College
Highway 148
Wayne Fitzgerrell State Park
Existing Trail
Interstate 57
Sesser
Highway 154
Whittington
Ewing
Sesser Connection
Ewing Connection
Rend Lake
Existing Trail
Existing Trail
Highway 37
Highway 14
North City/ Valier Connection
Valier
Benton/West City Connection
Benton
North City
Highway 14
Steel City
Highway 34

Mt. Vernon Area

Comprehensive Plan for Trails and Greenways

January 2007

City of Mt. Vernon

David Keen, Mayor
City Council
Rick Heck
Shirilyn Holt
John Howard
Mike Walker

Southern Illinois Trails System (SITS)

Bonnie Jerdon, President
Anthony Lankford, VP/Secretary
Lisa Jones, Treasurer
Mike Beard
Mary Ellen Bechtel
Sarah Lou Bicknell
Sharon Bradham
Mark Deaton
Bernie Dickneite
David Farley
Dawn Gibson
Judy Hinson
Cindy Hoard
Merle Hollmann
Ike Kirkikis
Michael McKee
Cyndy Mitchell
Craig Olsen
David Overstreet
Wes Plummer
John Porter
Steve Schnake
Jerry Schutte
Greg Simms
Cathy Taylor
Hank Villani
Vera Whiteside

Massie Massie & Associates
LAND PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
1210 South Fifth Street, Springfield, IL 62703
217/544-3210, MassieAssociates@SBCglobal.net

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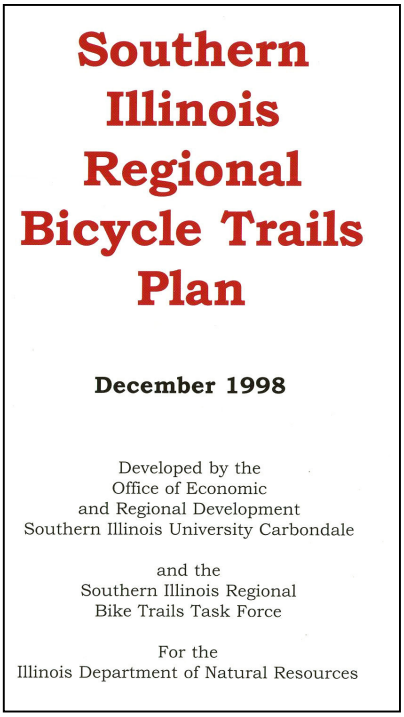
Chapter 1 Introduction

A. Trails in Southern Illinois

Southern Illinois is well known for its scenic quality and natural resources. The hills, forests, waterways and lakes are spectacular and provide habitat for a vast array of wildlife. Large tracts are publicly owned and managed as forests, parks and conservation areas. Much of the privately owned land also has resource-based uses including camping, hunting, fishing, horse riding, etc.

Hiking and equestrian trails have long been attractions in Southern Illinois. Within various forest and parklands, trails are a traditional means of enjoying the natural areas. During recent years, a local group developed the acclaimed **River-to-River Horse and Hiking Trail.** This trail extends 160 miles from the Ohio River east to the Mississippi River through the Shawnee National Forest.

During the 1990s demand was growing for trails suited for bicycle use. The IL Department of Natural Resource acquired abandoned railroad right-of-way built the **Tunnel Hill Trail.** Constructed in phases, the trail was completed in 2001 from Harrisburg in Saline County southwest 45 miles to White Hill in Johnson County.



The ***Southern Illinois Regional Bicycle Trails Plan*** was published in 1998. Developed by the Office of Economic and Regional Development at Southern Illinois University and the Southern Illinois Regional Bike Trails Task Force, the effort brought together local officials and citizens from throughout the region. Its recommendations were to develop bicycle trails to interconnect population centers and major recreational sites.

One trail identified in the plan was the **Great Shawnee Bike Trail.** It would extend from Murpheysboro southeast to Carbondale and Giant City State Park. It would turn northeast to Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge and Marion. From Marion it would run southeast to New Burnside, intersecting the Tunnel Hill Bike Trail. From the Tunnel Hill terminus at White Hill, the trail would resume running west to Tamms and north through Jonesboro and Alto Pass back to Murpheysboro. A spur would also run from Marion north to Benton resulting in nearly 120 miles of additional trail.

The other trail identified in the plan was the **Rend Lake Corridor**. This trail was to extend from Benton north to Rend Lake where it would meander around the lakes southeast edge, connecting existing campgrounds, beaches, boat access areas, the golf course and the two resorts. It would continue north to connect with Rend Lake College. From the Wayne Fitzgerrell State Park it would run west across the causeway/bridge now used by motorists, southwest around the lake and back to Benton.

Wayne Fitzgerrell State Park

Following this route construction of the **Rend Lake Trails** began. The Rend Lake Conservation District advocated trail construction and assisted in trail design. The IL Department of Natural Resources built trail sections within Wayne Fitzgerrell State Park, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed trails within their jurisdiction. Currently in 2006, 18.5 miles of trail have been completed. Another 10 miles are planned to complete the loop around the south end of Rend Lake.

The momentum for trail development grew as residents became involved in planning for trails and trails sections were built and used. Trails were expanding and complementing the existing recreational opportunities of the southern Illinois region. At Rend Lake use of all facilities has increased and the mix of users has expanded. It is apparent that trails are attracting new visitors to the lake and expanding parties of visitors to include family and friends that had little interest in the more hunting/fishing related facilities there.

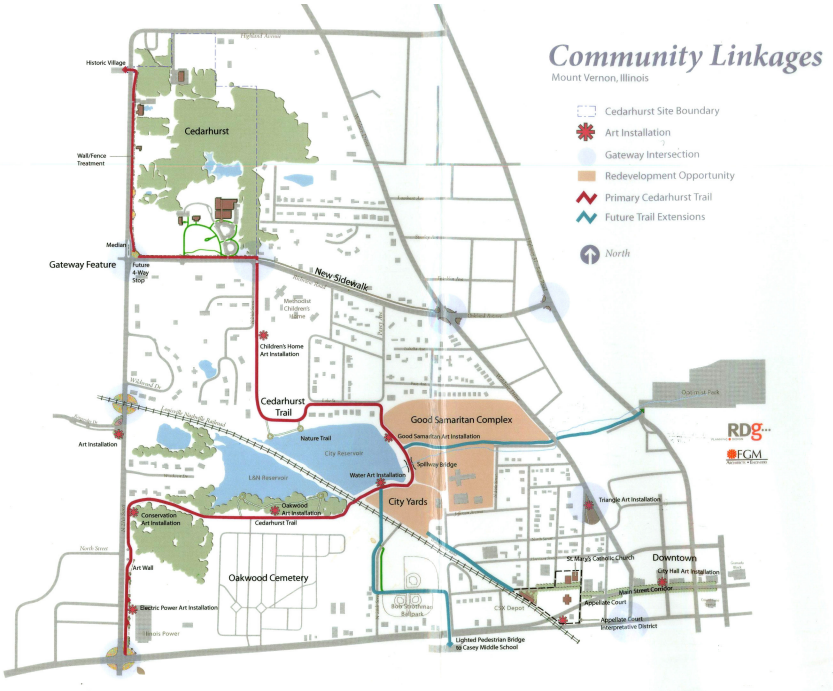
By attracting more users, economic gains are being realized. More tourists are patronizing local restaurants, shops and other businesses. Bicyclists have specific needs. Some need to rent bicycles and associated equipment and others need parts or repairs. With additional increases of trail users, opportunities for expanding existing businesses or start-ups of new businesses may be possible.

B. Mt. Vernon's Interest in Trails

Interest in developing trails in the Mt. Vernon Area has increased during the last few years. Office of Tourism Director Bonnie Jergen described the phenomena as ***trail envy*****.** Residents of the area have become familiar with trails in other locations including Rend Lake Trail and Tunnel Hill Trail to the south. They have enjoyed the trails' recreational benefits and recognize the benefits of having trails within their community.

The ***Southern Illinois Regional Bicycle Trails Plan*** described above extended through Franklin County. Although Jefferson County just north of Franklin was not included, it is logical to connect Jefferson County to the system. The northern half of Rend Lake is located in Jefferson County and Mt. Vernon is only two miles north of the associated federal lands.

The Cedarhurst Center for the Arts on the city's north side initiated a study of how they could reach more people in the community. Their plan includes construction of trails extending from Cedarhurst into surrounding areas. At suitable sites along the trails, outdoor sculpture would be located.



Cedarhurst Trail Plan

The city formed the **Mt. Vernon Area Trails Committee** to investigate trail possibilities. For professional planning assistance, the committee applied to the IL Department of Natural Resources for grant funding and retained the services of Massie Massie & Associates in Springfield, IL. This report is the result of that planning effort.

C. Objectives of Mt. Vernon Area Trails

Three objectives were identified for Mt. Vernon's trails.

1. Provide safe trails through the city of Mt. Vernon that interconnect residential areas, schools, parks and open spaces, commercial locations, city facilities and other points of interest. Both residents and visitors to the community would use the trail. It would provide both recreational opportunities (strolling, walking, running, bicycling, roller blading, riding toys) and non-vehicular transportation throughout town.

2. Develop trail routes south from Mt. Vernon to the *Rend Lake Trail.* With 18.5 miles of off-road trail already developed, and more that 10 more miles planned, the *Rend Lake Trail* is a regional attraction. It provides hiking, bicycling and equestrian opportunities and it offers access to the numerous facilities around the lake. With a link to the Rend Lake Trail, residents and visitors to Mt. Vernon could access the Rend Lake Trail and lake facilities. Visitors to Rend Lake could access Mt. Vernon. This connection would increase tourism and offer opportunities for new and expanded businesses.

3. Provide trails to outlying communities and areas of interest in the surround area. Small towns, rural recreation areas, etc. should be woven into the trail network. Rural residents thereby would have access to the trail system. Other trail users could access the communities and points of interest to enjoy the unique character of rural Jefferson and Franklin counties.

Chapter 2 Existing Resources

A. City of Mt. Vernon

Located in south central Illinois, Mt. Vernon has a population of just over 17,000. It is the county seat and largest city in Jefferson County. Interstate 57/64 runs along the city's west side. I-64 extends 70 miles northwest to St. Louis and 90 miles southeast to Louisville. I-57 runs 70 miles north to Effingham and 40 miles south to Marion. State Highway 37 runs north/south through town, Highway 15 runs east/west. Highways 142 and 148 enter town from the south. Several railroad corridors run through town, although some are not used currently.

County Courthouse

The Mt. Vernon area has many interesting and significant resources that can be integrated into Mt. Vernon's future trail system.

The city has a unique, historic downtown with the county courthouse in its central square. Nearby is the landmark Greek revival Appellate Courthouse constructed in 1857. Abraham Lincoln argued a legal case here and Clara Barton supervised an emergency hospital in 1882. To the east is the 107-year-old Carnegie Library and the C.E. Brehm Public Library housing one of the largest circulating genealogical collections in the country. Other sites of interest in town are the Cedarhurst Art Center with permanent indoor and outdoor collections and the Historic Village with a collection of relocated log buildings. Mt. Vernon has many parks, including 36-acre Veterans Park with a lake, swimming pool, trails and other amenities.

Downtown Mt. Vernon

Within Mt. Vernon are many businesses. In the historic downtown are retail and service operations including stores, banks, newspapers, restaurants and real estate offices. The local hospital and associated medical facilities are just north of the downtown, although they have announced plans to relocate to the city's southwest side. In areas along the city's perimeter are manufacturers, wholesale distributors and other industry. On the city's outskirts are four private golf courses as well as a commercial raceway.

Carnegie Library

Along the city's west side are interstate service businesses including large hotels, restaurants and a shopping center where Rend Lake College also has facilities. The city's new convention and tourism office is in this area and a local winery was established here in 1997. A golf course and the raceway are in the area.

Mt. Vernon Convention and Tourist Office

B. Jefferson and Northern Franklin Counties

Outside the city many natural resources are close at hand. The Casey Fork and Seven Mile Creek lie to the east of town and the Big Muddy River lies to the west. These creeks feed into Rend Lake about 7 miles south of Mt. Vernon in Franklin County. Rend Lake itself has 19,000 acres of water (almost 30 square miles) and 20,000 acres of surrounding land that serve as both fish and wildlife habitat and recreational area. The lake has two resorts, a 27-hole golf course, numerous boat launches, camping and picnic areas, 20 miles of hiking, bicycling and equestrian trails, hunting and numerous special activities.

Rend Lake

East of Rend Lake is the Rend Lake College campus and farther south is the Illinois Artisans Building.

Throughout Jefferson and Franklin counties are small lakes, waterways and woodlands. Many recreational businesses have been developed in these rural areas for camping, hunting, fishing, horse riding, etc. Several wineries within the area and an iris farm near Bluford are also attractions.

County Road

When Jefferson County was founded in 1819, three quarters of the land area was forested and one quarter was prairie. Today only 5% is woodland. Most of the remaining forest is along drainage ways, on steep slopes and over shallow bedrock. Only relics of prairie remain along railroads and back roads. Now about 60 per cent of the land area is used for farming. Crops include soybeans, corn, grain sorghum, winter wheat, pasture, hay and fruit. Livestock includes beef and dairy cattle, hogs, poultry, sheep, goats and horses.

Historic Village

Communities (28 in Jefferson County) are scattered through the area. Each has unique characteristics such as downtown areas, antique and specialty stores, historic buildings, topography or vegetation.

Another characteristic of the area is its industry. Jefferson and Franklin counties have a history of coal mining dating back to 1901. Mine yards and tipple can still be found in the area as well as remaining railroad lines that served the mines. Some crude oil is also produced in rural areas.

Chapter 3 Definitions

Trails are becoming more common elements within municipalities, counties and states. Even so, terminology is not standardized and sometimes confusing. Within this report, the following terms are used.

A. Trails

Trails are routes designated for non-motorized transportation. They typically are paved with asphalt or concrete, but aggregate surfaces are also used. Trails most often are used for walking, running and bicycling. Especially in urban areas, however, trails also are used for roller blading, tricycle riding, stroller use and other specialized activities.

Trails can be located in many situations. Often a trail system must include several of the following alignments to accommodate provide the desired routing and destinations.

Railroads. Trails can be located on abandoned railroad rights-of-way (rails to trails) or along active railroad tracks (rails with trails). Companies can offer unused sections of railroads for trail development leaving the opportunity in the future to recover the right-of-way (rail banking).

Roadways. Trails can be built along roadways on the rights-of-way, separated from traffic lanes. Where adequate right-of-way widths are not available, special-use bicycle lanes can be provided along the outside of traffic lanes. Where traffic counts are low, trail users can share roadways with motor vehicles (share the road).

Other Locations. Rails can share easements with power companies, underground pipelines or other services. In rural areas trails can follow waterways or lakes, providing a nature-oriented trail experience.

B. Paths

Paths are walking routes and nature trails, intended for slower pedestrian speeds and more passive use. They typically are narrower than trails. Their surface is sometimes paved but often hard-packed soil or wood chips.

Paths are often located in parks and natural areas, where people can walk leisurely, study nature or quietly contemplate. Paths also are used to

interconnect recreational facilities within sites such as a park, and to connect sites to nearby trails.

C. Equestrian Trails

Trails for horseback riding usually are separate from roadways and hiking/bicycling trails. They are not paved and often are located in undeveloped areas where they can wind through woods, over hills or along creeks. Equestrian trails may follow the same route as hiking and bicycling trails, but usually have a separate surface.

Private stables and trail riding facilities also can provide trails and associated services and facilities. These private facilities can connect to public trails, providing expand opportunities for equestrian interests and business enterprises.

D. Trail Heads

Trail Heads are sites with facilities for trail users. Facilities should include restrooms, drinking water and shelter from the weather. Vehicle parking should be provided for those accessing the trail by motor vehicles. Other facilities that could be provided are trail maps and interpretative information, bike racks or lockers, vending machines, concessions, etc. Trail Heads are often located at parks and other public areas where some or all the necessary facilities are already available.

E. Greenways

Greenways are corridors of land and/or water that can provide a variety of benefits. They can protect of banks and flood plains from erosion, preserve ground water recharge areas and improve biodiversity. They can provide wildlife habitat and corridors for migration. They can provide recreational opportunities and improve the visual quality of the landscape.

The Greenway can help establish municipal growth boundaries and to provide a buffer for adjacent land uses for example between farms and municipal growth areas.

Depending on their characteristics, greenways may include paths, trails or even driving routes. Land along the greenway can be considered for future sites for parks, nature areas and other compatible land uses. Land uses both within and near greenways that generate pollution or other adverse affects should be discouraged.

Chapter 4 Proposed Trails

A. Mt. Vernon Trail System

The **Mt. Vernon Trail System** should interconnect neighborhoods, schools, parks and other public facilities. The trail should be looped through the community to maximize interconnections and opportunities for recreational and commuting use.

Cedarhurst

Where areas of the city are bordered by barriers (highways, railroads, creeks), trails should be routed to safe centrally located crossings. To accommodate these criteria, the trail route through town can include many available alignments.

The following trails are proposed within Mt. Vernon. Although specific trails are identified, they interconnect to form a network known as **The Mt. Vernon Trail System.**

- ***Cedarhurst Trail***

Cedarhurst Trail would extend from the Historic Village south around Cedarhurst, south and around the City Lake, west along the back of Oakwood Cemetery to 27th Street, and south to Highway 15.

Cedarhurst outdoor sculpture

Sections of *Cedarhurst Trail*

#1 From the Historic Village, south along 27th Street, east along Richview Road across the Cedarhurst frontage, south on 24th Street, east on Lake Street, south around the lake to St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital and the City Yard.

Notes:

As the city expands, the City Yard might be relocated to a central location with more area available. Located along the lake, this property could be re-developed as an attractive city park and trail head where people could access the trail system.

Oakwood Cemetery

It is anticipated that the St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital and associated medical facilities will relocate to the city's southwest side. When this occurs, the area likely would be redeveloped. The new development could incorporate and feature the *Cedarhurst Trail* around the lake and the *Pumphouse Trail* running east through the property to Optimist Park.

City Lake

#2 From the City Yard, west along the lake (and back side of Oakwood Cemetery), across the north end of the Illinois Power property to 27th Street, south to Highway 15.

#3 From the City Yard south on 20th Street, east through the Bob Strothman Ball Park and south on 18th Street to the pedestrian bridge across Highway 15.

Note:

The pedestrian bridge across Highway 15 was built primarily for pedestrian access to the Middle School. It has a flight of stairs on both sides. Because of its elevation and short approaches, retrofitting the bridge for bicycle riding is probably not feasible. It could be retrofitted with a shallow trough along the stairs to allow bicycle users to push their bikes.

Bob Strothman Ball Park

The bridge is not ADA accessible, however, so routing signs to an accessible crossing should be provided along the trail.

- ***Veterans Park Trail***

Veteran's Park Trail would extend from *Cedarhurst Trail,* crossing Highway 15 at 27th Street where traffic control lights already exist. The trail would extend south to the Veteran's Park, northwest to the Casey Middle School and Mt. Vernon High School, and southwest to Fairmont and Dawson parks and Continental Tire. From Veterans Park it would also run west then to Time Square Mall and Crossroads Hospital, and south to Lincoln Park and the new development area. It would connect to *Railroad Trail* at several locations on the south

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Insert “Mt. Vernon Trails and Greenways” Map (11 by 17”)

Sections of the *Veterans Park Trail*:

#1 From the intersection of 27th Street and Highway 15, south on 27th to Veterans Park where it would connect with the park trail that loops around the entire park. On the parks south side the trail would be extended south along the creek to connect with *Railroad Trail.*

Veterans Park

#2 From the west side of Veterans Park, extend trail along Logan Street to 19th Street, north to the Casey Middle School.

Notes:

At Casey Middle School, the Downtown Trail begins and continues eastward and connects to the Mt. Vernon High School

Perkins Avenue is an alternate alignment to Logan Street. Perkins is wider and might be used as a share-the-road section. It is farther south, however, so trail users from the middle and high schools may tend to short cut on Logan to reach Veterans Park.

#3 From Logan Street (or Perkins Avenue) extend trail south on 19th Street where it would tie-into *Railroad Trail*, turn east at the tee, run along Fairmont Ballpark, jog north on 12th Street, east on Belle Street, and south on 9th Street, east on Forrest Avenue to Dawson Park.

#4 From Dawson Park, extend trail south along Highway 142 to Continental Tire. This section of the trail could be built if employees of Continental Tire (or other businesses that might locate nearby) were interested in using the trail link for commuting or noontime exercise. Such linkages are sometimes built in part or whole by the businesses(s) being served.

#5 From the west side of Veterans park, a trail would extend on Jamison Boulevard west across the creek, then follow the creek north to the Time Square Mall and Crossroads Hospital area where the Mt. Vernon Primary Center also is situated. The trail along the creek would continue south through the new Lincoln Park and development area to Railroad Trail.

- ***Downtown Trail***

Connections to downtown are an important part of the Mt. Vernon Trail System. The downtown has numerous city and county facilities and services, and many commercial enterprises serve both local residents and visitors to the community. The County Court House, Appellate Courts Building, Carnegie Library, Armory and many historic commercial buildings are an attraction to history and architectural buffs.

Downtown
Mt. Vernon

Route 15 runs through Mt. Vernon. Through the downtown it divides into the eastbound Broadway Street and the westbound Main Street. Both streets are wide and have a heavy traffic flow. Trails are not recommended along these streets in their current condition. If these streets were reconfigured to slow traffic and increase pedestrian safety, however, a safe bike route could be considered.

Short of such major modifications, however, trails could be provided along the streets one block off the highway routes. A route could be provided a block north of Main Street on Harrison Street and one block south of Broadway on Jordan Street. Here, trail users can enjoy the urban environment and come within a couple blocks of any destination they have in mind.

To access to the downtown core along Broadway and Main streets, all trail users would become pedestrians and use the existing sidewalks. Bike-parking areas would be provided along the trails so bicyclists could leave their bikes and walk the remaining distance. This approach will optimize safety for bicyclists and other trail users. Additionally, it will keep bicycle parking in designated areas along the trail routes, rather than what typically happens downtown of bikes parked against buildings, signs, parking meters, etc., littering the urban landscape and creating safety hazards for pedestrians downtown.

Sections of *Downtown Trail*:

#1 On the south side of the downtown corridor, from 19th Street east on Casey Avenue, north on 11th Street, and east on Jordon Street to the Mt. Vernon High School. From there, north on 6th Street, across Broadway and Main streets to Harrison Street.

Note:

The high school may be relocated in the future. This area would be excellent as a new business park. The site would provide the opportunity for existing or new businesses to build new facilities they need without going to the edge of town. This will help support the downtown businesses, by maintaining the critical mass needed to attract customers to the area.

Mt Vernon
High School

#2 On the north side of the downtown corridor, Waterworks Road east on Harrison Street to 6th Street.

- ***Airport Trail***

Airport Trail is on the northeast side of town. It would branch off the *Downtown Trail* at 6th and Harrison streets, extend east on Harrison Street east across the front of Ben Franklin School, turn and continue on Fairfield Road, where it would cross the Casey Fork and *Casey Fork Nature Trail.* It would continue on Meadowbrook Road and form a loop on roadways and open space around the Mt. Vernon Airport.

Sections of *Airport Trail*:

#1 From 6th and Harrison streets, onto Fairfield Road, to the Casey Fork and the proposed *Casey Fork Nature Trail.*

Note:

Along the Casey Fork, a hiking and possibly an equestrian trail could be developed. It would extend north to Jaycee and Miller lakes and south to Rend Lake. Positioned along this natural waterway, the *Casey Fork Nature Trail* corridor would be protected and enhanced as a greenway along the east edge of the city. Tree planting, bank protection and other stabilization improvements where needed would enhance the trail and protect Rend Lake from pollution and sedimentation.

Lake Jaycee

#2 From the Casey Fork, east on Meadowbrook Road, northeast to the Airport Park and Summersville Grade School, and around the Mt. Vernon Airport site. On the site's east side, the trail could follow Seven Mile Creek where trees and nature would be appreciated by trail users.

Note:

Mt. Vernon Airport is a low-use facility where community events are regularly held. The *Airport Trail* could run along the perimeter of the property, well separated from the runways. The loop around the airport would be approximately 3 miles long.

- ***Pumphouse Trail***

Pumphouse Trail provides a connection from the *Cedarhurst Trail* on the east side of the lake, east to Optimist Park, through the park, then northeast through residential areas to the *Casey Fork Nature Trail*.

Sections of *Pumphouse Trail*:

#1 The trail would begin on the east side of the lake, extend along the drainage way through the St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital area. It would cross Wilshire Drive and follow around the parking lot and along the sewer easement through Lyons Court. It would cross Highway 37 into Optimist Park. Here it could either use Pace Street as a share-the-street bikeway, or separate trail could be build through the park.

Lyons Court

Note:

Although providing a separate trail through the park would be more costly than using the existing street, this option has several advantages. First, it would be safer for trail users, since the street is rather narrow and the rolling topography makes visibility difficult in some locations. Second, it is an opportunity to enhance Optimist Park. The park site is quite rolling and linear with a stream through its center. It is situated so

Optimist Park

many homes overlook the area and streets along the edges offer vistas of the park. A curving trail could be located along the creek with groupings of trees and masses of flowers along the way. It would be an attractive trail to use, and would enhance the appearance for motorists and homeowners in the area.

#2 From the park's east side, it would follow Tolle then Pumphouse roads to intersect with the proposed *Casey Fork Nature Trail*.

- ***Northwest Trail***

The *Northwest Trail* would provide trails on the northwest side of Mt. Vernon, east of the interstate. The trail would begin at 27th Street and North streets; follow streets and/or the overhead electrical transmission line west through various neighborhoods to the Interstate.

Central Avenue
K-3 Center

Sections of *Northwest Trail*:

#1 From the intersection of North and 27th streets, the trail could follow the apparent highline easement straight west. It runs between apartment/condominium developments on 27th Street then west through residential and open areas, to 44th Street. Here the trail could run south to access the winery and other businesses that might locate in this area.

Note:

If permission could be obtained, this existing corridor would provide straightforward alignment across the northwest side of town. The ground itself is rolling and has trees and growth making it attractive for trail use.

Other alignments shown for trails are, 1) west on Piccadilly Avenue to 42nd Street South, 2) west on Victoria Lane, north on 42nd Street North to the CSX RR, or 3) west on Victoria Lane, north on 42nd Street North, west on Lilac to 44th Street extended. These routes can be considered options to #1 above.

#2 Even if #1 above is developed, the section west on Victoria Lane, north on 42nd Street North to the CSX RR must be developed to provide interstate crossing along the CSX RR line.

- ***Westside Trail***

The *Westside Trail* serves areas west of the interstate. The trail provides access for the existing interstate businesses and for new business expected in the development area. The trail connects with the *Mt. Vernon Trail System* to the east, and the *County Trail System* to the west and south.

Sections of *Westside Trail*:

#1 From the CXS RR on the north that provides a trail underpass, the *Westside Trail* would turn south on Davidson Drive between the Cherry Creek Golf Center and the Mt. Vernon Development Center. It would loop around the lake within the development area to provide trail access for future business occupants. It would continue south past Rend Lake College and Market Center and the interstate hotels and restaurants to Highway 15.

Note:

Trail connections could be developed from businesses along Potomac Boulevard to Westside Trail. The connections might be built by the businesses themselves, which may also consider providing bicycles or other equipment for their guests. Alternately, a bicycle shop with bike rentals might be established at Rend Lake College Market Place, which is conveniently located.

#2 The trail would cross the highway and continue south through the business area to Veterans Memorial Drive. Here a trail link would be made to the east, across the overpass that has been designed for trail and bicycle traffic, to connect with the *Veterans Park Trail* near the new Lincoln Park.

#3 On the west side of the interstate, the trail would extend from south Veterans Memorial Drive to connect with *Railroad Trail.*

B. Mt. Vernon to Rend Lake Trail System

The **Mt. Vernon and Rend Lake System** should be planned to connect to the existing and proposed Rend Lake Trails. Already sections of *Rend Lake Trail* extend along both the east and west sides of the lake. Additional trail sections are planned that will form a complete loop around the south end of the lake. This trail is being built by a cooperative effort of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the IL Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

Existing Rend Lake Bike Trail

Connecting the trail to both sides of Rend Lake would create a loop allowing users to start and return to one location without backtracking. Such a configuration is optimum for trail users. Another advantage to planning for a loop trail is that it makes more opportunities available to complete at least one leg of the trail.

The **Mt. Vernon to Rend Lake Trail System** would be comprised of the *East Lake Trail* and *West Lake Trail.* Both trails can have alternative alignments that are discussed below.

• *East Lake Trail*

The *East Lake Trail* would extend from the southeast side of Mt. Vernon, south generally parallel along the Interstate 57 to Rend Lake College, the northernmost extent of the Rend Lake Trail.

Sections of *East Lake Trail:*

#1 The trail would begin in town at Route 37 and Cleveland Street. Here the *Veterans Park Trail* crosses Route 37. East Lake Trail could be developed on existing or acquired right-of-way along Route 37. An off-road trail separated with a buffer strip is

desirable for safety here. The trail could extend south along the road to the interstate underpass.

#2 Alternately, the trail could jog east onto lesser-used streets where it could be either a bike lane along the side of streets or a share-the-road situation.

Note:

A spur could be built to the Continental Tire plant, either in addition to or taking the place of the trail link shown from the north.

#3 From the Interstate 57, the trail could follow lesser-used county roads, where it could be either an off-road or on-road trail. It would run parallel to the interstate on the east. North of Bonnie it would cross the interstate and run south through Bonnie to the Fish and Wildlife Area beyond. It would continue south through the federal lands to Rend Lake College where it would connect with the Rend Lake Trail.

Note:

A connecting trail would be built into Ina, providing trail users access to the businesses there.

A spur could also be developed from Bonnie, across the scenic Bonnie Bridge to connect with the proposed *West Lake Trail.* This road and bridge are very heavily used, however, so an off-road trail would be necessary for safety.

- ***West Lake Trail***

West Lake Trail extends from the southwest side of Mt. Vernon, across the Big Muddy River and south along the lake to Rend Lake Trail near Route 154.

Sections of *West Lake Trail:*

#1 The trail starts with the Union Pacific Rail Road in Mt. Vernon that connects Lincoln Park in

LLC, IL, LC Rail Line

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Northern Franklin County
Trails and Greenways” Map (11” by 17”)

Mt. Vernon and runs southwest to near Interstate 57/64. The railroad is not used and the tracks are gone. It could readily be converted into a trail.

#2 From the east side of the interstate another rail line, the LCC, IL, LLC (Lexington Coal Company, Illinois, Limited Liability Corporation) continues under the interstate and southwest to Nason. From here it crosses upper Rend Lake on a causeway/bridge and continues south to Route 154 and beyond.

This rail line is not currently used. Its alignment is optimum for the *West Lake Trail.* It provides a direct route to connect with the Rend Lake Trail. A trail along this route would provide safe, totally off-road trail through scenic countryside and across the lake.

Note:

Discussions with the rail company could include three alternate approaches to utilize the alignment. First is acquisition of the railroad and converting this line into a trail (rail-to-trail). Second is developing a trail along side the line (trails with trail). Finally rail-banking could be discussed whereby the alignment could be used for a trail until such time the company may want to reclaim the corridor for re-development of the railroad.

The Trails Division of the IL Department of Natural Resources has talked with this company in the past about utilizing the rail corridor from the lake, west to Sesser. This trail link has been considered part of the Rend Lake Trail

Bonnie Road Causeway

#3 An alternate to the LCC, IL, LLC alignment is utilizing lesser-used county roads. The trail would cross under the interstate along Route 148 and extend east to North Mason Road. It would jog west on East Bonnie Road and enter federal lands. Here the proposed *Big Muddy Nature Trail* would connect to the *West Lake Trail*. The trail would cross the river on the upper dam and continue south through federal lands to meet the Rend Lake Trail near Route 153.

Note:

Along the Big Muddy River, a hiking and possibly an equestrian trail could be developed. It would extend northwest of Mt. Vernon, south to Rend Lake. Similar to the proposed, Casey *Fork Nature Trail* on the east side of Mt. Vernon, this waterway corridor would be protected and enhanced as a greenway. Tree planting, bank protection and other stabilization improvements where needed would enhance the trail and protect Rend Lake from pollution and sedimentation.

C. County Trail Connections

Trails are shown that connect towns within the area to the Mt. Vernon Trail and the Mt. Vernon to Rend Lake Trail systems. These connections would provide access for local residents to the trail systems. They would also provide other trail users direct access into the towns. The connections would expand the opportunities for trail users, encouraging more frequent use of the trail. They also allow trail users to access facilities such as parks, museums, stores, restaurants, etc.

Development of county trail connections probably would be driven by interest of the local populations. Interested local groups (families, bicycle clubs, scouts, conservation groups, etc.) interested in having a trail connection could assist in identifying routes, gaining approval from local landowners if needed, posting signs, etc. Several towns already have shown great interest.

Trail Connections, starting from the north moving clockwise, could include:

- ***Dix Connection***

  The *Dix Connection* would run from the east side of Dix jogging south and east on low-use roads to Miller Lake. The connection would run south along Route 32 to Lake Jaycee where a park, boat access and other facilities are available. The connection would continue into town, connecting with *Pumphouse Trail.*

  Note:

  Casey Fork Nature Trail would extend along the creek to the lakes. The *Dix Connection* could tie into the nature trail with connections along the south side and/or north side of Lake Jaycee.

- ***Bluford Connection***

The *Bluford Connection* would start on the west side of town, run south then northwest to Marlow. It would continue across Route 15, run along Route 15, then connect with *Airport Trail.*

- ***Belle Rive Connection***

The *Belle Rive Connection* would begin at the Tenmile Creek Fish and Wildlife Area east of Belle Rive, an interesting and attractive facility set-up for visitors. The trail would run west through Belle Rive, turn south and continue through another section of the Fish and Wildlife Area. It would turn west on Bonnie Road and connect with the East lake Trail.

- ***Ewing Connection***

The *Ewing Connection* would extend from the town, west on Whittington, then south on Webb Street then west on Hamilton Pike Road across Route 37 and Interstate 57 to connect with the *Rend Lake Trail*.

- ***Benton/West City Connection***

The *Benton/West City Connection* intersects the *Rend Lake Trail* on the south side near Mine 24 Road. It would continue south to Route 14. From here, the trail could be extended to towns farther south, as shown on the *Southern Illinois Regional Bike Trail Plan of 1998.*

- ***North City/Valier Connection***

The *North City/Valier Connection* could intersect with the Rend Lake Trail on the west side of the dam. It would jog south and west to Reach Valier, then south to North City utilizing all lesser-used roads. A link west to connect to the trail through Benton would provide a connection between the towns and create a loop for general trail use.

- ***Sesser Connection***

As previously described, the *Sesser Connection* would provide a link from the *Rend Lake Trail* to this interesting historic downtown and restored theater. The unused rail line from Sesser to the lake would be an excellent alignment for the connection. Alternately an off-road trail along Route 154 is also feasible.

- ***Waltonville Connection***

The *Waltonville Connection* would extend from Waltonville, south on North Spruce Road to the west side of either the railroad causeway/bridge or the flood control dam, whichever alternative is used to develop the *West Lake Trail*.

- ***Woodlawn Connection***

The *Woodlawn Connection* would extend from Woodlawn east on either the CCX RR or Butternut Road. It would connect to the *Westside Trail* at Davidson Drive.

D. Nature and Equestrian Trails

Two major alignments are well suited for nature and equestrian trails through the area. They are along the Big Muddy River that runs along Mt. Vernon's west side and the Casey Fork that runs along Mt. Vernon's east side. Both these alignments are recommended as *greenways* where the natural qualities of the river are preserved and enhanced. The greenways are described in Chapter 5.

The nature trails would wind along the rivers taking advantage of interesting features along the way. The trails would be about 6-8 feet wide. Trail surfaces should be durable, and suited to local conditions. In grassy areas, the tail could be simply mowed grass, through woods the surface could be wood chips or compacted gravel, and in areas that flood the surface may need to be paved. It would be desirable to develop certain sections of the nature trail to meet ADA standards that include maximum slope and hard trail surface.

Equestrian Trails

The nature trails would provide for hiking, fishing, nature study, bird watching, photography, etc. Trail users could access facilities that may be developed nearby such as nature preserves, parks, campgrounds, canoe and kayak rental and stables and trail riding facilities.

For people patronizing these facilities, the nature trails could add another opportunity while there. For stables and trail riding facilities, equestrian trails built in conjunction with the hiking trails would expand the trails available for their use. Development of equestrian trails probably would be driven by interest of the local trail riders and related businesses.

Nature and Equestrian Trails could include:

- ***Big Muddy Nature and Equestrian Trails***

The *Big Muddy Nature Trail* would begin at the *Woodlawn Trail Connection* northwest of Mt. Vernon. The nature trail would run southerly across Highway 15 and to the upper reaches of the Rend Lake property where it would tie into the *West Lake Trail*.

- ***Casey Fork Nature and Equestrian Trails***

The Casey Fork Nature Trail would begin just south of Miller Lake and run southerly through Mt. Vernon and connect to the East Lake Trail south of Interstate 64.

E. Trail Heads and Facilities

Trail Heads along the proposed trails should be located, to the extent possible, at existing public facilities.

Within the *Mt. Vernon Trail System*, several trail heads could be provided. On the City's north side, trail heads could be located at Cedarhurst and in the future at the City Yard if it is converted for public use. On the east side, the Airport Park could provide public access and user facilities. Veterans Park in the center of town would be an ideal location with its many existing facilities. Lincoln Park on the south also can serve as a trail head. On the city's west side, a trail head could be developed at or near the Rend Lake Market Center. Located along the interstate service corridor, this could be a good location for development of a bicycle rental facility and service center

Along the *Mt. Vernon to Rend Lake Trail System* few facilities now exist. For the north end of East Lake Trail, Veterans Park can be used as a trail head. On the south end, the North Sandusky Recreation Area along Rend Lake probably could serve as a trail head. For the north end of West Lake Trail, Veterans Park can be used as a trail head. On the south end, either Rend Lake College or Wayne Fitzgerrell State Park farther south could be used as a trail head. Along the route no public facilities now exist.

Along the various *Trail Connections* a community park or other public facility should be identified by the local community for a trail head. At this location local users should be able to access the trail and have facilities such as parking space, potable water and toilets. Although trails connections can be provided without such facilities, having them will increase trail use and enjoyment.

Along the Nature and Equestrian Trails, trail heads should provide parking at a minimum. Potable water, toilets and shelter are also desirable. For the *Big Muddy Hiking and Equestrian Trails*, a trail head on the north end near the *Woodlawn Connection* should be built. On the south end, another one should be provided near the intersection with the *West Lake Trail*. For the *Casey Fork Hiking and Equestrian Trails*, an arrangement could possibly be made for trail head use a Jaycee Park or another quasi-public site along Miller Lake or Lake Jaycee. Mid-way in the trail, access might be provided to Airport Park, which would be serving as a trail head for *Airport Park*. On the south side another small trail head could be built.

Chapter 5 Proposed Greenways

Two greenways are recommended in the Mt. Vernon Area, the *Big Muddy River Greenway* and the *Casey Fork Greenway*. Both rivers flow south into Rend Lake. From Rend Lake the Big Muddy River flows southwest to the Mississippi River near historic Kaskaskia.

The town of Mt. Vernon was established between these two. Having grown to a community of 20,000, the city now occupies much of the area between the rivers. As it continues to grow it will eventually these rivers, which could be either a benefit or detriment to urban development.

Fortunately Mt. Vernon is planning for their future. They have worked with the state to develop a transportation system that serves local needs and provides the capacity for growth. They have identified areas for development of new housing, commercial growth and industry. They are working to rehabilitate existing areas of the city, particularly the historic downtown.

The ongoing planning for trails in the community is another aspect of planning for the future. Trails provide recreational as well as non-motorized commuting opportunities. They serve both local residents and attract out-of-town users. Providing amenities such as trails improves the quality of life within a community. As communities try to retain existing business and attract new business, the quality-of-life within a community is critical.

Another quality-of-life factor is the natural environment of a community. The Big Muddy River and Casey Fork encircle much of the city. The rivers could become major visual features of town. Residents and visitors could see beautiful green corridors as they enter town. Within the corridors, nature trails and hiking paths, fishing areas and picnic areas could be developed to supplement the existing park system. This plan recommends nature and possibly equestrian trails along both greenways. As described previously, these trails will offer hiking along the rivers and access to all other facilities that may be developed there.

By improving the natural quality of the corridors, the desirability and value of land along the river will increase. Guidelines will be needed to help preserve and enhance their quality. Guidelines should include stabilization of the river banks, preservation of native trees and plants, removal of invasive species, establishment of suitable plants where needed, control of sewage and other potential pollutants, etc. Already

agricultural agencies encourage such management practices including the Soil Conservation Service and Department of Agriculture.

An additional benefit to the greenways is that the good management practices will reduce problems downstream. Elimination of invasive species will keep their seeds from washing downstream to germinate. Stabilization of riverbanks and flood plains will reduce sedimentation downstream and in Rend Lake. Preservation or re-creation of pool and flood plains along the creek will reduce flooding and slow erosion.

Establishing and managing greenways along these rivers will contribute to the visual and environmental quality of the entire area. The linear corridors will support more wildlife and with the corridors connected to Rend Lake areas, will contribute to the natural qualities that already attract so many visitors to the area.

A. The Big Muddy Greenway

The Big Muddy Greenway would begin west of Mt. Vernon, south of Interstate 64, and would continue to the upper reaches of the Rend Lake Fish and Wildlife Area a distance of about 10 miles.

The greenway would be the width of flood plain or 50 feet on each side of the creek, which ever is greater. Since most of the corridor is privately owned at this time, landowners would be encouraged to voluntarily adopt management guidelines for the corridor. Since much of the area is rural, working with the Soil Conservation Service and other established organizations in the area could be helpful in explaining the benefits of greenway management.

As parcels along the greenway became available, acquisition might be considered. Areas could be acquired by the city or county for parks, fishing access, nature areas, etc. Other parcels could be acquired by not-for-profit organizations or businesses for lodges, hunting grounds, campgrounds, stables or other activities compatible with the natural qualities of the corridor.

B. The Casey Fork Greenway

The *Casey Fork Greenway* would begin at Miller Lake and extend south through Mt. Vernon and beyond to the upper reaches of the Rend Lake Fish and Wildlife Area a distance of about 10 miles.

This greenway would be established in the same way as the *Big Muddy Greenway*.

The section of the Casey Fork running through town could be a good demonstration of how greenways can serve public interest. Here, the city and local owners could enhance the corridor, provide access to the river and along its edge. In areas where flooding occurs, a demonstration of natural ways to control flooding and its effects could be done to educate the public and promote such efforts in other areas along the rivers.

Miller Lake

Chapter 6 Priorities

This chapter evaluates each of the trails and greenways that have been proposed for Mt. Vernon Area. Five criteria are considered in evaluating the potential for each of the routes. Values are assigned and a total value determined for each trail. These ratings, then, provide a way to set priorities among the proposed trails and greenways. The proposed facilities are listed in the same order that they appeared in the report, not in an order of priority.

Criteria

#1 Protection and Enhancement of Resources

#2 Proximity to the Needs of People

#3 Quality, Safety, Enjoyment of Uses

#4 Potential Social and Economic Benefits

#5 Connection and Integration Potential

Values

High H Medium M Low L

Name	*Criteria:*	*#1*	*#2*	*#3*	*#4*	*#5*	*Total*
Mt. Vernon Trail System							
Cedarhurst Trail		H	H	H	H	H	H
Veterans Park Trail		H	H	H	H	H	H
Downtown Trail		H	H	H	H	H	H
Airport Trail		H	L	H	M	M	M+
Pumphouse Trail		H	H	H	M	M	H-
Northwest Trail		M	M	M	H	H	M+
Westside Trail		M	M	M	H	M	M+
Mt. Vernon to Rend Lake Trail System							
East Lake Trail		H	H	H	M	H	H-
West Lake Trail		H	H	H	M	H	H-

County Trail Connections

Dix Connection	H	M	H	M	M	M+
Bluford Connection	M	M	M	L	L	M-
Belle Rive Connection	M	L	M	L	M	M-
Ewing Connection	M	L	M	L	M	M-
Benton/West City Connections	H	H	M	M	H	H-
North City/Valier Connection	M	M	M	L	L	M-
Sesser Connection	M	M	M	M	L	M-
Waltonville Connection	M	M	M	M	L	M-
Woodlawn Connection	M	L	M	M	L	M-

Nature and Equestrian Trails

Casey Fork Nature And Equestrian Trail	H	M	H	M	H	H-
Big Muddy Nature And Equestrian Route	H	M	H	M	H	H-

Chapter 7 Strategy for Implementation

This plan proposes many trails and greenways, each serving a somewhat specific function. The greenways and trails form a network that relates to the natural and cultural resources of the county facilities.

To achieve this plan, the greenways and trails will be developed section-by-section as the critical components of community support, lands and funding become available. For some sections, these critical components may not come together in a timely manner. When this occurs, alternate routes should be evaluated, especially when an important aspect of the developing system would otherwise be missing (linkage with other trails, connections to community parks and commercial facilities, etc.)

At the very least, the process of implementing this plan will take time and require considerable coordination. The following five steps outline how to approach and promote the development of the trail and greenway system. The steps are:

- Organize and develop community support
- Target individual projects (develop intergovernmental agreements)
- Secure funding, acquire land and rights-of-way
- Build trails and encourage supplementary business developments
- Manage and promote facilities

A. Organize and Develop Local Support

The first step in designating greenways and creating trails is to form a group, which will promote their development. People who now enjoy walking, riding bikes, canoeing, and other recreational activities are obvious recruits for membership. Those who are involved in environmental study and preservation would be supportive. Others may be motivated as well. Community leaders who want improvements for area residents, business people who see possibilities for expansion, developers who understand the value of trail facilities, all would be important members who could expand the support.

The Trails and Greenways Committee, organized for the purpose of developing this plan, is a great core for this group. The committee is made-up of city staff, representatives of many organizations in the community, and representatives of the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Il Department of Natural Resources. As the following steps of targeting projects and proceeding with development occur, the group will need to provide overall project leadership and coordination. In the long term, however, additional involvement is desirable. It would be beneficial to involve representatives of other communities in the area. They should be encouraged to support the trail plan and to promote the development of trails in their areas.

B. Target Individual Projects

Because the entire system cannot be developed at once, individual projects need to be targeted. Initially, the projects should be those which have the greatest opportunities for success. The projects should be those that are located either on public lands or on property where easements or acquisitions are feasible. For popular support, the initial projects should also appeal to a large population and provide various uses. These characteristics also tend to be attractive priorities for grant funding.

All phases of the targeted project need to be planned. At the outset consideration should be given to the following

- What lands to acquire or easements to obtain, what jurisdictions are affected and what input and consents are needed.
- What environmental concerns or limitations exist.
- Where and how are funds available.

- What uses will the trail have.
- What maintenance will be required and who will provide it.
- What is the implementation schedule.

In this way, tasks can be identified and pursued in a logical and timely manner.

C. Secure Funding and Acquire needed Rights-of-Way

Once a specific project has been planned, funding and available lands are the critical questions.

Acquiring land can be a sensitive matter. Since each landowner's situation is different, it is often helpful to have people involved in negotiations who know the owners and understand their particular situations. Often discussing the project's vision, its practical aspects and the need for a landowner's cooperation is effective. Where acquisition of lands from several owners may be necessary, a meeting for the group may be useful. Whenever possible, options should be offered for landowners' consideration.

Options may include combinations of easements or title, accomplished by outright purchase, land trade, donation allowing tax deductions, etc. See Addendum #1 for additional ownership and acquisition strategies.

Funds for development of trails and greenways can be obtained from a variety of sources. For many projects, a combination of funds can be targeted. See Addendum #2 for a listing and requirements for government grants and related programs. Each grant has specific eligibility and application requirements. Most require a local match of funds either by direct funding or donation of land, easements, labor, etc. Since these grants are very competitive, research and careful preparation of grant applications is critical. Also worth noting is that securing a grant(s) can take considerable time because application and award cycles are often lengthy.

Several aspects of the Mt. Vernon Area's situation will be an advantage in securing funds. Grant funding, generally, is a high priority for under-served areas. The fact that both Mt. Vernon and Jefferson County

presently have few trails is an advantage. Having feasible alignments to make the connection to Rend Lake and its trails is a great advantage.

For any trail grant application, the sponsor should be prepared to also demonstrate:

- Community support.
- Availability of a local match.
- Ability to manage the trail once built.

Local matches can be made in many ways. Grant matches can be made with general revenue, cash donations, and proceeds from fund raising. Matches can be of land values or easement values which are donated to the project. Finally, construction materials and labor can be structured as a donation for this purpose. In cases where businesses or individuals are making donations, many options are available to suit particular needs of the donors.

D. Build Trails and Encourage Development of Business

When the rights-of-way and funding become available, the trail must be designed. Consideration must be given to safety of trail users, intersecting with other transportation routes, means of access/egress, conveniences along the route, connection with community services, amenities along the trail, and blending with surrounding environments. All aspects need to be designed with an eye to:

- Safety and security.
- Attractive facilities that enhance adjacent lands and contribute to good environmental quality.
- Future maintenance responsibilities.

At this time, too, business owners should be encouraged to provide important goods/services for trail users. Typical needs of trail users include bike rental and repair, canoe/boat rental, fishing tackle and bait; food service and groceries, camping and lodging, shuttle service. Existing businesses may wish to encourage the patronage of trail users by expanding product lines, establishing locations near trails perhaps on a seasonal basis, or even starting new businesses.

E. Manage and Promote

The success of a system, of course, will be its long-term use. Initially, the public must be made aware of the existence of a new route. Handout maps can be offered at locations in the community. The trail can be listed in the brochures printed by state and local centers for tourism and in directories published by numerous publishing companies.

A trail can be promoted with special events, races, fundraisers, etc. These can be sponsored by a local group, a unit of government, a regional or national organization or business enterprise.

Feedback from users should be encouraged. This information can be used to make modifications in the trail if needed, and it can help to guide future projects.

Maintenance of the corridor is essential. Maintenance provides a clean and wholesome environment that users will want and expect. A well maintained environment would also encourage users not to litter, damage the area, or break trail rules. Routine maintenance of minor erosion or pavement deterioration can arrest what can become a safety hazard or a larger problem that is expensive to repair.

Summary

This section discusses a process of targeting a project, getting it built, and working toward its popularity and success. This process would repeat itself. With each successful targeted project, interest and support would increase. Each repeat would, in some significant ways, be easier to accomplish. Additionally, as the trail system grows, its attraction will increase. The longer distances and variety of opportunities tend to attract users from greater distances. The system could become a destination facility for tourists. For others it could be a strong draw when combined with other sites and events in the area.

ADDENDUM #1
OWNERSHIP AND ACQUISITION STRATEGIES

COMPARATIVE OWNERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR GREENWAYS & TRAILS

Method	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Private Ownership			
Individual Landowners	Adjacent landowners retain full title to land and provide for greenways through easements.	Property owners retain title to land. Large amount of funds for land purchase not needed. Land remains on the tax rolls.	Easements can restrict certain types of greenway activities, depending on the landowner's wishes.
Land Trusts and Nonprofit Organizations	A national or regional non-profit organization can acquire and hold land until a local land trust has been established or is able to finance acquisition.	A nonprofit organization can finance an immediate acquisition and hold property until a land trust has been established or has acquired necessary funds for purchase.	If a land trust does not exist, a community must establish one. A land trust needs solid support, funding, and the ability to manage land.
Corporate Landowners	A corporation may provide for greenways as part of the development of a corporate site.	Greenway is provided at no expense to local taxpayer. Managed by corporation.	Corporation may restrict use of greenway to the public or may choose to deny access.
Public Ownership			
Local Governments	Acquisition by county or municipality.	Local government can be more flexible about the type of open space it acquires.	Limited local funds and expertise limit the number and type of acquisitions.
State Government	Acquisition by state agencies.	Statewide bond acts can provide significant funding resources for important open space acquisitions throughout a state. Provides revolving loan funds to leverage nonprofit activity.	Government may miss acquisition opportunities due to long time frame for acquisition approvals.
Federal Government	Acquisition by National Park Service, Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or Bureau of Land Management.	Acquisition is at federal level, eliminating financial obligation for locality.	Acquisitions are limited due to agencies' specific criteria for acquisition. Needs congressional authorization.
Mixed Ownership			
Private-Public Ownership	A private nonprofit organization can help to implement government programs by acquiring and holding land until a public agency is able to purchase it.	A nonprofit organization can enter the real estate market more easily than government and can often sell to government at less than fair market value if property was acquired through bargain sale.	Must have public agency willing and able to buy within reasonable time frame.
Public-Public Ownership	Multi-jurisdictional partnership between local, state and federal agencies. Inter-agency projects.	Combining strengths of agencies enables greenway development to occur.	Development and management structure can be cumbersome. Partnership may not be equal.
Public-Private Ownership	Government works with private sector to implement greenway.	Private sector can realize tax benefits from participation. Cost share good for public.	Cost equity and management could be cumbersome.

Source: The Conservation Fund, Greenways: A Guide to Planning, Design, and Development, 1993, p. 113
McLean County Regional Greenways Plan

SUMMARY OF ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION STRATEGIES FOR GREENWAYS

Fee Simple Acquisition

Method	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Fee Simple Purchase	Outright purchase of full title to land and all rights associated with its use.	New landowner has full control of land. Allows for permanent protection and public access.	Cost of purchase may be outside local ability. Removes land from tax rolls.
Donations and Gifts	A donation by landowner of all or partial interest in the property.	Provides permanent protection without public expenditures. Tax benefits to donor - charitable gift.	Receiving agency must be able to accept donation and be capable of managing land.
Purchase and Lease Back	Purchase of full title, then lease back to previous owner subject to restrictions.	Essentially land banking. Income derived from lease payments. Owner is not displaced.	Lease may restrict public access. Land must be leased for appropriate uses.
Bargain Sale	Part donation/part sale because property is sold at less than fair market value.	Tax benefits to seller, difference in sale price is considered charitable gift.	Seller must be agreeable to terms of sale. Bargain price may be inflated.
Condemnation/Eminent Domain	The right of government to take private property for public purpose upon payment of just compensation. Can be exercised for recreational purposes in some states.	Provides tool for acquiring essential or endangered properties, if other techniques not workable.	Costly. Also creates a negative attitude about government and potentially the greenway concept. Only recommended as last resort.
Installment Sale	Allows buyer to pay for property over time.	If seller-financed, can lower taxes for seller, buyer can negotiate better sale terms.	Long term financial commitment (30 years). Mortgage lien.
Land Exchange	Swapping of developable land for property with high conservation value.	Relatively cost-free if trade parcel is donated. Reduces capital gains tax for original owner.	Owners must be willing to swap. Property must be of comparable value. Can be time consuming.

Acquisition of Partial Interest

Method	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Purchase of Development Rights	Local or state government purchases the rights of more intensive land use from current landowner.	Landowner derives financial benefit from selling rights and has reduced taxes. Government pays only for the rights it needs.	Can be costly to purchase development rights.
Management Agreements	Agreements between agency and landowner for a specific purpose.	Avoid purchase and other options, gain desired rights with minimal red tape.	Only applicable with current landowner, and could be revoked at any time.
Land Leases	Short- and/or long-term rental of land.	Low cost use of land. Landowner receives income and retains property control.	Lease doesn't provide equity and affords limited control. Does not assure protection.
Right of Public Access Easements	Provides the public with the right to access and use of a parcel of land for a specified purpose, limited to defined land area.	Can avoid need to purchase land from owner, may provide right of public access and use. Excellent for greenways.	Can be time limited, usually restricts other uses, doesn't prevent owner from exercising other property rights.
Conservation Easements	A partial interest in property generally for expressed purpose of protecting natural resources. Public access is not always a component.	Inexpensive method for protection of natural resources. Landowner retains all other property rights, land remains on tax rolls.	Public access is usually restricted. Easement must be enforced. Easement may lower resale value.
Preservation Easements	Same as conservation easement, most useful for historic landscapes.	Defines protection of historic elements of landscape.	Can restrict public access. Must be enforced.
Joint Use Easements	Accommodates multiple uses within one easement type: for example, sanitary sewer routing and public access. Should be one of the preferred methods for many greenways.	Provides opportunity to combine several public interests with one agreement. Easier for landowner to understand complete request rather than several different requests.	Can be difficult for all landowners to agree to multiple uses along an entire greenway corridor. If one objects, the entire multiple use potential can be jeopardized.

Source: The Conservation Fund, Greenways: A Guide to Planning, Design, and Development, 1993, p. 112
McLean County Regional Greenways Plan

ADDENDUM #2
FUNDING SOURCES

PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDING SOURCES

Method	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Foundation Grants	Foundations, usually private or corporate, provide grant money for greenway related projects.	Variety of foundations creates a wealth of possible funding opportunities.	Foundation grants may have strict guidelines regarding use of funds and project scope.
Company Grants	Corporations provide grants of funds and resources for greenway related projects. Corporations provide financial support and often volunteer employee time as well.	Many corporations love community service projects such as greenways.	Corporate giving funds are often committed quickly, and there may be competition for funds.
Individual Donors and Memberships	Funding derived from individual fund-raising campaigns or through membership drives through nonprofit organizations which solicit members as a way to raise money and support projects.	Excellent method for raising funds and building support for a greenways organization and its projects.	Membership or nonprofit organizations may require a great deal of time and effort on the part of its members in order to succeed.
Planned Giving, Life-Income Gifts, and Bequests	Planned giving and life-income gifts allow the donor to give away some land, receive some continued use privileges and benefit financially through charitable tax write-offs.	These techniques can be useful in protecting private land that has important greenway features. In addition, these techniques can offer tax and investment advantages to the donor and recipient nonprofit organizations or land trust.	Can be complex issues. Require financial and legal expertise.
Service Clubs	Organizations that perform community service activities or sponsor projects such as greenways. Examples of service clubs include the Lions Club, Rotary Club or Kiwanis organization.	Service clubs can sponsor fundraising activities and provide volunteers and publicity.	Getting commitment from service club to help in a greenways project can be difficult.
Special Events and Fundraisers	These events are designed to raise funds through activities such as benefit dinners, races, tours and related activities.	Special events and fundraisers can be very successful in raising money and creating publicity for greenways.	These activities can require significant time and resources and may not provide a significant return.

FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING SOURCES FOR TRAILS & GREENWAYS

FEDERAL PROGRAM	INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT (1)					LAWCON	N/A	HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND
STATE ADMIN AGENCY	IDOT				IDNR			IHPA
FUNDING PROGRAMS ISTEA ENHANCEMENT CATEGORIES	ITEP Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (2)	STP Surface Transportation Program	SCENIC BYWAYS	FTA Federal Transit Act (3)	SYMMS National Recreational Trails Funds	LAWCON Land and Water Conservation Program (W/OSLAD) (4)	Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program	Certified Local Governments Program (5)
Provision of Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles	80% Fed $ 20% Loc $	80% Fed $ 20% Loc $	80% Fed $ 20% Loc $	80% Fed $ 20% Loc $	100% Fed $ FFY93	50% Fed $ 50% Loc $	50% State $ 50% Loc $	
Acquisition of Scenic Easements and Scenic or Historic Sites	80% Fed $ 20% Loc $							
Scenic or Historic Highway Programs	80% Fed $ 20% Loc $		80% Fed $ 20% Loc $					
Landscaping and Other Scenic Beautification	80% Fed $ 20% Loc $							
Preservation of Abandoned Railway Corridors (Including Conversion and Use for Pedestrian or Bicycle Trails)	80% Fed $ 20% Loc $	80% Fed $ 20% Loc $			100% Fed $ FFY93	50% Fed $ 50% Loc $	50% State $ 50% Loc $	60% Fed $ 40% Loc $

(1) Reauthorization of ISTEA will be considered by Congress in Spring, 1998
(2) Excludes land acquisition
(3) Bicycle and pedestrian facilities related to transit projects only
(4) State OSLAD program follows LAWCON guidelines
(5) Program restricted to Historic Register Properties only

SUMMARY OF ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION STRATEGIES FOR GREENWAYS

Regulatory Control

Method	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Exaction	As a condition of obtaining subdivision approval, local government requires developers to pay a fee or dedicate land to a municipal trust for open space.	New construction and development pays for its impact on open space. Good method during high growth periods.	Acquisition funds dependent on specific development. Difficult to calculate fair costs. Not effective during recessionary periods.
Transfer of Development Rights	Under legally established program, owner can transfer development rights from one property to another property designated to support increased density.	Cost of preservation absorbed by property owner who purchases rights. Allows local government to direct density and growth away from sensitive landscapes.	Difficult to implement. Very controversial. Often hard to identify areas where increased density is desirable. Must be established by legislation.
Cluster Development	Permits higher density development in parts of subdivision to protect sensitive lands.	Flexible and negotiable with landowner-developer. Can reduce construction and infrastructure costs.	Open space may not be linked.
Performance Zoning	Zoning district uses defined by permitted impacts as opposed to permitted uses.	Development occurs based on comprehensive, environmentally based strategy.	Criteria are hard to establish. Development plans more expensive to prepare.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INCENTIVES APPLICABLE TO GREENWAY PRESERVATION

Program	Contact	Term	Minimum Acres	Purpose					
				Natural area, habitat preservation	Open space, recreation	Forestry	Wetland, water resource protection	Soil conservation	Farmland preservation
Cost Share Programs									
Ag Conservation Program	ASCS	10 years	1 acre			X		X	
Ag Loans	State Treasurer							X	
Conservation Reserve	ASCS	10-30 years	1 acre			X		X	
Forest Stewardship	IDNR	10 years	5 acres			X	X	X	
Forestry Incentive Program	ASCS	10 years	10 acres			X			
Ill. Forestry Dev. Act	IDNR	10 years	5 acres			X	X	X	
Partners for Wildlife	USFWS/IDNR	10 years	1 acre				X		
Stewardship Initiatives	IDNR	10 years	5 acres	X	X	X	X		
Trees, Shrubs, Seedlings	IDNR					X		X	
Wetland Reserve	ASCS	permanent	2 acres			X	X		
Technical Programs									
Emergency Conservation	ASCS							X	X
Forest Mgmt. Assist. Program	IDNR			X		X	X	X	
Natural Heritage Landmark	IDNR			X					
Private Land Habitat	IDNR		1 acre ●	X					
Private Waters	IDNR			X			X		
Register of Land & Water Reserves	IDNR			X					
Tax Incentives									
Assessment with Easements	SA			X					
Conservation Easements	IDNR			X					
Forestry Mgmt. Plan	IDNR	10 years	5 acres			X	X	X	
Illinois Nature Preserves	IDNR	permanent		X					
Open Space Assessment	SA		10 acres	X	X		X	X	
Preferential Assessment of Farmland	SA								X
Tax Cert. for Livestock Waste Mgmt.	IEPA						X		

Abbreviations:

ASCS	Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
IDNR	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
SA	Supervisor of Assessments
IEPA	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
●	minimum of one acre for rural areas, 1/4 acre for urban area

Source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources
McLean County Regional Greenways Plan