

## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

The development of a trails and greenways system in Clark County will occur over time, as land uses evolve, public interest and support is generated, and resources become available. The intent of the *Clark County Trails & Greenways Plan* is not to outline specific projects with firm deadlines, but rather to present a vision for the County where resources and efforts can be concentrated to achieve success and, therefore, build momentum for initiatives and overall support for trails, greenways and, alternative transportation in the community.

Three strategic approaches to trail development were created throughout the planning process. Listed below each approach are the supporting opportunities.

### 1. Connect communities to and along Historic National Road and National Road Heritage Trail.

Historically, the National Road was a driving force in community development in Clark County. Communities along the National Road were connected and united by this feature. It was determined early on that the Clark County National Road Heritage Trail would be an integral component of the larger trail system; especially with planning and implementation occurring just across the Illinois/Indiana state line. Connecting to the National Road Heritage Trail in Indiana and Terre Haute would provide access to the Terre Haute trails network. There are potential funding opportunities that could support the National Road Heritage, given its proximity to a National Scenic Byway, the community development opportunities, the economic and tourism development opportunities. Supporting opportunities include: Historic National Heritage Trail, Mill Creek Greenway, Big Creek Greenway, Lincoln Trail Greenway, Westfield-Embarrass Greenway and Trail Connection Opportunities that cross the Historic National Heritage Trail



*Lincoln Trail State Park is a major Clark County destination that could be enhanced by additional alternative transportation connections, drawing local visitors and visitors from surrounding counties.  
Photo courtesy Storrow Kinsella Associates*

## 2. Connect to Mill Creek Park and Lincoln Trail State Park.

Early in the planning process, it was determined that connection was needed to the two major recreation facilities in Clark County, Mill Creek Park and Lincoln Trail State Park. Connecting the parks to each other and the parks to communities, further expands the recreation opportunities and enhances the existing facilities. Mill Creek Park and Lincoln Trail State Park are great assets of Clark County. Partnership with their larger organizing bodies, Clark County Park District and Illinois Department of Natural Resources, will be integral to future development of trails connecting to these destinations. Supporting opportunities include: Mill Creek Greenway, Trail Connection Opportunities, Lincoln Trail Greenway

## 3. Capitalize on developing 'low-hanging fruit' of the vision.

While the vision plan identifies many long-term vision opportunities, it is important for the implementing agencies to make progress on short-term vision opportunities. Many communities receive overwhelming support once a section of trail or component of the vision plan is completed. Successful trails become the starship and example that supporting organizations can point to for proof that the community is enjoying the trail and the process for developing trails is effective. The 'low-hanging fruit' refers to the short-term vision opportunities. Some short-term vision opportunities include water trails, and appropriate phasing of trails routes. Water trails require, at minimum, a waterway for a route and access/launch points. With minor improvements, a water trail could be open for use and increased recreation opportunities would be available. Another short-term vision opportunity includes the temporary routing of trails. Once sections of a trail is built, it may be beneficial to designate temporary connections using alternative facilities to maintain continuity and connectivity. Alternate facilities may include the *Trail Connection Opportunities* as shared use bikeways or bike lanes until the trail

### Three Strategic Approaches to Clark County's Trails and Greenways Development

1. Connect communities to and along Historic National Road and proposed National Road Heritage Trail.
2. Connect to Mill Creek Park and Lincoln Trail State Park.
3. Capitalize on developing 'low-hanging fruit' of the vision.

is complete. Supporting opportunities include: Certain sections of the National Road Heritage Trail, Mill Creek Greenway (Water Trail), Wabash Heritage Greenway (Water Trail) and Big Creek Greenway (Water Trail)

## POLICIES

Implementation of a comprehensive, connected alternative transportation/ trails and greenways system will require commitments and strategic partnerships among several entities within and outside of Clark County. The “Governance” goal addresses the responsibility of the plan’s management and project integration.

### ▪ **Champion of the *Vision Plan*.**

Identifying the agencies or organizations within Clark County to be primary advocates and implementers of the *Clark County Trails & Greenways Plan* will be instrumental in the realization of the vision. Whomever the lead coordinators for trails endeavors in the County are, they should provide the planning and facilitation for the trails and greenways plan in accordance with current and future planning. The Clark County Trails Coalition has recently acted as the leader of Clark County trail initiatives. The Clark County Trails Coalition, or one or more of its members, has the potential to be the champion of the Vision Plan.

The *Promotional Brochure*, located at the end of this section, is a tool for advancing the Vision Plan. The brochure provides a summary of the plan, explaining the Mission Statement of the plan, the Concepts of the plan and the Opportunities in Clark County as well as illustrating the complete Vision Plan Map. This brochure is also intended to educate the community and spur interest in future trail initiatives as well as serve as a quick reference of the Plan.

As Clark County’s trails and greenways systems mature, the lead coordinators should consider other options for management, such as a quasi-public taxing authority, that would generate continuous funds and provide

sustainability.

▪ **Role of county government.**

Additionally, Clark County Government, should advance alternative transportation and trails and greenways in Clark County through current and long range planning activities. All future planning efforts in the County should provide alternative transportation recommendations. County government should review ordinances and, when needed, create ordinances to ensure they support, encourage, and, when appropriate, require the inclusion of alternative transportation facilities in the development or redevelopment of property. These facilities are important both within a site as well as external connections to adjacent land uses. For example, county government could require that all new developments include facilities for pedestrians and bicycles in the form of a “Trail Connection Opportunity” along external, perimeter roads as well as an internal network to connect to the overall system.

▪ **Role of county highway department.**

The Clark County Highway Department will be one of the critical implementers of this plan and the alternative transportation projects within the road right-of-way, identified as “trail connection opportunities.” The Highway Department, should be responsible for the design and construction of County-initiated infrastructure, pavement markings, and signals. The Maintenance Department, within the Highway Department, should be responsible for maintenance of the County-owned sections of the systems, which includes resurfacing, cleaning, snow removal, and repairs. There may be opportunities for the Maintenance Department to partner with other entities to enable a connected system.

A possible policy decision adopted by the county government and administered by the Highway Department could be to accommodate bicycles, at a minimum, as a signed bike route or with a dedicated bike lane and, when feasible, accommodate bicycles and

pedestrians with a multi-use path on routes designated “*Trail Connection Opportunities*”. assuming the road would be safe for both motorists and bicyclists.

- **Role of county park district.**

The County Park District should also contribute to the alternative transportation network through the planning and development of County-initiated recreational, or “greenway,” facilities throughout Clark County. The County District should lead the design, development, and maintenance of multi-use and unimproved trails. These greenway facilities may incorporate other users besides pedestrians and bicyclists, including boats, and horses.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

In addition to the key implementers, several critical partnerships should be established and/or maintained with entities of Clark County. This includes partnerships with State and local government, the private sector, not-for-profits, and schools and institutions.

- **Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).** Two State roads, State roads 1, and 49 and Interstate 70 pass through Clark County. It was determined, through this planning process, that both State roads are potential route connections, however, the conditions of some of these roads is not ideal for bicyclists. It is recommended that the County enter into an agreement with the State and assume responsibility of sweeping the shoulders of the State roads so that they are safer for bicycle use. Additionally, Clark County should partner with IDOT to plan for and accommodate bicycles, at a minimum, as a signed bike route, with wide shoulders, or with a dedicated bike lane, and, when feasible accommodate bicycles and pedestrians with a multi-use along State roads in the County. The bicycle/pedestrian coordination at IDOT will be a great partner.

- **Local government.** City of Marshall, City of Casey, City of Martinsville, and the Village of Westfield. Clark County townships, Coles County, Crawford County, Cumberland County, Edgar County, Jasper County, Sullivan County– Indiana and Vigo County– Indiana. The incorporated municipalities of Clark County each have, at a minimum, a pedestrian network (i.e. sidewalks) within the city/town limits. It is important that the Clark County system provide linkages to these areas. The *Clark County Trails & Greenways Plan* identifies points where connections should be made to destinations and systems in adjacent counties.
  
- **Local Economic Development Entities.** One of the purposes of this effort is to enhance the local economy through the development of an alternative transportation system. Homes within a half-mile of the Monon Trail in Indianapolis command a sales premium of \$13,059. If this premium is applied to all 8,862 homes within this distance of the trail, the total increase in property values in Marion County is \$115.7 million. *Source: Indiana Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, Indiana University-Purdue University, 2003 (www.urbancenter.iupui.edu).* While not all facilities may have the results of the Monon Trail, generally, alternative transportation facilities improve property values. Additionally, local businesses with access along an alternative transportation route are introduced to an additional customer base. Specialized retail and service businesses, such as bike repair/rental and food vendors, are likely to establish along these routes in response to the traffic and market demand.
  
- **University of Illinois Extension Office.** University of Illinois Extension Office is a community outreach program dedicated to education. The Extension Office has served in a leadership role in development

of the Clark County Trails Coalition and trail planning initiatives including this study. It is anticipated that the University of Illinois Extension Office continue to be a partner and leader among trail planning in Clark County.

- **Not-for-profit organizations.** Not-for-profit organizations will be most relevant in the development of greenway/recreational facilities. This type of organization could assume the responsibility of planning, financing, constructing, maintaining, and managing of a trail, through an agreement or cooperative effort with Clark County. Clark County is fortunate to have the Clark County Trails Coalition, a group of trail supporters and advocates within and surrounding Clark County. Clark County should continue the dialogue between the members to further promote and develop trails and greenway initiatives and the presence of the Clark County Trails Coalition. National Road Association of Illinois will be a great asset to Clark County in terms of planning and implementing the National Road Heritage Trail.
  
- **Park and recreation organizations.** There are three park and recreation organizations in Clark County, Clark County Park District, Casey Park District, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) may be the most experienced in terms of trail planning and implementing; the local park and recreation organizations could work with the state organization to leverage funding and coordinate other planning projects. The Illinois Greenways and Trails Council serves as Illinois' 'State Trails Advisory Board.' Becoming affiliated with this council would be a great partnership. This council is statewide and it plays a role in selecting state funded projects and influencing state pedestrian and bicycle policies.

- **Conservation and environmental organizations.**

The State Department of Natural Resources, Division of Conservation and County Forest Preserve Districts may be the most appropriate avenue for implementing conservation corridors. Another organization, The Illinois Conservation Foundation, may be an important partner as well. Their mission is to “preserve and enhance our precious natural resources by supporting and fostering ecological, educational, and recreational programs for the benefit of all people now and for generations to come.”

- **School systems.** There are three public school systems in Clark County, Marshall Community Unit District C-2, Martinsville Community Unit District C-3, Casey-Westfield Community Unit District C-4. Administrators of the three school systems should be educated on the plans for and benefits of trails and greenways in Clark County. As mentioned previously, there is federal funding for the Safe Routes to School (SR2S) program, which can be used for construction projects, as well as programming. Through this program, local school administrators intend to promote physical activity and reduce childhood obesity; decrease traffic congestion and reduce automobile emissions; improve community safety and access; reduce school transportation costs; and build stronger, healthier communities and families.

In summary, all stakeholders in Clark County should be considered partners and be well-versed on the social, environmental, economic, and health benefits of alternative transportation and trails and greenways. The long-term underlying intention of this effort is to start thinking about opportunities in Clark County and to start providing additional recreation and transportation amenities.

## FUNDING

The development of a Clark County alternative transportation and greenways system will involve the use of Clark County financing resources. The following are several potential alternative transportation and greenways systems funding sources:

- Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) **Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)** is an ideal, although competitive, source of funds for transportation projects. This program provides funding for “alternative transportation and preserving visual and cultural resources.” “A project must qualify as one of the twelve eligible activities listed below and it must relate to surface transportation.”
  - Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
  - Historic preservation
  - Rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities
  - Landscaping and scenic beautification
  - Scenic and historic highways scenic easements
  - Transportation museums
  - Outdoor advertising control
  - Safety education for pedestrians and bicyclists
  - Rails-to-trails corridor preservation
  - Archeological planning and research
  - Mitigation for roadway runoff and wildlife connectivity
  - Scenic or historic highway programsApplicants must be local or state government with taxing authority; partnerships will be critical here. If selected, 80% is federally funded through the ITEP and 20% is the responsibility of the project sponsor/ local money. *Source: Illinois Department of Transportation (www.dot.il.gov)*
- Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ)**, part of TEA-21, “invests in programs that reduce criteria air

pollutants regulated from transportation-related sources over a period of six years (1998-2003).” If selected, 80% is federally funded through CMAQ Program and 20% is the responsibility of the project sponsor/ local money. *Source: Illinois Department of Transportation (www.dot.il.gov)*

- **National Scenic Byways Program** “funds may be used for construction along a scenic byway of a facility for pedestrians and bicyclists. *23 USC Section 162 © (4)*” If selected, 80% is federally funded through Scenic Byways Program and 20% is the responsibility of the project sponsor/ local money. *Source: Federal Highway Administration (www.fhwa.dot.gov)*
- **National Highway System** “funds may be used to construct bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways on land adjacent to any highway on the National Highway System, including Interstate highways. *23 USC Section 217 (b)*” *Source: Federal Highway Administration (www.fhwa.dot.gov)*
- **National Surface Transportation Program (STP)** “funds may be used for wither the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or non construction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use and walking.” *23 USC Section 217 (a)*” *Source: Federal Highway Administration (www.fhwa.dot.gov)*
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) co-administer **Recreational Trails Program (RTP or SYMMS)** “provides funding assistance for acquisition, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of both motorized and non-motorized recreation trails.” If selected, 80% is federally funded and 20% is the responsibility of the project sponsor/ local money. Examples of eligible project activities include:

- Trail construction and rehabilitation
- Restoration of areas adjacent to trails damaged by unauthorized uses
- Construction of trail-related support facilities and amenities
- Acquisition from willing sellers of trail corridors through easements or fee simple title

*Source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (<http://dnr.state.il.us>)*

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) **Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program** provides financial assistance for “acquisition, construction and rehabilitation of public, non-motorized bicycle paths and directly related support facilities.” “Bicycle routes sharing existing roadway surfaces are not eligible for funding under this program.” *Source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (<http://dnr.state.il.us>)*
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) **Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program (OSLAD) & Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF and LAWCON)** provides financial “assistance to local government agencies for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space.” If selected, 50% is federally funded and 50% is the responsibility of the project sponsor/ local money. *Source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (<http://dnr.state.il.us>)*
- Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, is a financing tool currently being used in other communities to construct portions of the alternative transportation networks. TIF allows for reinvestment of all new property tax dollars in the defined TIF district from which they came. This “new” revenue, or “increment,” is incurred when new development takes place in the district or when existing property values rise, resulting in increased tax revenues. For example, TIF revenues can be used as subsidies to encourage private development, for public infrastructure projects, or to acquire private

property for redevelopment.

- User fees could help offset some of the costs of development, maintenance, or management through the requirement of registration before use of some facilities or a tax on bike sales or rentals in the County.
- Private investment is a source of funding for project implementation. This investment could include financial contributions from individuals or corporations, an “adopt a facility” sponsorship program, volunteer maintenance and patrolling groups, and others. Other communities accept donations from the public as a contribution to the development of an alternative transportation and greenways system plan.