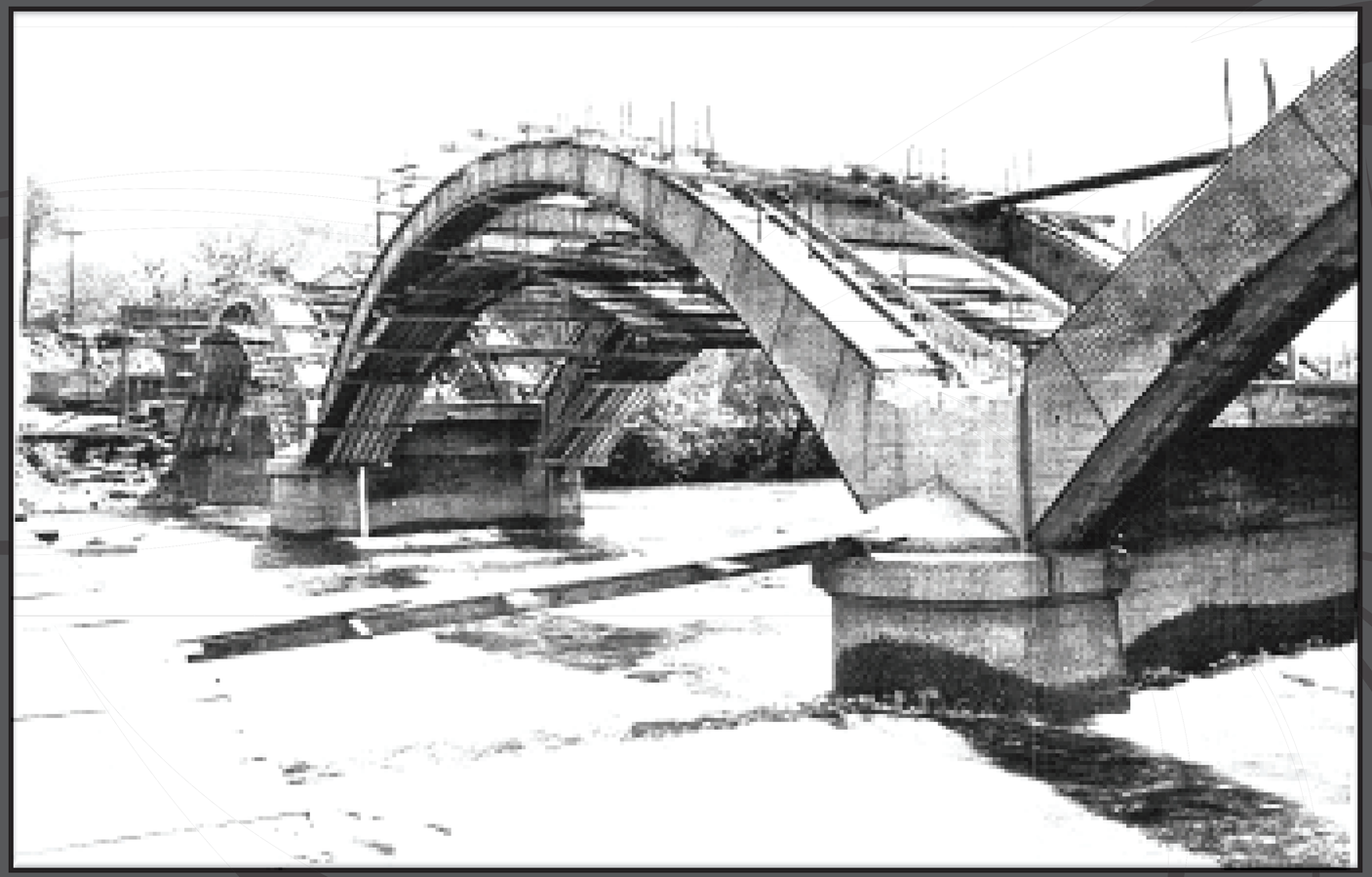
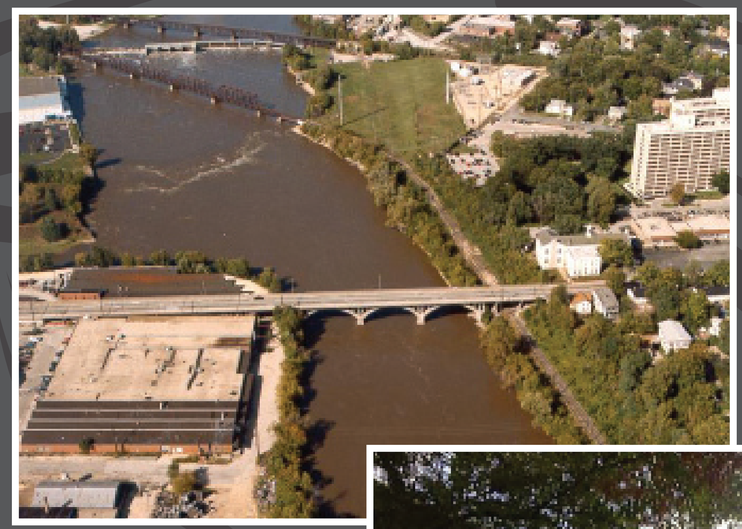
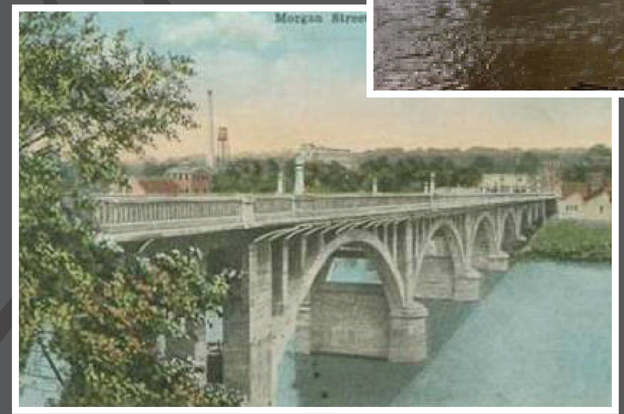
Morgan Street Bridge

Groundbreaking 2011

The Past







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THE CITY OF ROCKFORD ILLINOIS, USA

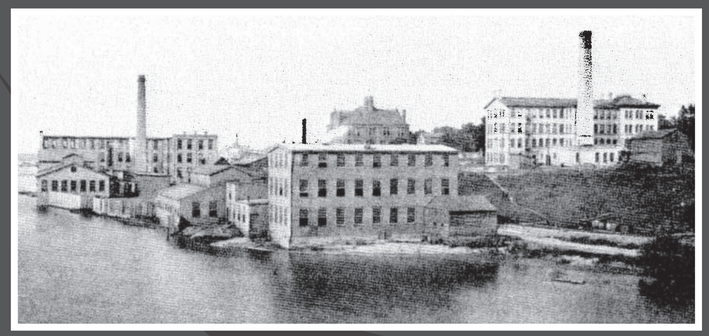
The History

Morgan Street Bridge

Groundbreaking 2011

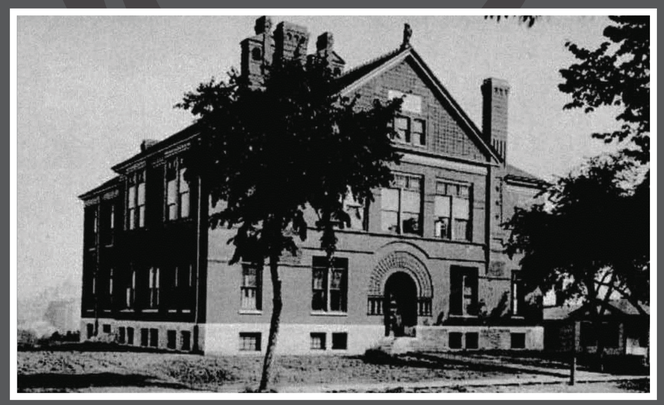
Rockford's most fashionable neighborhood during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, its residents have included mayors & leading industrialists.

This area included two major educational institutions – the Rockford Female Seminary pictured to the left (later Rockford College) and Rockford Central High School. Two structures remain - the Science Building (now home to the Winnebago County Health Department) and the Sherratt Library building on College Avenue at the river.



The area along the Rock River is part of Rockford's storied industrial past & was first subdivided in 1867 as the Rockford Water Power Co. Lots, East of the Rock River. Early businesses here were the W.F. & John Barnes Co., Ward Pump Co., and the Rockford Watch Factory.

The area north and east of the Morgan Street Bridge is one of Rockford's most historic. The area north of the railroad, now known as Haight Village, formed the southeast corner of the newly incorporated Village of Rockford in 1839 and is the only section of the original square mile settlement to remain intact as a residential area. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is also a local historic district.



Until West and East High Schools were built in the 1940s, the Rockford School District had only one high school – Rockford Central, pictured to the right. Parts of the old high school now form the administrative offices of District 205 on South Madison Street.

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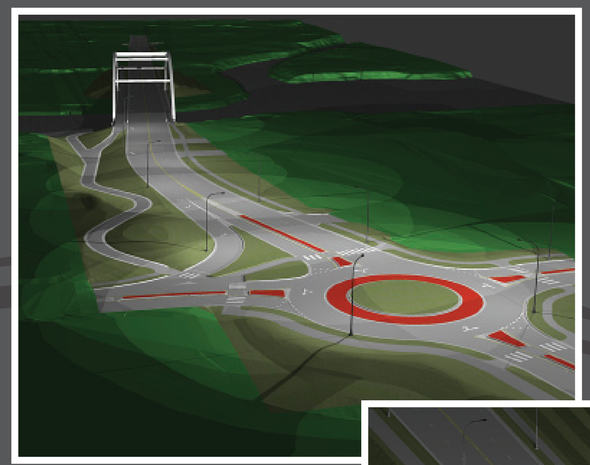
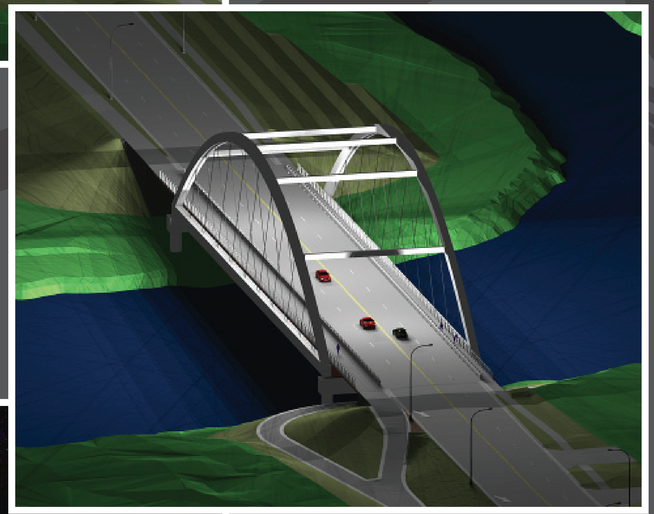
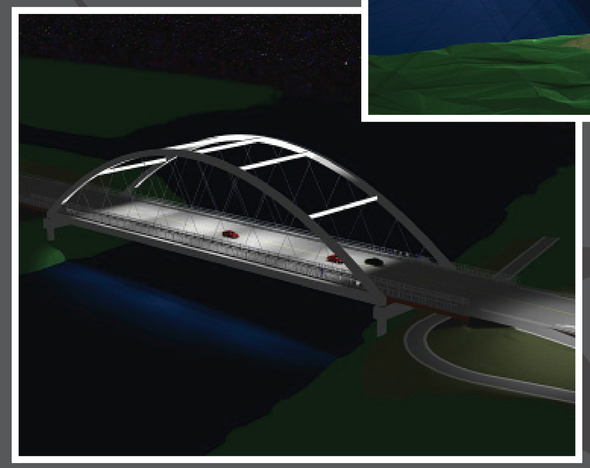
Morgan Street Bridge

Groundbreaking 2011

The Future







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THE CITY OF ROCKFORD ILLINOIS, USA

In the News

Morgan Street Bridge

Groundbreaking 2011

WORTH ITS WEIGHT | $36 MILLION RECONSTRUCTION

SCOTT MORGAN | ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR

Commercial trucks have been banned from the Morgan Street bridge since April 2000, when some of the surface crumbled and left a 3-foot hole. The bridge opened over the Rock River in 1916, as did the Chestnut Street bridge. The Jefferson Street bridge opened 18 years later.

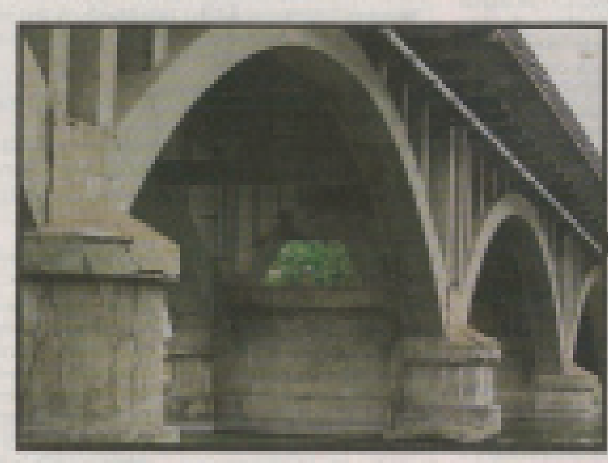
Leaders eager for bridge to somewhere more lovely

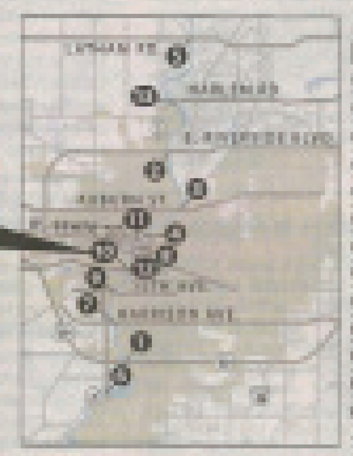
"There would be no way that you would succeed in encouraging business to develop along the South Main corridor if you didn't have the bridge there at Morgan."

— Victory Bell, former Rockford alderman

By Thomas V. Bona

See MORGAN, 2E ▸





AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

	BRIDGE	2009
1	U.S. 20	34,500
2	Riverside Boulevard	26,800
3	Auburn Street	25,100
4	Whitman Street	21,200
5	Latham Road	10,880
6	Bell Line Road	10,800
7	Harrison Avenue	10,280
8	State Street	9,180
9	15th Avenue	8,780
10	Morgan Street	8,780
11	Jefferson Street	8,680
12	Chestnut/Walnut streets	7,080
13	Harlem Road (Bauer Bridge)	4,180

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

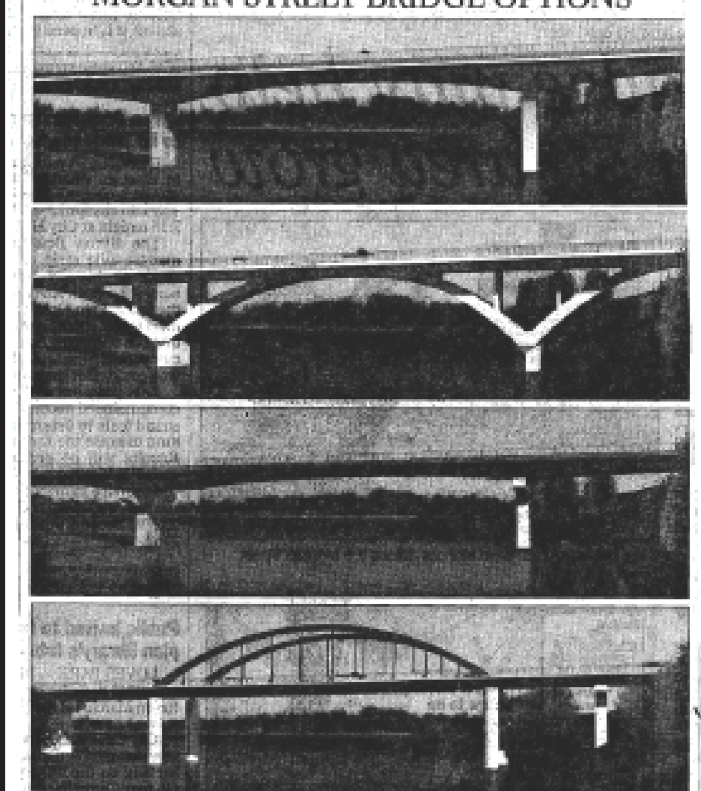
Leaders eager for bridge to somewhere more lovely

▸ MORGAN from Page 1E

SCOTT MORGAN | ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR

The Morgan Street bridge, built in 1916, carries about 8,780 vehicles a day over the Rock River in downtown Rockford.

MORGAN STREET BRIDGE OPTIONS



Images provided by Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc.

Here are four computer-generated options submitted by engineers for redesign of the Morgan Street bridge in Rockford.

New bridge may help Morgan St. area grow

Officials hope the $20 million to $25 million project will spur redevelopment and aesthetic improvements.

Holly McQueen/Rockford Register Star

Cars drive across the Morgan Street bridge on Monday in Rockford.

By ADAM LOWENSTEIN
Rockford Register Star

ROCKFORD — When is a bridge more than just a bridge? When it also is a spark plug, triggering development, revitalization and investment in a struggling part of a city.

See Bridge, 6A ▸

Rockford Register Star, Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2002

Photo by Holly McQueen/Rockford Register Star

Patricia Robinson looks for the best place to hang a picture in her new restaurant, Canaan's Restaurant & Catering, which is in the former Campus Towers Supermarket, 330 College Ave. The restaurant in the Morgan Street bridge area will open soon.

New bridge may help Morgan St. area grow

▸ Continued from Page 5A

Cars, but not trucks, drive Monday across the Morgan Street bridge in Rockford.

Rockford Register Star

What it looks like

The $20 million to $25 million project, with up to 80 percent of funding coming from federal sources, would feature a new bridge and improvement on streets surrounding the bridge. Project highlights:

- Four traffic lanes, up from three lanes
- New lighting
- Sidewalk
- Multiuse bike path
- Pedestrian overlooks
- Improvements to Morgan Street, including realignment, improvements at several intersections, and new pavement, sidewalks, curbs, gutters and drainage

Intersections would be improved at Morgan and Main streets and College Avenue and Seminary Street.

If you go

- **What:** Informational meeting on Morgan Street bridge project
- **When:** 6 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday
- **Where:** Patriots Gateway Community Center, 615 S. Fifth St.
- **Why:** To hear about and comment on the Morgan Street bridge project, including types of bridges, roadway alignment and community revitalization
- **Who:** Public Works officials from Rockford and members of the project management and bridge construction teams

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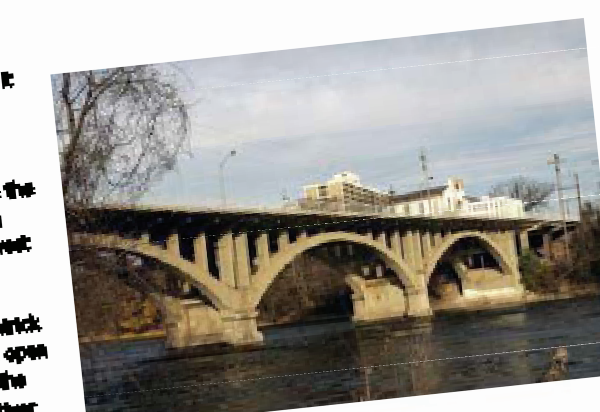
GREENWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN OFFERS PATHS WITH RIVER VISTAS

By Corina Curry
RRSTAR.COM
Posted: October 12, 2010 @ 12:33 AM
Last update: October 12, 2010 @ 12:37 AM



SCOTT MORGAN | RRSTAR.COM

ROCKFORD — City leaders hope to spend nearly $5.5 million — most of it in state grant funds — to transform the area north and south of the Morgan Street bridge into a pedestrian- and bike-friendly area.

The centerpiece of the proposed Rock River Valley Greenway would be the transformation of an old railroad bridge into a multiuse recreation path that would link Davis Park with three other paths along the east and west sides of the river, each offering unique, scenic riverfront vistas.

"The area that's been outlined in this project is very isolated," said Patrick Zuroske, the city's capital program manager. "What we want to do is open up the greatest asset we have in our community, the Rock River, to the people in our community. Some of the very best views of the Rock River are in this area, but people wouldn't know. It's not easy to get to."

The new path would start at the south end of Davis Park, head south along the Rock River to the Fordam Dam, southeast across the river on the southern most of two railway bridges, south along the east bank of the river, under the Morgan Street bridge and east toward Seminary Street.

Zuroske hopes to get an answer on the grant application within a month.

If the Illinois Department of Transportation approves the project, the state would pay 80 percent of the $5,347,000 endeavor. The city would then need to commit the remaining 20 percent — a bit more than $1 million — to its Capital Improvement Program in the years to come.

Time for engineering

City officials would spend the next 18 months to two years completing the necessary engineering designs and obtaining right-of-way permission.

Other paths that would be developed as part of the Rock River Valley Greenway would be a south branch that runs along Kent Creek and the Rock River both north and south of the Morgan Street bridge, a north branch that spurs off the railroad bridge on the east side of the river and heads toward the old Ingersoll building, and the Keith Creek north leg that goes from Third and College streets to Kishwaukee and Lewis streets.

Connecting major projects

The path project was designed to bring a cohesive and connective quality to two major road improvements set for 2011 and 2012 — the much-anticipated reconstructions of the Morgan Street bridge and South Main Street. Added into that mix is the arrival of a new Amtrak station just north of Main and Morgan in 2012.

Construction on the path system wouldn't begin until the Morgan and Main street projects are nearly complete.

"People are getting really excited when they come to meetings and they hear about everything that's about to happen," said Barb Verni-Lau, executive director of South West Ideas for Today and Tomorrow, a community and business resource center whose offices are in the heart of the upcoming improvements. "The people who have been saying that the city doesn't care about us and southwest Rockford doesn't get anything — that's starting to change."

Staff writer Corina Curry can be reached at [illegible] or 815-987-1371.

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Morgan Street

A bridge, street redesign could reinvigorate city

Rockford officials hope that a multimillion-dollar bridge project in the Morgan Street area can be turned into rich potential for revitalization.

The vision is spectacular. But turning it into reality depends upon the community.

From 6 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, residents can attend an informational meeting on the project at Patriots Gateway Community Center on South Fifth Street. They will see proposed designs for the bridge. They will hear how the bridge and street realignment might spur economic development, spruce up the riverfront and improve one of Rockford's gateways.

The rest, however, is up to residents. Do they like the arch-like design or the no-frills, no-paint-required bridge? Do they want something distinctive or something that "goes" with the other Rockford bridges?

More importantly, do they buy into the assertion that this is more than a bridge project?

They should. Rockford must give more than lip service to achieving its potential — to improving areas of the city that have been written off as too unimportant, too unsightly or too dangerous.

In fact, no part of Rockford can be separated from the whole. No section is beyond redemption.

This project is an ideal way to revitalize Rockford, especially because little local investment will be required. The federal government is paying 80 percent of the $20 million to $25 million tab.

With the federal money comes federal strings; however, in this case, they are good ones. Rockford must sound out small groups on the project (that's been done) and hold public meetings (the first will be Thursday).

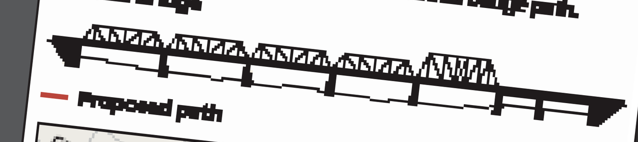
But the process is only as meaningful as the participation. Jim Ryan, the city's construction program manager, sees the bridge as a catalyst. He talks about how a similar bridge project on Damen Avenue in Chicago attracted investment to the area and became a symbol for a stronger, more linked community.

Rockford could easily do that with Morgan Street. But residents must see the bridge as more than something you drive over. It's something you drive.

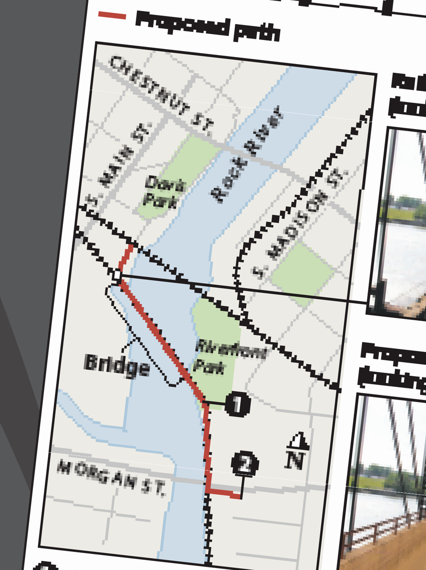
Rock River Valley Greenway

Rockford has applied for an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant to build four multi-use paths extending north and south of the Morgan Street bridge. The focal point of the project would be a railroad bridge path.

Railroad bridge



— Proposed path



Railroad bridge (looking east)

Proposed pathway (looking east)

1 The railroad bridge path connects to the north branch of the proposed path at this point.

2 The railroad bridge connects to the south branch of the proposed path at this point.

Source: City of Rockford

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