

Section 12

Public Funding and Implementation

This section provides an overview of potential funding sources available for pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the Rockford Area Transportation Study (RATS) Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA).

12.1 Regional Transportation Planning Process

This Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan will become part of the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). According to federal law, the LRTP must be based on reasonable financial commitments and constrained based on the available public funding.

The Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is the program for transportation projects, which lists the projects to be implemented within the next four years. It is updated annually. The first year is considered the implementation year, and the second, third, and fourth are “out years.” The intent is to move projects from the out years to the implementation year in each consecutive plan.

The TIP for RATS evaluates the funding needs and resources for the municipalities, counties, human service providers, and the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD). The TIP, like the LRTP, is a financially constrained document. This means that all projects listed within the first year element have verified funding sources, while those listed in the second and third years have reasonably available funding. The projects are listed in accordance with the LRTP.

Many of the bicycle and pedestrian projects listed in this Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan currently are unfunded.

12.2 Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program

This Plan involves an extensive shared use path system. The shared-use path system in the MPA is regional and often involves many government jurisdictions during planning, design, and construction. Therefore, RATS takes an active role in the planning and implementation of the shared-use path system.

The construction of the shared-use paths are funded primarily from the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP). The ITEP is derived from the Surface Transportation Program (STP). STP funds are allocated by the federal government to Illinois for use on state marked or unmarked routes or other qualified projects at the state’s discretion. ITEP provides for community based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience through cultural, historic, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the transportation infrastructure. In order to qualify for the program, the project must fall under one of the following types of activities:

- 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 programs

The ITEP program is funded under current federal legislation, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU, Public Law 109-59). Any unit of government (state or local) with taxing authority is eligible to apply for and sponsor a ITEP project. Project sponsors may receive up to 80 percent reimbursement for project costs; while the remaining 20 percent is the responsibility of the project sponsor.

Shared-use path projects listed within the 2035 LRTP are included in **Table 12-1, Enhancement Projects**. Three of these projects already are programmed for funding within the RATS TIP. These projects were not included in the prioritization analysis because the funding for these projects has been secured. The remaining projects listed are expected to secure ITEP funding over the 30 years of the LRTP. One project already has partial funding. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has funds programmed to undertake a Phase I engineering study of the Rock Cut State Park to the Long Prairie Path Connection, but this funding is not derived from ITEP sources.

Enhancement Projects	Length (Miles)	Cost in Millions		Priority
		Cost Per Unit	Subtotal	
Kent Creek Path Continuations (1. From Davis Pec. Path to Mel Anderson Park and 2. West Extension of Mel Anderson Path from Longwood park to Pecatonica Path)	4.3	0.74	3.2	High
Perryville Path Continuation (south to Swanson Path in Cherry Valley)	3.0	0.73	2.2	Programmed
Rock Cut State Park connection to Long Prairie Path	2.8	0.75	2.1	High
Perryville Path continuation North	3.3	0.73	2.4	High
Kishwaukee and Rock River Paths from downtown Rockford to downtown Belvidere	8.0	2.25	18.0	High
Davis-Pecatonica Path Connection (Davis Park west to Central Avenue)	1.2	1.33	1.6	Programmed
Pecatonica Path (County Line to Central Avenue)	9.5	0.55	5.2	Programmed

Table 12-1 Enhancement Projects				
Enhancement Projects	Length (Miles)	Cost in Millions		Priority
		Cost Per Unit	Subtotal	
Machesney Path-Willow Creek Connection	1.5	1.47	2.2	High
Connection between Northeast Park and Rock Cut State Park	3.0	2.7	8.1	High/Medium
		Total:	\$45 Million	

An additional \$9 million worth of additional shared use paths are proposed within the MPA (See **Table 5-4, Facility Cost Estimates by Municipality**). Unless other funding sources are found, the remaining shared use paths, those not listed as “programmed,” will not be built within the next thirty years. The addition of bicycle lanes and routes to the network with the MPA provides an inexpensive means of building the bicycle transportation network. The implementation of this system is discussed below.

Finally, existing path systems need to be maintained and re-built. Funds dedicated to these activities must be earmarked in order to preserve the existing shared use path network. Reconstruction costs were not accounted for within this Plan.

12.3 Funding for Bicycle Lanes and Routes and Pedestrian Facilities

RATS considers the implementation and construction of bicycle lanes and routes and pedestrian facilities the responsibility of local jurisdictions. This Plan provides guidelines, standards, and recommendations for where and how these facilities should be constructed. The funding for these facilities primarily should be the responsibility of the municipalities in the MPA.

Therefore, municipalities within the MPA should consider the following guidelines when prioritizing shared use path projects not listed within the existing LRTP:

- **Transportation Improvement Plan process** – All roadway improvements that use state and federal funds need to go through the RATS Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) process. In order to be included within the TIP, projects must be listed first in the LRTP. The planning process provides an ideal time to determine if bicycle/pedestrian improvements could be provided in conjunction with a roadway project.
- **Require a Complete Streets Approach for Roadway Improvements**-For all roadway improvement projects within the MPA that use state and federal funding, municipalities must consult and work in conjunction with RATS. Therefore, RATS should require all new projects to take a complete streets approach to roadway development in order to ensure that all improvements account for motorized and non-motorized users. These requirements may include shared use paths, but also bike lanes and routes where appropriate.

12.4 Other Potential Federal/State Funding Sources

Other potential funding sources may become available for bicycle/pedestrian improvements. RATS will continue to monitor these programs for potential application in the MPA.

Illinois Bicycle Path Program

The Illinois Bicycle Path Program was created in 1990 by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to assist eligible units of government to acquire, construct, and rehabilitate shared-use paths. Grants are available to local government agencies to acquire and develop land for public shared-use paths. Maximum projects awards are limited to \$200,000 per year. Revenue for the program is derived from a percentage of vehicle title fees collected within the state. Grant assistance applications must be received by the IDNR by March 1 of each calendar year.

Illinois Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan

The Illinois Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) was developed in response to the growing number of highway incidents throughout the state. The goal of this plan is to reduce the number of traffic-related deaths by 2008. The CHSP aims to improve the attributes of roadways, its users, and vehicles in order to reduce the number of traffic-related deaths and life-altering injuries within Illinois. Programs that seek to achieve high levels of safety initiatives and projects will be given priority for funding.

These projects typically will incorporate engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency services, otherwise known as the “Four E’s.” These areas currently include alcohol and impaired driving, driver behavior and awareness, highway-railroad crossings, information systems, intersections, large trucks, roadway departure, safety belts and occupant protection, vulnerable users, and work zones.

Safe Routes to School

The Community Leader Survey conducted for this Plan showed that schools are the most important criterion to be used for prioritizing pedestrian facilities. A viable option to promote these facilities is through a federal program, called Safe Routes to School (SRTS). The federal government via SAFETEA-LU developed this program¹ to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school. The funding consists of infrastructure and non-infrastructure needs. The first refers to physical improvements, such as sidewalks or crosswalks. Non-infrastructure needs refer to evaluation or education and encouragement programs to get children to walk or bike to schools (www.dot.state.il.us/saferoutes/). Illinois has been granted nearly \$23 million from the federal government over a five-year period. The funds can be administered without a local match to complete projects.

¹ See SAFETEA-LU Section(s): 1101(a)(17), 1404

Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program

The Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP) is a federal grant program, which provides opportunities to implement and to evaluate the relationship between transportation and community and system preservation. The TCSP program is authorized by SAFETEA-LU through fiscal year 2009. Examples of eligible projects include improving the efficiency of transportation systems; reducing the impacts of transportation on the environment; reducing the need for costly future public infrastructure; ensuring access to jobs, services, and centers of trade; and encouraging private sector development patterns. Funding from this program is sought through IDOT. States, metropolitan planning organizations, and local governments are eligible for discretionary grants. The federal share on account of any TCSP project is 80% or subject to the sliding scale rate.²

12.5 Local Responsibility

Municipal, county, and regional agencies ultimately are responsible for the implementation of the pedestrian/bicycle strategies developed within this Plan. The following discussion presents various implementation strategies.

Local Funds and Programs

All municipalities and counties have a general fund. This is comprised of money collected primarily from local and user taxes. These funds often are used for the day-to-day operation of the municipalities and counties. General funds are not restricted in their uses. Local funds of this type can provide a source for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Motor Fuel Tax

Municipalities and counties annually receive an allocation of Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) funds from the State of Illinois. MFT is imposed by the State of Illinois for the privilege of operating motor vehicles on public highways and recreational watercraft on waterways. The tax is paid by distributors and suppliers, who collect the tax from their customers. This tax primarily provides funding to build and maintain roads and highways. However, it also can be used to develop non-motorized transportation improvements.

Public Private Partnerships

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) refer to contractual agreements formed between a public agency and a private sector entity that allow for greater private sector participation in the delivery of transportation projects.

² 23 USC 120 (b).

Municipalities and county agencies may want to develop various partnerships to develop bicycle facilities, including bicycle racks and storage. Public comments for the installation of these racks suggested that they contain advertisements for local businesses and that they be installed with some financial assistance from the municipalities.

Another program may be initiated as a 50/50 Sidewalk and Curb Program. An example of this program currently is in use within the City of Rockford. The City of Rockford sidewalk and curb program allows the property owner to combine with the City in the repair of sidewalks at a 50% cost level (this does not include service walks or driveway apron work). Through this program, a company contracted by the City provides the repairs for sidewalks. The cost for the repairs is split evenly between the City of Rockford and the homeowner. The advantage to this program is that since the City contracts large volumes of work for competitive bidding, private homeowners can receive a lower rate for sidewalk improvements than if ordering repairs on their own.

Development Related

All new development is subject to zoning and subdivision approval. Developers are responsible to provide transportation improvements within the right-of-way of new development. Any needed transportation improvements where the development connects to the main roadways also may be the responsibility of the developer. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities may be included as part of these requirements.

Capital Improvement Program

Municipalities within the MPA should include non-motorized transportation projects in their capital improvement plans (CIP). A CIP is a long-range financial planning tool used to address community needs in the long-term future. Typically, projects listed within a CIP have a multi-year life cycle similar to those listed within the regional transportation improvement plan. This plan is fluid, as it is updated constantly to represent additions and deletions of projects based on funding or completion.

12.5 Other Funding Sources

Bikes Belong Coalition

The Bikes Belong Coalition is a national organization that welcomes grant applications from organizations and agencies throughout the United State that are committed to putting people on bicycles. The grant program funds projects in three categories including facility, education, and advocacy. The organization will accept grant applications for public agencies for education and facility categories only. The funds can be used to leverage other sources of funding for bicycles. The Bikes Belong Coalition can be contacted directly.³

³ www.bikesbelong.org.