
Vermilion River Greenway MASTER PLAN

JANUARY 2002



Prepared for:

City of Streator, Illinois
Vermilion River Greenway Steering Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Streator, its civic leaders and its citizens, particularly the Greenway Steering Committee members and others who volunteer within the parks and along the Vermilion River, have the opportunity to undertake a very achievable goal of creating a Greenway system of parks, recreational amenities, trails, and natural areas along the community's Vermilion River Corridor. This will not happen overnight and it will not happen all at one time. A primary objective of this Greenway master planning effort was to identify a small, but key, first project that could successfully be implemented by a grass roots, volunteer effort with City and community support. Future Greenway projects and community support would then build from the success of the first project.

The Vermilion River has a very good, and well-deserved reputation as a pleasurable river to canoe. The heart of Streator rests upon the banks of the Vermilion River's banks. The river's beauty and character give the Streator area two tremendous assets to work with that other communities may not have. And now the community has the Greenway Steering Committee. A group of volunteers that are energized, enlightened, and committed as citizens to see this Greenway concept succeed for the benefit of the community and the river.

The Greenway Steering Committee's Vision for the Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan is to:

- ***Preserve, Restore and Protect the Greenway Corridor***
- ***Educate the Public about the Greenway System***
- ***Celebrate the Greenway Corridor's Heritage***
- ***Recreate along and within the Greenway Corridor***
- ***Develop Tourism in Streator through Regional and Statewide Trail and Greenway Connections***

Executive Summary

To this end, the Greenway Steering Committee's (GSC) has identified the following **Greenway Master Plan Goals**:

- Improve and Maintain Streator's Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities.
- Accommodate Various User Groups.
- Improve the Vermilion River Corridor's Natural Environment within the Streator Area.
- Reduce Threats to the Vermilion River's Health and Character.
- Increase Streator's Regional and Statewide Tourism Profile.
- Protect Existing and Provide Additional Public Access Points to the River.
- Inter-connect the Community and the Greenway System.

Streator has the opportunity to actively participate, and benefit from participation, in the growing Greenway planning interest in La Salle, Livingston and Bureau Counties. These counties and surrounding communities such as La Salle, Ottawa and Pontiac, have a "grass-roots" interest developing Greenway and park systems along their river and canal corridors as a means of generating business and tax revenues from tourism development. Streator must position itself to take full advantage of this growing interest and demand.

Therefore, this Master Plan Report challenges the GSC, the community at large, City staff and employees, and the City Council to implement the Master Plan's first objective, the conversion of the COMED/NICOR site into a restored naturalized river front park, within 3 years while continuing to explore, research, and build toward longer range objectives. The opportunities for Streator to carry this Greenway plan through are very numerous and described within this report. The constraints are just as numerous but the GSC recognizes this and has adopted the philosophy of "one step at a time." This report also outlines the physical location of the proposed improvements, the reasoning behind the improvements and then offers strategies or recommendations for their implementation.

The Greenway Master Plan process and report hopes to have successfully empowered, educated, and familiarized the GSC with the resources available to them and their community. By no means is this master plan report the end of the GSC's Greenway implementation efforts but merely the beginning. This master plan report is intended to be a working document, flexible and amendable to meet the needs and opportunities that arise within the community and the Greenway corridor.

Implementing elements of this master plan, even small ones, will take

Executive Summary

the conviction and sweat of the GSC, volunteers and City. Resources, energy, desire and know-how are available to those communities that show a strong desire to improve the natural environment and make their communities a better place to live.

The time to act is now, not next month or next year, in order to take advantage of these items currently in Streator's favor:

- Grass roots support in Streator and surrounding communities.
- Strong and growing tourism market nearby along the Illinois and Fox Rivers, and the I&M Canal Heritage Corridor.
- The Greenway's first project site, the COMED/NICOR site, is scheduled to be turned over to the City in November 2002, less than a year away.
- Strong public agency interest, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Agency, and private companies such as the Streator Landfill Company.



Figure 2. Sandy Ford Conservation Area's rocky bluffs along Leonore Road.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Streator has been exploring the idea of a Greenway or Park System along the Vermilion River since the 1960's. Since the 60's, almost all of Streator's various community studies and reports have encouraged the development of a river front Greenway and park system. So why another study now? What circumstances have changed or must change in order for the Greenway to happen?

To answer those questions, let us answer a few others first:

WHAT IS A GREENWAY?

A Greenway is an open space system that is established for conservation, preservation, and recreation purposes. Greenway systems typically follow a linear corridor such as a stream or river, a ridge-line or other topographic feature, a railroad or utility corridor, or other unique, natural or manmade feature. Greenway systems can function on both a local and regional scale to link parks, natural areas, cultural or civic uses, historic or cultural sites with residential areas.

WHY DEVELOP A GREENWAY IN THE STREATOR AREA?

The Vermilion River provides the Streator Area with a very unique and special quality that other nearby communities do not have. The Vermilion River's role in the community, in terms of beauty, scenery, character, and cultural heritage, has never been fully employed in maintaining or enhancing what the Streator Area has to offer residents, potential and existing businesses, those businesses' prospective employees, and visitors to the community.

Equally important is the preservation and conservation of the natural resources that are part of the Vermilion River drainage basin, from the soils of the surrounding agricultural fields to the plant and animal life that live among the bluffs and shoreline of the river. However, the proper management of these natural resources is essential to ensure that they are not further degraded as is evidenced along certain portions of the River Corridor.

A Greenway can provide recreational activities that improve a

community's quality of life. In addition, a Greenway can promote tourism and economic development. The development of a Greenway system in the Streator Area would allow the community to tie into larger, regional and even national trail and Greenway networks such as the Grand Illinois Trail and the Illinois and Michigan (I &M) Canal Heritage Corridor.

There is no denying the economic impact that the development and marketing of the I&M Canal has had upon communities that reside along its route. As mentioned in this report's Introduction, there is already a La Salle County "grass roots" effort to develop a regional or county-wide Greenway system. However, early indications are that this effort may be centered on the Fox River Valley, the northern portion of La Salle County and its proximity to the ever-expanding Chicago Metro area. If the Streator Area does not move forward with their own Greenway agenda and become an equal participant in this County-wide Greenway planning effort the Streator Area, in the far southern part of La Salle County (and far northwestern part of Livingston County), may be forgotten.

SO WHY DO WE NEED A GREENWAY MASTER PLAN?

A Greenway Master Plan provides the community volunteers, City staff, Civic leaders, and other interested parties a singular, clear and unified blueprint for the implementation of the Greenway. The community's goals and objectives, opportunities and constraints, and available resources are identified and taken into consideration in the development of the master plan. The master plan also describes and prioritizes the needs and wants of both the resources and the community.

The master plan is an invaluable tool to show State, Federal or even private funding sources that Greenway project improvements; park, trails or boat facilities, are actually part of a larger vision that hopes to benefit a larger community and environment. In other words, the people with the resources, and this includes local residents who may be willing to donate time and materials as well as money, want to see that their resources are contributing to a greater vision and being put to good use.

The adoption of this Greenway master plan report by the City Council would support not only the City's future capitol improvements but the City's future grant funding applications as well. As an amendment to Streator's Comprehensive Plan, this Greenway master plan report would be given more "teeth" because comprehensive plans are

recognized by State Statutes as a community's guide for making land use and zoning decisions.

And lastly, the master plan should never be considered to be "written in stone". The master plan, and those who take ownership of it, must remain flexible enough to overcome setbacks as well as take advantage of unforeseen opportunities or resources that become available.

SO WHAT HAS CHANGED? WHAT DOES THIS MASTER PLAN HAVE GOING FOR IT THAT OTHER PLANS DID NOT?

There is no prescribed method of implementing a Greenway master plan upon a community or place. There is no one set of rules that can be applied to each community that says is wants or is recommended that it develop a Greenway master plan. However, there are some common principals that successful Greenway master plans have:

COMMITMENT

If there is no one committed to the seeing even the first part of this Vermilion River Greenway master plan implemented then it will not succeed. However, this Greenway system has several components already in place that were done without the benefit or guidance of a master plan, the Hopalong Cassidy River Trail and the Hopalong Cassidy Canoe Launch. Neither of these elements cold have been implemented without the vision, commitment and cooperation of a few individuals, the City, a generous landowner, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Corps of Engineers.

And in this Vermilion River master plan effort, there has been a great deal of commitment and enthusiasm from the meeting and workshop participants.

GRASS ROOTS EFFORT

The previous recreation or river trail studies appeared to have very little public involvement. So when these plans were completed they were handed over to the City for the City to implement. However, the City did not have the resources nor the incentive to implement these ideas.

While this master plan study was initiated and funded by Senator Patrick Welch's office along with Mayor Schmitt's cooperation and support, it is the Greenway Steering Committee members that are taking ownership of this plan. They are the people who are establishing the goals of and generating the ideas for the Vermilion River Greenway. These members will be the voices and energy that make this Greenway effort a success.

"The physical implementation is a combination of "grassroots" and higher support. Your elected officials must join in and assist in the delivery of a Greenway system."¹

STRONG LEADERSHIP

The need for strong leadership has to occur and many levels. While the Greenway Steering Committee (GSC) is currently providing the "grass roots" leadership on behalf of the larger community, they will soon need to elect their internal officers to lead them during the implementation phase of the Greenway plan. On the local level, this master plan effort also has the benefit of current and former Streator City Council members as active GSC members. But active leadership and involvement, "champions" of the Greenway plan, must also occur at the County, State(regional and State-wide), and Federal levels.

AN ACTION PLAN

A major difference between this Greenway master plan effort and those in the past in the focus on the Streator Area's portion of the Vermilion River. The previous recommendations were part of various, larger studies that examined the Vermilion River's entire length, the City's overall recreational needs, or the City's current and future land planning issues. None of these studies were focused enough to be of real benefit to the community.

This master plan effort focuses on the Streator area, examines the real possibilities, and provides the GSC and City with a do-able, high impact Phase One project.

EDUCATION

For the Greenway effort to be successful, many people must educate themselves and others about the process and resources required to successfully implement and manage the various components of a Greenway. But not to worry, many educational resources; books, classes, seminars, other Greenway communities, state and federal agencies, are available to help the City and the GSC educate themselves, school children and their parents and grandparents, local civic groups, community leaders, local, State and Federal level politicians and agencies about a Greenway's role in the Streator community.

¹ Donna Erickson. 1997 "Implementation of Metropolitan Greenway Networks: Seven Case Studies". School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

MONEY

Many funding resources are available but it does not mean that these sources are aware, willing or always able to "invest" in the Streator Area's Greenway system. Streator must compete with other communities for limited funds for projects of similar caliber or greater need. Therefore a variety of funding sources will need to be explored by the GSC and the City. They cannot afford to look to only one source for funding Greenway projects.

PATIENCE

As with anything this large and important, it will take a great deal of patience to implement the GSC's vision for this Greenway. As the GSC was told at the very first workshop, it may take a very long time to implement the overall master plan. But by breaking down the overall master plan into smaller, less daunting bit size pieces, they can achieve incremental success that builds support, confidence and additional success.



Figure 3. One of the Vermilion River's many scenic areas.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

NOTE:

This background and analysis of the Vermilion River concentrates on the Greenway study area itself and is limited to the physical quality of the river from a recreational standpoint. A more in-depth and highly valuable assessment of the Vermilion River was completed in March 2001 by the State of Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Office of Scientific Research and Analysis. This is a four volume environmental assessment of the Vermilion River Basin and covers the basin's Geology, Water Resources and Living Resources (Volumes 1-3 respectively). The fourth volume was broken into three parts covering Socio-Economic Profile, Environmental Quality, and Archeological Resources. A thorough environmental assessment of the Greenway area was not within the scope of services and would have simply paralleled the State's most recent efforts. Additional, in-depth environmental assessment reports may be required for the development of specific projects identified in this master plan report.

THE VERMILION RIVER REGION

The Vermilion River is located in North-central Illinois and was called "Aramoni" by the Native Americans that once lived in the same region. It is one of very few North American rivers that flows north and it is a major tributary to the Illinois River. Its 90 mile length drains a 1,331 square mile basin covering seven counties; La Salle, Marshall, Woodford, Livingston, McLean, Ford and Iroquois.²

The Vermilion River has a reputation as a being one of the best canoe and kayak experiences in the Mid-west. Between Streator and the Vermilion's confluence with the Illinois just east of La Salle, 35 miles of gentle gradient, tree-lined banks, and scenic beauty attract many

²Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Scientific Research and Analysis. March 2001. Vermilion River (Illinois River Basin) Area Assessment Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

canoeists and outdoor lovers. Seasonal, Class I rapids just north of confluence with the Illinois attract kayakers from throughout the Midwest.

State Park acreage is a small percentage of the total Vermilion River basin area, Matthiessen and Starved Rock State Parks (1,686 and 2,816 acres respectively) and the Sandy Ford Recreation Area (193 ac) total only 4,695 acres. However these acreage numbers do not include another 800 plus acres of Natural Areas or Preserves in the river basin area. "These areas give some level of protection to the natural communities in the area, and in some cases they are the only refuge for certain endangered species or natural communities. However, these areas do not always offer adequate protection, and they are not all situated in the most biologically important areas."³



Figure 4. An early artist's depiction of Streator growing and prospering along the Vermilion River.

According to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and its "Endangered Species of Illinois State" brochure, La Salle County has over 50 occurrences of endangered species of plants and animals. The IDNR states that "40% of the state's listed species depend on wetland for survival. Illinois has lost more than 90% of its natural wetlands, and as the wetlands are lost, so are the plants and animals".⁴ Threatened species were identified by their Latin and common name but a geographic location or habitat was not identified. From freshwater mussels to river otters, the Vermilion River and its habitat improvement, including much of the Greenway study area, could be an asset to the efforts of the IDNR and its Endangered Species Protection Act to protect further loss of plant and animals.

THE STREATOR AREA

As both Figure "A" - *The State and Grand Illinois Trail Location Map* and Figure "B" - *Streator Regional Area Map* show, the Streator Area straddles the Vermilion River along La Salle County's south line and is comprised of the City of Streator, the Village of Kangley and unincorporated South Streator in Livingston County. The community of roughly 15,000 residents is centrally located between three Interstate Routes; I-80 20 miles north via State Highway Route 23 and Route 18 connects to I-55 23 miles to the east and I-39 12 miles to the west. In addition, the Streator Area is also on the south edge of the Illinois & Michigan Canal Heritage Corridor, the nation's first Federal Recreation

³IDNR Vermilion River Area Assessment Volume 3.

⁴IDNR Office of Resource Conservation and Office of Realty and Environmental Planning. Brochure on the Endangered Species of Illinois. 2000.

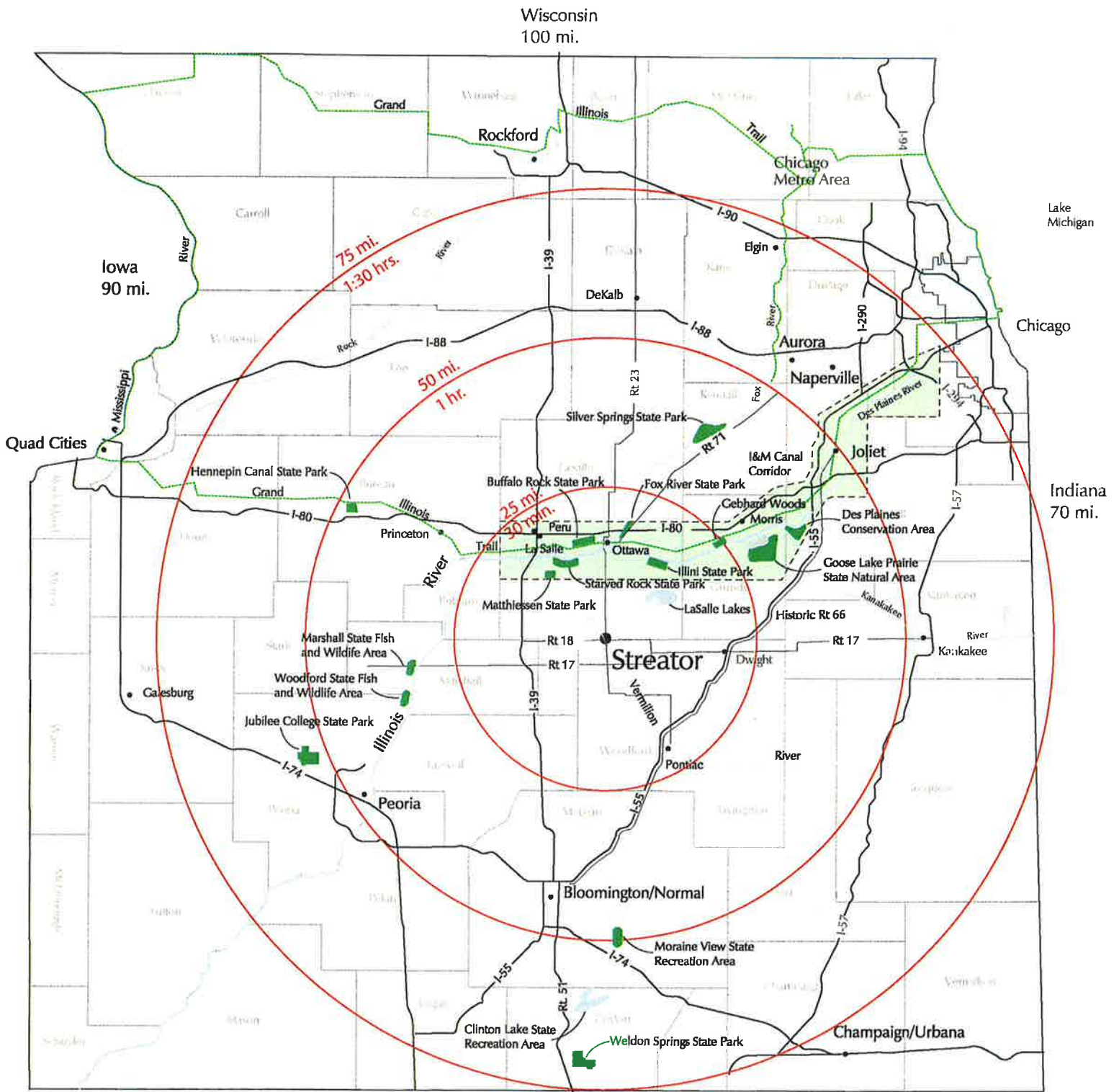


Figure A
State and Grand Illinois Trail Location Map

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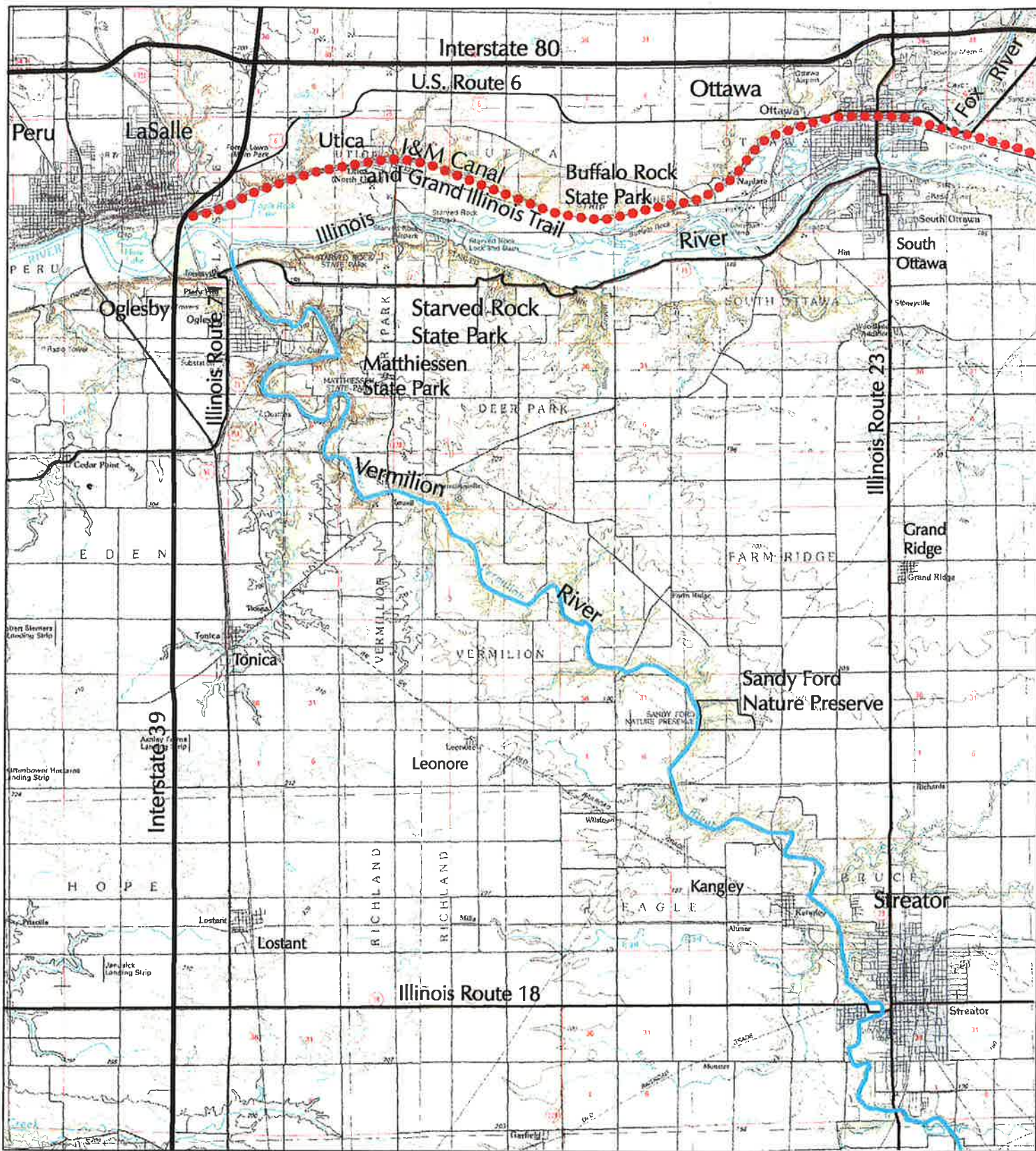


Figure B
Streator Regional Area Map

Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan

Streator, Illinois



January 2002



Figure 5. View of the Vermilion River at the IAWC dam.



Figure 6. View of former gas plant during Flood of 1958.

Area signed into legislation in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan. The I&M Corridor and the Streator area are less than a 2.5 hour car trip from 9-10 million potential visitors from not only the Chicago-metro area but downstate and local communities as well.

“Hardscable” was the community’s original name and became La Salle County’s largest coal producer through the mid to late 1800’s. The availability of coal allowed zinc smelting and glass works to take hold as well, leading to the moniker of “Glass Capitol of the World”. In addition, rail road companies began to route lines through the community to serve the growing industries and mining. Streator was incorporated as a city in 1868 and named after Dr. _____ Streator who helped organize and open the first coal mines in the area shortly after the Civil War.⁵

THE GREENWAY STUDY AREA

The City of Streator’s Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan study area, referred to in this report as the Greenway, project or study area, stretches 7.2 miles from the Illinois-American Water Company (IAWC) Dam southeast of Streator to the area’s newest bridge location at Oakley Avenue. Our analysis of the study area, summarized on Figure “C” - *Site Analysis Map*, was defined by the existing Streator city limits as well as the current, popular, public access points at each respective end. After a brief description of the Vermilion River as it flows through study area, additional points of interests along the Greenway and in the Streator community are discussed. Their order follows the river’s same northerly water flow direction beginning at the IAWC dam and ending at the Oakley Avenue bridge.

The Vermilion River serves the Streator area in the following primary ways; storm water drainage, potable water supply (industrial and domestic), recreation (boating, swimming, fishing,) wastewater and stormwater discharge , flood control, scenic beauty and habitat. The Greenway study area’s river width averages between 110-120 feet and a typical fall of 2 feet per mile. Upstream of the study area the river is flatter while downstream it falls more rapidly.⁶

⁵Amanda Bell Spitzer. La Salle County: The Rivers and the Prairies, early 1990’s.

⁶IDNR Vermilion River Area Assessment Volume 2 - Water Resources.

The river valley moves through Streator as a series of opposing bluffs and lower flood plains. Private homes are the primary land use along the Greenway study area corridor. These homes typically occupy the river bluffs except for a developed, former flood plain area of both homes and businesses in west central Streator. This area between Main Street and Bridge Street is protected by a Corps of Engineers' dike constructed in the late 1950's after a serious flood. The Corps still annually inspects the dams and holds jurisdiction but the City of Streator does daily maintenance.



Figure 9. An example of indiscriminate dumping along the River's banks.

Except for the above mentioned natural flood plain area in central Streator, the low land areas, former forested area have been cleared for row crop farming. Some areas are still actively farmed while other ground has been taken out of production for conservation programs or other reasons. Both the high and low ground was originally forested and some of this forest exists today but in a degraded state.

The Greenway's 100 year flood plain, as provided by Federal Emergency Management Agency maps, loosely follows these low areas as well as the confluences of streams and creeks. Tree cover occurs on both banks and most bluffs. The tree, or forest cover, thickens north of the study area although some thick stands of trees occur between Spring Lake Road and the River.



Figure 7. View of Bridge Street during '58 flood.



Figure 8. Westgate Shopping Ctr. In '58 Flood.

Wet-mesic forests occur in between the higher Mesic Flood plain Forests and the low, wet flood plain forests along the rivers and streams. Canopy tree species within the mesic forest (high) include oak, hickory, basswood, walnut, ash, sycamores, buckeyes, and others. The wet-mesic (middle) forests include some of the above but also include honey locust, hackberry, cottonwood, elm and silver maple. Lastly the wet flood plain forest includes some trees from the middle forest but also black willow and box elder. All three forest types have diverse understory trees, shrubs, vines and ground covers as well. Additionally, a minimum of 41 species of plants, birds, mammals, fish and mussels have been identified as being threatened and endangered within the Vermilion River basin. Birds represent the biggest number followed by plants, fish and mussels, and lastly mammals.⁷

Many home and property owners have taken the time and effort to create their own high quality riverside garden or natural area. Other owners have turned their rear yards or properties into a private junkyard where debris of all shapes and sizes litters the hillsides. However, the

⁷IDNR Vermilion River Area Assessment Volume 3 - Living Resources.

dense canopy and undergrowth of the river banks and bluffs masks this six months out of the year.

Indiscriminate dumping has apparently plagued the river for years continues to be a problem in some remote locations. Some might have been added to “help” control erosion but a majority looks as if someone was simply trying to save landfill dump fees. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the only river clean up done is an annual volunteer effort organized by local kayakers and canoeists.



Figure 11. Former Bridge Street Bridge, circa 1930.

The majority of the Greenway’s mapped wetland resources occur at the confluence points between tributary streams and the Vermilion River. The IDNR classified the Vermilion River itself and the Greenway study area’s Otter Creek and Eagle Creek (Egg Bag Creek flows into Eagle Creek) as “A” streams due to their unique aquatic resources. These streams were identified in order in an effort to increase awareness for protection and management of their outstanding biological characteristics, (fishes, crustaceans, mussels, plants).

These streams and others continue to carry both urban and agricultural sediments and contaminants. The IDNR Vermilion River Area Assessment’s Water Resource’s book addresses sediment and contaminants in the water in greater detail but apparently the water quality is good enough for continued canoeing, swimming and treatable as drinking water. And while the Water Resources volume spoke of water quality within the River and groundwater aquifers, it did not mention the immediate threat of the Smith-Douglass acid ponds breaching their berms or dikes, spilling into Phillips Creek and then immediately into the Vermilion River.⁸



Figure 10. View toward Aqueduct Road bridge from atop berm along Phillips Creek.

A legacy of rail and coal activity provide the Streator area with a web of active and inactive rail lines that criss-cross the city and the river. Six active and abandoned rail road bridges cross the Vermilion compared to only four for automobiles. The unique design of each rail bridge or remaining abutments are more interesting than the “cost efficient” concrete, automobile bridges. These active and in-active rail line bridges provide this stretch of river corridor a unique and nostalgic sense of rail and mining history.

Within town, the inactive rail right-of-ways have either been abandoned or taken over by adjacent land owners. The abandoned, un-maintained right-of-ways have produced unsightly, overgrown and areas ripe for

⁸IDNR Vermilion River Area Assessment Volume 3.

vandalism and illegal dumping. The areas taken over by adjacent property owners, either legally or illegally, become obstacles for future multi-use path locations. However, these rights-of way can provide a safe and direct route to points of interest or destinations within the community as well as to those outside the study area.

Streator, like most small towns in Illinois, is an automobile dominated community. The broad shoulders of major streets and highways within and leading into town may look inviting to bicyclists but the speed of the vehicles on these roads and the drivers' unfamiliarity with sharing the road with bikes or pedestrians make it using these shoulders dangerous. In addition, there are no signed or marked bike lanes anywhere in the community.

Ironically, a majority of the Streator area is within a ½ mile or 10-15 minute walking distance of the River. However, limited public access points and areas along the river may force residents within the ½ mile distance to the river to drive to a public area rather than walk or ride a bike from their home.

Streator is a community very active in organized sports but is lacking in passive recreational activity opportunities. Almost all of the parks and schools in town have a baseball or softball diamond. The parents and summer recreation leagues effectively share maintenance and preparation responsibilities with the City.



Figure 12. Current view of IAWC overflow in winter.



Figure 13. Early photo of the Streator Pleasure Grounds (now the Streator Boat Club) upriver from dam.

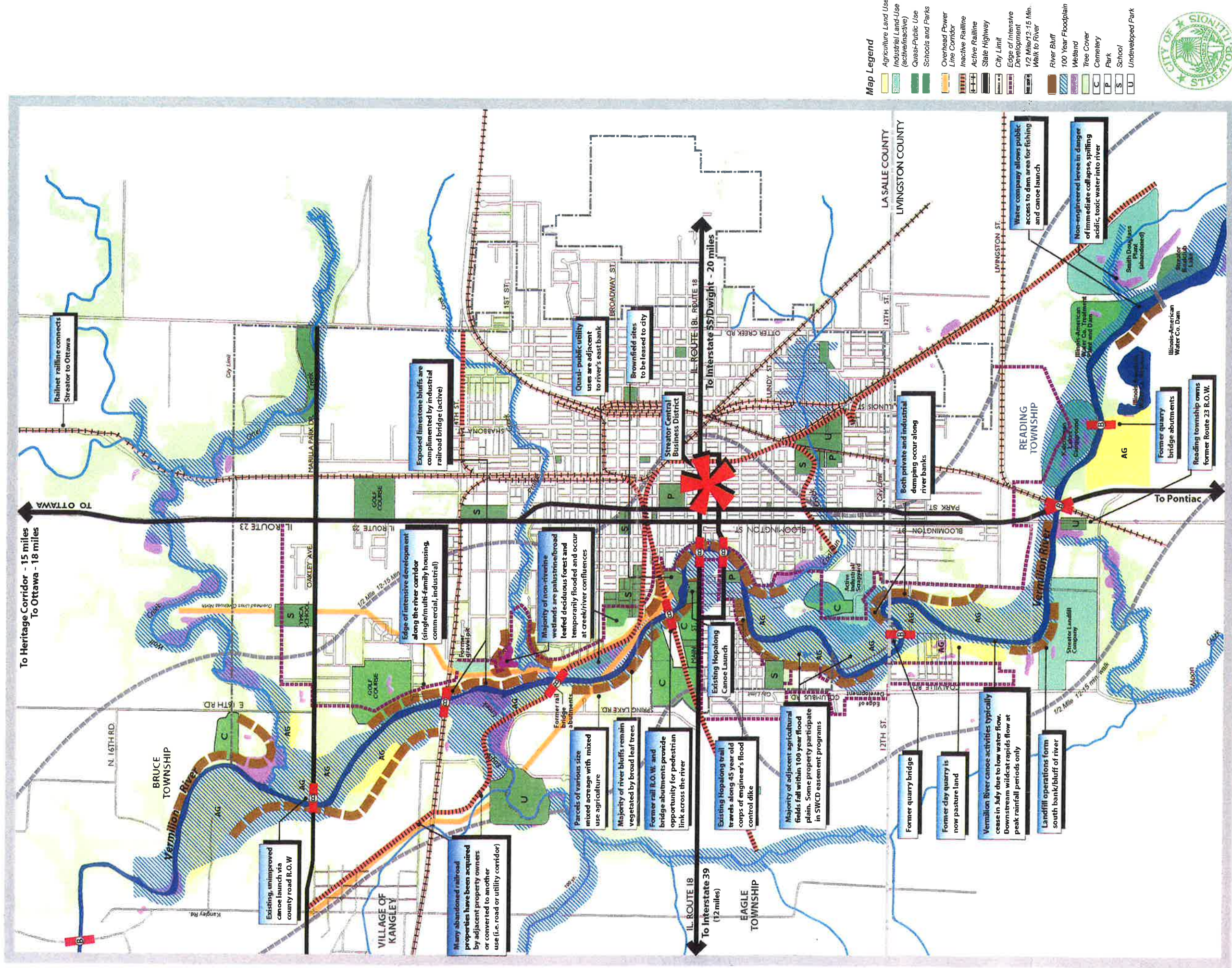
SPECIAL USES WITHIN THE GREENWAY CORRIDOR

Please refer to the following two figures; Figure "D"- *Greenway Corridor Ownership Map* and Figure "F" - *Existing Land Use Plan*, as this section follows the river's flow, from south to north, past these land uses.

DAM AND WATER TREATMENT FACILITY

The Vermilion River provides the drinking water source that the Illinois-American Water Company (IAWC) treats for its customers in the Streator area. The IAWC owns the dam across the river and draws from water from the reservoir or lake behind it. This is the same lake that the Streator Boat Club uses for small, motorized recreational boating. On the river's west bluff above the dam is an old strip mine that the IAWC uses as a reservoir. This strip mine once supplied clay for the brick factory located just down river from the dams near what is now the Katchewan Lakes Campground. Old brick bridge abutments still stand

Site Analysis



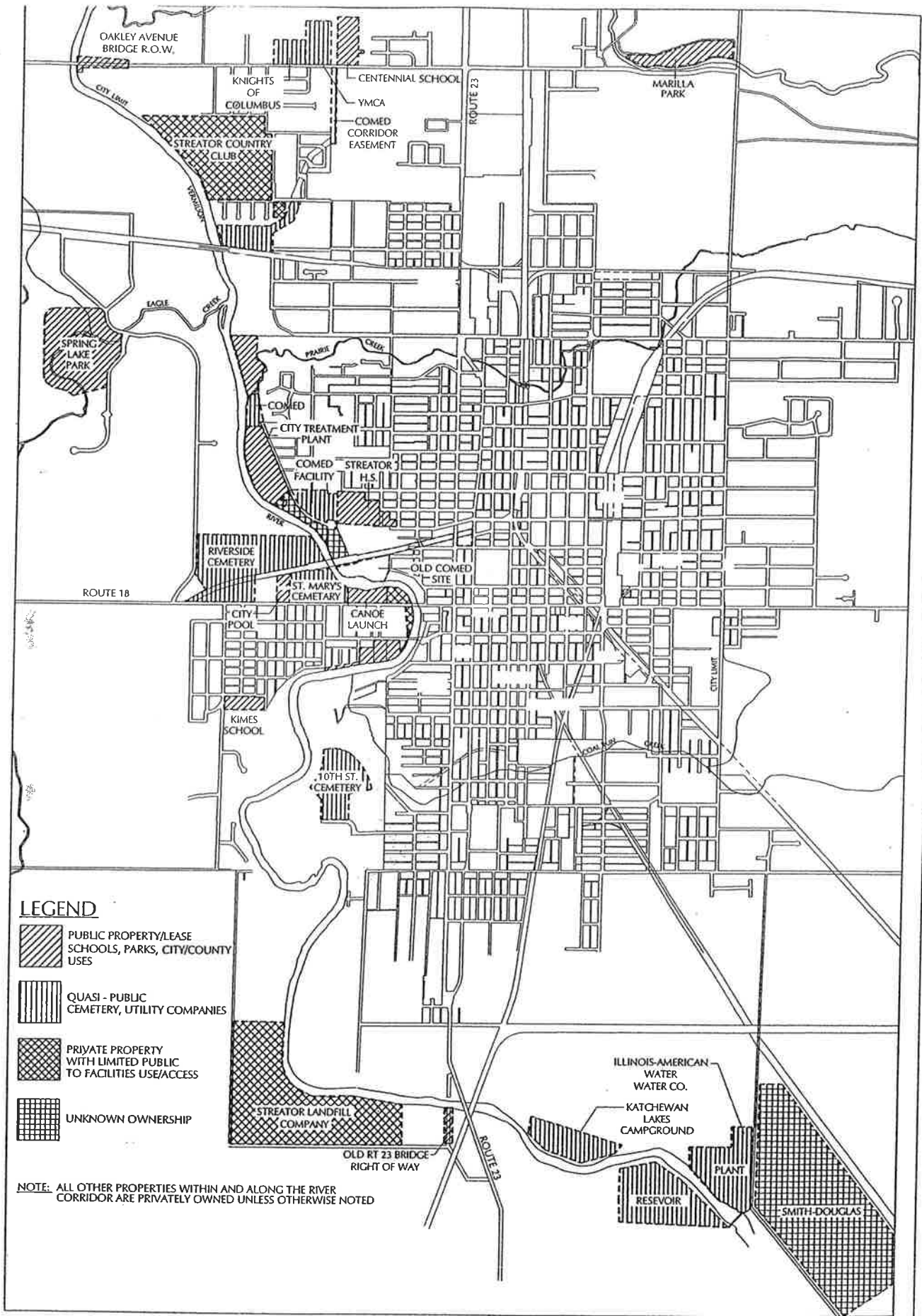
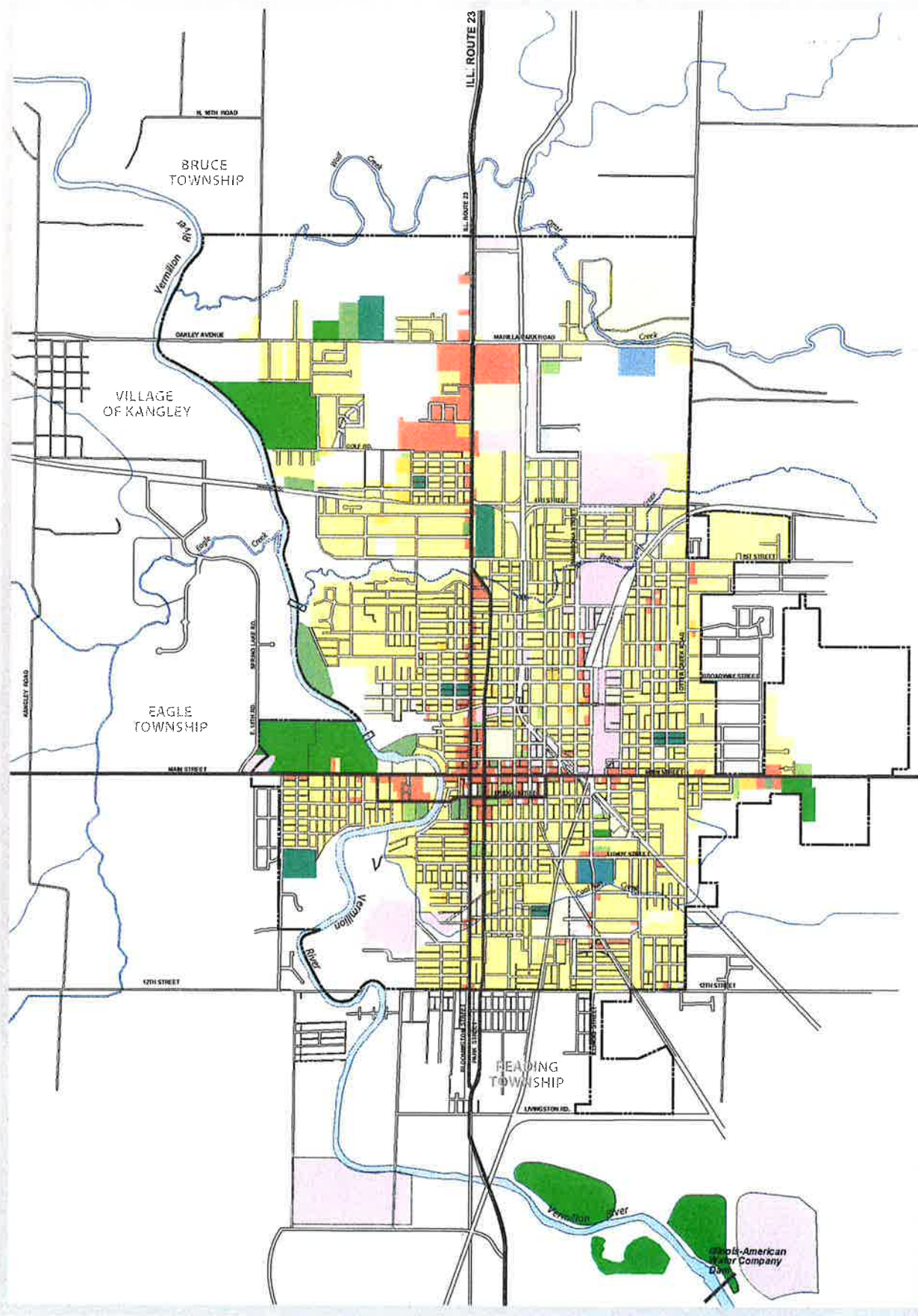


Figure D
Greenway Corridor Ownership Map

Existing Land-Use Plan



Land-Use Legend

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Hospital
- Industrial
- Public School
- Public/Quasi-Public/Cem.
- Fraternal Organization
- Park/Open Space
- Church/Church School
- Vacant/Agricultural



Figure E

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sentry at this old crossing and their possible re-use provides a potential point of connection across the river.

The IAWC currently allows public access to this popular area below the dam for canoe launching and fishing. An undeveloped path leads from the Aqueduct Road's slightly widened shoulder, the only parking area to the river bank. Fishermen scramble over the rock and concrete fill to fish the deeper pool at the spill way. Aqueduct Road and its bridge over a nearby creek are rumored to be scheduled to be widened and replaced respectively. It is unclear if these improvements would improve or diminish river access. There are no public facilities of any kind at this access site and parking is along the county road's shoulder.



Figure 14. Aerial view of Smith-Douglass facility circa. 1965.

SMITH-DOUGLASS SITE

The 124 acre Smith-Douglass Site is a former landfill and fertilizer plant that has been on the Illinois EPA's "watchlist" but is not a Federal "Superfund" site. The IEPA has spent over a half million dollars to demolish and remove some buildings, tanks and hazardous materials. However, the possibility of a breached dike that holds back 70 million gallons of acidic water still remains a very real threat. The IEPA has had to repair this "narrow and failing berm" twice in the past three years. A breach of this berm "could have raised water levels as much as 10 feet from several miles downstream and killed fish and other aquatic life as far as 10 miles downstream." Phillips Creek flows through the abandoned Smith-Douglass plant, erodes away the acid pond's protective berm, flows under Aqueduct Road and enters the Vermilion River just below the dam.⁹

KATCHEWAN LAKES

This existing, public campground has river front access and has a certain level of improvements in place to accommodate a variety of campers. It sits on the site of a former brick factory that utilized the strip mine that now is the City's drinking water reservoir. It is the only campground within the study area and south of the Matthiessen and Starved Rock state park campgrounds.



Figure 15. Former Route 23 Bridge with Santa Fe rail bridge beyond.

OLD ROUTE 23 RIGHT-OF-WAY

Reading Township now owns this former state highway right-of-way located just west of the current Route 23 bridge. In key person interviews, Reading Township representatives stated that they acquired the property in hopes of developing it for public access to the river.

⁹Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Environmental Progress, Volume XXVI, No. 1, Spring 2001, "Unique Approach Diverts Potential Disaster - For Now"

This site remains undeveloped and the river is not easily accessible at this time.

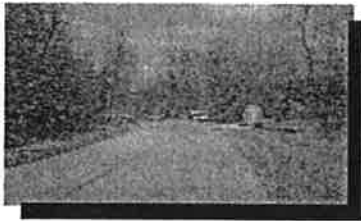


Figure 16. Former Route 23, south bank's right of way today.

STREATOR LANDFILL COMPANY

The landfill company owns or controls a majority of the river property from the Moon Creek west to the Coalville Road, with one out parcel at the corner of N1625 Road and Coalville Road. According to a recent report by the IEPA, this landfill is scheduled to reach capacity by late 2001.¹⁰ The owner of the landfill is currently seeking an expansion by the end of the year from Livingston County in order to continue serving the Streator area.

KIMES SCHOOL

This public grade school sits atop the river bluff but its property is not immediately adjacent to the river. Just southeast of this school, below Rhett Butler Drive, is flood plain farm ground enrolled in a USDA/SWCD conservation program and has been taken out of production for a number of years.

RIVERSIDE AVENUE AT FOURTH STREET

From Fourth Street east to Second Street, Riverside Avenue slips along the north river bluff almost directly connecting Kimes School with the existing Hopalong Cassidy River Trail. The street dead-ends where the trail begins. An old dam site and footbridge once crossed the river in this general vicinity.



Figure 17. The Hopalong Cassidy River Trail travels along the top of the Corp of Engineer's flood control dike.

HOPALONG CASSIDY RIVER TRAIL

The Hopalong Cassidy River Trail is named after the western book series character Hopalong Cassidy. The childhood home of Charles Mulford, the author of this popular series, is immediately adjacent to the trail. Having never traveled to the west prior to writing his first few books, the author based his old west adventures on his childhood memories of playing along the Vermilion River.

This gravel trail currently travels atop the Corps' protective dike. The Corps would not allow a paved trail to be placed atop the dike. The trail runs east along the river past the City's maintenance yard, Merriner Park, and the Armory building, and Charles Mulford's childhood home. It then slips under the Bridge Street Bridge and then back atop the dike heading north where it dead ends at the Route 18/Main Street Bridge. A permit from the Illinois Department of Transportation is required for

¹⁰1999 Annual Report-Nonhazardous Solid Waste Management and Landfill Capacity in Illinois - IEPA/BOL/00-022.

the trail to continue under the bridge as are the funds to construct the trail extension. However, the landowner on the north side of the bridge has already agreed to provide an easement across his property for the trail to continue to the Hopalong Cassidy Canoe Launch.



Figure 18. View of existing concrete rail abutments. Older limestone support in right foreground.



Figure 19. View of the COMED facility from the Hopalong Canoe Launch.

HOPALONG CASSIDY CANOE LAUNCH

The canoe launch site currently is currently leased from the same above, generous landowner. Its location is visible and easily accessible from Route 18. It is close to Streator's central business district, which is just across the Main Street Bridge as well as the Westgate Shopping Center across Route 18.

An attractive sign and canoe welcome visitors to the site. A gravel parking lot, walk-in concrete launch, picnic tables and 55 gallon drum garbage cans constitute the facilities. The creation of the launch site was an earlier cooperative effort between volunteers, the City, property owner, and the IDNR (at that time the Department of Conservation). The grounds and a public porta-potty are maintained by the City.

ST. MARY'S CEMETERY

St. Mary's abuts the canoe launch site and has expressed a willingness to help the City with the continuation of the Hopalong trail. The cemetery's east, river front edge is experiencing severe erosion problems and needs an action plan. The abandoned rail bridge abutment and right-of-way could be accessed through the rear of the cemetery.

COMED/NICOR SITE

A former NICOR coal tar burning gas plant and an existing COMED switching station, soon to be removed, occupied this site since the early part of the 1900's. Both sites, a combined total of about 11 acres, will under go a remediation plan prior to being leased to the City as park land. The site is bordered by an abandoned rail corridor to the north, the Vermilion River to south and west, and Water Street to the east. COMED has also said that it will install a bridge over the existing railroad bridge abutments but it does not own the abutments nor the approach properties on either side of the bridge location.

RIVERVIEW CEMETERY

Riverview cemetery owns the property north of the abandoned rail line along the River. The rail right-of-way travels through the heart of the cemetery connecting Route 18 to the COMED site. The former rail road right-of-way, still privately owned, travels east past the COMED/NICOR site to Bloomington Road/Route 23, just a few blocks from Streator's

historic square, City Park. To the east the rail right-of-way could connect to the City's public pool as well as continue through the River view Cemetery.



Figure 20. City Treatment Plant Overflow.

It is in this area, just north of Riverview cemetery and the abandoned rail corridor, that a 1975 Vermilion River Canoe Trail report by the Illinois Department of Conservation (IDOC) and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) proposed the installation of a low flow dam. "Because of the low amount of precipitation between August and November a low flow dam at Streator could maintain the water level at a suitable level to permit canoeing during the (late summer and) fall months." The IDOC report never gave its full recommendation to this proposal due to the need for additional engineering and environmental studies and other fiscal costs.¹¹ This report did point out that such a dam might prevent the downstream flow of water during dryer, summer months. However, the trend today in the United States is the restoration of free flowing rivers by removing the existing dams rather than building new ones.



Figure 21. Prairie Creek in foreground with COMED line overhead. Vermilion River is to the left.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

The City owned Waste water treatment plant at the foot of LaRue Street sits within the flood plain along the river. The facility is surrounded by an earthen berm and security fence atop that. When the trees are in full leaf a canoe-er would hardly notice the facility along the east bank if not for the large concrete overflow that is rarely used. This overflow would need to be bridged if a trail were routed between the river and the plant.

A gravel service road travels south, paralleling a former rail corridor, between the plant and the adjacent homes on the river bluff. The road accesses the replacement COMED transmission site as well as other utility towers and monitoring stations.

PRAIRIE CREEK

Prairie Creek, north of the treatment plant along the corridor, is a heavily degraded, urban creek that carries a high volume of urban runoff. The creek bed is gouged by the force and volume of water passing over the bed. As the creek continues to deepen, the creek has less opportunity to escape its banks into the adjoining flood plain as it had done originally.

¹¹ Illinois Department of Conservation and Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Water Resources. Vermilion River Canoe Trail Feasibility Report. 1975

Prairie Creek continues east passing under Route 23 where the highway splits into one way highways through town. The creek corridor appears quite wide and inviting and could provide an opportunity to provide an east-west access to the Greenway trail system.



Figure 22. The dramatic, industrial bridge still in use across the Vermilion River.

At the confluence of Prairie Creek and the Vermilion River is yet another abandoned bridge abutment still in place. A mix of limestone and concrete, these abutments cross the river at an angle and once connected the heart of Streator, south of the high school, with Kangley to the west. The former rail corridor passes through the undeveloped Spring Lake City Park along Eagle Creek

COMED TRANSMISSION LINES

An overhead COMED transmission line on double wood poles runs north-south along the east bank of the river. It feeds into both the old and new COMED sites and runs north past the YMCA and Centennial School at Oakley Avenue. It continues all the way to Ottawa through agricultural fields.

GRAVEL AND SAND PITS

North of the City treatment plant along the river and transmission corridor is an abandoned sand and gravel pit. The privately owned pits, located at the foot of both 2nd and 3rd Streets, is probably home to various birds and wildlife. However, evidence of ATV use and vandalism are evident as well.

ACTIVE RAIL CORRIDOR

Separating the gravel pits from the COMED service yard is an active rail line with a fantastic trestle bridge that crosses high above the river below. At this same location, magnificent, exposed bedrock cliffs add to the drama of the overhead bridge. And while any active rail corridor can be an impediment to trail development, it appears physically possible get a trail underneath the rail bridge.

INACTIVE RAIL CORRIDOR

In addition to the many active rail lines and yards in the Streator area, it has equal number of inactive lines that could serve the Greenway master plan as trail linkages. Some of the corridors have already been assumed, either legally or illegally, by adjacent property owners. However, many former rail corridors exist along and over the river and could make great links between key community features or facilities.

STREATOR COUNTRY CLUB

North of the COMED Service yard on the east river bluff is the private Streator Country Club 18 hole golf course. The property's bluffs are



Figure 23. Spring Lake Park's Eagle Creek today.

heavily wooded and far enough away from the edge that no erosion or degradation of the slope is seen. It is unclear if the hole alignment of the course, let alone the ownership, would allow a pathway to safely pass along its river front. No private homes exist between the golf course property and the Oakley Avenue Bridge. However, privately held farm ground, still in crop production, sits between the golf course and the bridge.

OAKLEY AVENUE BRIDGE

The Streator Area's newest bridge location across the Vermilion River, and its associated right-of-way, is used by canoeists, fishermen, and others to gain access to the river. On the east side of the bridge the county's right-of-way widens in order for the bridge embankment to rise up and meet the opposite bluff. There are no access improvements at this location and vandalism under the bridge has occurred in the past.

Both north and south of the bridge, the farm ground has maintained the trees along the riverbank. Otter Creek/Wolf Creek enters the river on the north side of the northern piece of farm ground. On the west side of the bridge, the bluffs you see are a sign of the beauty that lies down river.

SPRING LAKE PARK

In the past, Spring Lake provided the community's ice supply and a summer time fishing and swimming hole behind a dam built across Eagle Creek. The dam has been removed and low waterfalls still flow sometimes after rains. However, the City of Streator has been forced to fence off this park to protect it from all-terrain vehicles, vandals, and illegal dumping. It is a beautiful park to visit but the fence, lack of parking and facilities, no alternative walking or biking trail connection, and its reputation for unmonitored use by young adults make it uninviting to residents and their guests.

MARILLA PARK

Marilla Park has always been held in very high regard by the community. This park along the shaded banks of Otter Creek is still popular today for picnics, family reunions, and ice skating just as it was years ago when school boys would reserve a picnic shelter at daybreak for their families summer holiday. This park's open lawns, playground equipment, and shallow stream provides lots of entertainment. A very low concrete dam across Otter Creek provides some limited fishing and winter time ice skating. There is concern in the community that sedimentation behind the dam is currently limiting these activities and may someday prevent them altogether.

Existing Conditions

Marilla Park can be accessed via Marilla Park Road (the eastern extension of Oakley Avenue) just off State Route 23, but there are no sidewalks or paths on either side of the Marilla Park Road for pedestrians or bikes.

JAMES STREET PARK

Another undeveloped park site is James Street Park that could serve the southeast side of the community. This former rail yard facility's location, straddling the Vermilion River tributary Coal Run Creek, Oakland School and Oakland Park, and its size make for an ideal park site. Unfortunately, the City and community have never developed the site to its fullest potential.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Every community or project has its own set of opportunities and constraints or benefits and threats. Outlined below are some of the things, positive or negative, that the Greenway concept would have going for it or have to overcome. Nothing listed here should be considered locked in place, taken for granted, or an obstacle that cannot be overcome.

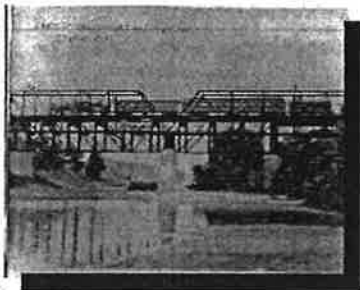


Figure 24. An early combination Sante Fe rail and wagon bridge cross the Vermilion River.

OPPORTUNITIES

PROMOTE LOCAL AND REGIONAL TOURISM

The Vermilion River and its natural features that exist in close proximity to downtown, are probably the most underutilized assets of the community. A successful Greenway will draw people in to the community to shop and patronize the businesses, from purchasing fast food and gas, staying in hotels, bicycle tire tubes, and groceries, lunch at a downtown restaurants, etc. The State of Illinois Bureau of Tourism cites that leisure travelers to the State of Illinois spend an average of \$108 per day while attending cultural events, fairs, shopping, recreational activities, sightseeing and visiting historic sites.¹² While studies specifically conducted for the Little Miami Scenic Trail in Warren County, Ohio revealed that trail users spent an average of \$13.54 per person per visit for trip related expenditures, food, lodging, retail goods, auto expenses, and generated more than \$2 million per year for local communities.¹³ That may seem like a lot but it must be assumed that communities along the I&M Canal are experiencing similar tax revenues.

And while the top five states providing tourists to Illinois include Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Missouri and Wisconsin,¹⁴ many of the

¹²Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Bureau of Tourism, 2000. Illinois Tourism Fast Facts

¹³D. Erickson. 1997 "Implementation of Metropolitan Greenway Networks: Seven Case Studies".

¹⁴Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Bureau of Tourism, 2000. Illinois Tourism Fast Facts



Figure 25. An example of a potential business catering to the trail users. (Courtesy of RTC).

Chicago-land suburban residents are supplying the trade in the I&M Canal Heritage Corridor for outdoor recreation and culture. Morris Harvest festival, Starved Rock and Mattheissen State Park, I&M Canal trail, Historic Ottawa, Sky Diving, and canoeing on both the Fox river and the Vermilion River as well as white-water kayaking in Ogelsby on the lower reaches of the Vermilion River.

The Vermilion River forms the hypotenuse of the triangle that connects the Streator area with both Ottawa and La Salle-Peru. It is very easy to imagine a person visiting Starved Rock State Park for the second or third time and be looking for something new to do in the area. And it does not have to be a person willing to bike 20 miles from Starved Rock to Streator but maybe a driving tour that traces this triangle. Cooperating and providing a variety of activities makes all these communities stronger in terms of tourism.

Other important persons to involve are the State Parks and local merchants association. Strong merchant involvement in the Greenway and Tourism development can lead to cooperative marketing programs, festivals, sidewalk sales, and other events. A highly organized group will always be more successful than several individual efforts.

PARTICIPATE IN A REGIONAL GREENWAY AND CONSERVATION EFFORT

The desire and need for such a Greenway system and comprehensive conservation plan will only become more apparent as La Salle County experiences increased development pressure. After the typical development pressure of homes, businesses, and shopping centers will come a demand for "things to do". There is no reason that this recreation and tourism demand by future residents as well as other visitors cannot be answered by the Streator area. However this future recreational and commercial development, should occur in a sensitive manner respectful and aware of the limited, natural resources we all share.

Also of note are the lack of State Parks or conservation areas within our Study Area today and upstream along the Vermilion River. The State recognizes this as well and is always looking for opportunities to amend this.

A VIABLE PHASE ONE PROJECT

This master plan differs from past Greenway suggestions or attempts because it has a very real, first phase project that benefits the community immediately. The COMED/NICOR sites provide this "place to begin", earlier suggestions had no such place.

The turnover timing is also very favorable to both the City and GSC. The cleanup of the NICOR site is almost complete and the COMED site

is scheduled to be completed and turned over to the City in November 2002, less than a year away. In this short amount of time, the GSC and City must coordinate improvements with COMED and the improvement costs and funding.

One of the immediate benefits to the community besides a nice park is the extension of the Hopalong Cassidy Trail over the Vermilion River using the abandoned rail bridge abutments. This provides a safer pedestrian and bicycling alternative for all ages to move back and forth between the east and west sides of town, especially those children traveling to the City pool on the west side of the river. The current pedestrian and bicycling routes over the Main Street and Bridge Street bridges must use either the narrow sidewalks or travel along with the rumbling and speeding traffic. The traffic, the characterless bridges, and the narrow walks make for an uninviting and dangerous crossing. For adults, this alternative mode of crossing from the west to east (and vice versa) may actually encourage more walking within the downtown area.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

If the Greenway proves successful in attracting more people to downtown Streator, existing businesses and properties could benefit. The market, driven by tourism, will help determine what new businesses might fill any current building vacancies. Those properties that have been neglected for years may finally receive the attention they deserve and help preserve the crumbling downtown facades. Businesses that are not compatible with a revitalized downtown could receive the incentive they need to relocate due to increased property values or rent prices.

Another aspect of downtown Streator that could assist the Greenway effort and downtown is the existing enterprise zone. The purpose of the Illinois Enterprise Zone Program is to stimulate economic growth and neighborhood revitalization at the local level. This is accomplished through state and local tax incentives, regulatory relief, and improved governmental services.

With Greenway plan underway, the City of Streator might be able to market both the Greenway and Enterprise Zone together as a way to entice new businesses or property owners to the downtown area. In addition, this enterprise zone might provide some assistance in acquiring derelict rail road right-of-way.

In addition, with the absence of the COMED/NICOR plant and the proposed river front park, the desirability of the homes and business north of and near Main street will hopefully increase and lead to capital

improvement of these residences and businesses. Many of these properties either fall within or are near Streator's enterprise zone.

PLAYBOAT PROJECT

Creating a kayaking "Playboat Area" near the Main Street and the Bridge Street Bridges where kayakers could play in man-made rapids is a long-term project but an immediate project they would like to begin exploring. Wausau, WI and South Bend, IN have built man-made rapids that successfully attract tourism to their communities. However, such an "improvement" (man made rapids) to earn merit it with the permitting agencies (IDNR, Water Resources, Corps of Engineers), the project would have to prove more beneficial to the environment and community than just recreation. Water quality and habitat improvement must also be considered and, with proper engineering, could be part of an over-all river improvement package, not just a play-boat design.

CREATE A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

Today people are interested in "experience retailing" where they take away more than consumer products from a place but the memory or experience of the place they visited. This is where Dr. Streator, rail roads, Native American history, the zinc and bottle industry, the Greenway's recreational activities and other Streator and Vermilion River cultural resources can combine to provide a unique "Streator" experience.

During the grant application review period, IDNR and other agencies consider the cultural resources of a project area as much as the environmental resources. These resources can and should be incorporated into projects through various means: preservation, interpretive signage, education, etc.

DEVELOP A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVELY HANDLING URBAN RUN-OFF, CONTAMINATION AND SEDIMENTATION OF THE STREATOR AREA'S URBAN STREAMS AND THE VERMILION RIVER.

This can be accomplished through a combined effort at State, regional and local levels. State and federal agencies, local public works, business owners, developers, contractors, home and property owners, established watershed task forces and politicians can work toward cleaner, healthier water flowing in the Vermilion River.



Figure 26. Ice harvesting on Spring Lake.

IMPLEMENT EARLIER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Greenway Master Plan can fulfill other recommendations made to the community in a Times-Press sponsored 1999 Community Assessment report:

- Actively market and promote its "small-town" character and atmosphere and its quality of life, desirability as a place to live and work.
- Prepare detailed plans to implement the Vermilion river front-greenery concept
- Upgrade or creation of community "gateways". The river crossings, stream channels and natural areas could serve as this green "gateways" that visitors and resident pass through that indicate to them that they have arrived at a community with an appreciation for its setting.

PROMOTE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

The Streator Area has an active community YMCA staff and facility, strong organized recreational sports leagues, and various volunteer individuals and organizations that could become an active partner in Vermilion River Greenway projects and activities that get people outside to enjoy the river.



Figure 27. An community shelter example with rustic architectural character.

Building and establishing a Greenway, and its components; trails, outdoor activities, history/heritage, and environmental consciousness, all add to the Streator area's quality of life. Community pride raises a notch with each successful trail extension or handicap accessible fishing deck installed.

Parents have a community-wide network of trails and bikeways that provide safe, nearby outdoor activities that can be enjoyed by the entire family and a community accepted alternative for their child to get to school. Equally important is the Greenway's addition to the area's portfolio that it uses to attract new businesses and their employees to the community.

BUILD PUBLIC SUPPORT

It is evident that Streator area residents are supportive of 'grass-roots', community interest projects ranging from the Hopalong Cassidy River Trail and Canoe Launch to the Streator area's recreational baseball and softball leagues. Strong and continued public involvement in this Greenway Master Plan effort indicates a strong interest in passive recreation opportunities that serve a larger population and user base.

In fact in the course of this study, a new snowmobile club has been formed, adding another partner in the effort to establish outdoor recreational activities in Streator.

The Greenway Master Plan is large enough that it needs the support of other community activists, social clubs and organizations. Examine this partial list and consider how these groups could become involved in the Greenway on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis.

- Lions Club
- Rotary Club
- Knights of Columbus
- AARP
- Good Sams
- High School or Recreational Leagues
- Future Farmers of America
- Garden Club
- Historical Society
- YMCA/YWCA
- Elderly/Nursing Homes
- Boy and Girl Scouts
- Sierra Club
- The Nature Conservancy

DEVELOP AN OVERALL PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN TO COMPLIMENT THE GREENWAY

Currently the City of Streator lacks an overall parks master plan to guide their park system.

A parks master plan would allow the City to:

- Establish Park Improvement Goals
- Schedule Capitol Improvement Projects
- Identify Opportunities
- Prioritize Future Improvement Projects
- Design and Program Uses for Undeveloped Parks (James Street Park/Spring Lake Park)
- Establish Maintenance Guidelines and Budget
- Secure Funding Sources, Both Private and Public

- Elicit Public Feedback on Park Improvements
- Budget Capitol Improvements
- Plan Park Rehabilitations That Better Serve the Public

PUBLIC UTILITY AND SERVICE COMPANY COOPERATION

Almost all of the Streator area's public service companies are participating in the master plan effort, either through the workshops and steering committee meetings or through daily, real means. For example...

- The Illinois-American Water Company (IAWC) continues to provide access to the river through its property at the dam and have participated in some of our meeting. Also, since the dam is over 50 years old the IAWC may need to rebuild or replace it in the near future. The GSC should stand ready to assist the IAWC and community in getting this accomplished. The GSC should lobby the IDNR, the water company, and local governments to provide a pedestrian bridge, fish ladder, and canoe portage, or kayak course as part of its re-design. Removing the 50 years of sedimentation behind the dam would also enhance the Streator Boat Club facilities. Funding for the extras could come from a variety of sources because a new dam, like the Greenway master plan, could provide benefits to multiple users as well as the environment.
- COMED and NICOR are working with the City and GSC to establish a park on their former energy facilities along the river as well as proposing to install a pedestrian bridge connecting the new park to the City pool and the Hopalong Cassidy River Trail Canoe Launch. In addition, COMED has a history in other communities of allowing trails to be placed within their property or easements and there is no reason to believe that a similar arrangement could not be made in Streator as well.
- The parent company of the Streator Landfill Company is very willing to cooperate in the development of the Vermilion River Greenway Concept. The landfill is moving forward with expansion plans but cannot locate its expansion within the flood plain leaving an opportunity for the Greenway trail system to slip along their property and the river. Figure "K" - *Conceptual Greenway Trail and Facility Plan for the Streator Landfill Company Property* later in this report shows how the Moon Creek Trail might pass through this property.

PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC RIVERSIDE LAND USES

Existing public and quasi-public uses that already exist within the Greenway Corridor include:

- COMED's new switching station
- Streator's Waste Water Treatment Plant
- COMED overhead transmission line
- COMED service yard
- Streator Country Club
- Riverview and St. Mary's Cemeteries
- Hopalong Cassidy River Trail
- Armory Building
- Various roadway rights-of-way (bridges)
- Merriner Park
- Streator Landfill Company
- Katchewan Lakes Campground
- Illinois-American Water Company property

As Figure "D" - *Greenway Corridor Ownership Map* illustrates, Streator has the potential to make additional strides toward implementing new, interconnected and community-connected riverside trails. Installing these trails will require the cooperation of adjacent property owners. However, some property owners have been working with the community for years on public open space projects. For example, the Westgate Shopping Center developer/owner has leased the Hopalong Cassidy River Trail Canoe Launch to the City of Streator for years and could share their experience with other property owners who are considering helping the Greenway effort.

In addition, some agricultural properties within the study area are already participating in USDA soil conservation easements, independent of our master plan work. Whether or not the public is ever allowed to set foot on these properties, these easements add value to the river corridor's natural habitat.

RAIL CORRIDORS

Both active and inactive rail lines criss-cross the Streator area providing potential links between key community facilities as well as multi-use trails across the Vermilion River. Inactive lines offer an immediate opportunity but the GSC should also be ready to take advantage of future opportunities when they become available. A program called

RailBanking is discussed in the *CONSTRAINTS* section under the heading of *PROPERTY ACQUISITION*.

SMITH-DOUGLASS SITE



Figure 28. The barren 40 acre gypsum mound, 40 high, at the Smith-Douglass site.

Yes, even this site, though it is also listed as a constraint later on in this report, could be transformed in to a community asset. The site is currently trespassed by off-road vehicles who use the site as their own, private race and obstacle course. One alternative suggested for the site is for the local township or Livingston County to turn this site into a day-use, pay-to-use facility similar to the off-road facilities at Buffalo Rock State Park.

The Smith-Douglass site will require an extensive amount of environmental clean-up, clearing and site manipulation. With all this required work and the site's size, it has the potential to serve the community and Greenway as recreational and restored natural area asset. In addition, a win-win-win opportunity exists to use dirt excavated during the Streator Landfill Company's expansion plans as fill and capping material on the Smith-Douglass site. The Smith-Douglass site wins, Streator Landfill Company wins, and the community environment wins as well.

ESTABLISH A STRONGER VISUAL AND PHYSICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE RIVER AND THE COMMUNITY



Figure 29. The undeveloped canoe launch at the IAWC dam.

The Vermilion River sneaks through Streator largely undetected by those unfamiliar with it. Stronger visual and physical connections or clues can be made at Greenway trail head locations, parks, and river (or stream) crossings. In addition, the proximity of Downtown Streator to the river can be further taken advantage of by the Greenway.

The public currently accesses the Vermilion River by largely undeveloped sites. Both the Oakley Avenue Bridge and IAWC dam sites have no facilities. Only able bodied persons and "those in the know" can use these sites. In addition, there is only one existing trail for the public to travel along the Vermilion River's edge. However, this trail's location is "groomed" does not share with the user all the river can offer in terms of beauty and nature. Establishing a spine trail along the entire Greenway would provide a more pleasurable means of experiencing the river.

PROTECT AND ENHANCE EXISTING RESOURCES

The Greenway system's resources (people, knowledge base, and goals) can assist in the conservation, preservation and restoration of both public and private lands within the corridor, all in an effort to improve the Greenway's various habitats and water quality.

Opportunities and Constraints

Some properties along the Greenway receives minimal attention, if any, while others indicate that the property owner truly appreciates the river environment. The GSC could work with these adjacent property owners who, regardless of whether they allow public access on their property or not, voluntarily want to restore their property.

In addition, with the assistance of the IDNR, the Greenway Task Force could "adopt" a particular specie of plant, animal or fish (or one of each) as a pilot project in conjunction with local schools.

CONSTRAINTS

LACK OF GREENWAY FUNDING

The communities that participate in the Grand Illinois Trail and I&M Canal Heritage Corridor Trail are directly involved in the initial design, improvements, maintenance and ownership of the facilities within their communities. They understand that an up-front commitment to the trail or canal system by the City and its citizens is actually an investment in their community's quality of life and economic development.

There are funding sources, typically grants, that are available to communities to acquire, improve and maintain projects or improvements similar to those within the Vermilion River Greenway. Because of the Greenway Study Area's diversity of recreation, natural systems and land uses within the corridor, it is possible for the City and GSC to apply for a number of different types of grants and funding sources. These sources can be both public and private.

Public funding comes from various federal and state agencies while private funds come from private individuals, corporations and trusts. The commonality between private and public sources is that they are both looking for quality, community based projects.

Some of the public grants work on a reimbursement process where communities must provide 100% of the funding and then get reimbursed back by the state or federal monies. Grant programs vary in their matching requirements; some require 50% matching funds while others require only 20%. However, the state sometimes assists communities by providing some of the federally required matching funds. Also, communities can use forced labor accounts and materials as part of their matching funds.

Another benefit of having an adopted master plan, active steering committee and supportive city council and staff is that the Streator Community can plan projects in advance and spread the fiscal impacts over time. This can work for professional design fees, and capitol improvement or maintenance budgets. Smaller communities than Streator have made appropriated the funds and resources necessary to

implement their portion of the Grand Illinois Trail because they felt it was important enough to the pride and future of their community.

ADDITIONAL STUDIES

When does an idea become too costly or cumbersome to a community? Sometimes it takes additional great ideas must be taken further before it can be determined that an idea is what is best for a particular environment or community.

For example, the "playboat" idea within the Vermilion River would require additional environmental and hydrological studies. But a market study might also be worth performing to determine if such a project would provide the economic return that many people feel it would.

These additional in-depth, project studies could be funded by other sources such as Special Appropriations or Illinois First Grant funds. These suggestions do not mean that the Streator area's Greenway corridor will automatically receive grant money for every project. But with experience, quality grant applications, your community's and the river's attributes, and a City Council adopted master plan, the Streator area should be a leading candidate.

SMITH-DOUGLASS SITE

The former Smith-Douglass plant site presents a very real constraint. If the berm were to be breached and the river poisoned, not only would the river suffer physically, but the river's and Streator's reputation as a recreation destination would be severely tarnished. A poor reputation could potentially wipe out all the work being done on behalf of the Greenway Master Plan. Cleaning up Smith-Douglass and reducing the threat to the river will take the cooperation of many agencies and municipalities beyond Streator. Unfortunately, none of them would be as severely impacted as Streator so Streator must continue to be highly proactive in the clean-up of the site.

Early during this Greenway study, the sponsor for this study, Senator Patrick Welch hosted a meeting with Illinois EPA officials in an effort to have the IEPA move faster in its clean-up efforts.

OPPOSITION TO THE GREENWAY

Crime and property values are the two most common concerns of nearby residents to a proposed trail. They are concerned that after the trail is in place and people begin to use the trail that crime and property

values are going to head in opposite directions. Unbelievable as it may sound to many people, increased crime and lower property values adjacent to trails are very, very rarely the case. In fact, just the opposite typically occurs.



Figure 30. Former rail corridor north of COMED site that connects to both City Park and City Pool.

CRIME

Today many of the Streator area's inactive rail corridors, as well as some public and quasi-public properties along the Vermilion River are unkept, overgrown, strewn with litter and home to various unwanted and illegal activities. Eye-sores that are not maintained and difficult to patrol. A well maintained and managed trail can make for a more reliable neighbor.

The Brown County (WI) Planning Commission conducted a crime and property value study on their county's Mountain-Bay Trail because a new Fox River Trail was being proposed. This study found that crime along the Mountain-Bay Trail in the Village of Howard was "virtually non-existent". Police records for the nearby Ahanapee Trail in Kewaunee County and the Gillet to Wabeno Trail in Oconto County "found no record of crimes reported by landowners adjoining the Ahanapee Trail between 1980 and 1997, and only three reported cases of trespass violations on lands located along the Gillet to Wabeno Trail during the same time period."¹⁵

Greenway system of this size will take time to develop and while that is occurring, the Greenway supporters can incrementally build local support by working with adjacent land owners as well as the local police department, volunteers and residents.

Here are a few examples:

- The GSC can ask local law enforcement, both Livingston and La Salle County Sheriff's department and City of Streator's Police Department, if additional crime would be a concern of theirs. These departments, as well as fire protection districts, should be involved in the review of trail alignment, design and access points for patrol and emergency response purposes.
- The GSC should meet one on one with adjacent landowners when considering the installation and alignment of a trail near their property. Property owners can then relay their concerns and the GSC can respond to those concerns accordingly.

¹⁵Brown County Planning Commission. Recreation Trails, Crime, and Property Values: Brown County's Mountain Bay Trail and Proposed Fox River Trail. July 1998

- Trained volunteers help establish a presence on the trail, assist users, maintain the trail, and report problems. Roughly two-thirds of the nation's trails are patrolled regularly, by either a trail manager or, more typically, volunteers.¹⁶
- Elements that contribute to a safely designed trail are listed under TRAIL DESIGN.

✓ PROPERTY VALUES

Opponents to trails and Greenway also often claim that adjacent or nearby property values will drop. However, most studies find that there is no property value decline and in many cases the value rises slightly. In addition, real estate agents and developers typically list the trail or Greenway as an amenity to the home or lot and that the property usually sells faster than other nearby properties.

The National Park Service (NPS) surveyed adjacent property owners along three trails throughout the nation and asked the property owners what effect the respective trail had on their property's value:¹⁷

Iowa's Heritage Trail

No effect: 73%

Increased Value: 14%

Florida's St. Mark's Trail

No effect: 74%

Increased Value: 16%

California's Lafayette/Morgana

No effect: 44%

Increased Value: 53%

The Brown County (WI) study referenced earlier found similar results. Lots within the Highridge Estates subdivision that fronted the Mountain Bay Recreation Trail sold for an average 9% (or \$2800) more than lots that did not front the trail. And again, those lots fronting the trail sold faster because they were perceived by buyers as being more desirable.¹⁸

Besides crime, one of the adjacent property owners' common concern is liability. They are afraid that someone using on of the Greenway's

¹⁶Rails-to Trails Conservancy. Addressing Common Concerns: Crime. 2000

¹⁷Rails-to Trails Conservancy. Addressing Common Concerns: Property Values. 2000

¹⁸Brown County Planning Commission. Recreation Trails, Crime and Property Values. July 1998

trails, land or water will sue them after the user crosses onto their property, knowingly or not, and injures themselves. Liability has not been a big issue along multi-use trail "primarily because a person entering an adjacent landowner's property is considered a trespasser and the landowner owes limited duty of care to a trespasser."

In addition, recreational use statutes (RUS) currently exist in all fifty states and these statutes typically say that, "no landowner is liable for recreational injuries resulting from mere carelessness if they have provided public access to their land for recreational purposes." An injured person would have to "prove 'willful and wanton misconduct' on the part of the landowner. Also this protection or statute is typically extended if the landowner is charging a fee for access to their property."¹⁹

This does not necessarily prevent landowners from being sued but it does grant them certain protections. The GSC and City should consult a local attorney in reviewing the current State of Illinois Statute regarding recreational use statutes (RUS). Have this information available for discussions with those property owners adjacent to the trail and those who may grant easements.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

For the Greenway master plan to develop many of its multi-use paths, it will need to acquire property and/or receive public easements across private, as well as public properties. While money to pay for these is certainly a requirement, so is an understanding of the various means of acquiring property and the various types of easements that might be available to the GSC and the City. The following descriptions provide an overview of the various methods available to the GSC as described in *Greenway: A Guide to Planning, Design and Development*, by Charles Flink and Robert Searns. Both the GSC and City should consult a knowledgeable real estate attorney to assist them prior to approaching any potential property owners, public or private.

A key to working with property owners is to make every discussion about how each party, the Greenway/GSC and the owner, can each win, the "win-win" proposition. If they feel they are not getting what they deserve and/or the GSC feels the transaction is too costly in some way the deal will not go through. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission can also offer assistance in protection options and incentives for private landowners. Lastly, before securing either title or

¹⁹C. Flink, K. Olka, and R. Searns. *Trails for the 21st Century, Second Edition, Planning, Design, and Management Manual for Multi-Use Trails*. 2001

an easement to a property, the GSC should perform an environmental investigation to avoid potentially contaminated areas or properties.

The three primary methods to secure Greenway property or access include;

1. Management agreement, leases, permits and licenses
2. Easements or partial rights to a specific piece of property
3. Purchase or donation of title from willing seller or donor

TEMPORARY BINDING AGREEMENT

A temporary binding agreement is a short term method of securing a parcel of land. These temporary binding agreements can take the form of the following.

Management agreement: An agreement between the owner and Greenway organization to specify how the property is managed during the life of the agreement.

Formal land lease: the Greenway organization controls access and land-use practices, such as farming or mining, and it can make improvements to the property to ensure the well-being of users. Sometimes the landowner will receive rent from the organization.

Long-term lease or permit: These can be for as long as 99 years or more (similar to COMED's agreement with the City of Streator) and are often granted for \$1 and other "considerations", such as liability protection and property tax relief. This can also include a "revocation" clause that the property owner can invoke if certain conditions are not met, such as maintenance.

GREENWAY EASEMENTS

An easement is mutually binding legal contract between the owner and an individual or organization that has an interest in the land. The owner who grants or sells the easement gives up some rights to his or her property. The easement specifically defines boundaries, uses or management. The GSC should review existing easements within their community more closely for additional opportunities. Two types of easements can be secured on property:

Affirmative Easement:

This type of easement allows the person or organization who has secured the property rights "to access and use the land at any time and to erect or place structures and improvements on the property." An example is when a utility company installs an underground pipeline and

needs access for inspections and repairs. The same can be done for a multi-use path or canoe launch facility.

Negative Easement:

A negative easement is used to restrict land use on a specific piece of property and does not allow the easement holder access or to make improvements. This is usually employed to protect or maintain a scenic corridor or vista.

There are also several specific types of easements that can be employed by a Greenway including:

1) *Right of Public Access* that provides the public with the right to use the parcel for specific things; walking, jogging, biking, but restricts other activities like hunting, or vegetation removal.

2) A *Conservation Easement* defines the use treatment and development of the parcel to protect the natural resources of the land. The United States Department of Agriculture's Soil and Water Conservation District (USDA-SWCD) currently employs an easement program on agricultural properties within a particular river's flood plain called Conservation Reserve Program (CreP). There are currently several properties within and near the Greenway study area that currently participate in this program.

3) A *Preservation Easement* is designed to protect the historical integrity of a structure or landscape. Particular guidelines are established to guide improvement or restoration to the property. An example would be a historic mill, home or farm within the Greenway corridor.

4) A *Joint-use Easement* "defined the legal rights of the grantor and grantees for multiple use of a single parcel of land." An example would be an overhead electrical line easement is maintained by a utility company while the multi-use path below it is maintained by a conservation or forest preserve district. It is a very popular easement because it allows more than one group or company to benefit from limited resources.

✓ TAKING TITLE

By outright purchase or donation, the GSC can control all rights to a property in the following ways:

Fee Simple: The property is purchased from a willing seller for a negotiated, lump sum amount through the use of a standard contract.

Donation/Gift: The landowner(s) give all or part of their property to the organization or agency. The giver may even be eligible for a property tax credit or estate or income tax reduction. The GSC may wish to consult an estate planner to assist them in understanding the benefits

that property owner may receive by donating his or her property and how the GSC must be set up to receive such gifts.

Purchase or Lease Back: An organization can purchase a piece of property and then lease it back to the seller for a specified period of time. An example would be a farmer with land along the Vermilion River needing capital who decides to sell his farm. The GSC organization would purchase the ground and lease it back to him on the condition that a CreP is established along the river and that the remainder is put into “no-till” production.

Bargain Sale: Landowner sell his property for less than fair-market value and treats the difference as a charitable donation tax deduction.

Right of First Refusal: An agreement between a landowner and an Greenway organization that the organization will have the first opportunity to purchase the land. When the organization is notified that the seller is ready to sell, the organization has the agreed upon amount of time (typically 90 days) to match any other credible offer. The value of this is that it gives the buyer (the organization) the opportunity to raise funds to buy the property.

Purchase of Development Rights: A private property owner maintains ownership of the property but agrees to sell off any rights to future development of the property. This is popular tool used to try and preserve “greenbelts” around communities that are experiencing uncontrolled growth or “sprawl”.

Condemnation: This is a last resort method of acquiring property from unwilling seller. However, it is sometimes employed with even willing sellers when deed complications deem it necessary.²⁰

FEDERAL RAILBANKING

“Railbanking” is a method “by which lines proposed for abandonment can be preserved through interim conversion to trail use.” Railbanking treats the “about-to-be-abandoned” corridor as if it had not been abandoned and the integrity of the corridor is maintained. If there is a rail line in the community or region that a public agency or qualified organization feels is about to be abandoned, they can file a “railbanking” request with the Surface Transportation Board (STB). A rail company that wants to abandon a line under STB’s authority must make an abandonment request with the STB prior to abandoning any rail line.

A public agency or qualified private organization sends in a request to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) along with a “Statement of

²⁰Greenway: A Guide to Planning, Design, and Development. C. Flink and R. Searns.

Willingness to Assume Financial Responsibility". A copy is given to the railroad company at the same time so property negotiations can begin. This is not an obligation to purchase the property but it does provide the opportunity to negotiate with the rail company.²¹

Other "railbanking" considerations:

- It is not a method of obtaining free rail corridor.
- The property is subject to possible future rail service however the property would be subject to fair market value.
- Tracks and ties can be removed but bridges and culverts must remain.

NO LOCAL PARK DISTRICT

It has been recommended to Streator since at least 1961 that a Park District be established to better serve the recreational needs of the community. Establishing a park district in accordance with the current State of Illinois Statutes can be done with the assistance of the Illinois Association of Park Districts.

Incidentally, La Salle County formerly had a conservation district but it was disbanded by the La Salle County Board in the early 1970s for reasons unknown. A County conservation district could have assisted in the creation, sponsorship, implementation and ownership of not only Streator's Greenway plan but an overall La Salle County Greenway system.²²

A 1975 Open Space Report prepared for the City of Streator again recommending the park district establishment reinforced their position with the following points that still hold true today.²³

REVENUE SHARING

A park district that covers the entire Streator area should be established to collect and disperse the funds needed to pay for the facilities. Many of these facilities are being used by area people who do not live in the City of Streator. The City is therefore not receiving all of the necessary financial support to maintain their facilities. A park district could pool and distribute the resources so that the costs are equally shared by all.

²¹Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Railbanking" What, Where, Why, When, and How?. 2000

²²Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Centennial City Plan prepared for the Streator Plan Commission. Streator, Illinois, 1969

²³Housing Research and Development Program, S. Stone and R. Callecod. City of Streator Open Space Report. 1975

COMPREHENSIVE ACTIVITY PROGRAMMING

A park district and/or park district employee could guide and oversee all of the recreational services and programs that are currently done through various private, public, volunteer and city persons or groups. A coordinated effort would better serve the needs and demands of the Streator area's residents, resources and facilities.

PARK DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD

A board made up of residents from throughout the Streator area would "think parks (and Greenway)". This board would set policy and budget based upon the recreational needs of the Streator area and do this independently of the City of Streator's operating budget and politics.

LEADERSHIP

A park district and its qualified park professional staff would provide the Streator area with continuity in the planning, implementation and maintenance of both recreational programs and facilities. In addition, this professional staff would oversee the daily business of running a park district and providing for the Streator area citizens.

The park district staff would also serve as a liaison to other city and county agencies, school districts, and city, township and county representatives. The park district would also represent the Streator area on issues at the state and regional levels. And today, the park district could assist in the marketing of the Greenway as a community asset.

FACILITY MANAGEMENT

The park district could cooperate with local school districts to make better use of the tax payer's facilities after school or during summer or holiday vacations. Both children and adult activities could be programmed to make better use of resources. Both the school and park districts could pool their resources to replace and upgrade aging facilities.

Also, the park district would be in charge of maintaining their own facilities allowing the City's public works employees to work on other projects. In addition, maintenance of park and school districts facilities, such as play fields or pools, could be shared.

PREDICTABLE FINANCING

The establishment of a Streator area park district could create a tax base for adequately funding (both Greenway and) park improvements, restorations, maintenance, and recreational programming that the residents of the area (as well as Greenway visitors) request. The park district funds would be used entirely for recreational purposes, remain separate from the City of Streator's general fund, and require all the park and recreation users to fund the park district. A park district is also

eligible to apply for and administer the same grant programs as municipalities.

At the time of the 1975 study suggesting the establishment of a park district there were 13 sources of tax revenue that could be used to raise money. Some of those 13 sources included funds for:²⁴

- Operating Expenses of the Park District (A General or Corporate Fund)
- Recreational Programs (From Organized Sports to Trips to the Morton Arboretum for Example)
- Land Acquisition
- Park Development
- Facility Construction

Another idea is to establish a system in which the added tax revenue generated by the Greenway system gets pumped back into the Greenway for development and maintenance.

Obviously the subject of creating a park district and its related taxes, levies, and operations is complex. But creating a park district is a recommendation that should be taken seriously as a means to satisfy the community's park and Greenway's current and future needs.

BOUB VS. WAYNE

In 1998 the Illinois Supreme Court handed down a ruling in the Boub vs. Wayne township that has slowed the earlier momentum bicycling had enjoyed on Illinois. The supreme court's ruling "means that Illinois municipalities, townships, and counties owe no duty of care to bicyclists using their streets and roads unless there is evidence that bicyclist are intended to use them."²⁵ This ruling stems from a case where a man named Jon Boub sued DuPage County's Wayne Township after injuring himself crossing a Wayne Township bridge. His tire became lodged in a rut created by earlier township road work.

The League of Illinois Bicyclists has been working to restore the rights and protection of bicyclists while satisfying the safety and liability concerns of municipalities. And they have successfully lobbied a Bicycle Safety Restoration Act that was passed unanimously by the

1975 ²⁴Housing Research and Development Program, S. Stone and R. Callecod. City of Streator Open Space Report.

²⁵League of Illinois Bicyclists Website, May 2001, www.bikelib.org/boubcase/

Opportunities and Constraints

Illinois State Senate. (Thanks Senator Welch!) This bill has not made it through the Legislature to the Governor yet.

However, the outcome of this court case and the bill currently in Springfield should not deter or slow the GSC from approaching both the County and State transportation engineers about any of the bicycling tours that it thinks is important to Streator and the bicycling public.²⁶

²⁶ League of Illinois Bicyclists Website, May 2001, www.bikelib.org/boubcase/

GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

PROCESS AND APPROACH

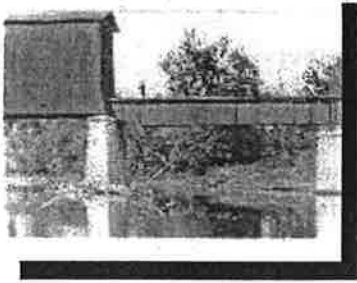


Figure 31. Former rail bridge crossed the Vermilion River at Prairie Creek.



Figure 32. Those same supports could carry a pedestrian bridge today.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Greenway Master Plan effort was sponsored by Senator Patrick Welch and kicked off in late 2000. In February of the following year, the design team held a series of key person interviews. The people interviewed could be characterized as civic or business leaders, interested volunteers, public agency or utility representatives and avid outdoor enthusiasts. Most everyone interviewed thought the idea of a Greenway was a positive one and would prove beneficial to the community.

After the interview process, tours of the river corridor, (both in and out of leaf) and compiling some background information, our first public workshop was conducted. Participants were divided amongst different tables and given the tools necessary to “build” their own Greenway. The groups then presented their Greenway plans back to the larger group. The differences and similarities between the groups was recorded and is presented in *Table One - Public Workshop Idea Matrix, April 25, 2001.*

Because there was no organized, ‘grass-roots’ organization, the workshop attendees were invited to serve on the Greenway Steering Committee (GSC). This ad hoc committee met once a month at open, public meetings at Streator City Hall to plan, develop and organize the Greenway Master Plan idea.

A brief description and purpose of each GSC meeting follows:

Agenda One - Revisit the workshop alternative plans (Table 1) and discuss their similarities and differences as well as become more familiar with the Greenway corridor background information.

Agenda Two - Anxious to get into the field, a self-guided tour of the Greenway study area was developed. Our second meeting was hosted by Jeff Hettrick of COMED at COMED’s riverside facility that will soon be abandoned.

Agenda Three - Based upon feedback from previous meetings and professional experience, three design alternatives were presented to the GSC. The discussion, reinforced by the GSC’s new, as well as existing knowledge of Greenway corridor, centered around the most productive



Figure 33. The GSC meets at the COMED site to discuss its future as city park along the river front.

use of existing assets and facilities as well as how extensive a Greenway Master Plan they wished to adopt as their preferred plan.

This master plan report includes *Table Two - Design Alternative Comparison Matrix, July 15, 2001*. His matrix was developed to assist the GSC in their comparison of the proposed level of improvements for each master plan alternative.

Agenda Four - This meeting focused on what elements their preferred master plan to begin implementing first and where. In addition, the group was briefed on a meeting held with IDNR representatives to introduce them to the efforts underway in Streator.

Agenda Five - The fifth meeting was an opportunity for the GSC to become familiar with some of the local people and resources available to them as a volunteer organization. In addition, another IDNR meeting was held to discuss idea of altering the river flow for the "Playboat idea" within the Vermilion River.

Agenda Six and Seven - Discussion and refinement of the Master Plan Report and its recommendations by the GSC.

PRIMARY GOALS OF THE MASTER PLAN

After having meet numerous times to discuss the Greenway Master Plan, Figure "F", becoming more familiar with the existing conditions of the Vermilion River valley, and knowing the Streator and regional areas as they do, the Greenway Steering Committee (GSC) developed a list of primary goals they would like to see accomplished through or in conjunction with the Greenway. Elements of these goals are further addressed under the description of the Master Plan components.

- IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN STREATOR'S EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

A recurring and very pragmatic message heard and discussed in the GSC meetings was the need to improve upon what they already have. This goes beyond the parks themselves as you will learn later but to start the GSC wants to ensure that they are not proposing to add new facilities or parks at the expense of existing ones. However, a separate park's master plan (see Recommendations) would be required to guide the City and its maintenance department and park board (if established, again see Recommendations) in identifying and planning for future capitol improvements.

- ACCOMMODATE VARIOUS USER GROUPS.

The Greenway's system of trails and facilities must accommodate the needs of the primary Greenway beneficiaries,



Figure 34. Horses and bikes share a Greenway Corridor.

the local residents, as well as out of town visitors. The trails, access points, and other improvements must be made accessible to all age groups, the handicap and elderly, and various users (walker, jogger, naturalist, bird watcher, fishermen, students, bicyclist, horseman, cross country skier, kayakers, and community or civic groups, etc.).

- IMPROVE THE VERMILION RIVER CORRIDOR'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE STREATOR AREA.

Besides improving recreational opportunities along the river corridor, the GSC has recognized that an equally important part of their charge is protecting and/or improving the natural environment along the river. Improvement projects that preserve, conserve, or develop new habitat areas or improve water quality would be done independently or in-conjunction with new recreational projects (i.e. trails, parks, boat launches, etc.). In addition, the GSC is also aware of the need to protect the river valley from inappropriate development that diminishes the river valley's quality.

- REDUCE THREATS TO THE VERMILION RIVER.

Threats to the Vermilion River must be addressed at the same time that improvements are being made or suggested. The single, biggest physical threat to the success of this Greenway project is the precarious Smith Douglass fertilizer site in Livingston County. Acid that escapes into the Vermilion River from this site could result in a "dead" river and tarnish the reputation of the Vermilion River and the Streator area as a recreational destination and a place to live or work. Less immediate dangers, but still viable threats to the river's health, include urban run-off contaminants and illegal dumping.

- INCREASE STREATOR'S REGIONAL TOURISM PROFILE.

The marketing of Streator as a half-day or full-day destination point to visitors of the Starved Rock/I&M Canal Heritage Corridor will take the cooperation of Streator's Tourism Board, the GSC and the community itself. The Vermilion River has a reputation as a quality canoe and kayak experience, one of the best in the Mid-west. Implementation of small but high impact improvements and amenities and increased public awareness of the improvements will assist in marketing the Greenway system. These smaller successes can then lead to the planning and implementation of more ambitious improvement ideas that would benefit the local residents as well as draw more visitors from throughout the Mid-west.



Figure 35. A view of the River's scenic beauty and interest within Streator.

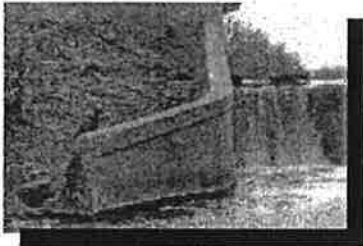


Figure 36. Handicap accessible fishing areas are almost non-existent along the Vermilion River.

- PROTECT EXISTING AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ACCESS POINTS TO THE RIVER.

Boat, fishing, and pedestrian access to the river is limited to three major points, Oakley Avenue Bridge, Hopalong Cassidy Canoe Launch, and the Illinois-American Water Company Property at their dam. Only the Hopalong Launch is partially improved and the Water Company Dam access is across private property. None of these points provide adequate improvements or facilities to serve all of the users mentioned above and each is more accommodating to the automobile than the pedestrian is.

- INTER-CONNECT THE COMMUNITY AND THE GREENWAY SYSTEM.

The opportunity exists to turn the Vermilion River Greenway System into a pedestrian circulation spine that connects different community uses or neighborhoods together. The river currently divides the community into east and West and pedestrian circulation across it is limited to heavily traveled vehicular bridges. And, there is no improved pedestrian access along the river except for the stand along piece of the Hopalong Cassidy River Trail near the Armory.

GREENWAY USERS

LOCAL RESIDENTS

Although the Greenway Master Plan effort was partly undertaken to attract tourist to the community, it is anticipated that 70% of the users will actually be local rather than visitors. This percentage is based upon other trail and Greenway system studies as well as the fact that probably 70% of the Streator area residents live within a ½ mile of the Vermilion River.

As stated in Existing Conditions Section, the Streator population is roughly 15,000. Using age breakdowns for La Salle and applying them to Streator the following percentages are worth noting:

- The percentage of households with children under the age of 18 is 34%.
- The number of residents under the age of 18 in Streator is 25%.
- The number of citizens over the age of 65 is 16%.²⁷

The if you combine these three percentage numbers, active senior citizens (16%), children of all ages riding there bikes to the library or

²⁷United States Census Bureau. 2000 Census Website. La Salle County Data

pool or simply enjoying the outdoors (25%), and the adults of these children who are looking for fun and constructive family outings (34%), you end up with 75% of the Streator population as potential users and riders.

Throw in 5% (a modest number) of the 18-65 crowd with no children but still wanting active or passive outdoor recreation, you get 80% of the Streator population who may be waiting for such facilities to be provided, these people may even be willing to participate in its development once the first phase is underway. The multi-use paths, park improvements, and access to natural areas will provide Streator area residents with passive, unorganized recreational opportunities that they did not have had before.



Figure 37. This elevated wood walkway protects sensitive creek banks and wetlands while providing an accessible path for all users.

THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY CHALLENGED

The Greenway system is not being developed for only the fully healthy, active visitor or resident. All proposed improvements made within the Greenway will strive to be fully ADA compliant. It may not always be possible due to slopes, flooding concerns or unstable conditions, but most grants and local building codes require that new and renovated public facilities be fully ADA accessible. These ADA compliant improvements will also assist the elderly, parents with young children and users of all abilities.

SCHOOL CHILDREN

There is a new, national "Safe routes to School" program sponsored in part by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Federal Department of Transportation. The purpose of the program is to provide children a healthy and safe walking or biking route to their schools while increasing the child's exercise and activity level.²⁸

With more energy as a result of increased activity, the program hopes to reduce the increasing number of health problems associated with overweight children in the United States. In other words, increase the child's activity level and they will hopefully have so much energy that they cannot sit still in front of the television snacking on potato chips.

School administrators, parents, students, GSC, and local law enforcement should all be active participants in determining safe routes to and from each school. The CDC has been providing grant money to assist communities with projects that could have a positive impact on a communities health. The Greenway should keep the CDC on its list as a potential funding source.

²⁸Centers for Disease Control. 2001. Kids-to-School: A Guide to Promote Walking to School. www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk.htm

EDUCATORS

The restoration and conservation efforts also provide local schools, from grade school to community college, the opportunity to be involved in preservation or conservation efforts. From implementation, documentation and monitoring, the schools can be heavily involved.

OTHER BENEFITS

Preservation and conservation efforts within the Greenway will have a positive benefit to the Vermilion River's overall eco-system. The designated, developed, and/or preserved natural areas will attract wildlife and provide a place for plants to flourish. Success in these areas will attract outdoor lovers interested in birds, plant wildlife and the general outdoors. An unconfirmed rumor is that bird watching is the fastest growing outdoor activity in the United States.

ACTIVE USERS

The Greenway is hoping to attract users of all types, ages, and socio-economic background to enjoy the Greenway's environment, beauty, history, cultural heritage, and recreational facilities their pathways. The anticipated users that the GSC plans to accommodate include:

- Bicyclists
- Roller-bladers
- Walkers
- Joggers
- Dog Walkers (With Dogs on Leashes)
- Equestrian
- Cross Country Skiers
- Canoe-ists, Inner-tube Floaters, Kayakers
- Fishermen and Women
- Naturalists

Uses not currently planned to be allowed include:

- Motorized vehicles of any kind (except service and emergency vehicles)
- Hunting or Trapping
- Swimming
- Private Concessions without City and GSC approval

PHASE ONE OBJECTIVES

When trying to decide where to begin implementing their Master Plan, the GSC identified six priority areas or opportunities that required minimal use of new resources, maximum use of existing resources, greatest positive impact on the Greenway and community, and greatest chance of success. Some of these priority areas and ideas are very achievable in the short term while others will take much longer to implement. However, by identifying these long term priority projects now, the GSC and City can begin working on them now.

OBJECTIVE ONE - DEVELOP THE COMED/NICOR PARK SITE AND EXTEND THE HOPALONG CASSIDY RIVER TRAIL

Connect the existing trail to the Hopalong Canoe Launch and then across the river to the new, river front Power Plant City park that will be leased to the City by COMED and NICOR. This would require the installation of a bridge across the old railroad abutments, a bridge that COMED has at least verbally committed to providing, former rail road right of way acquisition on both sides of the bridge, and park and trail improvements as well. COMED and NICOR are responsible for remediation and monitoring of the site clean-up.

As seen on Figure "G", *Phase One Improvement Plan*, A strong visual connection between these three key Greenway components, the Power Plant Park, Hopalong Cassidy River Trail and the Hopalong Canoe Launch, and the shopping districts on both sides of the river are important components to attracting both residents and visitors to frequent the businesses.

OBJECTIVE TWO- REGIONAL BICYCLE CONNECTIONS TO STREATOR

Through the cooperation of both the Illinois Department of Transportation and the La Salle County Road Commissioner, the GSC feels that identifying logical and safe touring bicycle routes within the triangle mentioned earlier that connects Streator, Ottawa and the Starved Rock area and then marketing these routes would provide a relatively in-expensive recreation opportunity. Once these trails are identified, improvements (such as signs, pothole and shoulder work) can be planned as part of on-going maintenance and capitol improvements at the IDOT district or County levels.

OBJECTIVE THREE- DEVELOP A STREATOR PARKS MASTER PLAN

As identified earlier under Goal Number One, the GSC recognizes the need to identify, prioritize and perform capital improvements on Streator's existing parks. Besides the undeveloped parks such as James Street and Spring Lake, existing parks like Marilla Park also require some upcoming attention.



Figure 38. View from Main Street bridge northwest toward the Canoe Launch.

OBJECTIVE FOUR - IMPROVE BOATING EXPERIENCE, FACILITIES AND RIVER ACCESS

The Vermilion River itself is a Greenway trail that is already in place and awaiting more users. Today's canoe-ists, as well as fishermen and women, can be easily accommodated with basic improvements. However, attracting more advanced users may require more intensive development of a play-boat area in the Hopalong horseshoe near the Main and Bridge Street bridges.

Basic portage facilities (ramps or docks), restrooms, and parking areas at the Old Route 23 Bridge right-of-way, the Illinois-American Water Company Dam and the Oakley Avenue Bridge would benefit both canoe-ists and fishermen and women. An additional site, further down stream and out of the study area is improving the existing Sandy Ford Launch site north of town.

The play-boat area idea would use a combination of erosion control devices and man-made rapids (under water obstacles) to direct and create quicker moving water for the more experienced kayakers to use during high water when most other water users would not be on the river.

OBJECTIVE FIVE - IMPROVE INTRA-CITY BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN LINKS

Through the use of public education, maps, signage, bike lanes (new or constructed), and sidewalks, a basic trail armature could be identified. This armature would identify safe and preferred routes between schools, civic uses, parks, central business districts, other special uses, and eventually the Greenway system itself.

OBJECTIVE SIX - ASSIST IN THE RE-DEVELOPMENT OF THE SMITH-DOUGLASS SITE

Because the site is such a large and real threat to the Greenway, the environment and Community, the GSC recognizes that it will take local, citizen pressure to get the 'powers that be' to do anything about the site. The GSC feels that if they can present both a plan and a commitment to appropriate agencies and politicians that a remediation plan can begin to move forward.

Phase One Improvement Plan



Figure 6

Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan | Streator, Illinois | January 2002

MASTER PLAN COMPONENTS

The Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan is composed of both trails and special destination points. Outlined below is a description or level of improvement proposed by the GSC. Please refer to *Figure "F" Greenway Master Plan*.

SPECIAL USE AREAS

ILLINOIS-AMERICAN CANOE LAUNCH



Figure 39. An example of a concrete, walk-in boat ramp and interpretive signage.

- ADA accessible fishing deck near dam
- Concrete canoe launch 'walk-in' ramp
- Greenway Master Plan Trail signage
- Portage area around (south of) IAWC Company Dam (to accommodate those canoeing from Pontiac)
- ADA accessible concrete path from road to river bank for boat launching and fishing
- 20 Car parking area on Smith-Douglass property
- Restore as natural area/flood plain
- Provide site furnishings and public restroom

SMITH-DOUGLASS SITE

The GSC would like to see the Federal, State and County (both La Salle and Livingston) and Local agencies come up with plans to:

- Reduce the immediate threat of river contamination due to a breached berm/dike along Phillips Creek on the S-D site.
- Develop a remediation plan and implementation schedule.
- Assist in the development of the site as an off-road vehicle recreation park (both motorized and non-motorized vehicles).

OLD ROUTE 23 CANOE LAUNCH

- Install concrete 'walk-in' launch pad.
- Clear and improve banks for fishing access.
- 15 car parking lot
- Provide site furnishings and public restroom
- Greenway Master Plan Trail signage

BRICKYARD PENINSULA

- Access road and 15 car parking lot located less than a quarter mile off Coalville (East 1625) Road/Columbus Street.
- ADA accessible fishing decks or spots along shoreline
- Restored Natural Area
- Site furnishings and restroom
- Greenway Master Plan Trail signage

HOPALONG CASSIDY RIVER TRAIL CANOE LAUNCH AREA

- Updated Site Furnishings and Public Restroom
- Greenway Master Plan Trail signage
- Trail connection to existing Hopalong trail, through St. Mary's Cemetery to the old rail bridge abutment/r.o.w.
- Improved parking for 20 vehicles/turnaround space
- ADA accessible fishing deck and clear bank access

PLAY BOAT AREA (MAN-MADE RAPIDS)

- Man-made rapids before, between, and after the Main and Bridge Street Bridges
- Reduce the erosive effects of the river against its banks
- Accommodate both experienced and inexperienced boaters through this stretch of river.
- Marked path with crosswalks from Hopalong Canoe Launch to Merriner Park
- Walk-in kayak launch site and staging area behind Merriner Park/Armory
- Boaters (kayakers/canoeists) would put in behind the Merriner Park, paddle down river through the man-made devices placed just before, between and after the Bridge Street and Main Street bridges. Boaters would then take out at existing Hopalong Cassidy Canoe Launch and start all over again, all within a short quarter mile portage.



Figure 40. River bank behind Armory building where Play Boat area might begin.

POWER STATION PARK (COMED/NICOR SITE)

The following figures provide a conceptual plan and view of how the Greenway's first project site, the COMED/NICOR site, might look as a park. Figure "H" provides an Illustrative Plan while Figures "I" and "J" respectively provide a bird's eye view from above St. Mary's



Figure 41. Existing concrete bridge supports between COMED site and St. Mary's Cemetery.



Figure 42. An artist's rendering of how a pedestrian bridge might look on these abutments.



Figure 43. Abandoned rail bridge in Spring Lake Park.

Cemetery looking east toward the site and from the banks of the Hopalong Cassidy Canoe Launch looking across the Vermilion River.

- Naturalized river front plantings to restore the area and reduce weekly/monthly maintenance on the part of City resources
- Picnic Shelters, benches, trash receptacles, and other site furnishings
- Cultural/Interpretive signage
- Greenway Master Plan Trail signage
- Camouflage the COMED and NICOR buildings to remain to better fit the park's character
- ADA accessible sidewalks and multi-use paths into and within the park
- ADA accessible fishing access (piers/docks/clear banks)
- 'Walk-In' concrete canoe launch
- Parking for 20-25 vehicles
- Storm water retention wetland to filter site run-off from new improvements (if required)
- Acquire former rail r.o.w. and install bridge over abutments

SPRING LAKE PARK

- Develop overnight camping facilities for both recreational vehicles and car-camping (tents) and provide site hook-up facilities
- Restore Spring Lake to its original height (or similar) in order to provide both a recreational and site amenity
- 20-25 Car Day-Use Parking lot
- Restored Natural Areas with Interpretive Signage through out the site as well as Greenway Master Plan Trail signage
- ADA accessible, multi-use trails through out appropriate areas of park
- Public Restroom and shower facilities
- Site Furnishings; picnic shelters, benches, trash, etc.

OAKLEY AVENUE BRIDGE CANOE LAUNCH (EAST BANK RIGHT-OF-WAY)

- 10 Car Parking facility and turn-around
- 'Walk-in' concrete canoe ramp
- ADA accessible deck, dock or otherwise stabilized bank for

fishing and boating access

- Greenway Master Plan Trail signage
- Minimal site furnishings; benches and trash

RIVERWAY



Figure 44. One of many abandoned rail bridge supports along the lush river banks.

The Vermilion River itself provides the best opportunity to enjoy the Greenway, although it may be seasonal, but the beauty, nature and history is hard to match. The earlier mentioned launch improvements will assist this riverway along with the following signage:

- Greenway Master Plan Trail signage
- Mile markers/locations maps
- Nearby Facilities
- Interpretative Signage for both cultural and natural experiences

MULTI-USE PATHWAYS

KATCHEWAN LAKES LOOP

A shoreline trail loop that runs along the northern bank through the campground and under both the railroad and highway bridges. From there the trail moves along old Route 23 to Livingston Road and back to the Canoe Launch. Installing a bridge over the existing brick, bridge abutments would provide a southern loop around the reservoir. A link along an old rail road right-of-way would link the trail to both James Street Park and downtown Streator.

MOON CREEK LOOP

Working in conjunction with the Streator Landfill Company (SLC), Figure "K" - *Conceptual Greenway Trail and Facility Plan for the Streator Landfill Company*, riverside trail could be developed that connects the old Route 23 Bridge Canoe Launch to both Coalville Road and the Brickyard Peninsula. The Moon Creek Loop skirts along the southern and western bank of the river through the SLC property within the 100-year flood plain. The trail could then continue north through the old clay strip mine that once served the brick factory. Passing through a the Brickyard Peninsula, a new public fishing and natural area, the trail travels back to the Route 23 Canoe Launch via East 1625th Road. The trail then travels along Columbus Road north past Kimes School to Route 18 and the Hopalong Cassidy River Trail.

Power Plant Park Illustrative Plan

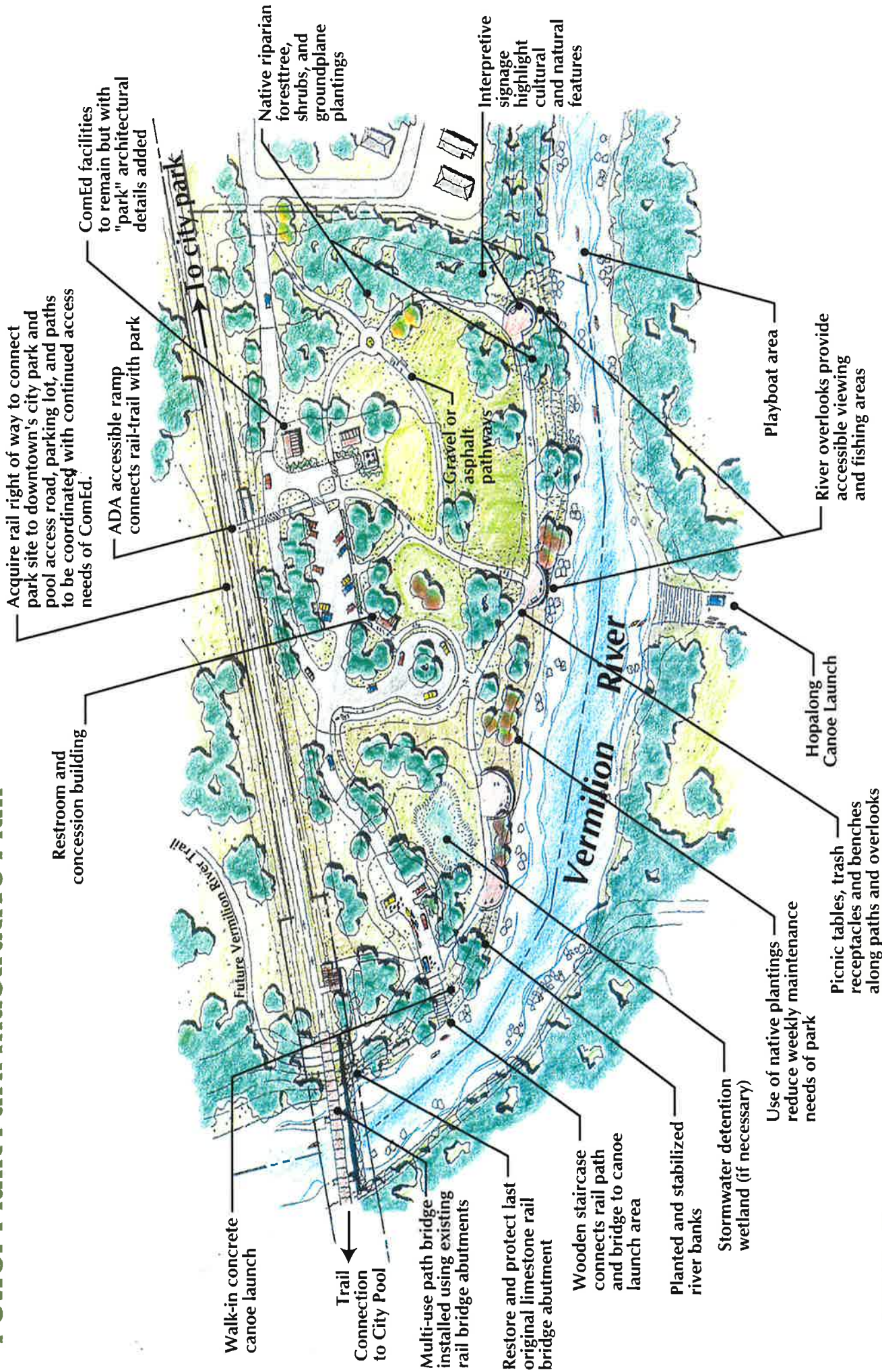


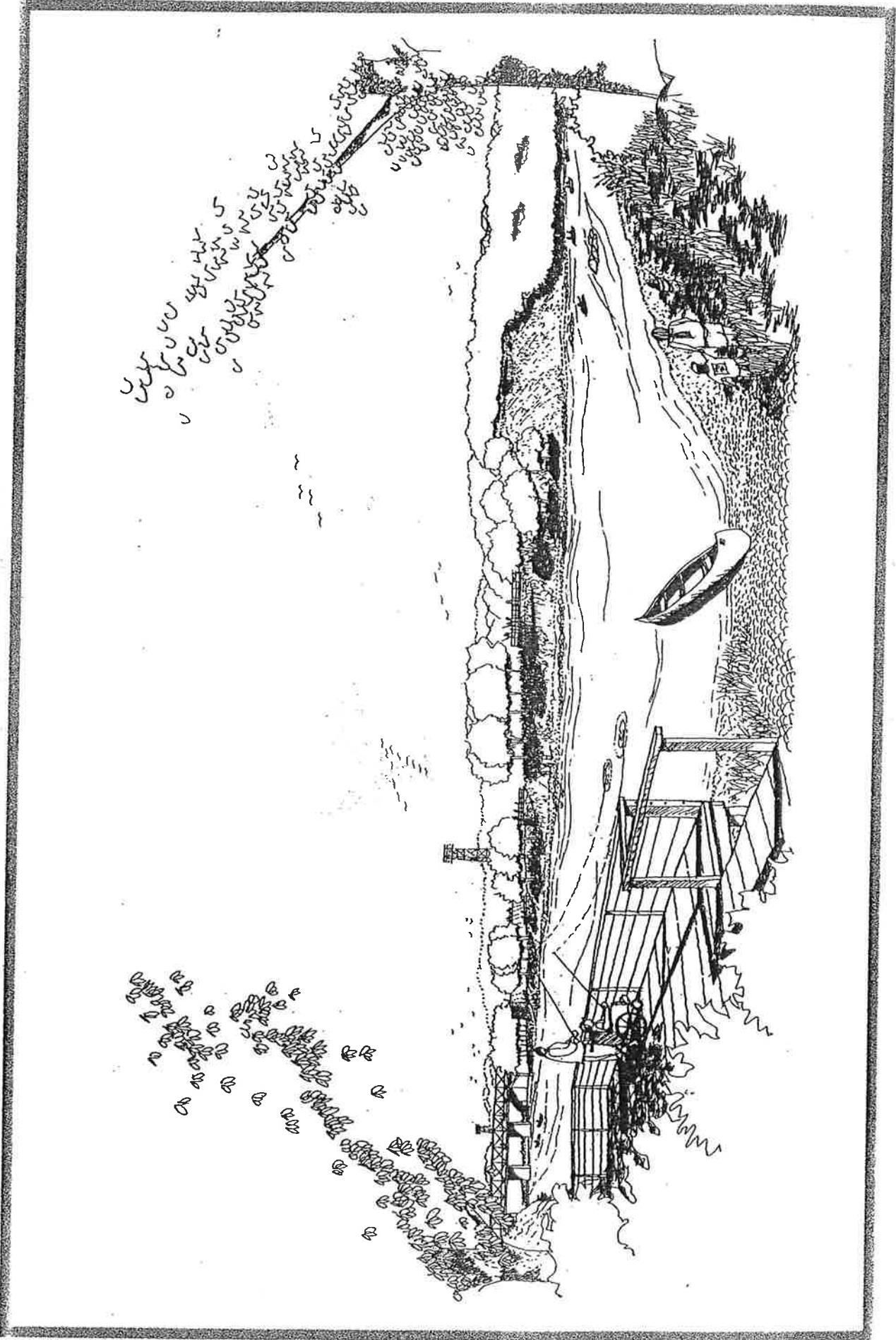
Figure H

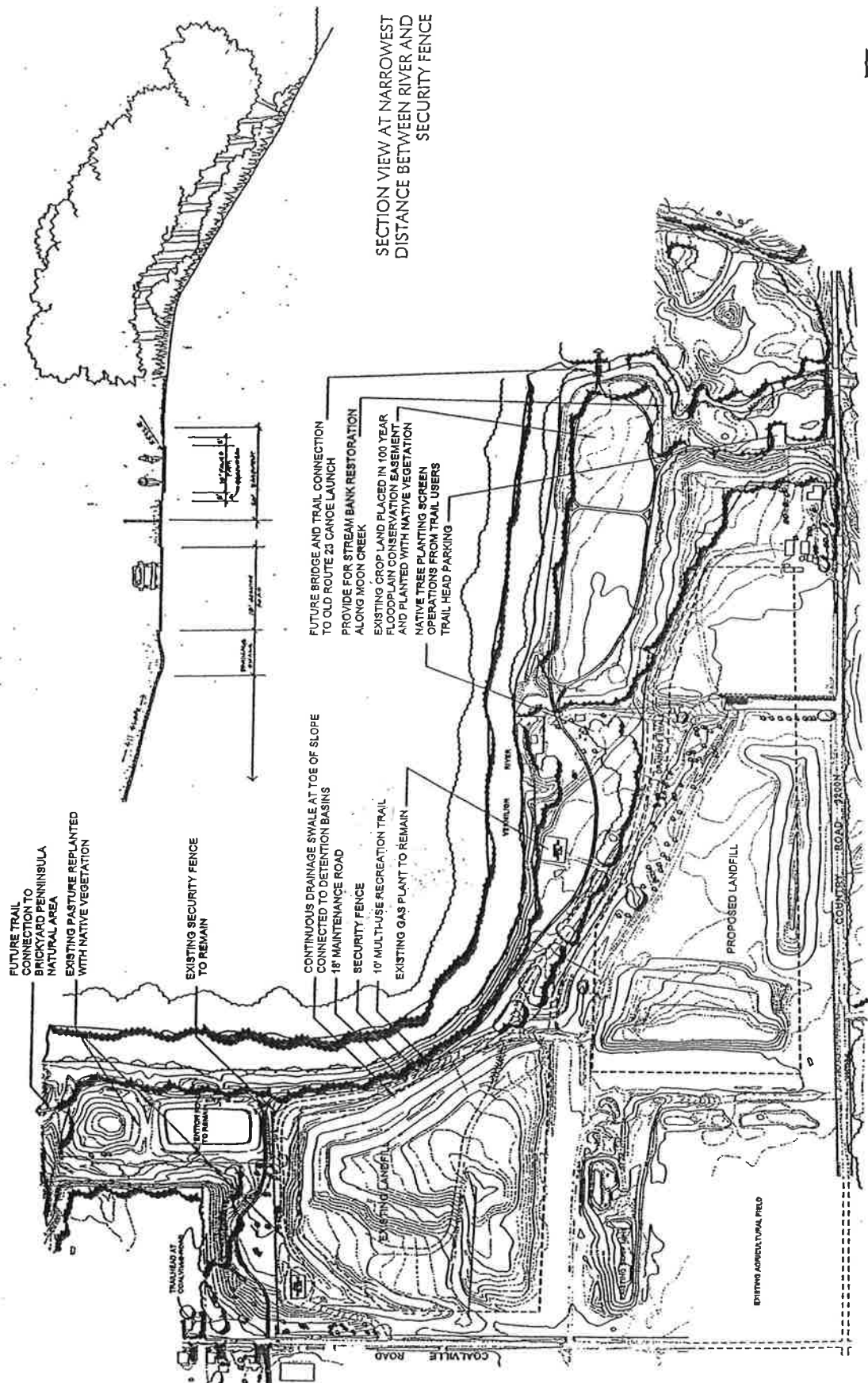
Bird's Eye View of Power Plant Park Looking Northeast



Figure 1

Figure 1
View of Power Plant Park From Hopalong Cassidy Canoe Launch





SECTION VIEW AT NARROWEST DISTANCE BETWEEN RIVER AND SECURITY FENCE

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Designed for:
 Vermilion River Greenway Steering Committee
 City of Streator
 100 N. Main St.
 Streator, IL 61361

Conceptual Greenway Trail and Facility Plan
Streator Landfill Company
 South Streator, Illinois
 January 2002

FIGURE K

BRICK YARD PATH

This path travels along the river's east bank behind the brick and block factories on bottomland (former) farm ground. It is accessed via existing roads to the east and the former quarry rail bridge to the south. Its northern spur connects to the Old Town Loop via River Avenue.

The Brick Yard Path and Moon Creek Loop are connected via an abandoned rail bridge, partially intact, that once carried clay across the river from the strip mines to the brick and block factory.



Figure 45. A wide, paved path accommodates a variety of users.

HOPALONG CASSIDY RIVER TRAIL

As mentioned earlier in this report and priority areas, the Hopalong Cassidy River Trail will be connected under the Main Street Bridge, through both the Canoe Launch and St. Mary's Cemetery via the former rail right of way and the Power Plant Park. In addition, a stronger sign program will be included along existing, city streets to link the Moon Creek Loop, Hopalong and Sandy Ford Line (Route 18). In addition, stronger signage and visual links will be made at the Main and Bridge Street bridges.

OLD TOWN LOOP (NORTH AND SOUTH)

Signage and hand maps would guide visitors on this walking or biking tour of historic buildings, parks and other sites as well as local stores and businesses. The eastern spurs would provide signed links for residents to access downtown, schools, public facilities, and the Greenway and allow guests to explore more of the City.

SPRING LAKE LOOP (KANGLEY)

This loop is a combination of off-road, multi-use trails and roadways. A user could begin in downtown Streator and travel to Spring Lake Park via a new bridge (using the former rail abutments at Prairie Creek) and former rail corridor. Once at Spring Lake Park connecting to Kangley is done by a county road or, if available, the continuation of the rail right-of-way. From Kangley, or Spring Lake Park, the user could return to Streator via county and state roads.

VERMILION RIVER TRAIL

This trail provides the users the opportunity to follow the Vermilion River north (down stream) from Power Plant Park along the river using an existing utility line easement as well as City and COMED property. The trail travels north under the active rail line, alongside the Streator Country Club and down along the flood plain agricultural field to Oakley Avenue Bridge.

A Prairie Creek Trail extension moves east along Prairie Creek and connects to the Old Ottawa Line at Route 23 / Bloomington Street, providing residents and guest access along a restored creek and natural area. In addition, improvements at Route 23/Bloomington Street could also act as a gateway feature for the community as well as the Greenway system.

POWER STATION TRAIL

Just under the active rail line, the Power Station Trail moves northeast using the COMED, overhead power line easement. This trail would terminate at the community facilities of the YMCA, Knights of Columbus, and Centennial School. All of these facilities front Oakley Avenue. Users could then head west to the Oakley Avenue Bridge or east to the Ottawa North Line(s) and Marilla Park.

OLD OTTAWA LINE AND OTTAWA NORTH LINE (ROUTE 23)

The Old Ottawa Line travels along a currently active railroad right of way, presenting the opportunity to introduce first "Rails with Trails" in North Central Illinois. This trail, as well as the Route 23 Ottawa North Line, would link Streator and Grand Ridge with Ottawa and the I&M Heritage Canal. The Route 23 bicycle trail would travel along a widened shoulder on each side of the highway.

Both trails feed south into the heart of Streator with various spurs connecting to other trails and destinations. A small spur to the east along Otter Creek connects users to Marilla Park and at Northlawn school both connect to the Vermilion River Trail spur.

OTTER CREEK ROAD BIKE LANE

The Otter Creek Road Bike Lane would be a signed and marked connection that allows residents, both riders and drivers, a signed and designated route of travel that connects them to Greenway via the Old Ottawa Line to the north (connecting at North Lawn School) and south to the Katchewan Lakes Loop.

GREENWAY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

TRAIL AMENITIES

The color of site furnishings, buildings or shelters, and pathways should be in keeping with the Greenway theme and be of natural materials and/or earth colors and contribute to the Greenway's visual character. The colors, materials and their architectural application should not be loud or flashy. However, the materials and their application do not have to necessarily be "rustic". And the use of colors and materials should be consistent through out the Greenway System, including signage and marketing material, in order to provide the Greenway a unified and cohesive look.

All improvements should be made to the highest possible quality. This will let your users know that you are serious about providing a quality environment and experience for them. The improvements will typically last longer thereby reducing on-going maintenance costs. Poor maintenance or cheap installation techniques can lead to vandalism simply because some vandals justify their actions by saying, "if they don't care, why should I?"

The same level of improvements do not have to be made at every special area. The number of facilities and/or the level of improvement should be based on the expected level of use as well as the site conditions. This allows stretched resources of time, materials, and money to be spent wisely.

BUILDINGS

Buildings , if well designed and sited, can add visual character to the Greenway. Buildings and shelters (i.e. picnic, restroom and shower facilities) should be designed and constructed for simple security, easy maintenance and to withstand abuse. In addition, all shelters and buildings should be built outside of the flood plain. Public restrooms may be high maintenance but they are an incredibly valuable facility in the eyes of the public.

SITE FURNISHINGS

Consistent use of colors, manufacturer, and design style in regards to site furnishings will provide the Greenway a unified and cohesive look and also reduce maintenance time and expense. The use of the



Figure 46. This public restroom's building material fits its rustic setting. It also employs a living "green roof" and a "green" septic system using plant materials.

following site furnishings can also be applied to existing and future city parks as well.

- Trash Receptacles
- Benches
- Bollards
- Drinking Fountains
- Overhead Security Lights and Poles
- Bike Racks (Even Downtown)
- Signage Posts or Supports

Adequate bicycle racks and parking must be provided at both public and private locations in town. If these facilities are not provided there will be less incentive for people to bike. Providing bike racks and parking, even at City Hall, would send a message to the community that the community and City are seriously encouraging people to enjoy, bicycling, enjoy the Greenway and outdoors, and enjoy the exercise. In addition, bike racks should be provided at City Parks and Greenway access points.

Trash receptacle design and placement must allow for ease of maintenance and access as well as providing protection from weather (wind/rain) and wildlife.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

It is important that the signage, wayfinding, maps and marketing materials all work together as one system. The Greenway's signage system must serve three important tasks. The first is to establish the Greenway's identity, the second is to help provide a safe and enjoyable Greenway, and the third is to inform the visitor of the historical and cultural resources of the Greenway area.

Having a strong, clear and consistent Greenway identity will make the Greenway and the Streator area easier to market and compete against other tourist attractions. A well thought out signage and marketing program will attract people to the Greenway and Streator. Once here, they will then be able to recognize and locate the Greenway facilities making for a good first impression.

Secondly, signs can describe and share common trail courtesies, rules, warnings, hours of operation, trail speeds and other general information. Wayfinding signs and maps can also provide distances or direct people to specific locations or services along the Greenway. In



Figure 47. Clear and identifiable family of signs and maps will assist all Greenway visitors. (Courtesy of RTC)



Figure 48. Typical trail rules displayed at a trail head parking area. (Courtesy of RTC)

addition, locating and directing users to key use items such as phones, restrooms, water fountains, and exits, will reduce the fear by adjacent landowners that users will trample their property in search of these items.

Overall Greenway maps should be placed at each access point and special use area and directional and mileage signs placed at trail intersections and overlooks. Direction, mileage and location information and maps should not be limited to the land trails and access points. It is just as important to inform the river trail users of their location and progress. This can easily be done by placing signs on overhead bridges for example.

Lastly, people like to experience a place or things as mentioned earlier under Opportunities. The Streator areas geography and history provide a rich resource of information than can be placed on interpretive signs throughout the Greenway. Again, the design and quality should be consistent but the information presented can vary or follow different themes. Check with the Local historical Society and long time residents that may have photographs or information about what and where items occurred along the Greenway corridor.

TRAIL AND BIKE LANE DESIGN

Good design should result in proper and fun enjoyment of the system by first time and repeat visitors. Care must be taken to create interest within the Greenway as people travel along the paths and roadways or they may loose interest. It is important that view opportunities and overlooks are provided for both interest as well as rest spots. And lastly, the sensitive placement of the trail within the Greenway is also an important consideration in maintaining the master plan goal of preserving and enhancing the existing environment and providing a safe environment for everyone and everything.

SAFE TRAILS²⁹

- Eliminate vegetation overgrowth to improve visibility.
- Trail access points and parking lots should be lit.
- Emergency phones at trail access points, parking lots and/or call boxes along the trail.
- Make all paths accessible to emergency and patrol vehicles.

²⁹Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Addressing Common Concerns: Crime. 2000

- Provide necessary amenities such as trash cans, restrooms, potable water, and other facilities to deter litter and trespassing.

MULTI-USE TRAIL MATERIAL



Figure 49. Striping can be added to asphalt trail to improve safety as use increases.

Multi-use pathways should be crushed limestone, cinders or asphalt. Both are relatively inexpensive to both install and maintain. The gravel provides a more rustic look to natural areas and can always act as a base course for future asphalt if future demand dictated its installation. However, roller-bladers do require asphalt. In addition, there are a number of suppliers of polymers or resins that can be mixed into naive soils as pathway material.

Trails should be installed and maintained to avoid and reduce bumps, potholes, or obstructions. Proper soil evaluation of trail alignments and the trail's use (i.e. fire trucks or just service pickups) will help access the most cost effective pavement material and pavement thickness. Care should be taken to not interrupt the natural rain flow by placement of the trail. Raised beds should be minimized.

MULTI-USE TRAIL DESIGN



Figure 50. A switchback is employed in steep areas to maintain an accessible path.

Trail width can vary based upon the number and type of users as well as terrain. The following trail descriptions follow the current American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines. These updated guidelines should be consulted prior to the installation of each trail project or phase. In addition, Federal or State Funding (transportation enhancement funds) will require that the trail designs (width, alignment and materials) meet AASHTO guidelines.³⁰

Trail Widths:

- Pedestrian only 6-8' wide, 7' height clear
- 10' wide paved surface for bikes, with 2' shoulder, heavy use may need 12-14', 8' minimum, 8' minimum vertical clearance
- 10' minimum width for bridges and overpasses.

A gravel shoulder should be provided on either side of paved trails. A 2.5' to 4' wide pedestrian shoulder will allow faster moving traffic to move past. In addition the gravel provides a softer and more comfortable walking surface.

³⁰Charles Flink. Trails for the Twenty-First Century, 2nd Edition, Planning, Design, and Management Manual for Multi-Use Trails. 2001

MULTI-USE TRAIL ALIGNMENT

Trail alignment should capture scenic views while providing the users a safe and manageable experience. This means that the trail alignments should provide:

- Clearly visible users (pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, motorists)
- Adequate sight lines at both roadway and trail intersections (vision triangle) with no obstructions
- Clear signage as to the right-of-way and in a timely manner (i.e. well before the corners)
- Sight lines for trails, (the view from the trail as well as the view of the trail)
- Unobstructed views each way, ahead and behind, the user as follows:

- Pedestrians: 50 linear feet
- Bicycles: 150 linear feet
- Equestrians: 100 linear feet
- Snowmobiles: 400 linear feet



Figure 51. This boardwalk provides a dry pathway for users and protects the sensitive floodplain.

Where trail alignment near adjacent homes or private property cannot be avoided, care should be taken to maintain the privacy of the owner or resident without disrupting their view (if any). This can be accomplished through sensitive planting of under story and eye level privacy plantings, attractive and appropriate fencing, berming or the trail's elevation (higher or lower).

DESIGN SPEEDS

A maximum design speed of 15 miles per hour for unpaved surfaces and 20 for paved surfaces. These speeds are suggested to reduce conflicts between bicycles and pedestrians and horses.

PITCH

Trail should be flat or gently sloping (3%). A maximum of 5% for ADA compliance. Trail cross slopes or crowns should not exceed 2%. Switchbacks or scissor ramps can be used on steeper terrain to maintain these slopes. Stairs can also be employed on switchbacks where shortcuts could be a problem.

SHARED BIKE LANES

Representatives from the local IDOT district, the La Salle County Highway and Road Department, local public works, city and county

law enforcement and the GSC must all work together on specific and safe bicycle routes that can be implement. It is apparent from our site visits and meetings that the Streator area as well as La Salle County is in need of a touring or road bicycle program to address the growing bicycling demand and the potential for vehicular and bicycle conflicts.

The GSC should make the above agencies aware of the Greenway master plan and your goal to connect to neighboring destinations and towns. Then a series of guidelines can be established with these agencies to address bike routes, lanes, roadside shoulder material and maintenance, signage and wayfinding, and road markings. These guidelines can be consistently implemented in Streator, on the State highways, and along the county roads providing well signed routes and conditions that both driver and bicyclists are familiar.

Signed and marked routes on streets and roadways with lots of driveways (i.e. strip centers, shopping centers) are sometimes preferred over separate trails because drivers are conditioned to look for traffic within the street, not within a bike lane.

MAINTENANCE

The City and the GSC must decide early-on how the Greenway system will be maintained and funded during the detail planning and design of the each, specific project. It cannot wait until after the improvements are installed. It is very common for communities to install a new streetscape or park for example, but then be unable afford to do the associated maintenance to keep the improvements looking and working as they should. Once again, the communities that chose to participate in the Grand Illinois Trail, as well as the I&M Canal, directly participate in the maintenance and ownership of the facilities within their communities.

Even though some Greenway areas may be called "natural" they will still require maintenance. A Greenway requires a different style or approach to maintenance than the high school ballfields or City Park. The city staff and/or GSC members will have to learn how, when and what needs to be done so they can do the work themselves or direct others.

The design process must also include the local police and fire chiefs as well as the director of public works. Their input is critical now to avoid problems later. These three people will be responsible for maintenance, patrol and emergency response of not only the special service areas or access points but the land and water trails as well and their early public buy-in and partnership can also help win support within the

community. They can also assist in establishing safety rules and hours of operations.

CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT PROTECTION GUIDELINES

The Greenway system would not be complete if the GSC and City did not adopt some levels of protection against undesirable development or land use to protect the visual resources and character of the Greenway corridor. The formulation of additional zoning, review requirements and/or design guidelines for properties and land uses adjacent to the Greenway Corridor would allow businesses and property owners along the river to understand and buy into the long-range vision while preventing inappropriate building, businesses or site planning along the corridor.

- Storm Drainage and Run-off
- Fencing and Walls
- Outside Storage of Equipments and Materials
- Building Style and Colors Materials
- Parking and Loading Areas
- Lighting
- Encourage Outdoor Break Areas
- Sidewalk and Path Connections
- Billboards
- Non-conforming Uses
- Landscaping

ACCESS POINTS

The Greenway's public access points should be well signed so users can easily find the Greenway system's access points. Multi-use paths should have either one or three bollards placed across their entrances to prevent joyriding. These bollards should be removable so emergency and service vehicles can access the Greenway.

The parking facilities should be well lit, where appropriate, and kept visible for security and safety reasons. There is an opportunity for the Greenway to employ new technology, such as bio-swales and permeable pavements, in their parking lots to reduce and slow down run-off and contaminants.



Figure 52. A view of the Vermilion River near Katchewan Lakes Campground.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Funding the Greenway system will be primarily through Federal, State, and private resources. No one source should be relied upon as the Greenway's primary financial source. Government grant programs and requirements are continually evolving

RECREATIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

The State of Illinois invests in outdoor recreation in three different ways:

- State Parks
- Conservation Areas
- The Statewide Outdoor Recreation Partnership Plan (SORPP)

SORPP identifies priorities that are used to guide the selection of grant projects. Grant programs available include, but are not limited to the following:

CONSERVATION 2000 (C-2000)

C-2000 is an effort to develop broad-based, multi-disciplinary solutions to ecological problems that bridge the gap between private and public land ownership and benefit. Essentially creating a "win-win-win" for private landowners, public benefit (i.e. - recreation), and the State's natural resources. Below is an excerpt from IDNR/C2000's web page³¹:

"While efforts to preserve and enhance Illinois' natural resources have traditionally been focused in nature preserves, parks and fish and wildlife areas owned by public agencies and dedicated to public recreation, protection of landscape scale resources requires a broad involvement for private landowners and community interests and a collaborative role for the State in promoting conservation efforts. Two key criteria were established for new programs designed to preserve the natural resources of Illinois:

³¹Conservation 2000, State of Illinois <http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/c2000/>

- They must be voluntary, and based on incentives rather than governmental regulations
- They must be broad-based, locally-organized efforts, incorporating the interests and participation of local communities, and of private, public and corporate landowners

The Conservation 2000 Program funds nine programs across three state natural resource agencies:

Illinois department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

- Ecosystems Program
- Review of Illinois Water Law
- Ecosystems Monitoring Program
- Natural Resources Information Network

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)

- Illinois clean Lakes Program

Illinois Department of Agriculture

- Conservation practices Cost-Share Program
- Sustainable Agriculture Grants Program
- Soil and Water Conservation district Program Development Expansion Grants
- Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program

OPEN SPACE LANDS ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (OSLAD)

OSLAD, the largest grant program, assists communities in meeting their diverse recreational needs. It focuses on providing basic close to home recreational opportunities, including land for parks and facilities.

The OSLAD program provides up to 50% funding assistance for land acquisition and development projects that serve a wide range of open space and recreation purposes.

OSLAD also supports the renovation of existing recreational facilities, since aging infrastructure has become a major problem in many communities.

Greenway are a current priority for this grant program according to IDNR sources consulted. Force labor can also be used as part of the communities matching funds (city employees or volunteers).

OSLAD also supports the renovation of existing recreational facilities, since aging infrastructure has become a major problem in many communities.

OSLAD applications may be submitted May 1- July 1 of each year.

BOAT ACCESS AREA DEVELOPMENT (BAAD) GRANT PROGRAM

The Boat Access Area Developments (BAAD) Grant Program provides up to 100% funding assistance to improve the public's recreational use of the state's water resources by developing new and improving existing boat access areas. The program encourages water-trail development as well.

The program's main purpose is to increase access to public waters, by providing more public boat launching ramps and canoe access areas and facilities that support the use of these boat access areas, including courtesy docks, parking, lighting, etc.

BAAD applications are accepted July 1-September 1 of each year.

OPEN LANDS TRUST (OLT)

The OLT Program is authorized to provide grant funding assistance to eligible local units of government for the acquisition of land from willing sellers for public conservation, open space and natural resource-related recreation purposes. Funding assistance up to 50% of eligible project costs, or 90% for agencies qualifying as "economically disadvantaged", is available through the program. A conservation easement shall be conveyed to IDNR for all property acquired with OLT assistance.

The deadline date for submitting applications for this program is November 1 of each year.

ILLINOIS TRAILS GRANT PROGRAM

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) administers five (5) grant programs that can provide funding assistance to acquire, develop and, in some cases, maintain trails for a variety of public recreation uses. These programs can also restore areas damaged by unauthorized trail use activity. The programs include the following:

1. ILLINOIS BICYCLE PATH GRANT PROGRAM

The Bicycle Path Grant Program assists with up to 50% of the costs for acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of public, non-motorized

bicycle paths and directly related support facilities. The program's main objective is the development of long distance bicycle paths and trails for the safe and enjoyable use by the public.

Bike path grants are accepted January 1–March 1 of each year.

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

The Local Government Snowmobile Grant Program provides up to 100% funding for construction and rehabilitation of trails and facilities for public snowmobiling and up to 90% funding for the acquisition of linear corridors for trail development.

The program supports all activities that enhance public snowmobiling opportunities: Trail acquisition, trail development, trail grooming, and equipment for local agency patrol.

These grants are accepted March 1–May 1 of each year.

3. OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE (OHV)

The OHV grant program provides financial aid to government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and other eligible groups or individuals to develop, operate, maintain, and acquire land for off-highway vehicle parks and trails. These facilities must be open and accessible to the public. The program can also help restore areas damaged by unauthorized OHV use. Funds for the grant program come from the State Treasurer's "Off-Highway Vehicle Trails Fund."

Applications for grant assistance must be received March 1 of each calendar year.

4. FEDERAL RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

The FEDERAL Recreational Trails Program (RTP), was created through the National Recreational Trail Fund Act (NRTFA) as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and re-authorized by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21). This program provides funding assistance for acquisition, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of both motorized and non-motorized recreation trails.

By law, 30% of each states' RTP funding must be earmarked for motorized trail projects, 30% for non-motorized trail projects and the remaining 40% for multi-use (diversified) motorized and non-motorized

trails or a combination of either. Eligible applicants include federal, state and local government agencies and not-for-profit organizations.

The RTP program can provide up to 80% federal funding on approved projects and requires a minimum 20% non-federal funding match.

Applications for grant assistance must be received by March 1 of each calendar year.

5. ILLINOIS TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (ITEP)

As part of a larger, federal program, the State of Illinois provides an 80% reimbursement for alternative transportation projects. The goal of ITEP is to allocate resources to well-planned projects that provide and support alternate modes of transportation (trails, bike lanes) enhance the transportation system through preservation of visual and cultural resources and improve the quality of life for members of the communities. ITEP requires communities to coordinate efforts to develop and build worthwhile projects in a timely manner.

GRANT AWARDING

Many of these five programs provide grant assistance on a wide variety of trail related projects in the state. Each program operates on an annual recurring grant cycle with funds awarded on the basis of a review and prioritization of written applications submitted to the IDNR. Projects are evaluated according to established trail objectives and priorities. The director of the IDNR, in consultation with staff and the Illinois Natural Resources Advisory Board, the Illinois Greenway & Trails Council and the Illinois Off-Highway Vehicle Trails Advisory Board, as appropriate, has sole authority and responsibility for approving grants through these programs.

GRANT FUND DISBURSEMENT

Funds awarded and disbursed under these five programs are on a reimbursement basis. This means that once a project proposal is submitted to the IDNR and approved for grant funding, the project sponsor is responsible for successfully completing the project and initially financing the entire project cost. Actual disbursement of grant funds to the project sponsor is made after the approved project is satisfactorily completed and a final project billing statement, verifying project costs, is submitted to the IDNR for reimbursement. Forty-five (45) days should be allowed after submittal of an acceptable billing request to the IDNR for receipt of actual grant reimbursement payment.

ILLINOIS RIVER 2020

Illinois Rivers 2020 is a \$2.5 billion, 20 year Federal-State Initiative to restore and enhance the Illinois River Basin. The requested funds are additive. It will require the following Congressional actions:

Appropriate \$950 million for the Illinois River Basin through existing Farm Bill Programs and the Clean Water Act. The Federal dollars are additive dollars.

Amend WRDA 2000 to authorize the Illinois River Restoration Act to restore the waterway and improve water quality. The Federal share is \$1.5 billion and the State share is \$88 million over 20 years.

Illinois Rivers 2020 will provide a full toolbox to implement a sound and successful basin wide restoration effort. The program offers the opportunity to prove conclusively that fully funded voluntary incentive-based programs work on a landscape scale equivalent to the Illinois River Basin. Proposed is a three component program that requests additional funds beyond the current individual program funding levels and not reallocation of existing funds for Illinois. The programs include:

Farm Bill Programs affected:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CreP)
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)
- Farmland Protection Program (FPP) targeted specifically for the Illinois River Basin
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act which addresses:

- Urban and Rural non-point source problems
- Stream bank stabilization
- Assistance with in-stream management and habitat restoration
- Watershed planning in education

Through WRDA provide annual continuing authority appropriations for

- Removal, analysis, transport, and beneficial uses of sediment
- Long term resource monitoring

- Flood reduction, hydrological restoration and habitat restoration

This crosscut agency budget approach would appropriate new federal dollars through existing federal agencies to provide for expanded **voluntary, incentive-based** efforts that address Illinois River Basin hydrology and water quality, urban and rural non-point source issues, farmland protection and open space, land treatment for storm water, and best management practices for upland areas.³²

ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Grant are issued to municipalities to identify, evaluate and prioritize former industrial and commercial property for cleanup. Grants are awarded for:

- Extensive site assessments
- Preparation of cleanup plans
- Development of Cleanup objectives

Maximum grant amount is \$120,000

BRGP funds cannot be used for the actual cleanup activities. The IEPA claims to be working on a cleanup solution for the Smith Douglass site so this grant may not be applicable to that site nor the COMED/Nicor sites since those two companies have already made and will be making both extensive studies and cleanup operations.

³²Illinois Rivers 2020 Website <http://www.state.il.us/lrgov/IR2020-Why.htm>

Key Recommendations

<u>Action</u>	<u>0-1 Yr.</u>	<u>1-3 Yrs.</u>	<u>3-5 Yrs.</u>	<u>5-10 Yrs.</u>	<u>10 Yrs.</u>	<u>Respon- sibility</u>
<p>INVESTIGATE THE GSC BECOMING A NON-PROFIT VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION (OR JOIN AN EXISTING GROUP). Choose a name, establish format and protocol, elect officers and assign responsibilities. This could assist with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving more quickly and independently than local governments • Accepting donations of money, easements or land separately from the City or County. • Providing legal protection for organization/community/etc. 	X					
<p>PHASE ONE - COMED/NICOR PARK SITE IMPLEMENTATION. Begin implementation efforts and planning for Phase One Greenway Project, the COMED/NICOR park site.</p>	X	X				
<p>BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE COMED/CITY OF STREATOR LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN COMED AND THE CITY.</p>	X					
<p>INVESTIGATE STATUS OF RAIL CORRIDOR PROPERTY ADJACENT TO COMED PARK SITE. Learn what means could be employed to gain ownership or access to the property. (i.e. easements, purchase, "Railbanking")</p>	X	X				
<p>MEET WITH COMED OFFICIALS TO COORDINATE AND MINIMIZE DUPLICATE COSTS FOR COMED'S FACILITY REQUIREMENTS AND THE FUTURE PARK'S.</p>	X					
<p>BEGIN EXPLORING GRANT OPTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR PHASE ONE PROJECT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Development Costs/Phasing • Determine what grant(s) to apply for • Grant Application Deadlines • Grant Writing Assistance and Requirements • Knowledge can be applied to future projects 	X	X	X	X	X	
<p>GSC AND CITY TO ACTIVELY LOBBY AND COOPERATE IN THE SMITH-DOUGLAS SITE REMEDIATION PLAN. The City, GSC and adjacent townships should collectively continue to apply political pressure to the IEPA, other agencies and state officials to assist the community with a clean-up plan.</p>	X	X				

Key Recommendations

Action	0-1 Yr.	1-3 Yrs.	3-5 Yrs.	5-10 Yrs.	10 Yrs.	Respon- sibility
EDUCATE THE GSC. Learn from other communities with Greenways and Trail systems. Become familiar with the state and federal grant programs, submission requirements, grading or weighting systems, and annual submission dates. Work backyard from these dates to build your implementation strategy for the next three years. Ask a local group to pay for your tuition. One, two, or three persons from both the city staff and the GSC should attend.	X	X	X	X	X	
EDUCATE THE PUBLIC. Children, citizens and other volunteer organizations can all participate and benefit from a Greenway system.	X	X	X	X	X	
PARTNERSHIPS - NETWORK AND BUILD STRONG COALITIONS WITH THE FOLLOWING GROUPS, INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES. FORGE NEW PARTNERSHIPS AS NECESSARY. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected officials and their staff; local, county, state and federal. Persons or agencies that have a high level of grant writing experience. County Highway and District IDOT in the establishing bicycle routes along their roadways. Local representatives for La Salle and neighboring Counties, State and Federal Departments or Agencies such as IDNR, USDA, and etc. Neighboring communities (both large and small) north of Streator and along the Vermilion River. 	X	X	X	X	X	
INVESTIGATE ESTABLISHING A VOLUNTEER STREATOR PARK BOARD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduit for Public Feedback & Involvement Identify & guide capitol improvements Organize volunteer efforts under one umbrella City-Wide Parks Master Plan Prioritize Park Projects and Needs for Volunteer efforts (funding/implementation) Cooperate with City Staff and Employees Explore the idea of a Streator Park District 	X	X	X			

Key Recommendations

<u>Action</u>	<u>0-1 Yr.</u>	<u>1-3 Yrs.</u>	<u>3-5 Yrs.</u>	<u>5-10 Yrs.</u>	<u>10 Yrs.</u>	<u>Respon- sibility</u>
DEVELOP IMPROVEMENT PLANS FOR EXISTING OR POTENTIAL CANOE AND BOAT ACCESS AREAS. Working with what is immediately available, the River itself, canoe launch facilities could be developed to accomplish the needs of the property owners as well as those of the Greenway Master Plan.		X	X			
VISIT OR RESEARCH OTHER MID-WEST COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE EITHER A SIMILAR GREENWAY OR WHITE WATER/PLAY BOAT WATER COURSES. Learn what investment these communities have had to make and what the return has been to those communities.		X				
INVESTIGATE THE PREPARATION OF A HYDROLOGICAL STUDY OF THE "PLAY BOAT" AREA. Invite a Water Resources engineer to visit the Vermilion River to discuss the idea of a play boat area in the Vermilion River Horseshoe. Ask that person for a ballpark figure for both engineering study fees, a construction budget, and an implementation time-line, including permitting and review from State and Federal agencies. Determine whether this is an investment that would work for the Streator area and the Vermilion River basin. This will help determine the environmental effects; both positive and negative, of a man made rapid within the river.	X	X				
APPROACH UTILITY COMPANIES ABOUT PLACING A MULTI-USE PATHS ON THEIR EXISTING EASEMENT AND/OR PROPERTIES. Learn what they would expect of the path and its maintenance and what you would expect of them. Learn how other communities have successfully used this approach.		X	X			
BECOME FAMILIAR WITH PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS, EASEMENTS, AND OTHER OPTIONS. Having this information and knowledge will be valuable when discussing possible trails adjacent to or on private property via an easement, or existing utility easements with property owners or easement holders. The State Public Utilities Commission can assist in learning more about overhead and underground easements. Consult the State of Illinois Statute regarding recreational use statutes (RUS) and a local attorney to assist the deciphering the current statutes in Illinois.		X	X			

<u>Action</u>	<u>0-1 Yr.</u>	<u>1-3 Yrs.</u>	<u>3-5 Yrs.</u>	<u>5-10 Yrs.</u>	<u>10 Yrs.</u>	<u>Respon- sibility</u>
DEVELOP A WAYFINDING SYSTEM FOR THE GREENWAY. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directional signage • Kiosk Maps • Flyers and Brochures • Trail signs and directions 	X	X				
ADD A PAGE TO STREATOR.ORG'S WEBSITE TO SPECIFICALLY PROMOTE THE GREENWAY SYSTEM'S RECREATION, NATURAL SYSTEMS AND SCENIC BEAUTY. The proposed website's contents and execution are included in the back of this report.	X	X				
CONTINUE TO MARKET THE GREENWAY PLAN WITH OTHER EXISTING TOURISM OBJECTIVES AND LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS.	X	X	X	X	X	
LOBBY THE CITY COUNCIL TO FORMALLY ADOPT THE GREENWAY MASTER PLAN. As an official, City planning document (or equal), the City council and staff will show support future assistance to the Greenway effort. This could become important during grant application review and future cooperation with another government body (city or county).	X					



Figure 53. The old limestone trestle support on the COMED property.

CONCLUSION

The overall Greenway Master Plan Report is a tool to organize and test the ideas and solutions presented during this Greenway effort. Much more thought and detailed design work is needed before each phase of the Greenway is implemented to ensure a final product which will meet everyone's expectations. To succeed, this process must continue at a rate which allows for sensible design while continuing the momentum needed to continue the excitement for the Greenway concept.

The City of Streator and its citizens, particularly the Greenway Steering Committee members and those who voluntarily work within the parks and along the River, have the opportunity to undertake a very achievable goal of creating a Greenway within the community. The Streator Area has a beautiful river environment to work with and is has interested, knowledgeable, and committed citizens and civic leaders.

Once again, Streator has the opportunity to led example within the region, La Salle and Livingston County, in the creation of a Greenway. Interest in doing the same and learning from what Streator is doing is growing in surrounding communities. Streator must position itself to take full advantage of this growing interest.

The City staff, council and citizen volunteers must rise to the occasion.

GREENWAY STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

JERRY O'KRASKI	CHARLES DOMINIC
JEFFREY WILLIAMS	PAM WALKER
JOHN MAJERNIK	CINDA BOND
MICHAEL SINENI	ARLETTE SALATA
MICHAEL PAVLICK	BERNIE ANDERSON
GLENN CLAYTON	TERRENCE DORDAN
GENE TAYLOR	JEFF HETTRICK
ROSEMARY WALKER	TROY DIMMIG
DAVE REED	JOHN REZANKA
ROBERT DIEKEN	JAMIE GAHN
ED BROZAK	

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2000. Vermilion River (Illinois Basin) Area Assessment, Volumes 1-4.

Implementation of Metropolitan Greenway Networks: Seven Case Studies, Donna Erickson, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Centennial City Plan. Prepared for the Streator Plan Commission. Streator, Illinois, 1969

University of Illinois Housing Research and Development Program, S. Stone and R. Callegod. City of Streator Open Space Report. 1975

Illinois Department of Conservation and Illinois Department of Transportation Water Resources. Report on the Feasibility of Establishing a Vermilion River Canoe Trail Downstream from Streator, Illinois. 1975

League of Illinois Bicyclists Website, www.bikelib.org/boubcase/. May 2001

C. Flink, K. Olka, and R. Searns. Trails for the 21st Century, Second Edition, Planning, Design, and Management Manual for Multi-Use Trails. 2001

C. Flink and R. Searns.. Greenway: A Guide to Planning, Design, and Development. 1993

Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen, and Payne, Inc. Community Assessment of the City of Streator, Illinois. Prepared for the Times-Press. January 1999.

Streator-Area Historical Society

Illinois Department of Natural Resources-Office of Resource Conservation and Office of Realty and Environmental Planning. Brochure on the Endangered Species of Illinois. 2000.

Amanda Bell Spitzer. La Salle County: The Rivers and the Prairies. Early 1990's.

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Environmental Progress, Volume XXVI, No. 1, Spring 2001, "Unique Approach Diverts Potential Disaster - For Now"

Nonhazardous Solid Waste Management and Landfill Capacity in Illinois - IEPA/BOL/00-022. 1999 Annual Report.

Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Bureau of Tourism, 2000. Illinois Tourism Fast Facts

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Rails-to Trails Conservancy. Addressing Common Concerns: Crime. 2000

Rails-to Trails Conservancy. Addressing Common Concerns: Property Values. 2000

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. "Railbanking" What, Where, Why, When, and How?. 2000

Centers for Disease Control. 2001. Kids-to-School: A Guide to Promote Walking to School. www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk.htm

United States Census Bureau. 2000 Census Website. La Salle County Data

Conservation 2000, State of Illinois <http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/c2000/>

Illinois Rivers 2020 Website <http://www.state.il.us/ltgov/IR2020-Why.htm>

USEFUL CONTACTS, LINKS AND REFERENCESLOCAL

Illinois Trails Conservancy
P.O. Box 10
Capron, IL 6102-0010
www.comnet1.net/illtrails

Prairie Rivers Resource Conservation and
Development (RC&D), USDA-NRCS
Kimberly St. John
400 Edward Street
Henry, IL 61537
www.prairieriversrcd.org

La Salle County Soil and Water Conservation
District, USDA-NRCS
Dennis Ford/Matt Stafford/Paul Youngstrom
1691 North 31st Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Livingston County Soil and Water Conservation
District, USDA-NCRS
Mark Baron
PO Box 80
Pontiac, IL 61764

Dan Faust
Mackinaw Canoe Club
17 Oakwood Dr.
Pontiac, IL 61764

Pam Blickem/Greg Sparrow
Kishwaukee College
21193 Malta Road
Malta, IL 60150-9699
(grant writing)

Illinois Paddling Association
www.illinoispaddling.org

Chicago Whitewater Association
Sigrid Pilgrim
(847) 328-0145

Allied Waste - Central Region/Streator Landfill
Company
Steven Smith, Regional Engineer
13701 S. Kostner
Crestwood, IL 60445

NICOR Gas
Bernard Anderson
1305 Martin Luther King Drive
Bloomington, IL 61701-1467

COMED
Jeff Hettrick
700 Frech Street
Streator, IL 61364

Illinois American Water Company
Tim Tuley/Dave Baker
401 Howard St.
Pontiac, IL 61764

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Dick Westfall, Division of Planning
320 W. Washington, 7th Floor
Springfield, IL 62704
(217) 782-3715
www.dnr.state.il.us

Conservation 2000 Programs
www.dnr.state.il.us/orep/c2000/
Vermilion River Watershed Taskforce
Conservation 2000 Contacts
Andy Hawkins (815) 929-1507
Bob Lawless (309) 824-6737

Grand Illinois Trail
IDNR Division of Planning
George Bellovics
200 Washington Street
Oregon, IL 61061
(815) 732-9072

References

IDNR - Office of Water Resources
3215 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, IL 62703
www.dnr.il.us/owr/content
Don Rosebourn (309) 671-3196

I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor
National Park Service
Anna Koval
15701 S. Independence Blvd.
Lockport, IL 60446-6584

Illinois Association of Park Districts
211 East Monroe Street
Springfield, IL 62701-1186
217 523-4554

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Frances Sue Doubet, Proj. Mgr.
1021 North Grand Ave., East
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, IL 62794-9276

Department of the Army
Rock Island District, Corps of Engineers
Initial Local Project Contact:
Steve Russel (309) 794-5847
Dike Maintenance:
Clock Tower Building
P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, IL 61204-2004
Terry L. Stieger, Chief Emergency Management
Division
Rodney Delp, Inspections Report
(309) 794-5230
rodney.l.delp@usace.army.mil
Inspectors:
Andrew M. Luber, Civil Engineering Technician
Michael P. Zerbinia, P.E. Chief, Maintenance
Section

RAILROAD COMPANY CONTACTS
Illinois Central Gulf GMO Railroad Company
Tax Department -20th Floor
455 N. City front Plaza Drive
Chicago, IL 60611-5504
(Abandoned Dwight to Peoria Branch RR ROW
- La Salle Co # 33-26-436-000 and 28-26-451-
002)

BN/SF Rail Property Sales:
Alice O'Donnell
Rail Property Management
57 Ogden Avenue
Clarendon Hills, IL 60514
(630) 325-6726

NATIONAL

Rails to Trails Conservancy
1100 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
800-888-7747
www.railstrails.org

U.S. Department of Transportation Bicycle and
Pedestrian Information Centers:
www.walkinginfo.org or
www.bicyclinginfo.org

Trails and Greenways Clearing House:
www.trailsandgreenways.org

National Bike and Pedestrian Clearinghouse:
www.bikefed.org/clear.htm

National Center for Bicycling and Walking,
www.bikewalk.org

International Mountain Biking Association,
www.imba.com

American Trails, www.americantrails.org

Greenways Incorporated:
www.greenways.com

American Rivers Conservancy
1025 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 270
Washington, DC 20005-3516
www.americanrivers.org/
Useful articles for education and funding

The Conservation Fund - Partners in Land and Water Conservation
www.conservationfund.org/conservation/greenway/organ.html

National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program,
www.nrc.nps.gov/rtca

Centers for Disease Controls
<http://www.cdc.gov/funding.htm>
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm>

PROPERTY ACQUISITION - Local and National
Various groups exist in Illinois and the Midwest that could assist Streator in acquiring or holding property until Streator is ready to develop that portion of the Greenway. The Steering Committee can consult with these groups about establishing a non-profit organization (in order to accept donations of money or land), legal protection for organization or community, and etc. Those groups include:

- The Nature Conservancy- Kirston Halvorson (309) 673-6689
- Trust for Public Lands –Chris Slattery (312) 427-1979
- Cor-Lands – Tom Hahn (312) 427-4256
- The Conservation Fund – Peg Kohring (312) 913-9459
- Openlands Project – Ders Anderson (312) 427-4256
- Land Trust Alliance, www.lta.org

DEVELOPMENT OF A GREENWAY WEBSITE

This website could stand alone or be supported by an existing website (i.e. Streator Chamber of Commerce). You should identify your audience and apply common sense and logic to the development of the website. This website should be well organized, simple in its delivery (easy and fast to download), logical, clear, and interactive. (Contact us at...)
The Greenway website should contain the following:

- Trail locations and trailheads
- Trail length and surfaces (Possibly Updated Water Levels as well)
- Permitted and Restricted uses
- History and/or description of the trail and area
- Map and Photos of the Trails and Facilities (i.e. seasonal, interesting features, should also be low resolution and small)
- Hours and Amenities (parking, toilets, nearby attractions or services)
- Parking and Access Information (how do people get to trails or parks)
- Sponsors and Partners (Your coalition members or funding sources)
- Contact information (Trail manager, City, GSC, etc.)

This website can be developed by the GSC or other volunteer. Another option is to pitch the idea to the superintendent or dean of a local high school or junior college and turn it into a class project.

Sample web sites to review:

- Katy Trail State Park, Missouri
- Village of Glen Carbon
- Capitol Crescent Trail
- Traillink.com
- trails.com
- Trailpaq.com

DATE: February 19, 2002 RESOLUTION 2001/02-

APPROVING A VERMILION RIVER GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Streator acting by and through its City Council has previously authorized the drafting of a Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan, pursuant to an Illinois Department of Natural Resources grant, sponsored by State Senator Patrick Welch for the purpose of developing a long-term development plan for the Vermilion River Greenway corridor throughout the City of Streator and adjacent environments in connection with the provision of providing permanent open space, greenspace, recreational opportunities, attracting tourism, and facilitating economic development; and

WHEREAS, a Vermilion River Greenway Steering Committee consisting of citizens of the City of Streator and other interested parties has collaboratively worked to develop a recommended master plan for the Vermilion River Greenway corridor, which final recommendation was submitted to the City Council and was received on January 15, 2002; and

WHEREAS, said Greenway Steering Committee together with the City's professional planning consultant for this project, Teska Associates, Inc., Evanston, Illinois, recommends adoption of a Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan as the City of Streator's official planning document for the preservation and development of the Vermilion River Greenway corridor; and

WHEREAS, the City of Streator acting by and through its City Council finds that said recommended Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan is consistent with the long-term goals and objectives of the City of Streator, including a recommended City of Streator strategic plan 1993 and a City of Streator Western Growth Area Comprehensive Plan adopted by the City pursuant to Resolution 2000/01-32.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Streator, LaSalle and Livingston Counties, Illinois as follows:

* SECTION ONE: That a recommended final draft of a City of Streator Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan, January 2002, be and the same is hereby approved.

* SECTION TWO: That said Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan, City of Streator, LaSalle and Livingston Counties, Illinois is further adopted as a City of Streator official planning document, which the City of Streator, its advisory boards and commissions, including its Plan Commission, and City Council shall utilize when considering recommendations and/or decisions regarding development plans, projects and any other matters, including the construction of public buildings and/or infrastructure.

DATE: February 19, 2002



SECTION THREE:

That the City of Streator acting by and through its City Council does hereby extend its thanks on behalf of the citizens of the City of Streator to the members of the Vermilion River Greenway Master Plan Steering Committee for their exemplary service in connection with the successful completion of this critical community planning project.

Passed by the City Council of the City of Streator, LaSalle and Livingston Counties, Illinois at a regular meeting thereof held on the 19th day of February 2002, and approved by me as Mayor on the same day.

APPROVED:

Ray Schmitt, Mayor

ATTEST:

Pamola K. Leonard, City Clerk