

# *THE SECRET LIFE OF PATHS*

*Planning for Greenways, Bicycles, and Pedestrians*

*Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning*

2

# *WHO WE ARE*

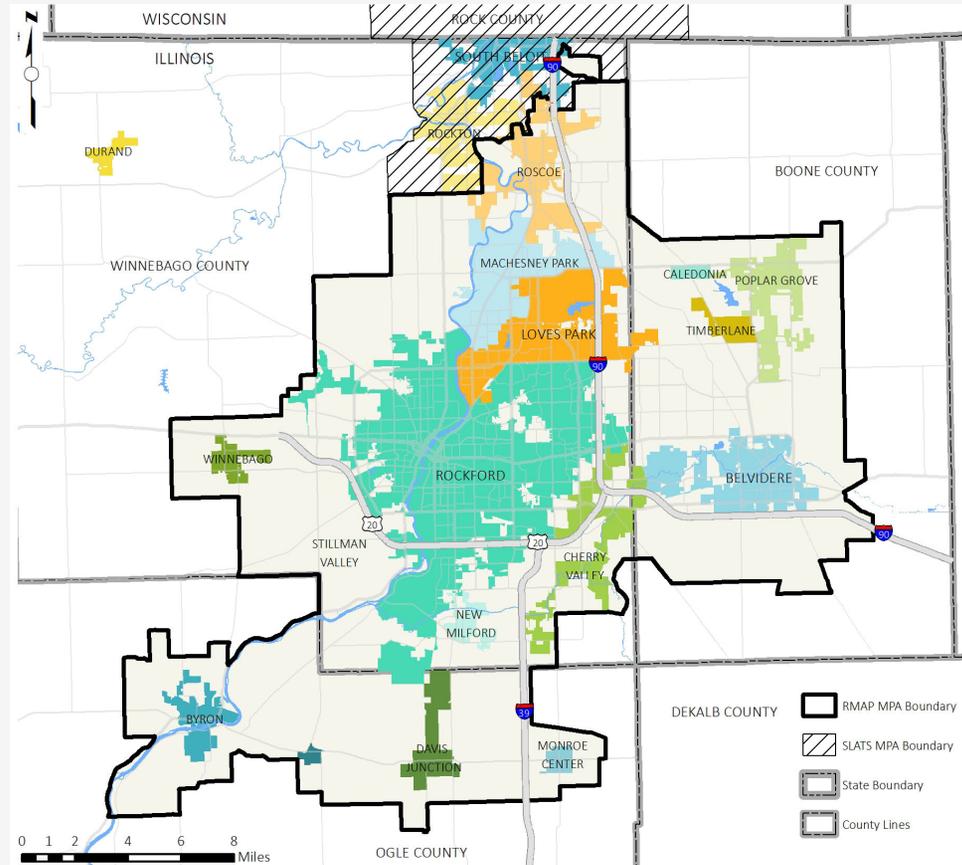
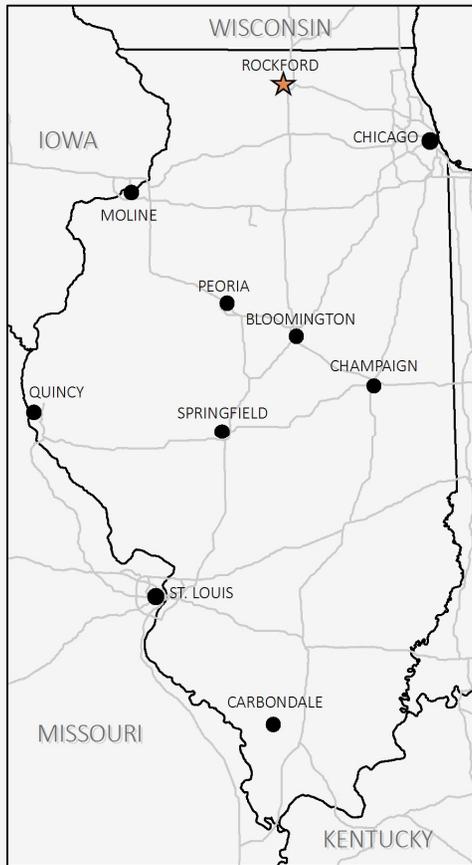
---

# *Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning*



- MPO formed in 1964 as the Rockford Area Transportation Study (RATS)
- In 2008, RATS reorganized and was renamed Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP)
- Located in north-central Illinois
- Serve approximately 440 sq. miles in Boone, Ogle, & Winnebago Counties
- Bordered by Stateline Area Transportation Study (SLATS) to the north
- Approx. population of 350,000 in the MPA.

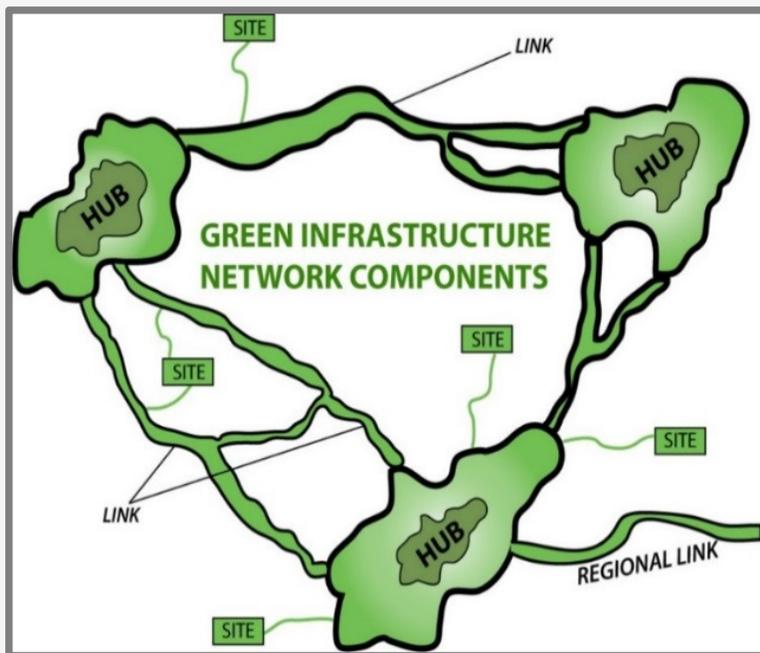
# Where Are We



# *GREENWAYS PLANNING*

---

# *Greenways Defined*



- A natural corridor of land which connects existing areas of open space.
- Creates a network of green infrastructure linking together parks, preserves, wetlands, unique habitats and other environmentally sensitive areas, spanning across urban and rural lands.
- This provides an opportunity for the natural circulation of plants and animals from one habitat to another, through man made features that act as natural barriers.

# *The Purpose of Greenways Planning*



To promote a regional greenway network that protects natural and cultural resources; provides alternative forms of transportation and recreational benefits; enhances environmental and scenic qualities; and stimulates economic development.

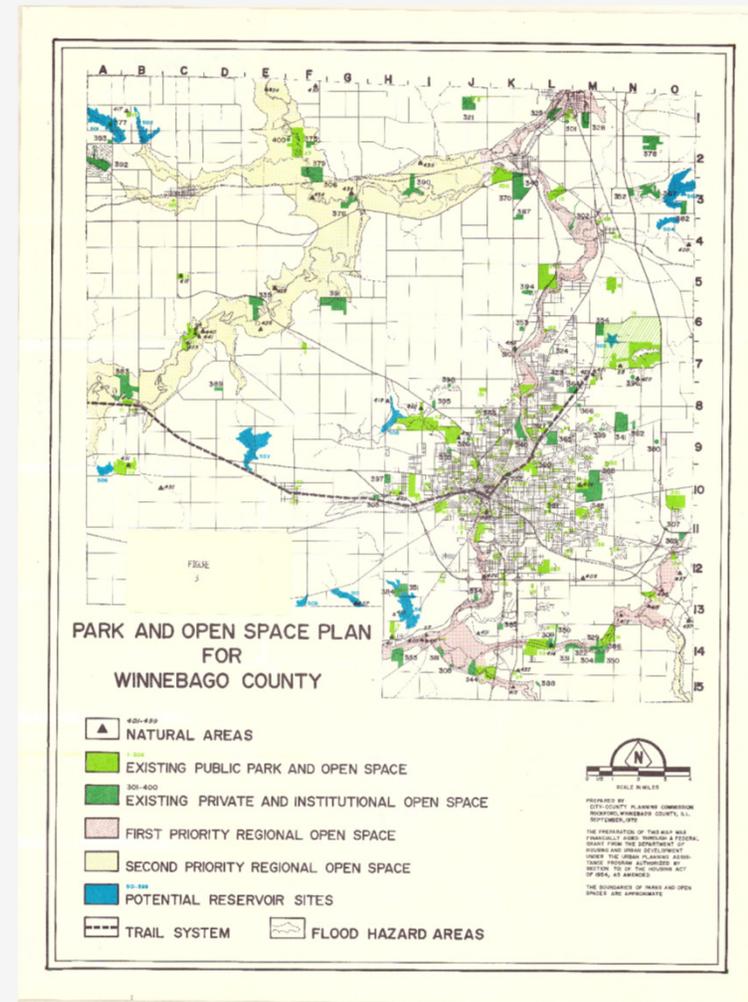
# *Objective of Greenways Planning*



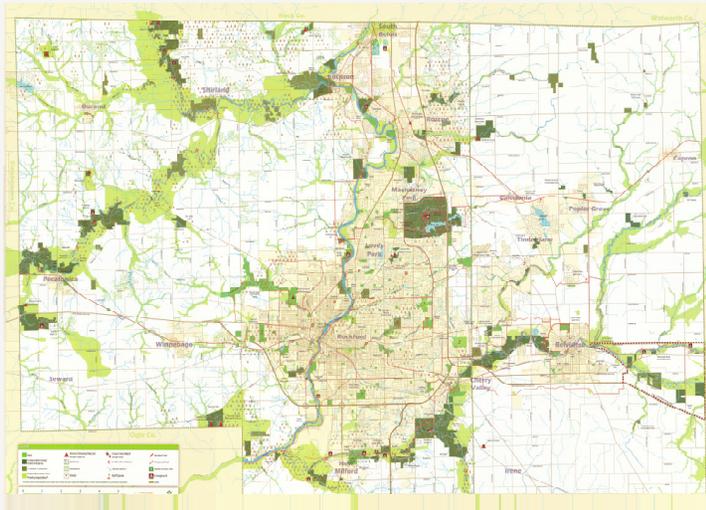
- To provide a comprehensive regional planning tool for government agencies and others involved in transportation land use planning, natural areas preservation, and recreation.
- To coordinate transportation planning with the greenways planning process.
- To reduce conflicts with development activities and offset the negative and costly impacts of urban sprawl.
- To be used as a tool by local organizations and municipalities to leverage additional planning and recreational funds to be allocated to our region.

# History of Greenways Planning

- 1972, Park and Open Space Plan for Winnebago County
- Was an Inventory of Natural Areas, Public Parks/ Open Space, Private Lands, Regional Trails, Flood Hazards, and Potential Reservoir Sites
- Highlighted Areas of Priority Acquisition



# *Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning in Our Region*



1972

- Park and Open Space Plan for Winnebago County

1997

- Funded by a Grant from the IDNR
- Had an accompanying written Planning Document

2005

- Partially Funded by an Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Grant
- Remaining funding from RMAP planning funds

2011

- Funding was secured from IDOT and FHWA to update the map
- Developed utilizing GIS for the first time

2015

- Funded by RMAP Planning Funds
- Map created complete in-house for the first time utilizing GIS and Adobe Illustrator

# 2015 Greenways Planning Committee



- Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Natural Land Institute
- Forest Preserve of Winnebago County
- Rockford Park District
- Belvidere Park District
- Boone County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Winnebago County Geographic Information Systems
- Boone County Conservation District
- Other Natural Resource Professionals

# *Data Collection*

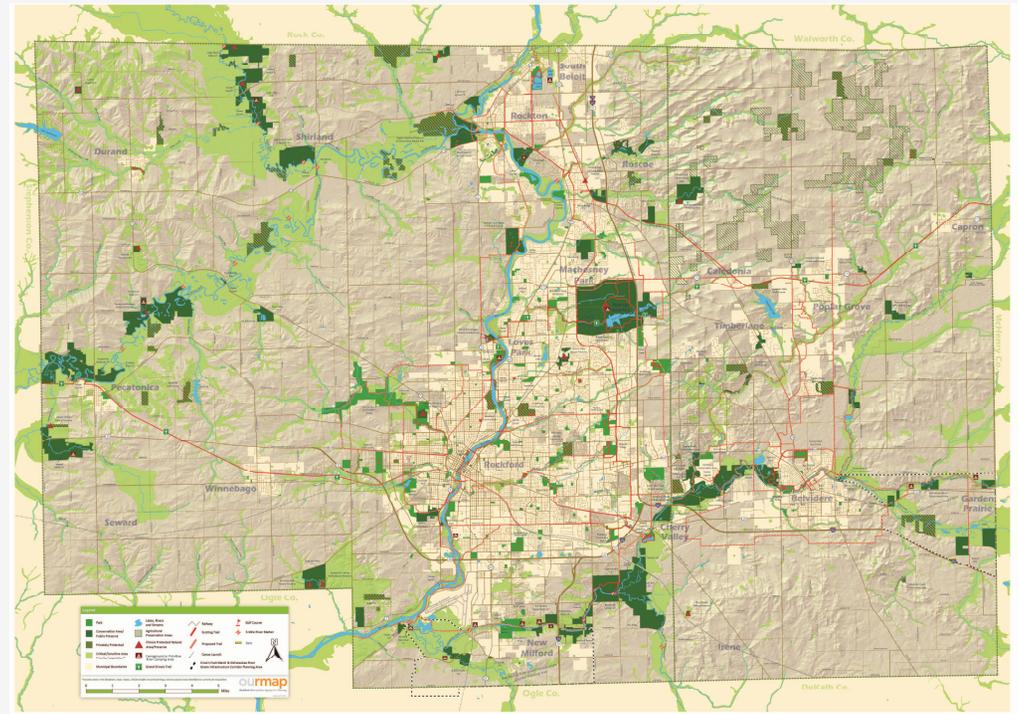
- 1 year from start to finish
- Completely developed and designed in-house using GIS and Adobe Illustrator
- GIS data is now updated throughout the year on a continual basis
- Types of data utilized, local knowledge, property acquisition maps, CAD/engineering, existing trail maps, aerial photo interpretation, new sources of GIS data from partner organizations
- Begin partner engagement sooner rather than later

# Current Plan

## 2015 Greenways: A Map and Plan for Boone and Winnebago County

2015

Greenways: A Green  
Infrastructure Plan for Boone  
and Winnebago Counties



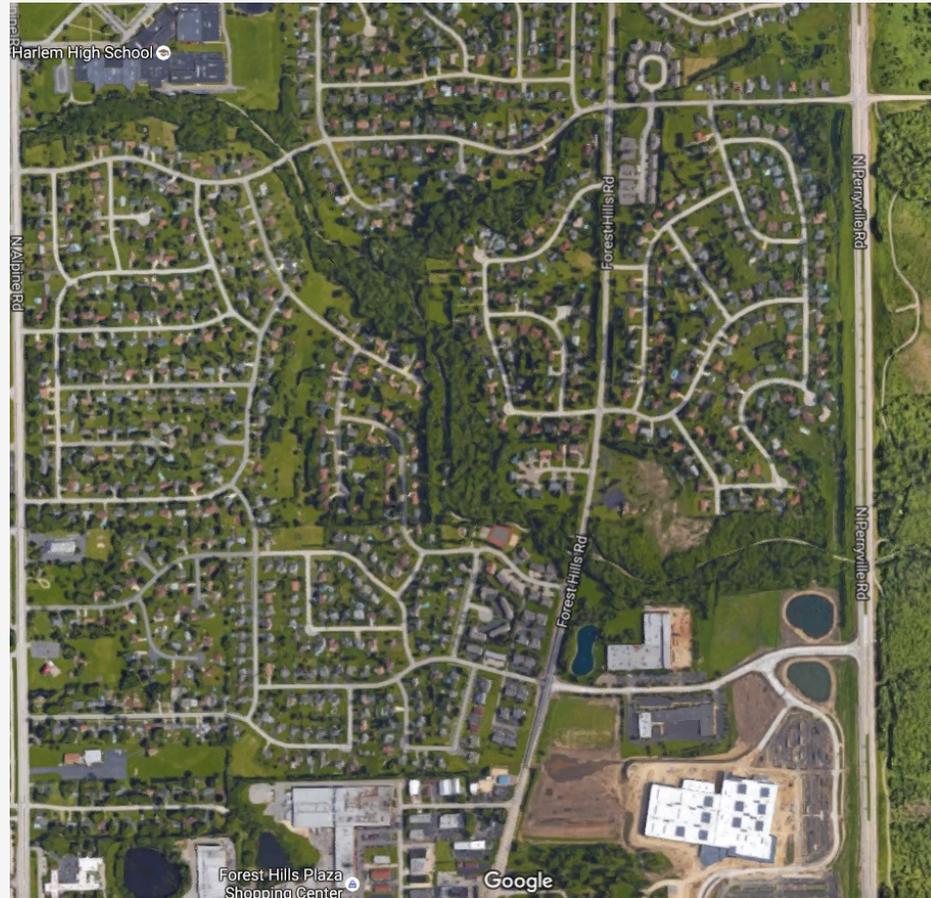
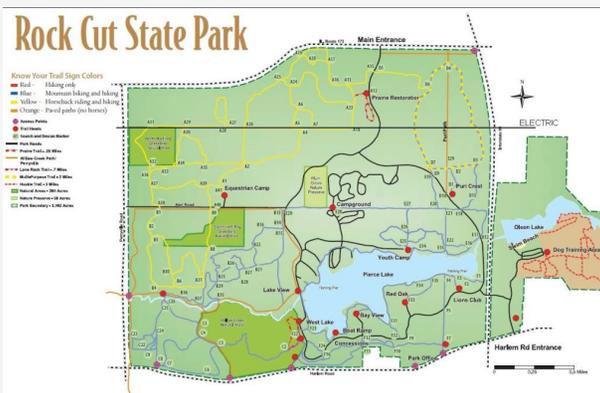
# *Current Plan*



- Regional resource guide, hiking, biking, kayaking/boating, tourism
- Educational Tool, used in Land Use Planning class at Local High School
- Agricultural preservation/conservation, protection of sensitive resources and properties
- Property acquisition tool
- Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL)
  - Collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making

# Recent Local Projects – Willow Creek Trail Extension

Currently under construction, trail extension to the Woodward Rock Cut Campus ITEP Enhancement & New Construction funds, \$502,120, total cost \$627,650. Part of the Grand Illinois Trail System.



## *Recent Local Projects – Alpine Path*

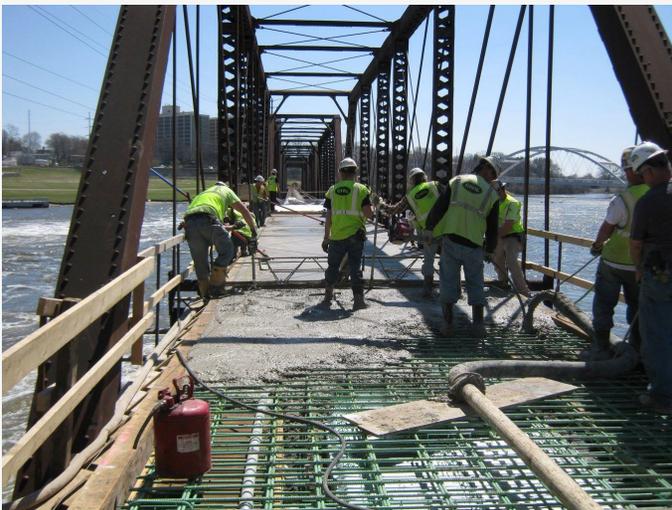


"Desire Path"

August 2014, The Village of Machesney Park was officially awarded \$620,432 by the RMAP Policy Committee through the TAP process to implement the North Alpine Road Shared-Use Path. The awarded TAP funds were matched with \$220,000 of Machesney Park Local funds, bringing the project total to \$775,540.

## *Recent Local Projects – Rails to Trails over Rock River*

Downtown Rockford, former Illinois Railnet bridge, over the Rock River just south of the Rockford Dam and north of the new Morgan Street Bridge. Construction began in early 2015, ITEP/TAP Enhancement dollars \$740,000. Proposed Route since 2005.



*BICYCLE &  
PEDESTRIAN  
PLANNING*

---

## *Purpose & Scope*

- Purpose – Provide a regional vision for a comprehensive infrastructure system that will support and encourage walking and bicycling (active transportation) throughout the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area.
- The plan will provide a framework for improving connectivity, safety, convenience, and attractiveness of bicycle and pedestrian networks; including
  - Existing conditions of bicycle facilities & pedestrian facilities
  - Commuter/transit needs
  - Recreational needs
  - Infrastructure, policy, and program recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian networks
  - Short-term and long-term prioritization
  - Funding

# *Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning in Our Region*

1984

- RATS initiated bicycle system planning with adoption of Regional Bikeway and Pedestrian Plan as a section of the L RTP

2005

- Public workshop to prioritize new proposed facilities and policies

2006

- Work on the 1<sup>st</sup> standalone RMAP Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan begins

2008

- RMAP Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan completed & adopted by the RMAP Policy Committee

2016

- RMAP completes a Bike Share Feasibility Study for the City of Rockford
- Begins work of the update to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

# *Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan (2008)*



- Current stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Region
- Elements:
  - Existing Conditions
  - Safety & Health Benefits
  - Traffic Regulation
  - Development Regulations
  - Facility Standards
  - Public Funding
- List of priority corridors

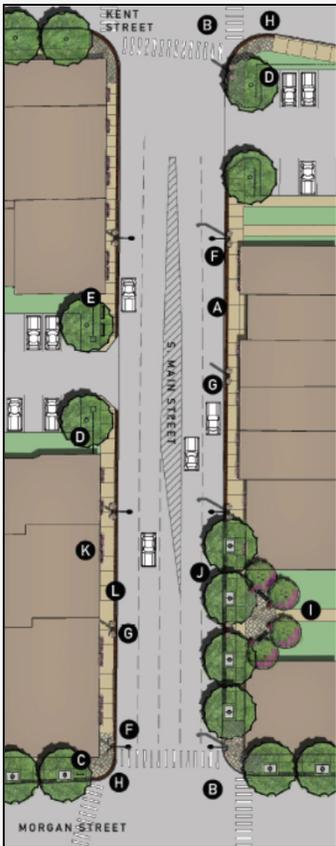
# *Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Update*



- Plan will update the current conditions, facility standards, priorities and funding sources
- Also include:
  - Vision & Goals for the Region
  - Complete Streets Design & Standards
  - Bicycle Demand Analysis
  - Pedestrian Suitability Index (Walkability)
  - Policy, Program, and Infrastructure Recommendation around the 5 E's (Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, & Evaluation)
  - New prioritization methodology

# Positive Impacts

- Public shift in support of a bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly region
- Increased number of corridors improved with Complete Streets design elements
- Continued expansion of shared-use path network with a focus on connectivity
- Significant increase of on-street bicycle facilities



S. Main Street



West State Street



Spring Brook Rd. in front of Rock Valley College

# *DATA COLLECTION*

---

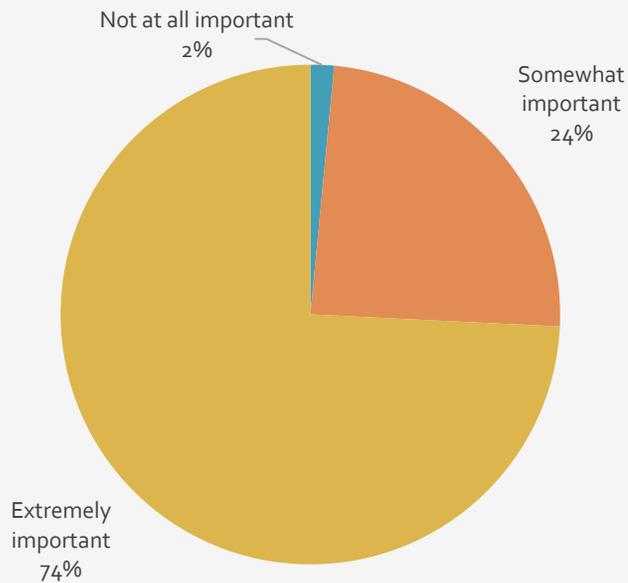
# *Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee*

- Provide guidance on decisions that impact bicycle and pedestrians
- Assist with the development of the Rockford Metropolitan Area Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan by setting:
  - A Vision Statement
  - Regional Goals
  - Strategies
  - Priorities

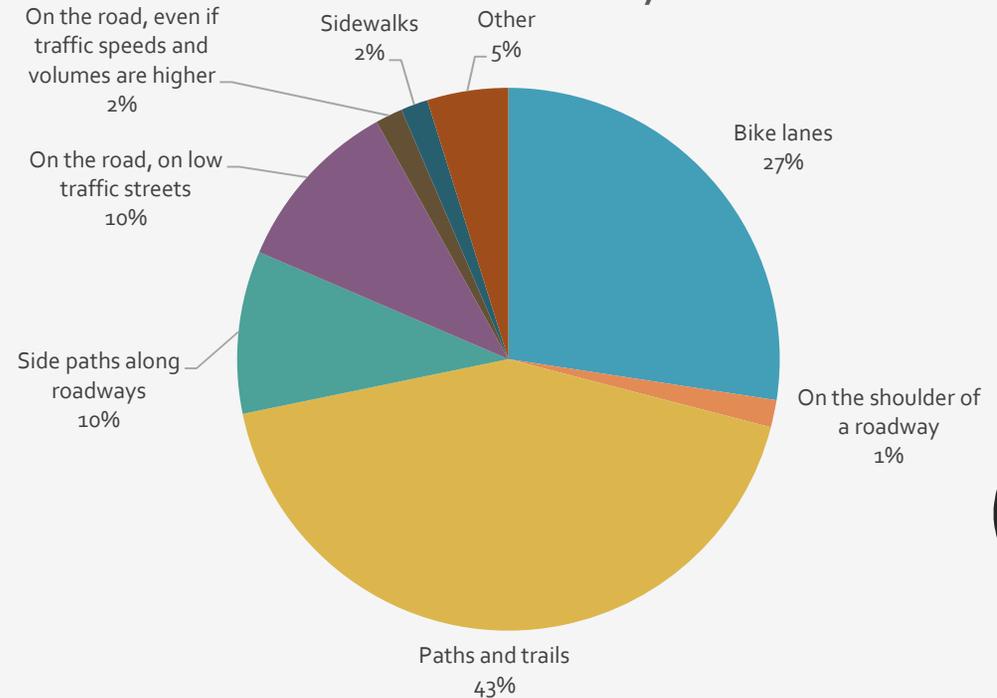
# Public Survey

- Opened to the public from May to July (60 days)
- Received 120 completed responses with 37 partial responses
- Will be releasing the data on social media

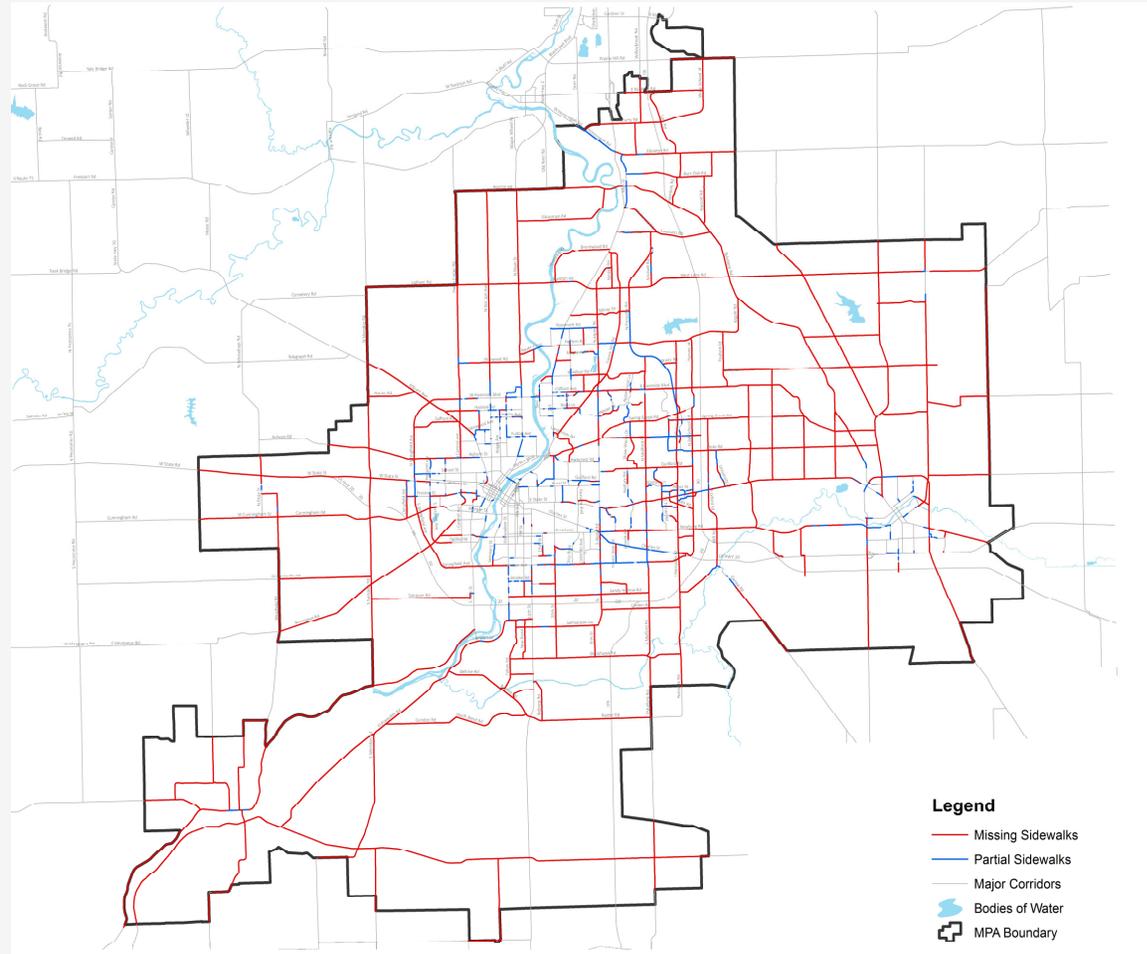
### Importance of Filling in Gaps in the Existing Sidewalk



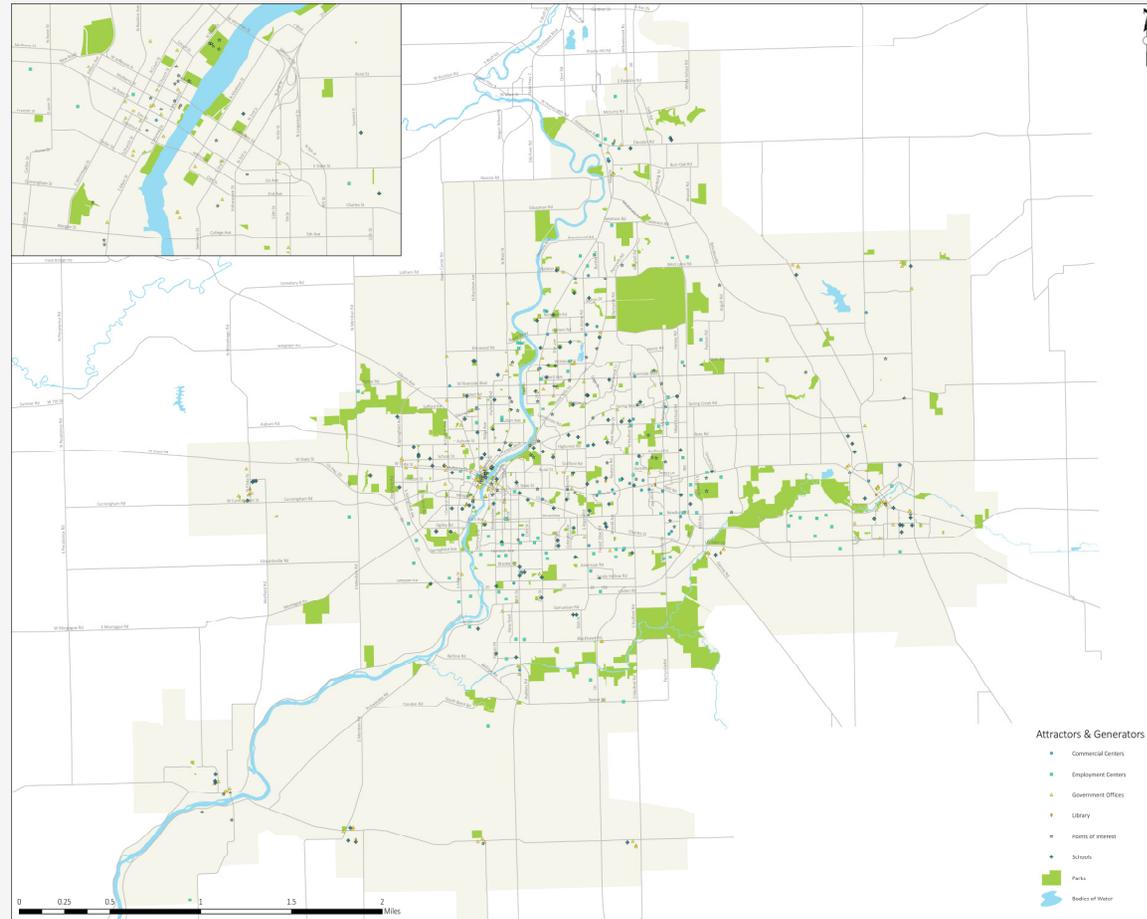
### Preferred Facilities to Bicycle On



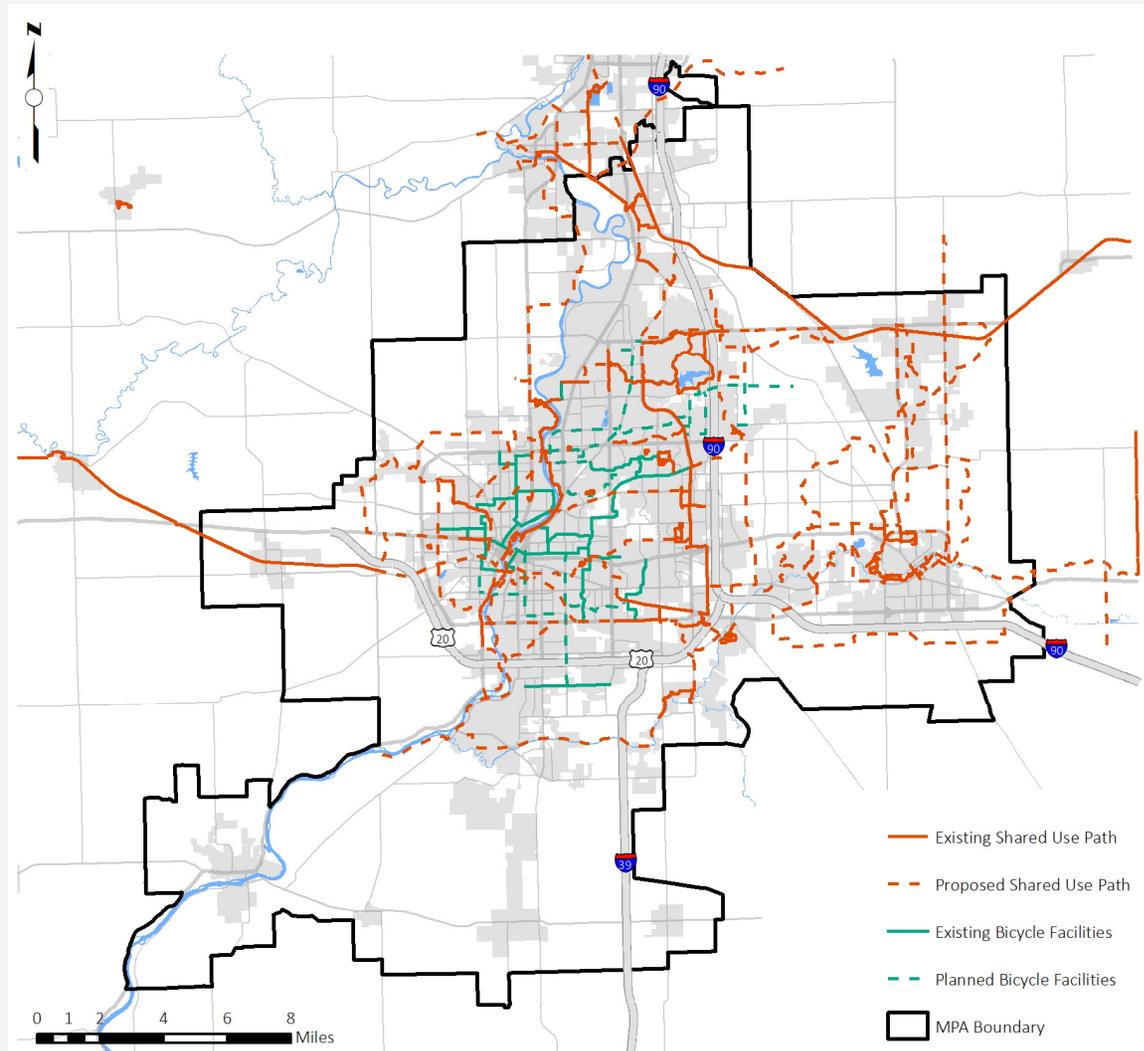
# *Partial or Missing Sidewalks*



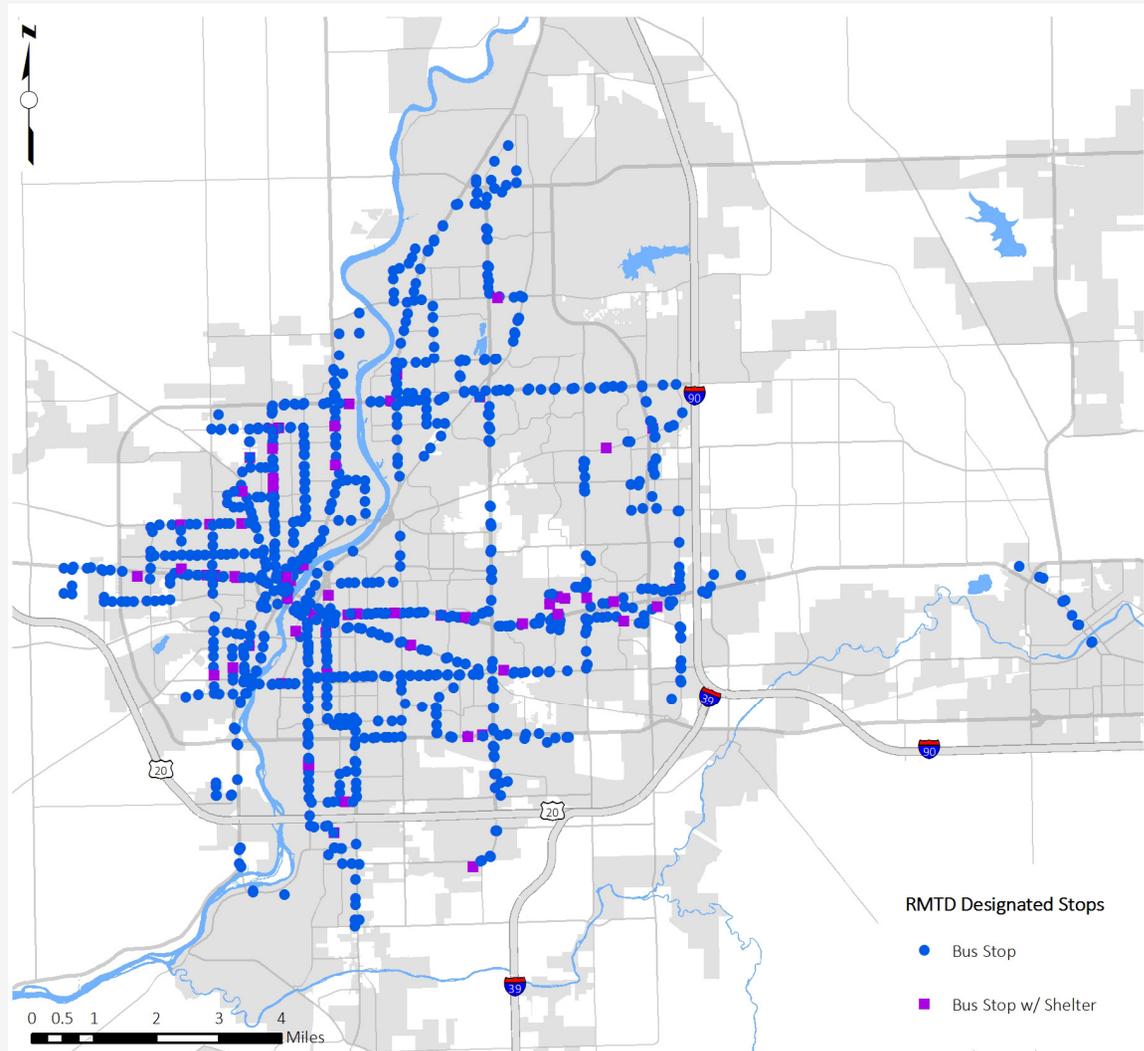
# Attractors



# Existing Bicycle Facilities



# *Bus Stops & Shelters*

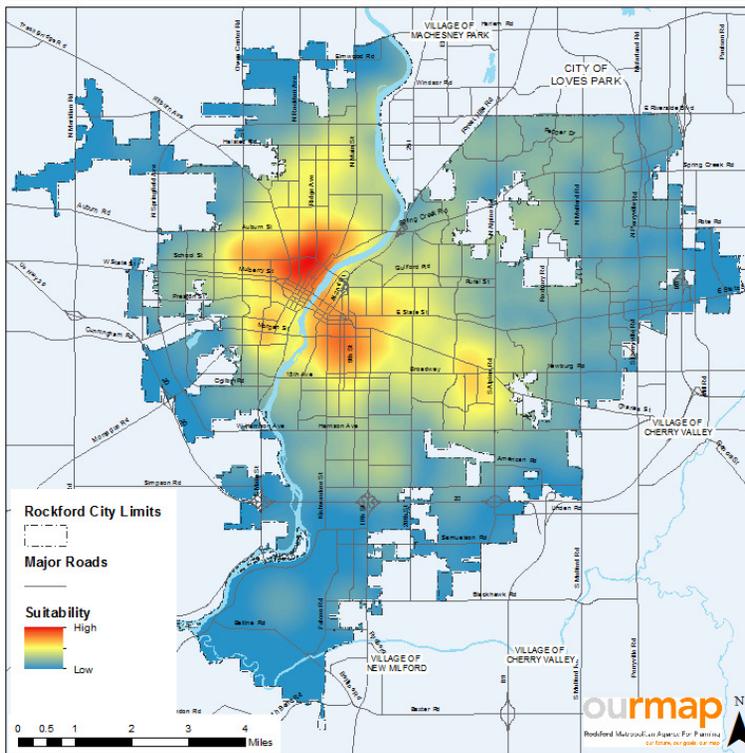


*NEXT STEPS...*

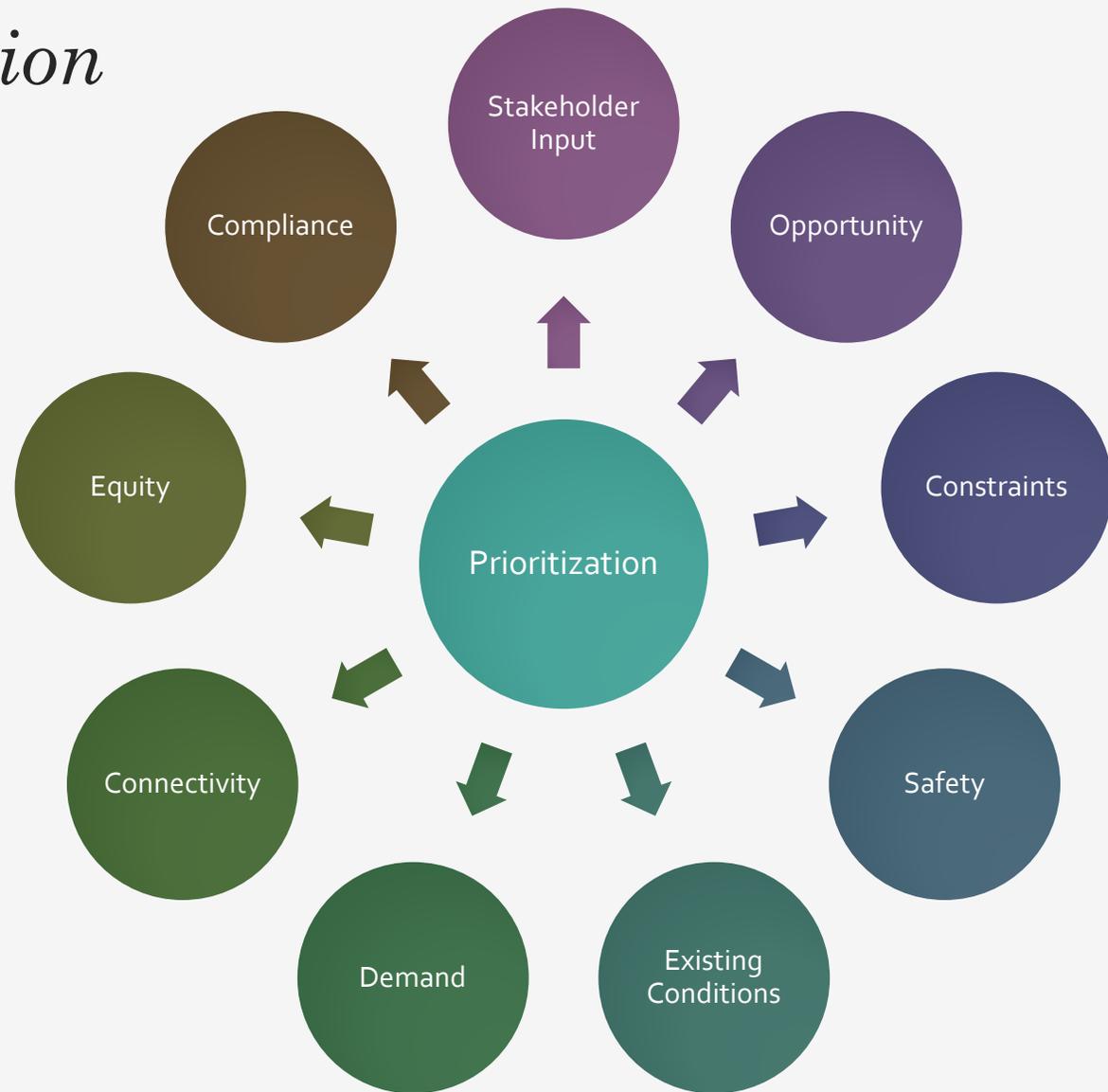
---

# *Suitability Index*

- Demand Analysis
  - Bus stops, schools, parks, tourist/cultural attractions, civic centers, commercial centers
- Intersection Suitability
  - Traffic control devices, lane design, turn lanes, crosswalks
- Pedestrian Network Suitability
  - Presence of sidewalk, sidewalk width, sidewalk buffer, sidewalk obstructions
- Roadway Permeability
  - Posted Speed, traffic volumes, roadway width/number of lanes, refuge islands, distance between crossings.



# *Prioritization*



# *FUNDING*

---

# *Grants and Access to Funding Opportunities*

---

- December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 – Fixing Americas Surface Transportation Act, or “FAST Act”.
  - This eliminated the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and replaced it with a set-aside Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program for funding transportation alternatives
  - This new STBG provides funding for the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), and previously eligible projects under TAP continue to be eligible under STBG set-aside
- Local Funding Opportunities
  - Sales Tax, Motor Fuel Tax (MFT), park districts, tourism bureau, etc.

# *Contact Information*

Sydney Turner  
Metropolitan Planner  
RMAP

[Sydney.Turner@rockfordil.gov](mailto:Sydney.Turner@rockfordil.gov)

779-348-7622

Colin Belle  
Metropolitan Planner  
RMAP

[Colin.Belle@rockfordil.gov](mailto:Colin.Belle@rockfordil.gov)

779-348-7621