

Issues and Forces

Through the public involvement process and Steering Committee input, numerous issues and forces have been identified for the existing greenways system. Issues can range from a location where an obstacle prevents off-street bicycle access to lacking funding for a crucial part of the trails network. Forces could include an established connection for commuter bicyclists or available local funding that would help procure more external funding for a project.

Commonly raised issues

- Accessibility for disabled persons: While many recreational facilities and trails are accessible by all users, there are aspects that make using the system difficult for some disabled persons.
- Accessibility to facilities: Many of the current facilities have nearby parking, sidewalks, bus stops, or bicycle racks that allow a person to arrive at the destination and use the facility. In some cases, however, trails or open spaces might be perceived as too distant or inaccessible.
- Connectivity between travel modes: Parks and trails should provide facilities for multiple travel modes, including bicycles, cars, pedestrians, and public transit.
- Connectivity to major activity centers: Many activity centers in Champaign County do not have non-motorized vehicular access (i.e. bicycle and pedestrian paths). This increases vehicular traffic to those areas and creates unsafe options for bicycle and pedestrian travelers. Map 17 in Appendix 6 details frequent traffic generators in Champaign-Urbana-Savoy as they relate to the existing Greenways and Trails system.
- Connectivity between urban and rural areas: Many of the County's natural resources and trails exist outside the Champaign-Urbana-Savoy area. A lack of non-motorized vehicle connections decreases visits to these more rural settings.
- Pedestrian safety: This is a multi-faceted issue that can include having difficulty crossing busy streets, poor lighting, and conflicts with other trail users.
- Facilities maintenance: Lack of maintenance can often lead to the deterioration of existing facilities.
- Understanding the greenways system: Many system users are not aware of the Rules of the Road that apply to bicycle riding and pedestrian rights on roadways. In addition, intended use of the trails system is often misinterpreted due to lack of signage and perception of who can use specific trail types.
- Geographic efficiency: Many trails in the area are not used for reaching specific destinations because they might cut off midway through a trip or might not be the shortest path to the destination.
- Bicycle Routes: Currently there is no maintained bicycle route system in the Champaign-Urbana area. High costs and liability issues have forced local governments to remove the routes that once existed, forcing bicyclists to travel on roadways where no signage alerts motorists that they need to share the road.
- User-friendliness: The current system largely does not have directional signage and other resources to help users make the most of greenways and trails in the area.

Issues and Forces help planners identify goals and objectives by showing us what problems we need to solve and what resources we have to help solve them.

- **Obstacles to movement:** Railroad tracks, narrow roadways, and trails ending are all obstacles to bicycle movement that create dependence on motorized travel. Similarly, lack of sidewalks, lack of marked crosswalks, and busy streets are all barriers to pedestrian movement.

Forces

- **Existing trails:** Champaign County trails often link important activity centers, including parks, schools, shopping centers, etc. Existing trails also show us where gaps are in the system so that we can consider how and when those connections should be created.
- **System diversity:** The Champaign County system offers facilities for all types of bicyclists and pedestrians, from those who commute by bicycle to children who use trails in our parks.
- **New subdivisions:** Newly constructed subdivisions often have some sort of pedestrian and/or bicycle path system as well as a neighborhood park. Developers and/or local governments can plan these paths and parks to link to existing paths and parks.
- **The community:** According to the Greenways and Trails Resident Survey, 72% of respondents agree that greenways and trails that connect urban centers to rural communities and forest preserves enhance residents' quality of life. Such community support helps ensure that more trails and open spaces will be created in Champaign County.
- **Interagency coordination:** The Greenways and Trails Steering Committee has members from local governments, park districts, and other agencies to coordinate and plan for the future of the Champaign County system.
- **The region:** Developing trails and greenways that connect Champaign County with the rest of the state, especially metro areas in central Illinois, contributes to the statewide greenways and trails system.

Goals and Objectives

The formulation of goals and objectives is meant to determine what direction planning efforts should take, independent of time frame and individual projects. A goal is defined as an end state that will be brought about by implementing the Greenways Plan. Objectives are sub-goals that help organize the implementation of the plan into measurable and manageable parts. Implementation measures are specific activities that must be completed in order to achieve goals.

The Greenways and Trails Steering Committee has developed six principal goals for the Greenways and Trails Plan. These goals were created based on public input and a variety of planning efforts. Below each goal, objectives, implementation measures, responsible entities, and benchmarks for completion are listed that will lead our efforts in the Greenways and Trails implementation process.

Goal 1: All Champaign County residents will be provided with a system of bikeways, bicycle routes, pedestrian paths, trails, and other greenways that provides connections between residences, schools and workplaces, other travel modes, major activity centers, and recreational sites.