

# Implementation Plan

## SECTION

# 5

Establishing a new Metra commuter rail station and service in the East Side planning area to expand transit options for Romeoville residents and employees is dependent on moving forward with various implementation actions to be undertaken by the Village, transit agencies, and other community partners. While some actions are contingent on certain elements that will take time to materialize -- including an improved economy, a supportable marketplace, and funding capacity to extend municipal utilities -- to help spur development projects, the Village can be proactive and make progress in the meantime by taking actions that it has control over, such as reviewing its zoning ordinance to ensure it is supportive of the concepts outlined in this plan. This will ensure the appropriate tools and programs are in

place once the development market rebounds and the East Side becomes a viable location for new projects.

The implementation plan for the East Side planning area includes the following elements:

- Review of Village Plans & Policies
- Site Preparation
- Implementation Strategies
- Funding & Support Resources

### **Review of Village Plans & Policies**

With its Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code already in place, the Village of Romeoville has the necessary tools to regulate development opportunities within the East Side, ensuring they meet the Village's standards and reflect the community's character and identity. As outlined in Section 2 of the Existing Conditions Assessment Report, the Comprehensive Plan is generally supportive of the core tenets defined in this plan, including establishing a Metra commuter rail station, enhancing multimodal connectivity throughout the Village, developing a transit-oriented district around the station, and diversifying housing choices.

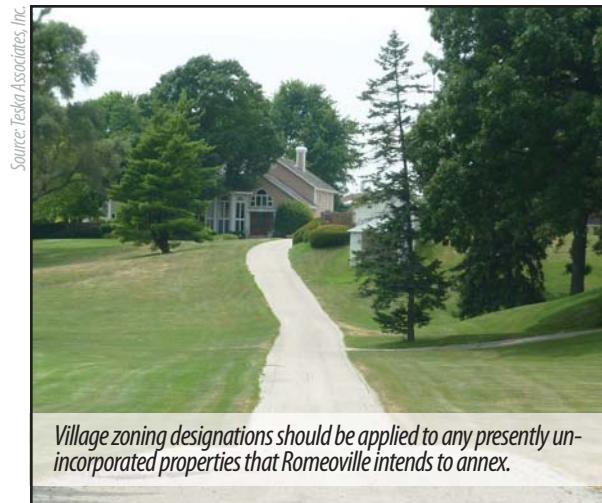
Although the development and transportation concepts outlined in Sections 1 and 2 are not a major departure from typical development that occurs in Romeoville, the recommendations described below are intended to guide the Village in amending its Comprehensive Plan and Zon-



ing Code to be supportive of the proposed concepts for the East Side. This will have a dual effect, first ensuring the Village will be prepared for new development activity on the East Side once the market is viable, and then streamlining the development review process that will provide a level of predictability to the development community as it presents projects that meet the objectives of the East Side Plan.

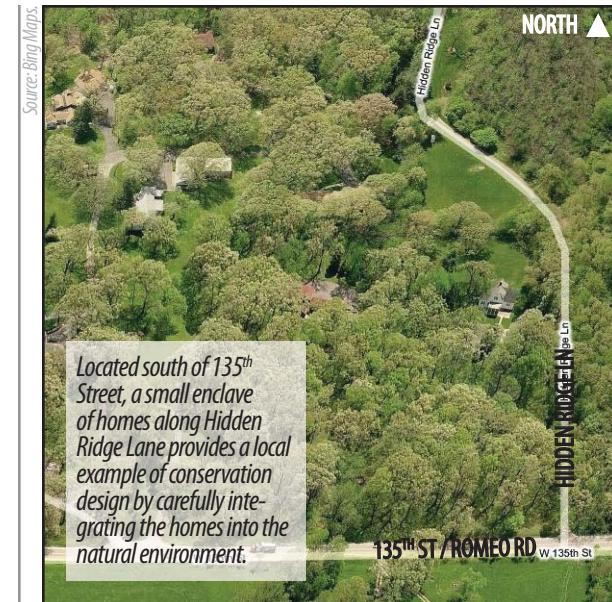
Recommendations to amend the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code include the following:

□ Adopt the East Side Plan by resolution of the Village Board and provide appropriate references to this document within the existing Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan was produced as a succinct poster plan, the Village provides a brief supplemental document that summarizes the core elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Updating this supplemental document provides the opportunity to insert a description of how the East Side Plan impacts the overall



Comprehensive Plan, particularly from land use and transportation perspectives.

- Update the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the land use recommendations outlined in the East Side Plan.
- Modify the Zoning Code to facilitate a district that includes a commuter rail station, transit-supported development, conservation design, and multimodal connectivity. Specific modifications may include the following:
  - » Rezone certain parcels that are currently incorporated parcels but do not reflect the planned land use(s) as established in the Concept Plan. For example, the parcel located immediately west of the Old Orchard Lane neighborhood should be rezoned from B-3 (Highway/Regional Shopping) to R-4 (Single Family Residential, 8,000 sq ft minimum lot size), which would allow for the townhouses (or similar density development) proposed in the Concept Plan.
  - » Apply appropriate zoning district designations to currently unincorporated parcels upon annexation into the Village. As best as possible, zoning should reflect the planned land use as established in the Concept Plan. For example, the parcels at the southeast corner of 135<sup>th</sup> Street and High Road should be designated as B-1 (Local Shopping), which would allow for the neighborhood retail and professional offices proposed in the Concept Plan. The B-1 district also allows for a district size between 1 and 4 acres, which fits the



2.8-acre coverage of the neighborhood retail illustrated on the Concept Plan.

- » Explore the potential to establish a new residential zoning district that requires adherence to the conservation design standards outlined in Section 4 to ensure compliance with conservation design principles as a requirement rather than a consideration via the PUD process. The conservation design guidelines (see pages 28-31 in Section 4) outline how the Village can encourage future development of the East Side to adhere to design principles that are intended to preserve sensitive environmental features and properly integrate them into site design, where appropriate.
- » Provide references within the Zoning Code to the design guidelines established in Section 4 for this

Zoning on the East Side should not be viewed as rigid designations set in stone; rather, zoning serves as a safeguard for the Village to ensure the East Side will develop as envisioned by the concept plan (or a Village-supported variation thereof) with the flexibility to make modifications as circumstances and opportunities change over time.

East Side Plan. The most appropriate sections to provide these references would be in the following: Section 159.60(H) (Residential Districts General Requirements); Section 159.151 (Development Standards); Section 159.157 (PUD - Residential); and Section 159.158 (J) (PUD - Business Commercial). The East Side design guidelines are meant to supplement the existing design guidelines presently established in the Zoning Code.

The zoning amendments should be made in the near term to bring the East Side Plan into conformance with local zoning regulations. If an existing use becomes non-conforming due to the zoning amendments, it shall be permitted to remain as a non-conforming use, with the understanding that the standards established in Section 159.140 (Non-Conforming Buildings, Structures & Uses) will apply until the property redevelops or the current use ceases or vacates the site.

Although there is the possibility that the land uses defined in the concept plan may modify over time, particularly since many of the concepts are long term, there should be an understanding that the zoning designations applied to the East Side are subject to

change as Village plans dictate. However, a foundation of zoning for the East Side should be established in the near-term to preclude spot zoning and the potential for developers to dictate their own plans for the East Side. In other words, zoning on the East Side should not be viewed as rigid designations set in stone; rather, zoning serves as a safeguard for the Village to ensure the East Side will develop as envisioned by the concept plan (or a Village-supported variation thereof) with the flexibility to make modifications as circumstances and opportunities change over time.

- ❑ Evaluate the appropriateness of applying the planned unit development (PUD) special use designation for parcels on the East Side to maximize flexibility for the Village to facilitate transit-supportive development.

### Site Preparation

Although the proposed Metra site and a few other parcels are already annexed within the Village, a majority of the East Side remains unincorporated, which creates the need to annex the other parcels within the Study Area as the East Side develops. While it is possible for development to occur on unincorporated properties, the Village will garner greater benefits, such as property and sales tax revenues,

when properties are annexed into Romeoville and can control both the character and quality of development.

Annexation hinges on two important factors: (1) willingness of property owners to have their properties annexed; and (2) financial capacity for the Village to extend municipal water and sewer service to the East Side.

### Communication with Property Owners

For the first factor, the Village should maintain open lines of communication with property owners. Communication should be initiated in the near term to form rapport and active dialogue with property owners. Even if certain properties have a longer term development horizon, communication should occur early and periodically, providing updates to the property owners on progress of development plans for the East Side.

### Extension of Municipal Water & Sewer Service

As for the second factor to extend municipal water and sewer service to the East Side, the Village will need to as-



sess elements such as its financial means, formation of public/private partnerships to help with funding, and phasing of the extension. The Village's 2010 Report on Water and Wastewater Service to the East Side of the FPA will be a valuable resource in planning for utility extensions. Alternative approaches to providing sewer and water services should also be explored if the financing of municipal services is not feasible.

#### Coordination with Transit & Transportation Agencies

The Village must also continue coordinating with transit (e.g. RTA, Metra, and Pace) and transportation agencies (e.g. IDOT, Will County DOT), particularly as the Metra station and commuter parking lot are established and the planned widening of 135<sup>th</sup> Street makes progress. This coordination will ensure the East Side Plan works in tandem with local projects that are within the jurisdiction of others and directly impact the East Side.

The Village should also continue coordinating with local park districts and the Forest Preserve District to plan and construct any new trails, bridges, or underpasses, as established in this plan. This is of particular importance to create linkages with the trail network on the east side of the railroad tracks to the Metra station and trails on the west side.

#### Implementation Strategies

The Implementation Plan is anchored by a series of strategies that need to be carried out to ensure the concepts and recommendations detailed in this plan are achieved to bring transit and development opportunities to life on the East Side of Romeoville. The five core strategies are highlighted on the right.

The strategies are integrated into a matrix that includes tasks for each strategy, potential partnerships, and phasing. The Village will assume primary responsibility for each task, with the potential to partner with other organizations or agencies, such as RTA, Metra, Pace, IDOT, and property owners, among others. Many of the tasks can be supported by the funding and support resources described at the end of this section.

With a concept plan and implementation strategies in place, numerous activities need to be accomplished to achieve the transit and development opportunities outlined in this plan. While the present economy suggests that development will not be immediate, there are still many steps that can be accomplished in the near term. The phasing component of the implementation plan matrix utilizes the following timeframes:

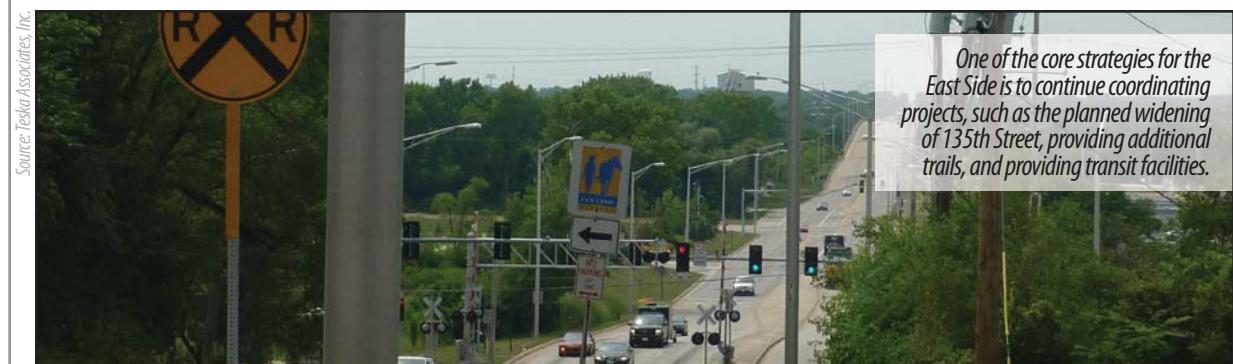
- Near Term Tasks (0-3 years)
- Intermediate Term Tasks (3-5 years)
- Long Term Tasks (5+ years)

The implementation plan matrix is provided on the next few pages.

## Strategies

### FOR THE EAST SIDE |

- 1 :** Build awareness of the planned Metra station, development of the East Side, and improved linkages to downtown.
- 2 :** Secure the resources needed to construct a commuter rail station with adequate parking facilities.
- 3 :** Maintain open communication with property owners of parcels that are planned for development and/or annexation, if applicable.
- 4 :** Continue to coordinate projects with other organizations or agencies.
- 5 :** Foster a strong character and sense of place on the East Side through streetscape enhancements, design guidelines, and transportation improvements.



# Strategies

## FOR THE EAST SIDE

**1 :** Build awareness of the planned Metra station, development of the East Side, and improved linkages to downtown.

Task	Potential Partnerships	Phasing
1. Continue utilizing the Village website, newsletters, press releases, and other media to promote the progress of the planned Metra station, development of the East Side, and improved linkages to downtown.	Village; local newspapers	Near Term
2. Reach out to local newspapers and real estate trade journals to submit press releases or articles relating to the development opportunities offered on Romeoville's East Side.	Village; local newspapers; real estate trade journals	Intermediate Term
3. Create promotional materials, such as brochures, newsletter, or website, to circulate around the region and among development companies and professional organizations to help attract interest from the development community.	Village; real estate trade journals; real estate brokerages	Intermediate Term

**2 :** Secure the resources needed to construct a commuter rail station with adequate parking facilities.

Task	Potential Partnerships	Phasing
1. Continue to collaborate with elected officials at all levels of government to support the construction of the commuter rail station in Romeoville.	Village; Will County; State of Illinois; RTA; Metra; CN Railroad	Near to Intermediate Term
2. Reserve funds to cover the Village's anticipated costs for construction of a commuter rail station and parking facilities, including the proposed connection (bridge) between the east and west platforms.	Village; RTA; Metra; CN Railroad	Near to Intermediate Term
3. Continue to maintain dialogue between the Village, RTA, Metra, and CN Railroad throughout the planning, design, and construction phases of a commuter rail station and parking facilities.	Village; RTA; Metra; CN Railroad	Intermediate to Long Term
4. Pursue grants and other funding sources (see pages 44-46) that assist with the construction of a commuter rail station and related facilities (e.g. commuter parking, trails, signage, etc).	Village; RTA; Metra; CN Railroad; grantors; funders	Near Term

# Strategies

## FOR THE EAST SIDE

**3 :** Maintain open communication with property owners of parcels that are planned for development and/or annexation, if applicable.

Task	Potential Partnerships	Phasing
1. Maintain regular contact with individual property owners to keep them updated on the implementation progress of the East Side Plan and assess each owner's willingness to have their property annexed (if applicable), acquired, and developed.	Village; property owners	Ongoing
2. Develop alternative or phased plans for parts of the East Side that have owners who do not wish to participate in development; such plans may need to modify the concept plan to carve out "holdout" properties but consider them as a potential longer term development phase, provided that the properties may eventually become available over time.	Village; property owners	Intermediate to Long Term

**4 :** Continue to coordinate projects with other organizations or agencies.

Task	Potential Partnerships	Phasing
1. Continue to coordinate with RTA, Metra, Pace, and CN Railroad on projects relating to transit facilities relating to commuter rail and bus services.	Village; RTA; Metra; Pace; CN Railroad	Near Term
2. Continue to coordinate with local park districts and the Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) on projects relating to trails and underpass/overpass connections.	Village; local parks and recreation districts; FPDWC	Near Term
3. Continue to coordinate with IDOT and Will County DOT on roadway improvement projects, including the planned widening of 135 <sup>th</sup> Street and securing the right-of-way for the potential realignment of High Road during or in advance of development proposals.	Village; IDOT; Will County DOT	Near Term
4. Continue to coordinate with the Army Corps of Engineers on projects that have potential impacts on sensitive environmental features.	Village; Army Corps of Engineers; selected developers	Near to Long Term

# Strategies

## FOR THE EAST SIDE

### 5 : Foster a strong character and sense of place on the East Side through streetscape enhancements, design guidelines, and transportation improvements.

Task	Potential Partnerships	Phasing
1. Amend the Village's Zoning Code to integrate the design guidelines established in Section 4 of this plan.	Village	Near Term
2. Utilize the elements from the Signage Plan (Section 3) to develop a unified wayfinding and information signage program to establish an identity for the East Side and tie into Romeoville's overall identity.	Village; Village Engineer; IDOT; signage and design firms	Near to Intermediate Term
3. Integrate streetscape enhancements and gateway elements as detailed in the Concept Plan (Section 1), Transportation Improvement Plan (Section 2), Signage Plan (Section 3), and Design Guidelines (Section 4).	Village; Village Engineer; IDOT; design firms; selected developers	Near to Intermediate Term
4. Provide improvements to the transportation network on the East Side as detailed in the Transportation Improvement Plan (Section 2).	Village; Village Engineer; RTA; Metra; Pace; IDOT; CN Railroad; local parks and recreation districts; FPDWC	Intermediate to Long Term

## Funding & Support Resources

Multiple funding opportunities are available to support implementation of the transit opportunities and development concepts outlined in this plan. Since many elements of the Concept Plan are considered long term opportunities, funding and support resources will be accessible and available throughout the implementation process. Any program listed is subject to change or elimination.

### Local Municipal Funding Sources

Municipal funding mechanisms can supplement Romeoville's ability to use local revenues for potential transit and TOD opportunities. These funding mechanisms can supplement the Village's general revenues, capital improvement plans, and other revenue sources, such as Motor Fuel Taxes, that can be partially allocated to TOD implementation over the long term.

- A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District is a special area designated by the Village to make public improvements within the district that will help generate private-sector development. Taxes derived from increases in assessed property values (i.e. the tax increment) resulting from new development would either go into a special fund created to retire bonds issued to originate the development or leverage future growth in the TIF district.
- A Special Service Area (SSA) can be used for infrastructure, maintenance, or area management purposes in a geography defined by Romeoville. Such revenues can support bonding or generate a revenue stream for specific projects for the defined geography.

□ A Business District (BD) can generate additional sales tax revenue for certain purposes, similar to the eligible uses for Tax Increment Financing (TIF). This approach may be appropriate for commercial and mixed use areas that redevelop for retail uses.

□ Public/private partnerships with a private developer can help to facilitate proposed development or extension of municipal utilities. Partnerships could be established through legal negotiations and performance standards.

□ Other tools, such as tax abatements that support capital projects or sales tax rebates could be applicable.

### Transportation Funding Sources

Funding for transportation related implementation work is available from federal, state, and regional sources.

□ The Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT), is a reimbursement program for local governments applying for federal transportation funding. ITEP provides assistance to support local communities achieve their transportation initiatives and expand travel choices. The program also supports broader aesthetic, cultural, and environmental aspects of transportation infrastructure. ITEP is comprised of 12 categories of eligible funding, including mitigation for roadway run-off and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

□ Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement funding is available via the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) and IDOT. This program

is intended to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, improve intersections, and increase and enhance multiple travel options, such as biking and walking. These funds are available locally through the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

□ The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) administers the Job Access Reverse Commuter (JARC) program, a federally funded program that provides operating and capital funding for transportation services planned, designed and carried out to meet the transportation needs of eligible low-income individuals and of reverse commuters regardless of income. The RTA also administers the New Freedom program, which provides operating and capital funding for new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

□ Through the Innovation, Coordination and Enhancement (ICE) program, the RTA provides operating and capital funding for projects that enhance the coordination and integration of public transportation and develop and implement innovations to improve the quality and delivery of public transportation.

□ Local municipalities could work cooperatively with the RTA, Metra, Pace, IDOT, and the Will County Governmental League (WCGL) to create a TED. A TED is a local development tool that helps communities manage parking resources while supporting both economic development and mobility. TEDs charge market rates for parking on the street or off-street public spaces and use part of the increased revenue to make the area more accessible. TEDs are managed similar to a Spe-

cial Service Area. These districts can be used to make the area more walking-oriented and connected to the larger neighborhood, improve transit connections, invite more bicycling, and revitalize the streetscape to reflect the character of the neighborhood or district.

- The Active Transportation Alliance provides support services for local governments on bicycle and pedestrian programs and issues.
- Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides flexible funding that is used by states and localities on any Federal-aid highway, bridge projects on any public road, transit capital projects, and bus terminals and facilities. The federal share for the program generally is 80%. Each of the region's 11 Councils of Mayors are allocated STP funding on the basis of population. Each Council oversees the planning and programming of these STP funds within their own region, and has developed their own set of project selection guidelines. The Will County Governmental League (WCGL) is the lead agency for programming STP funds in the region serving Romeoville. All selected projects must be submitted to CMAP for inclusion in the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- The Illinois Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety (PBS) Program Grant is designed to aid public agencies in funding cost effective projects that will improve pedestrian and bicycle safety through education and enforcement. Applicants for this grant can apply for one or more of 3 grant categories: (1) enforcement efforts; (2) educational efforts, which can include pedestrian and bicycle master plans, distribution of education materials, walk and bike promotional programs, and

distribution of protective equipment; and (3) research and training.

- TIGER grants invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects to preserve and create jobs, promote economic recovery, invest in transportation infrastructure to provide long-term economic benefits, and assist those areas most affected by the economic downturn. Projects can include highway or bridge rehabilitation, interchange reconstruction, road realignments, public transportation projects (including projects in the New Starts or Small Starts programs), passenger rail projects, and freight rail projects. Projects must be between \$10 million and \$200 million. No more than 25% of total funds (\$131 million) may be awarded to projects in a single state. Grants are available for 80% of project cost but higher priority given to those projects with higher local commitment.

#### Community & Economic Development Support

Illinois' Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) provides multiple grants and loans to local government for economic and community development purposes. Other state agencies and authorities have certain programs that could support implementation of Romeoville's plan.

- DCEO's Business Development Public Infrastructure Program provides a grant to local governments to improve infrastructure related to projects that directly create jobs.
- Other DCEO programs provide affordable, low interest financing for public infrastructure improvements for economic development purposes.

□ DCEO assistance in the form of participation loans is available to community and economic development corporations to serve small businesses within their defined areas.

□ The Illinois Finance Authority (IFA) is a self-financed, state authority with multiple programs for local governments (among other entities). IFA can assist with bond issuance, provide low cost loans, facilitate tax credits, and supply investment capital to encourage economic growth statewide.

□ The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) offers certain similarly structured programs for multi-family housing development. With different multi-family residential options outlined in the Concept Plan, IHDA programs could be partnered with private developers.

□ As plan implementation proceeds, DCEO, through its Illinois Bureau of Tourism, provides grants to municipal and county governments and local non-profits to market local attractions to increase hotel/motel tax revenues.

□ DCEO tourism grants are also available to private sector applicants, working with local government, to attract and host events in Illinois that provide direct and indirect economic impact.

□ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) provides technical and financial assistance for brown-fields activities, supporting revitalization efforts through environmental assessments, cleanup, and job training. Several grant types are available, including

area-wide planning programs, assessment grants, and cleanup grants.

» Area-wide Planning Pilot Program provides a flexible grant that can include financial and/or staff assistance for developing area-wide brownfields plans, identifying next steps, and resources needed for implementation. Awards are limited to \$175,000.

» Assessment grants provide funding for brownfields inventories, planning, environmental assessments, cleanup planning, and community outreach. Grants limited to \$200,000 per assessment or total grant funding \$400,000.

» Cleanup grants provide direct funding for cleanup activities at specific brownfield sites. Grants are limited to \$200,000 per site with 20% local match.

□ Under the Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant program, grants are available to implement green infrastructure for stormwater management. There are three program categories: combined sewer overflow rehabilitation, stormwater retention and infiltration, and green infrastructure small projects.

□ Through its Local Assistance Program, CMAP offers technical assistance to advance the implementation of the GO TO 2040 Plan. The program is primarily focused on assistance with a small amount of grant funding available. Typical projects include local comprehensive

plans, zoning ordinance updates, subarea plans, and projects related to sustainability and the natural environment.

#### Specific Purpose

Two state departments, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), provide multiple programs for specific purposes to local governments.

□ IEPA provides technical assistance and funding support, depending upon the issue. IEPA has programs intended to protect watersheds and water quality near developments and roadways utilizing federal Clean Water funds. Municipal governments can also apply for revolving low interest loans for new wastewater facilities, collection systems, and sewers. Upgrades are eligible, too.

□ Just like DCEO, IEPA offers programs to improve energy efficiency.

□ DNR has two programs for bike and recreational path development or renovation.

» The Illinois Bicycle Path Grant is a reimbursement program for multiple bike path development activities, including land acquisition, path development and renovation, and the development of support facilities for the path.

» The Recreational Trails program funds land acquisition, trail construction, and trail renovation

for recreational paths/trails that can be used by multiple users.

» Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) assists local government agencies in the acquisition and development of land for public parks and open space. This program has been used to fund bicycle/multi-use trail development. The OSLAD program is state financed and grants of up to 50% may be obtained. Acquisition grants are limited to \$750,000 and park development grants are limited to \$400,000.

□ DNR has additional programs dedicated to open space preservation and land and water conservation.

#### Private & Foundation Support

Certain regional and community foundations, private sector entities, and individuals may provide grant funding to support economic development, environmental, and land use activities or study.

□ Potential grantors may be identified through the Donors Forum of Chicago.

□ Local citizens or businesses may also provide a donation or series of donations to fund a specific local public improvement project. These projects can include funding for subsequent studies, or physical improvements and their maintenance. These activities are usually conducted under the auspices of a local public charity and may be subject to written commitment.