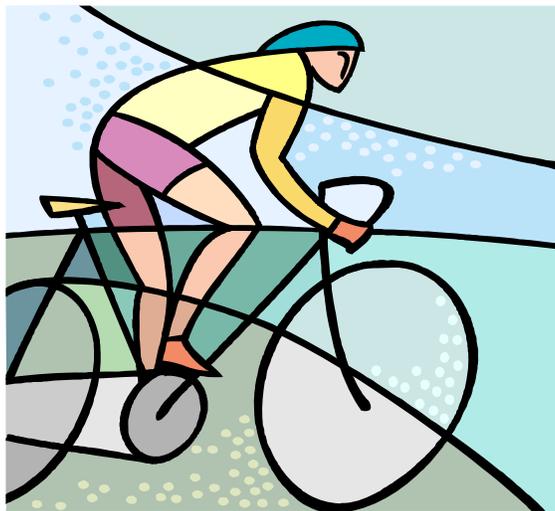




# **ROCK ISLAND BIKEWAYS PLAN**



## **REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROCK ISLAND BICYCLE TASK FORCE**

Heather Mattern  
Chuck Oestreich  
Dan Osterman  
Bob Payne  
Dave Round  
Mary Scott  
Tom Scott  
Pam Trotter  
Becky Wren

**August, 2009**

## REPORT SUMMARY

In September of 2008, the Rock Island Mayor and City Council appointed the Rock Island Bicycle Task Force. This citizen group was charged with making recommendations related to biking in the community. One of the first efforts identified by the task force was development of the Rock Island Bikeways Plan. This plan is intended to provide a blueprint for developing a system of connected bike routes through the city to encourage biking as a means of enhancing the community quality of life, supporting development efforts, promoting healthful activity and reducing the city's carbon footprint.

The Rock Island Bicycle Task Force recommends the following:

- *That the city construct a network of striped bicycle lanes on selected major streets and avenues and separated bike trails to create a community bikeway system*
- *That priority for constructing the community bikeway system be focused on the striping of 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue from 38<sup>th</sup> Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street and the construction of a separated trail on 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue from 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Sunset Park; and the striping of 17<sup>th</sup> Street from 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue to 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 20<sup>th</sup> Street from 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue*
- *That the city continue to support biking activities like Ride the River, the Modern Woodman Quad Cities Criterium, Safe Routes to School, bike safety programs sponsored by the Police and Parks Departments and installation of bikes racks at various locations throughout the city*
- *That the city pursue Bike Friendly Community designation as awarded by the League of American Bicyclists*

The Rock Island Bicycle Task Force respectfully submits these recommendations and stands ready to assist with implementation of this plan as desired or directed by the Mayor and City Council. The task force feels strongly that Rock Island is a great city and that the bikeway network as envisioned by this Rock Island Bikeways Plan will truly enhance the community as a place to live and work and improve the quality of life for all Rock Island citizens.

## ROCK ISLAND BIKEWAYS PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

In the early 1990's, Rock Island joined with other area communities to construct the Great River Trail (GRT), a sixty-two mile bikeway extending from Sunset Park to Mississippi Palisades Park in Savanna. When completed in 2001, the city's 5.5 mile section became a popular recreational and commuter facility. Offering levee-top views of the Mississippi River and tying together the city's northern waterfront, the GRT eventually connected with the American Discovery and the Iowa Quad Cities Mississippi River trails via a link across Arsenal Island. The city's trail on the Mississippi is also a part of the Mississippi River Trail which, when completed, will extend 2,000 miles and connect ten states. The riverfront trails system has experienced increasingly heavy use from both casual and serious bikers.



Use of the GRT helped spur additional biking interest in Rock Island and in ways to connect city neighborhoods to the trail. In addition, organizations like the Quad Cities Transportation Advocacy Group (QCTAG), the League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB) as well as individual biking enthusiasts began to promote biking as an alternative mode of transportation, a recreational activity and a tourist attraction.

Finally, the city's broader interest in pursuing policies and practices related to environmental sustainability and enhanced quality of life bolstered consideration of support for non-motorized modes of transportation and led to the beginnings of a bikeway system; installing bike lane striping on major city streets undergoing reconstruction.

### BICYCLE TASK FORCE

In furtherance of the city's interest in the promotion of bicycling, the Mayor and Council appointed the Rock Island Bicycle Task Force in September 2008. The task force was charged with three responsibilities:

- (1). Review current city initiatives to promote bicycling and alternate forms of transportation in the city

(2). Make recommendations on possible additional measures that could be undertaken

(3). Make suggestions on possible funding sources that could be accessed to help pay for these improvements

The task force began meeting in early 2009 and identified as a first step the drafting of a bikeway plan for the city. Meeting on a monthly basis, the task force considered many ideas and approaches to bike facilities throughout the city.

## **BIKEWAY PLAN**

The Rock Island Bikeway Plan is intended to be a guide for creating a bikeway network throughout the city. As a planning document, it assesses the current state of bike facilities throughout the city, proposes policies to support biking and suggests an implementation process.

According to the League of Illinois Bicyclists, as an activity, bicycling address several issues:

- Quality of life – Research has shown that bicycle improvements are popular with residents and can improve a community’s attractiveness as a place to live
- Economic development – Bicycling can be used as a tool to attract tourism, new business and young families
- Health benefits – Promoting bicycling improves community health through increased physical activity as well as decreased air pollution and traffic congestion
- Environmental awareness – A bicycle plan shows that the community is environmentally aware and committed to providing alternate forms of transportation
- Meeting many transportation needs – Accommodating biking helps meet the transportation needs of residents who do not drive including children and teens, some seniors, individuals with certain disabilities and those who cannot afford cars
- Enhanced cycling and walking – Bicycle planning is a good way to better accommodate the many residents who choose to cycle or walk for transportation or recreation



An additional benefit of a bikeway plan is to support funding for plan implementation. A coherent, focused plan communicates to potential funding agencies and organizations that the city has carefully considered and embraced the importance of developing a well thought out and sensible community bikeway system.

## **OBJECTIVES**

In drafting the Rock Island Bikeways Plan, the following objectives were identified:

- Create a coherent bikeway network throughout the city using the existing street system
- Establish a bikeway network in such a way that bicycle access from city neighborhoods to major commercial areas, recreational facilities, schools and other points of community interest can be provided in a safe manner
- Promote the use of bikeways as a means of reducing the use of motorized vehicles thereby reducing the city's carbon footprint
- Educate the public regarding the environmental and health benefits of using bicycles as a means of commuter transport and for recreation
- Work with other area cities and the Bi-State Regional Commission to ensure that the city's bikeway network connects with networks that are in place or planned by other area communities
- Educate both the general public and bicyclists about safely mixing vehicles and bicycles while both use the city streets

## **BIKEWAY TYPES / STANDARDS**

As cities across the country have embraced the development of bikeways, uniform standards for construction have been established. Following is a brief overview of the most common types of bikeways as identified by the League of Illinois Bicyclists and defined by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Bureau of Design and Environment Manual for Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations:



- Trails – Trails are off-road bikeways that generally work best away from roads, on other rights-of-ways such as old railroad beds, rivers or utility easements.

The Great River Trail, the Mississippi River Trail, the Hennepin Canal Trail and the Duck Creek Trail are examples of off-street trails in the Quad Cities. IDOT identifies Bicycle Paths or Shared Trails as a facility specifically separated from the roadway and intended for bicycle or other non-motorized transportation.

- **Sidepath Trails** – Sidepath trails are trails alongside a road, basically wide sidewalks. While sidepaths may be considered safer than riding on busy city streets, they do raise concerns with regard to pedestrian conflicts and where constructed along streets with many residential or commercial driveways. Sidepaths generally work best along busy roads with faster moving traffic and few driveways or intersections. Portions of the Great River Trail are sidepaths which run in the Illinois Route 84 right-of-way. IDOT does not define sidepaths.

- **Bike Lanes** – These are areas on the street specifically striped and dedicated to bicycle use. Standards indicate that bike lanes should be a minimum width of five feet with appropriate markings and bike lane signage. Lanes may be installed adjacent to the curb or may be separated to allow vehicle parking next to the curb. Bike lanes are most appropriate on lower speed urban arterial and collector streets. The bike lane striping on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 20<sup>th</sup> Street is an

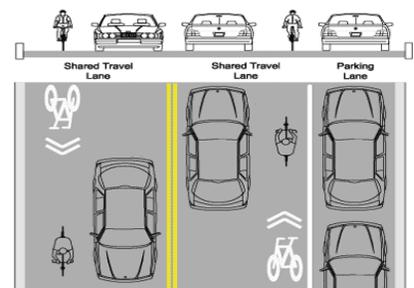


example of next-to-curb bike lane striping and the bike lane striping on 17<sup>th</sup> Street between 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue Court is an example of striping that allows for vehicle parking next to the curb. IDOT defines bike lanes as that portion of the roadway surface designated by pavement markings and signing for the exclusive use of bicyclists.

- **Bike Routes** – Bike routes are on-street bikeways designated by standard signs as preferred bike routes. These are shared roadways and are most appropriate where there is not sufficient street width for striping or right-of-way for a sidepath. Bike routes may also be along paved



road shoulders. A somewhat new concept in bike route designation is the use of “sharrows” which provide motorists with an indication that the street lanes are



being shared with bicyclists. IDOT uses the term Shared Roadway which is defined as any roadway upon which a separate bicycle lane is not designated and which may be legally used by bicyclists regardless of whether such facility is specifically designated a bikeway.

Bikeways, whether they are trails, sidepaths, bike lanes or bike routes should be designed and constructed according to defined standards. Designing and constructing bikeways to accepted standards ensures consistency and reduces city exposure to liability. One of the most widely used sources for bikeway design is the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities. The City of Rock Island currently uses the AASHTO standards for design of all bike facilities throughout the community.

## **EXISTING BIKEWAY SYSTEM**

Rock Island's existing bikeway system consists of three elements; The Great River Trail, on-street striping and designated bike routes.

- Great River Trail – The Great River Trail is a 62 mile bikeway that extends from Sunset Park in Rock Island to Mississippi Palisades Park in Savanna. Rock Island's segment is approximately 5.5 miles in length and consists of a 10' wide hard surfaced (primarily asphalt) trail. The GRT extends through Sunset Park and, after crossing 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, ramps up to the top of the levee. It extends along the levee except near the Rock Island River Terminal and Modern Woodman / armory property. Near the city's water pumping plant at 24<sup>th</sup> Street, the Great River Trail splits and connects to the American Discovery Trail via a bikeway bridge over the Sylvan Slough. This connection also provides access to the Mississippi River Trail along the Iowa Quad Cities riverfront. The Rock Island segment of the GRT continues and ends at the Moline border near the Sylvan Slough Natural Area.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Street (40<sup>th</sup> Avenue Court to 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue) – As part of the resurfacing of 17<sup>th</sup> Street in 2004, the city installed 5' wide bike lanes on the east and west sides of 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The east side bike lane is striped outside an 8' wide parking lane adjacent to the curb with the west side bike lane adjacent to the curb with no parking allowed. The striping is approximately one mile in length.

- 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Mill to 20<sup>th</sup> Street) – As part of a resurfacing project completed in 2007, 5' wide bike lanes were installed on the north and south sides of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Mill Street to 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Except for a short distance in front of 427 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, bike lanes are adjacent to the curb with parking banned on both sides of the street. This segment of striping is about 1.2 miles in length.
- 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue West (Rock Island Parkway to Turkey Hollow Road) – As part of the reconstruction of 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue West in 2007/08, 8' wide parking lanes were constructed on the north and south sides of the street. Although not specifically designated for bikes, these lanes provide ample, safe room for bicyclists using this street.
- Designated Bike Routes – Currently there are a number of bike route signs which provide directions through residential neighborhoods. Many of the signs and routes date to the late 1970's.

Two additional segments of the bikeway system have received grant funding and are proposed for construction in 2009/10:

- Veteran's Memorial Bridge at Carr's Crossing (West Rock River Bridge) to 44<sup>th</sup> Street – When the Illinois DOT planned and constructed the new West Rock River bridge, accommodations were made for bicycle usage through the installation of a separate bike bridge on the downriver side of the auto bridge. This facility is intended to link to the Hennepin Canal / Milan levee bikeway system on the south side of the Rock River and the Rock Island / Moline bikeway system on the north side of the Rock River. The Rock Island / Moline connection will exit the bridge via a ramp that will provide access to the Rock Island system for bicyclists heading west and to the Moline system for bicyclists heading east. In Rock Island, the trail will run due west on a power line easement through Ben Williamson Park to 44<sup>th</sup> Street. Construction of this trail segment was funded by a transportation enhancements grant received jointly by Rock Island and Moline in 2006.



- Cross Town Connector (44<sup>th</sup> Street to 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue) - This trail segment is intended to run along 44<sup>th</sup> Street from Ben Williamson Park to Blackhawk Road as striped bike lanes on the east and west sides of the street, cross Blackhawk Road at 44<sup>th</sup> Street, then run west in the north right-of-way of Blackhawk Road as a sidepath, turn north at 38<sup>th</sup> Street and run for a distance as a sidepath before entering 38<sup>th</sup> Street as striped bike lanes to 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The city received a \$200,000 state grant in 2007 to support this project.

## PROPOSED BIKEWAY SYSTEM



As noted above, one of the objectives of this plan is to create a coherent bikeway network throughout the city using the existing street system by linking existing system elements with new installations. To meet this goal it is recommended that a community bikeway system be created. The system will run along major arterial streets and avenues and be installed mainly as striped bike lanes. The system or network will also include the Great River Trail.

### Proposed Community Bikeway System

Maps on the following pages show the proposed network for that portion of Rock Island between the Mississippi and Rock Rivers and for that portion of Rock Island south of the Rock River (Southwest Rock Island). Utilizing community streets as part of the bikeway system will allow virtually all residential neighborhoods within the city to be within one-half mile of a street with a bikeway facility. At full implementation the proposed network will consist of over 30 miles of striped and separated bikeways throughout the city. Major north/south arterial streets identified for striping or marking include 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, 20<sup>th</sup> Street, 38<sup>th</sup> Street and Ridgewood Road. Major east/west arterial streets identified for striping are 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue and the Rock Island Parkway. A separated trail on 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue between 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Sunset Park is necessary as is a separated trail along Blackhawk Road between 44<sup>th</sup> Street and 24<sup>th</sup> Street.

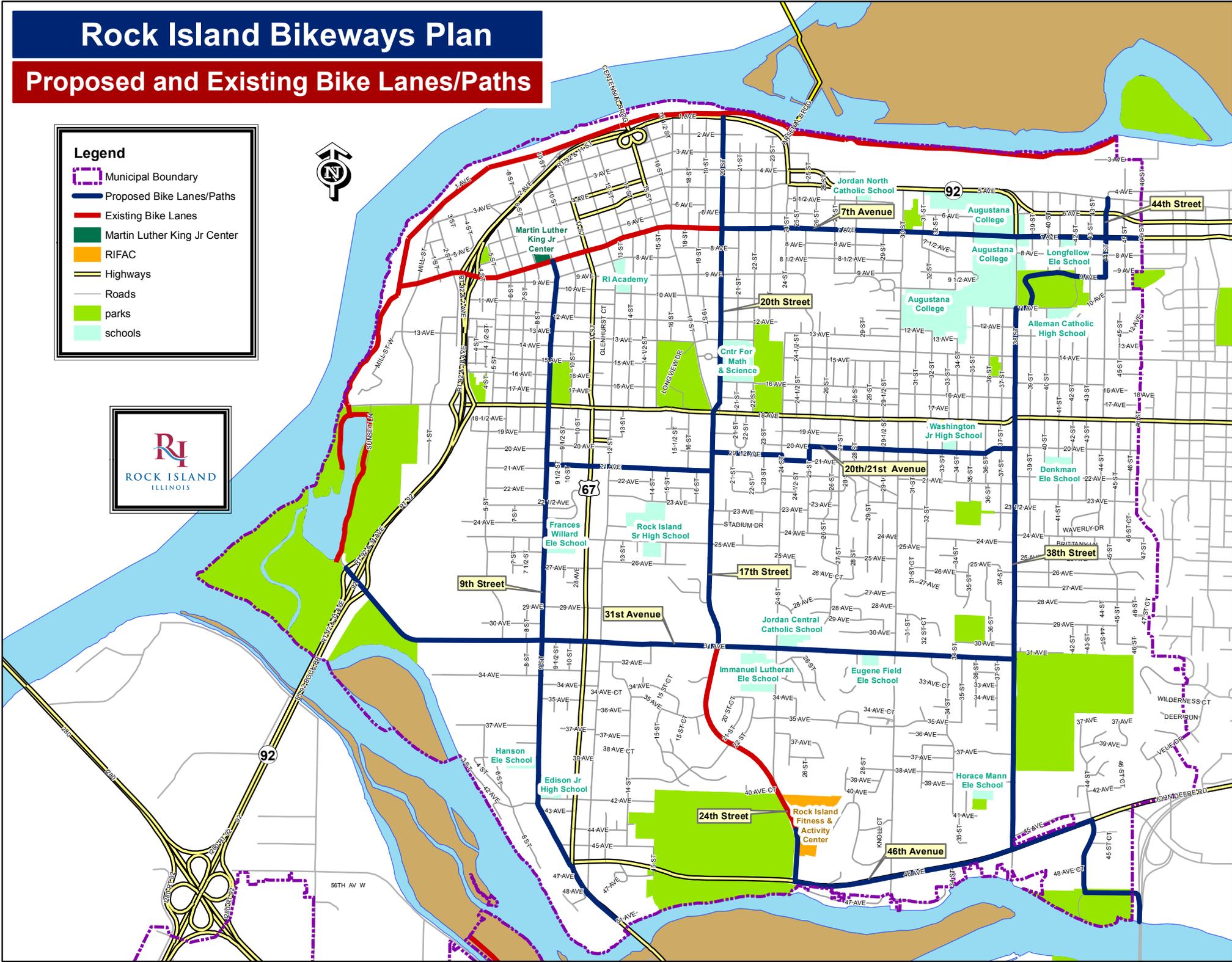
Critical to determining the feasibility of the on-street network are the paving widths of the streets identified as part of the grid. Standard engineering specifications suggest a minimum 50' paving width as the ideal to create a system that allows for two-way vehicular traffic, two parking lanes and two striped bike lanes. Typical dimensions for

# Rock Island Bikeways Plan

## Proposed and Existing Bike Lanes/Paths

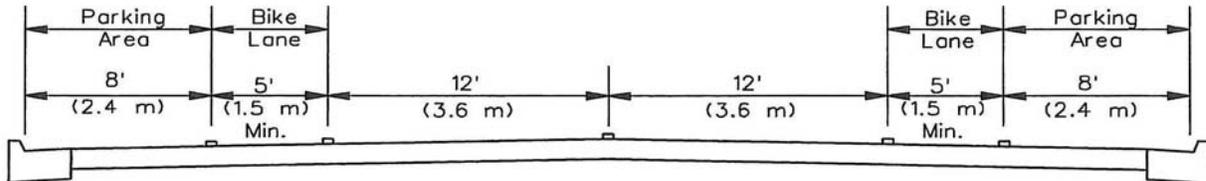
**Legend**

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Proposed Bike Lanes/Paths
-  Existing Bike Lanes
-  Martin Luther King Jr Center
-  RIFAC
-  Highways
-  Roads
-  parks
-  schools





such a configuration are two 12' wide motor vehicle lanes, two 8' foot wide parking lanes and two 5' wide bike lanes.



TWO-LANE SECTION WITH  
MARKED PARKING  
(Marked Bicycle Lanes)

**MINIMUM CROSS SECTIONS FOR CURBED STREETS WITH PARKING**

For the proposed bikeway system, Public Works Department Engineering Division staff reviewed street widths to determine the ability to install striping on both sides of the primary network streets. Since a majority of the streets proposed for the network are less than the 50', the elimination of parking on at least one side of a street may need to be considered. Following is detail on each of the network streets proposed as part of the bikeway system.

The north/south elements include:

- 9<sup>th</sup> Street from Blackhawk Road to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue - The curb-to-curb paving width of 9<sup>th</sup> Street varies somewhat from 45' between 9<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 54' between 47<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Therefore, to install striping on 9<sup>th</sup> Street from 9<sup>th</sup> to 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue will require elimination of parking on one side of the street. The segment between 47<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue will not need to be changed.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Street from Blackhawk Road to 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue / 20<sup>th</sup> Street from 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue – As noted previously, the segment of bikeway on 17<sup>th</sup> Street from the 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue Court to 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue is complete with a 5' bike lane striped on the west side of the street and a parking lane and adjacent bike lane striped on the east side of the street. To extend the bikeway north along 17<sup>th</sup> Street from 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue to 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue will require the elimination of one parking lane as the street width is 45'. The 20<sup>th</sup> Street section between 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> can support striped bike lanes without the elimination of parking. The section from 7<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue will require the elimination of one parking lane. The section

from 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue can accommodate parking and bike lanes on both sides of the street.

- 38<sup>th</sup> Street from Blackhawk Road to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue through Lincoln Park to / 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue / 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 44<sup>th</sup> Street / 44<sup>th</sup> Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue - Paving widths on 38<sup>th</sup> Street from 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue are such that striping for bike lanes on opposing sides of the street will require the elimination of parking on one side of the street. The segment from 38<sup>th</sup> Street along 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue through Lincoln Park and along 9<sup>th</sup> Street will need to be shared facility. The paving width on 44<sup>th</sup> Street from 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue is 36' so that on-street parking will need to be eliminated.

The east/west elements include:

- Great River Trail Sunset Park to Moline Border – This segment is completed and currently in use as an off-street trail.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Mill Street to the Moline Border - The segment from Mill Street to 20<sup>th</sup> Street has been completed with the installation of 5' wide bike lanes on the north and south sides of the street. Except for a short section in front of the Esquire Lodge (427 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue) parking was eliminated so that the bike lanes are adjacent to the curb. Extending the striping further east to 35<sup>th</sup> Street will require elimination of on-street parking. The segment of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 35<sup>th</sup> Street to 38<sup>th</sup> runs through the Augustana College campus. Due to the 35' street width a shared bike/vehicle designation will be necessary, perhaps using sharrows. The 66' foot wide paving width from 38<sup>th</sup> to 46<sup>th</sup> Street will accommodate striping of bike lanes on each side of the street. Note that future plans call for the narrowing of this segment of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and conversion from the current east bound only designation to a two-way street. At such time as this conversion takes place, plans for construction should include striped bike lanes on both sides of the street or consideration of a sidepath(s).
- 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue / 20 ½ Avenue / 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue 9<sup>th</sup> to 38<sup>th</sup> Street – This alignment is intended to provide a mid-city cross town route. Although 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be a logical choice, the heavy traffic volumes and lack of paving width make it unsafe for use by bicyclists. Using 20<sup>th</sup>, 20th ½ and 21<sup>st</sup> Avenues provides a route through residential neighborhoods and still allows access to the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue commercial corridor. Paving widths on these streets are not suitable for bike lane striping and the dense residential nature of the street makes the

elimination of parking problematic. Therefore, it is suggested that this route be designated using signage and pavement markings.

- 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue from Sunset Park to 38<sup>th</sup> Street – The curb to curb paving width on 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue between 38<sup>th</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Street is 40 feet. In order to accommodate separate bike lanes, parking will need to be eliminated. While 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue is not heavily used for on-street parking, the north side of the street just west of the 38<sup>th</sup> Street intersection and the area near Eugene Field School may need further review. The segment of 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue west of 5<sup>th</sup> Street to Sunset Park will require a separated trail as the paving width is 24’.
- Blackhawk Road from 44<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Street – The high traffic volumes and speeds on Blackhawk Road require this bikeway to be constructed as a sidepath. Although a sidewalk was installed on the in the north right-of-way when the state widened Blackhawk Road west of 38<sup>th</sup> Street, the sidewalk will need to need to be widened to meet bikeway standards. Note the section from 44<sup>th</sup> Street 38<sup>th</sup> Street is under design and should be ready for construction in 2010.

The Southwest elements include:

- Rock Island Parkway from 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue West to U.S. 67 – This segment runs along the shoulders of the Rock Island Parkway from 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue West to U.S. 67. The current eight foot wide paved shoulder widths provide adequate room for bicyclists using the road although the high speed nature of motorized vehicles would suggest a separated trail as a better alternative. However, given the topography of the area, such an approach is most likely cost prohibitive. A less costly alternative would be to call attention to the use of the road shoulder by bicyclists through the use if signs and pavement markings.



W51-1 / W16-1  
Share the Road with Bicyclists assembly  
Sign images from the Manual of Traffic Signs <http://www.tffsigns.ca/>  
These sign images copyright Richard C. Howar. All rights reserved.

- Ridgewood Road from the Rock Island Parkway to Andalusia Road - As is the case with the Parkway section, Ridgewood Road from the Parkway to 14<sup>th</sup> Street West has paved shoulders wide enough to accommodate bike traffic. However, the section from 14<sup>th</sup> Street West to Andalusia Road has gravel shoulders. Paving of the shoulders to connect this segment with Andalusia Road is suggested along with the installation of signs indicating the presence of bicyclists riding along the shoulder.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Engineering estimates on the next page indicate a total cost of \$5,150,684 to fully implement the bikeway system as envisioned in this plan. *However*, this figure includes three major elements totaling \$3.8 million: a sidepath on Blackhawk Road from 46<sup>th</sup> Street to 24<sup>th</sup> Street (\$900,000); a sidepath and two bridges on 24<sup>th</sup> Street between 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue Court and 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue (\$1,800,000) and a sidepath on 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue from 5<sup>th</sup> Street to Sunset Park (\$1.1 million). Although inclusion of these facilities would help create the “ideal” bikeway system, the cost of construction and resource constraints suggest that other parts of the system be completed starting with the most achievable elements. Therefore:

*The Bicycle Task Force recommends that initial efforts and resources be directed towards establishing a major east/west and a major north/south route. Specifically, these routes are:*

- ❖ ***31<sup>st</sup> Avenue from 38<sup>th</sup> Street to Sunset Park - This segment will allow for a connection between the West Rock River Bridge and the Great River Trail using mainly on-street striping along 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue. It is recommended that the striping section be completed first which includes striping 5' wide bike lanes on the north and south sides of the street from 38<sup>th</sup> Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The estimated cost for this work is \$188,232.***
- ❖ ***17<sup>th</sup> Street from 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue to 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 20<sup>th</sup> Street from 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue - This segment will allow a north / south connection from 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue Court to the Great River Trail. It is recommended that 5' wide striped bike lanes be installed on the east and west sides of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street and 20<sup>th</sup> Street. The estimated cost of this work is \$247,712.***

*This approach will not only allow for the creation on major east / west and north / south bikeways but will help tie together existing bikeways on 17<sup>th</sup> Street and those proposed for 38<sup>th</sup> Street. It is also possible to undertake installation of these bikeways in an incremental approach so that sections can be completed over several years as funds allow.*

**ROCK ISLAND BIKEWAYS PLAN**  
**Cost Estimates**

**East / West Routes**

7th Avenue	Mill Street to Moline	\$230,947	Mill Street to 21st Street completed
20th/21st Avenue	9th Street to 38th Street	\$10,000	Signage and pavement markings only
31st Avenue	Sunset Park to 38th Street	\$1,288,179	Includes \$1.1 million for separated trail 5th St to Sunset
Blackhawk Road	24th Street to 44th Street	\$900,000	Requires separated trail / 44th to 38th partially funded
Ridgewood Road	85th Avenue West to US 67	\$5,000	Signs on shoulders

**North / South Routes**

9th Street	51st Avenue to 7th Avenue	\$284,040	
17th/20th Street	Blackhawk Road to 1st Avenue	\$2,047,712	Includes 2 bridges at \$1.8 million
38th Street	31st Avenue to 7th Avenue	\$143,510	
Ridgewood Road	Lower to Andalusia Road	<u>\$119,294</u>	Paving of shoulders

**TOTAL COMMUNITY BIKEWAY SYSTEM**                      \$5,028,682

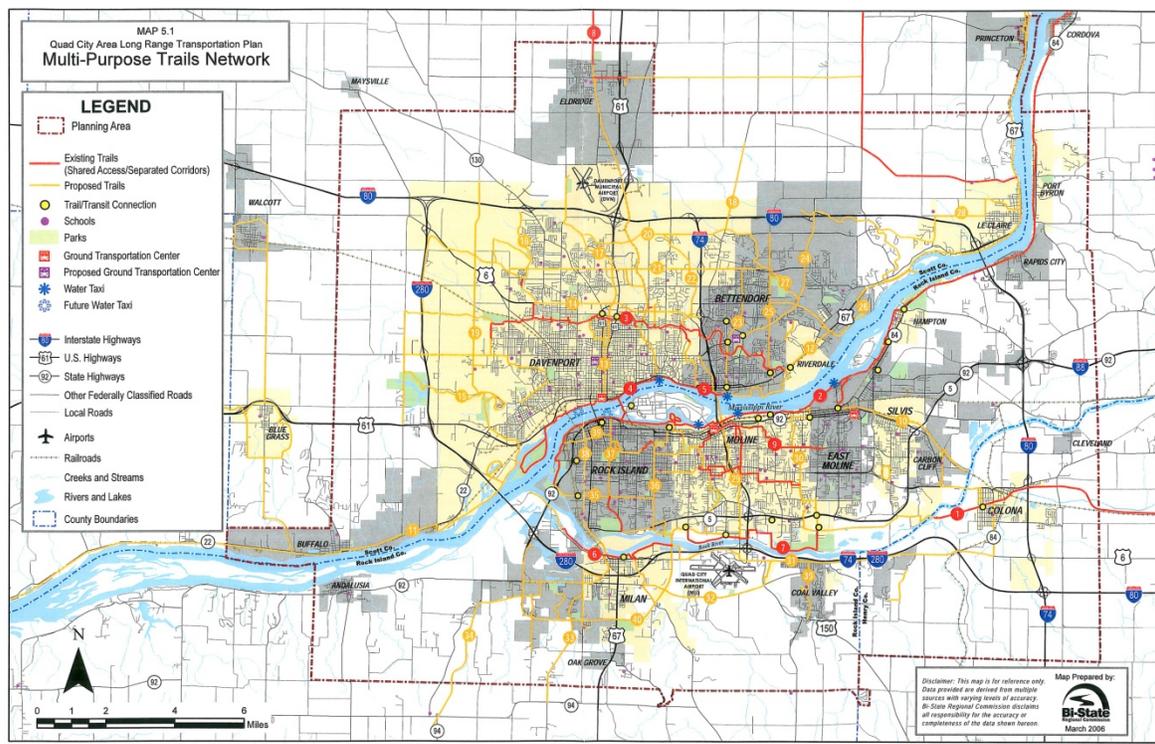
**RECOMMENDED SHORT TERM PRIORTIES**

<b><i>17th Street</i></b>	<b><i>31st Avenue to 18th Avenue</i></b>	
<b><i>20th Street</i></b>	<b><i>18th Avenue to 1st Avenue</i></b>	<b><i>\$247,712</i></b>
<b><i>31st Avenue</i></b>	<b><i>38th Street to 5th Street</i></b>	<b><i><u>\$188,179</u></i></b>
<b><i>TOTAL RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES</i></b>		<b><i>\$435,891</i></b>

## Connections

Another objective of this plan is to ensure that Rock Island's bikeway system connects with bikeways in other cities. The Bi-State Regional Commission and the League of Illinois Bicyclists have worked with various Quad City area communities to develop a bikeway system which knits together both existing and proposed bikeways as they extend throughout the greater metropolitan area. Given the area-wide interest in biking and the mobile nature of the community, a regional approach to coordinating bikeway routing makes sense. Making certain that bikeways within individual cities align with those of neighboring communities ensures a smooth transition for bikeway users who travel about the Quad City area.

With regard to the connections to Moline, the proposed primary bikeway system is designed to connect with Moline bike facilities at the Great River Trail, West Rock River Bridge and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.



In Milan, the Rock Island/Milan Parkway provides a network connection utilizing the road shoulders to U.S Highway 67 which serves as the border between the two cities. The Parkway extends through Milan to the West Rock River Bridge however; a connection from the Parkway to the bridge needs to be determined by the Village of Milan if this is to be a route for access to the West Rock River Bridge.

A second connection between Rock Island and Milan uses Andalusia Road (West 10<sup>th</sup> Street – Milan) to 4<sup>th</sup> Street to U.S 67 north to 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Rock Island. Although currently available, the lack of paved shoulders on West 10<sup>th</sup> Street (Andalusia Road) in Milan and the heavily travelled U.S. 67 Rock River Bridge, make this connection a challenge for all but the most experienced riders. A corridor study completed in 2004 recommended widening of West 10<sup>th</sup> Street to accommodate increasing vehicular traffic as well as bikes but the high cost (estimated at \$23 million) makes this a very long term proposition.

A final connection, between Rock Island and Milan is utilization of the Hennepin Canal bikeway. A former towpath runs parallel to the canal and portions are surfaced for use by bicyclists. It is understood that Milan has plans to pave the section of towpath which extends from about East 9<sup>th</sup> Street to the West Rock River Bridge, providing access to the Rock Island and Moline systems on the north side of the Rock River. Heading west along the towpath, a potential connection could be made by following the towpath to the point where the Rock Island Parkway crosses the Rock River. In order to continue north to Rock Island, construction of a bridge across the Rock River would be necessary. Once the crossing is complete, access to the Great River Trail would be possible. Note that in 2001, a cost of \$1.7 million was estimated for a bridge crossing the Rock River at this location.

As previously noted, a connection to the Iowa Quad Cities trails is in place via the American Discovery Trail Bridge, a paved trail section and the Government Bridge structure over Arsenal Island. The connection accesses the Mississippi River Trail and opens an additional seven miles of trail for Rock Island residents.

## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

While creation of a bikeway system is a major element of this plan, to encourage use of the system and provide support to users, a number of additional programs, activities or improvements should be considered.

**Bike Racks** – Placement of bike racks at both public and private facilities should be encouraged. Bike racks provide a designated, secure location for bike storage while the owner is shopping, visiting, working or conducting business. It is suggested that the city explore a program of sharing the cost of bike



racks with private business owners and install bike racks at all city facilities to encourage bike usage.

**Bike Friendly City Designation** – The League of American Bicyclists (LAB) currently awards the Bike Friendly Community designation to selected cities across the country. This designation requires submittal of an application for review by the organization. Cities can be designated at one of four levels; bronze, silver, gold or platinum depending upon their involvement and encouragement of biking in the community. The designation is recognition that the community appreciates the biking public and speaks to the quality of community life. It is recommended that the city apply for designation as a Bike Friendly Community.



**Ride the River** – Ride the River is a twenty-five year old annual Father's Day event sponsored by River Action, the Quad City Times and Trinity Regional Health Systems. The event utilizes riverfront trails to draw focus to the Mississippi River and the health benefits of biking. The city has traditionally supported the event by granting street closures, allowing use of the city's portion of the Great River Trail and providing police and traffic control services. It is recommended that the city continue to support this event.

**Complete Streets** – Complete Streets is a relatively new way of thinking about street design. For many years, streets were constructed to move the greatest volume of automobile traffic from point to point in the most efficient way often making travel by walking, bicycling, and transit more difficult. The complete streets design approach seeks to create streets that, to the greatest extent possible and appropriate, accommodate all forms of travel. It is recommended that the city utilize complete streets concepts in the design of new or reconstructed streets.



**Quad Cities Criterium** - The annual Quad Cities Criterium held in the District on Memorial Day is an event with a long history in the Quad Cities. While the event is oriented towards competitive biking, it does present an opportunity to highlight bike activity. Modern Woodmen Bank recently agreed to provide primary sponsorship support for the event through 2011. It is recommended that the city continue to work with the criterium's sponsor and the District organization to stage this quality event.

**Safe Routes to School** – Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs use a variety of education, engineering and enforcement strategies that help make routes safer for children to walk and bicycle to school and encouragement strategies to entice more children to walk or bicycle. In August 2005, the U.S. Congress as part of a major transportation bill, devoted \$612 million to the National Safe Routes to School Program. Numerous models exist across the country where SRTS programs have been locally implemented. It is recommend that the city work in cooperation with Rock Island/Milan School District 41 to consider an SRTS program for Rock Island.

**Education** – Both the Police and Parks department currently sponsor bike safety programs. It is recommended that these programs be continued and when possible be expanded perhaps by coordinating bike safety efforts with other organizations.

## **RESOURCES**

Full implementation of the bikeways plan is a significant financial undertaking. Given the level of support needed to achieve plan recommendations and constraints on city funds, it is apparent that a variety of federal, state and local resources will be needed if a realistic and timely implementation of plan elements is to be accomplished. Following is a summary of available resources which could support plan implementation.

**Surface Transportation Act** - Periodically, the US Congress approves legislation dealing with surface transportation issues. Several of the more recent enactments have included funding for transportation "enhancements" which, among other things, can include bikeways. Enhancement funds pass from the federal government to the various state Departments of Transportation, in Rock Island's case, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is the funding agency. Typically, IDOT issues a notice of funds availability and invites applications. While there has not been a grant maximum, the program does require a 20% match of local to federal funds with grants awarded on a competitive basis. One important element of past enhancement programs has been the ability to use the funds for on-street striping of bike lanes.

In addition to the more regular enactment of surface transportation legislation, the American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act apportioned \$26.66 billion in transportation infrastructure fund to the states. Of this amount, 3% was designated for enhancement activities. In Illinois, this resulted in \$28 million being available for the state enhancements program.

**Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program** – This program was created in 1990 to financially assist eligible units of government to acquire, construct and rehabilitate public, non-motorized bicycle paths and related support facilities. Grants are available to any local government agency having authority to acquire and develop land for public bicycle path purposes. Financial assistance up to 50% of approved project costs is available through the program with maximum grants of \$200,000. The city has received several grants through this program to support construction of the Great River Trail and the Cross Town Connector. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis annually through the Illinois Department of Transportation. Of note is a program restriction that grant funds may not be used to install street striping but only for the construction of separated trails or sidepaths.

**City of Rock Island Capital Improvements Plan** – Each year the City Council adopts a five year Capital Improvements Plan that outlines major infrastructure improvement projects and contract maintenance activities to ensure integrity of the city's physical facilities. Funds to support capital projects are drawn primarily from gaming revenue, motor fuel tax funds, grants-in-aid, enterprise fund revenue (water, sewer, storm water fees and charges for services), general obligation bond proceeds and excess General Fund balance. The nature of most CIP revenues is such that their use is restricted to support a specific activity or improvement. The two primary sources of discretionary CIP support are gaming revenues and excess General Fund balance. The CIP may offer two opportunities to support the bikeway system.

Past city practice has been to evaluate and, when possible, include the striping of bike lanes on major arterial streets as they are scheduled for reconstruction or resurfacing. This practice should be continued. A second possibility is to set aside a designated amount of CIP funding each year until full bikeway implementation is achieved.

**Bikes Belong** – Bikes Belong is sponsored by the bicycle industry – retailers, manufacturers, suppliers – whose aim is to promote biking throughout the country. Based in Boulder, Colorado, the organization is involved in federal policy making, national partnerships and the encouragement of biking. Bikes Belong makes small

grants to communities to assist with bike paths, lanes, and routes as well as bike parks, mountain bike trails, BM facilities and large scale bicycle advocacy initiatives. Since 1999, Bikes Belong has awarded 180 grants to municipalities and grass roots groups in 45 states, investing nearly \$1.5 million and leveraging close to \$500 million in federal, state and private funding.

**Safe Routes to School** – As noted above, Safe Routes to School is a federal program which passes funding through the Illinois Department of Transportation. In August of 2009, some \$13 million in grants were awarded to communities through this program. Participation requires development of a School Travel Plan which outlines a school community's intention for making travel to and from school more sustainable and safe. SRTS funds can be used for construction or replacement of sidewalks and bikeways.

**Foundations** – Several local, state and national foundations could be sources of funding to support implementation of the bikeways plan. For example, the city, in cooperation with River Action, was recently awarded a grant through the Moline Foundation to help with the cost of signs along the GRT. Organizations that support environmental activities or that prompt healthy living may offer opportunities to support bikeway construction as an alternative to modes of transportation which use fossil fuels. Foundations may also provide funding for programs that promote bicycle safety and education.

## **CONCLUSION**

Complete implementation of the Rock Island Bikeways Plan is a long term proposition; however, full realization of the plan will provide long term community benefits through enhanced quality of life, a healthier citizenry, an improved living environment and safer streets for both bicyclists and motorists. With completion of the Great River Trail, striping of bike lanes on major city streets, review of complete streets principles for street construction projects and support for biking events, the city has made an excellent start in realizing a new model for transportation through the community and the importance of "thinking outside the car".