

The Riverfront Trail Initiative

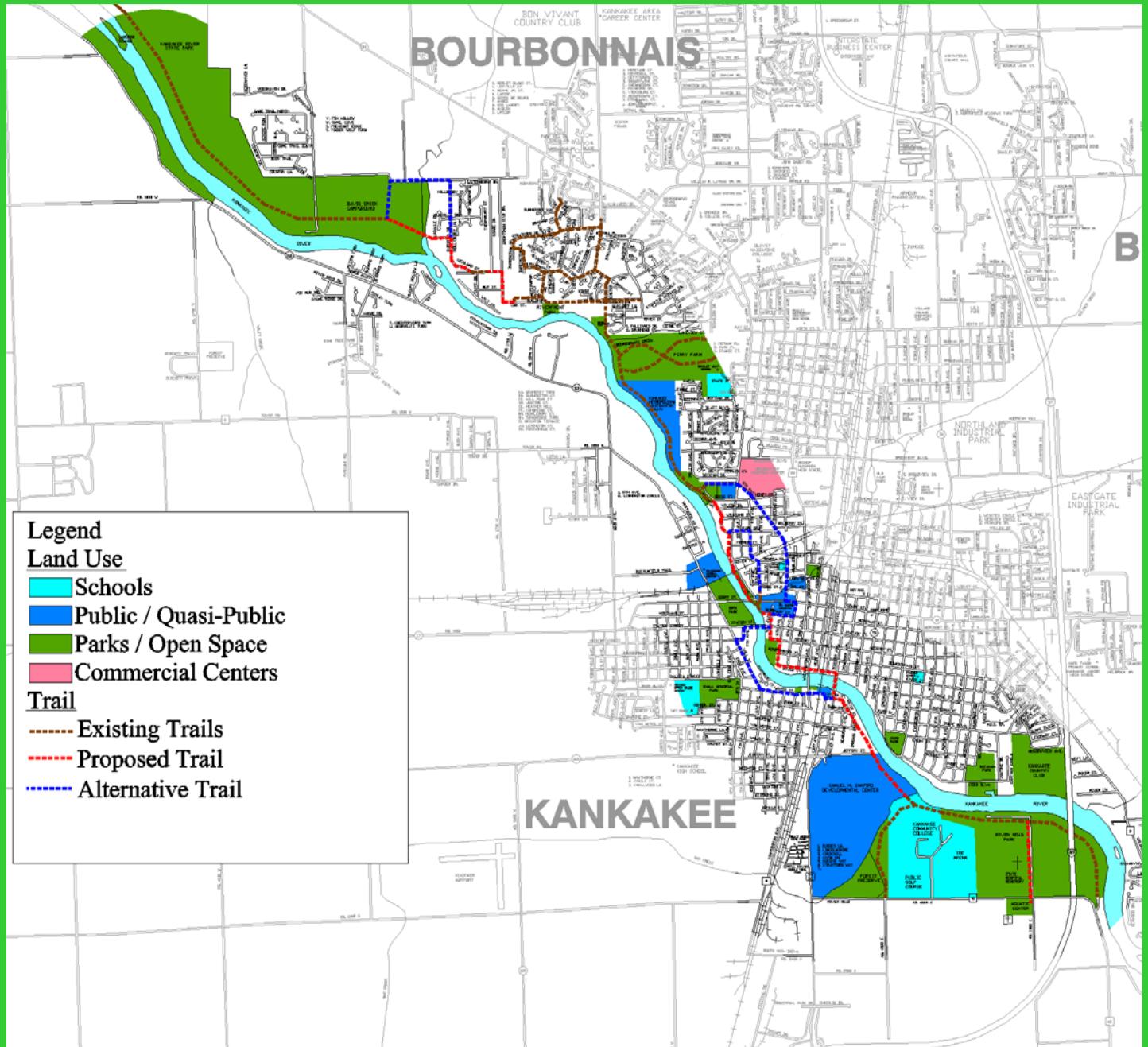


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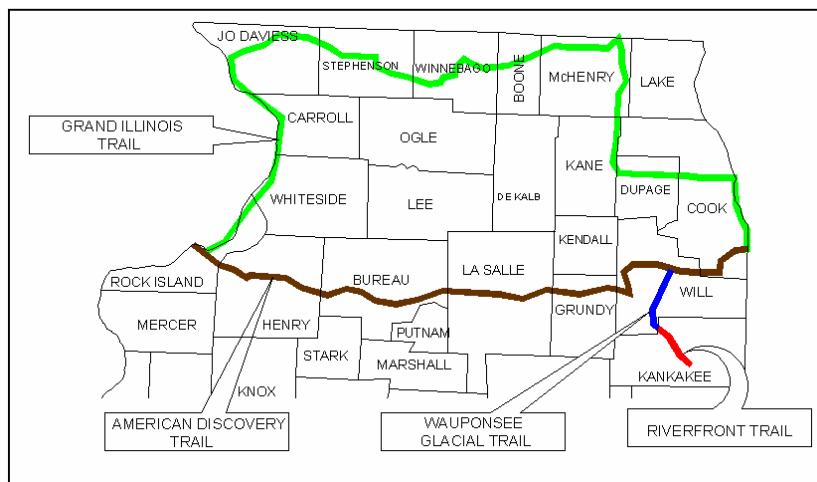
Introduction

The need for a trail along the Kankakee River was first introduced in the Kankakee County Greenways and Trails Plan adopted June 8, 1999 by the Kankakee County Board. In that plan the areas along the Kankakee River are linked together through a series of trails that interconnect the parks along the river from the south County Line with Iroquois County to the western County Line shared by Will County within the Kankakee River State Park. This initiative elaborates upon the 1999 plan.

In 2003 - 2004, the new George H. and Lura Lynn Ryan Family Aquatic Center was built south of River Road Park near the Kankakee River and plans are being formed to construct an Ice Arena and Fitness Center near the boundaries of Kankakee Community College's property in the near future. These two improvement projects prompted an effort by officials at the College to reopen discussion about the need for a trail along the river in that area to transport children from the City's residential neighborhoods to the Park Districts new attractions some 2 miles away. Without an adequate trail children wishing to use these facilities would have to travel down dangerous and narrow highways. These highways are heavily traveled by automobiles and large trucks and have speed limits up to 45 miles per hour. It was felt that a safer alternative could be found. Phase I of the Riverfront Trail focuses on alleviating these problems.

During the discussions about the trail for the Aquatic Center it was suggested that a study be conducted to link this trail to the existing trail system in the Kankakee River State Park located in rural Bourbonnais Township. If this trail could be linked to the State Park network, hundreds of miles of trail would become accessible to the citizens of Kankakee County. The State Park network of trails will be linked to the Wauponsee Glacial Trail proposed in Will County. This trail in turn connects to the Grand Illinois Trail which travels in a loop around Northern Illinois. The southern portion of the Grand Illinois Trail is also part of the American Discovery Trail which is proposed to travel from coast to coast across the United States.

This document focuses on identifying potential routes to extend the trail from the Aquatic Center to the Kankakee River State Park. The trail is divided into four construction phases and each phase is then divided into multiple segments. Some of these segments have multiple possible alignments. Each segment and alternative segment is described and potential obstacles are discussed.



The Corridor

The corridor for this study begins at the new Aquatic Center located on River Road and continues to the existing trail system within the Kankakee River State Park. Areas and facilities along this route were analyzed to determine the best possible routes. In some cases, the best route could not be determined without extensive engineering analysis. When this occurred all viable alternatives were listed. The width of the corridor varies but is wide enough to include all land uses adjacent to the trail. It should be noted that the alternatives listed in this document are not necessarily the only possible routes and other alternatives may exist.

Several parks and other attractions are located within the corridor. The routes in this document try to link these facilities together in the most efficient way. The table below shows these facilities and lists their various amenities.

	Restrooms	Benches	Bike Racks	Trash Receptacles	Storm Shelters	Lighting	Playground Equipment	Athletic Fields	Picnic Areas
Aquatic Center		X	X	X		X			
River Road Park	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
KCC	X	X	X	X		X			
Gar Creek Prairie FP				X					X
Jeffers Park	X	X			X				X
Small Park	X	X		X					X
Bird Park	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Fisherman's Park		X		X					
Legion Park		X		X	X		X		X
Alpiner Park	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
LeVasseur Park	X			X					X
Helgeson Park		X	X				X		
Perry Farm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cavalier de LaSalle Park	X	X		X	X	X			X
Riverfront Park		X	X		X	X			X
State Park	X	X		X					X

There are several obstacles within the corridor that will need to be addressed if this trail is to be constructed. The area where the Kankakee River meets Court Street is the biggest obstacle. There are currently three possible routes identified in this area, each with its own unique set of problems to address. An extensive amount of engineering and further studies will need to be conducted to determine the best way to navigate this area. Crossing the Canadian National Railroad near the Kankakee River on the south end is also a point in need of special attention as is, the crossing of Davis Creek near the Kankakee River State Park.

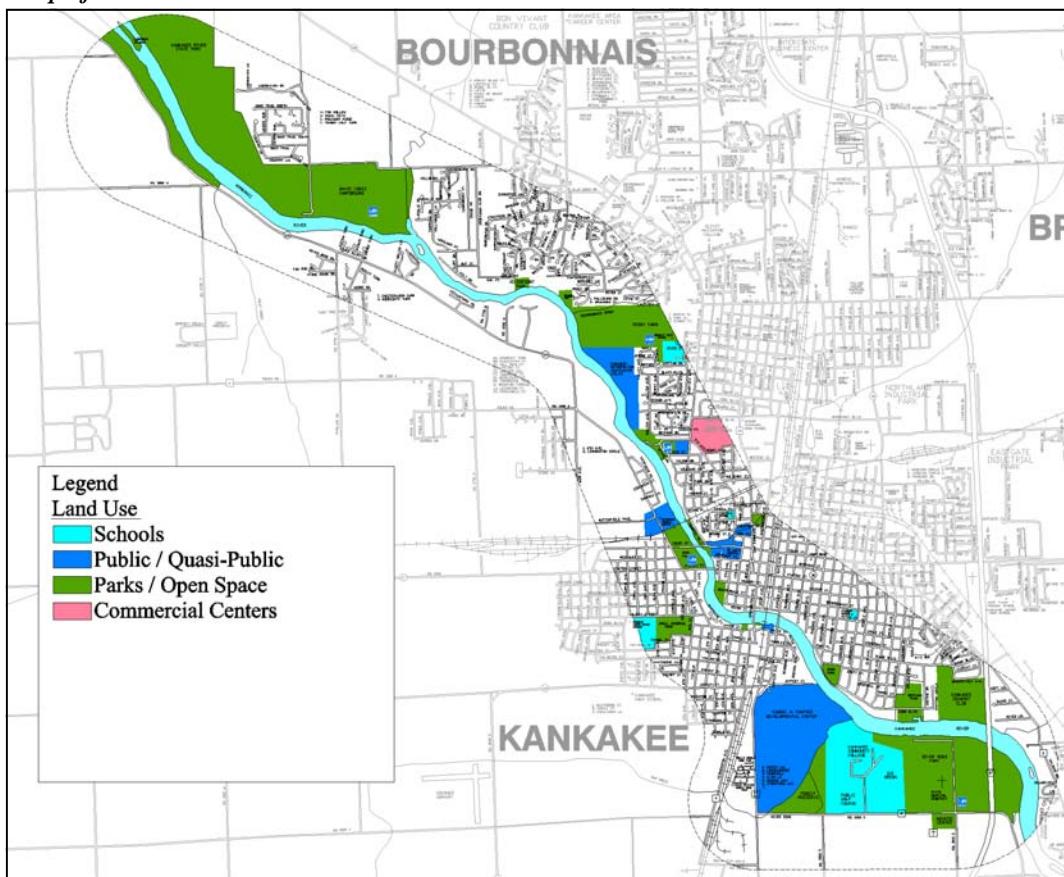
Another obstacle to overcome for this trail to become a success is the regulation of parking restrictions for the portions of the trail which utilize existing roadways. Curbside parking in these areas would need to be removed and local law enforcement would need to enforce the restrictions. This transition of use may not be well received by the citizens that live along the route and care should be taken to alleviate their concerns and alternatives should be used when possible.

Since this trail crosses multiple jurisdictions a coalition of members from the various jurisdictions should be formed to set policies and standards for the entire trail. Items such as lighting, restroom facilities, storm shelters and rest areas should be placed periodically throughout the length of the trail in an uniformed fashion. Cooperation among the various entities is vital to the successful implementation of this trail.



Vehicle parked across a trail in Bourbonnais.

Map of Trail Corridor.

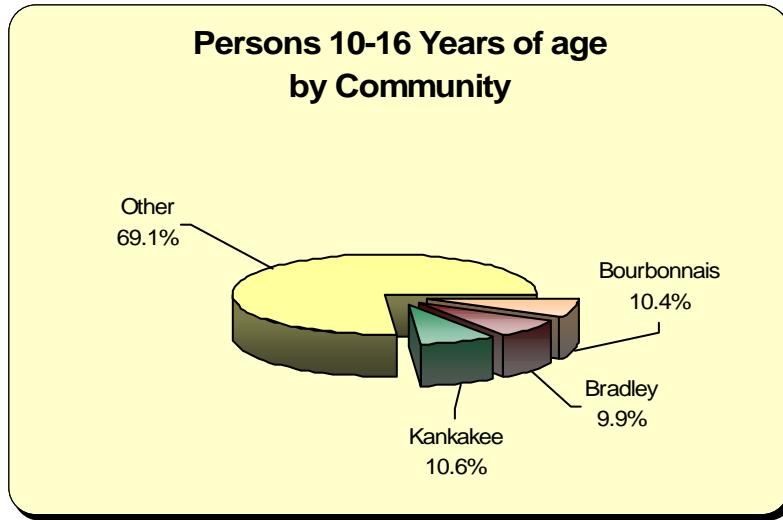


Potential Users and Demographics

The Riverfront Trail is recreational in nature and will most likely be used for that purpose by most of its users. Our demographics will focus on this group of users. A large portion of this group consists of persons 10 to 16 years of age. Persons in this age group lack access to motorized transportation, making this trail an attractive alternative. Also, there are 1,910 occupied households within the three municipalities that do not have a motor vehicle available. Of those households, over 14% are located within the City of Kankakee, followed by the Villages of Bradley and Bourbonnais with 6.2%, and 2.6% respectively.

The 2000 Census shows that there are over 5,500 persons 10 to 16 years of age residing within the communities of Kankakee, Bradley, and Bourbonnais. Of these three communities, the City of Kankakee has the largest population in this age group with 10.6%. The table and the chart below shows how this population is distributed throughout these communities.

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>10-16 Years of Age</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Population</i>
Bourbonnais	15,353	1,600	10.4%
Bradley	12,722	1,262	9.9%
Kankakee	27,561	2,933	10.6%
Total	55,636	5,794	10.4%



Demographics for other potential user groups are not provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, and as such, information about them is not listed. These groups would include bicyclist, joggers, runners and recreational walkers.

Stakeholders

This trail crosses many different jurisdiction and properties as it meanders through the area on its way to the State Park. Shown below is a list of the agencies and critical land owners directly affected by the construction of the trail.

Phase I

Kankakee Valley Park District
Kankakee Community College
Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve District
State of Illinois (Shapiro Developmental Center)
Consumer's Illinois Water Company
City of Kankakee

Phase II

Kankakee Valley Park District
City of Kankakee

Phase III

Kankakee Valley Park District
Bourbonnais Township Park District
City of Kankakee
Village of Bradley

Phase IV

Village of Bourbonnais
Bourbonnais Township Park District
Bourbonnais Township
State of Illinois (Kankakee River State Park)

Developing community support and consensus will be an integral part of making this trail an asset to the community. Every effort should be made to keep the public informed of the trails progress and public comment should be welcomed at every stage.

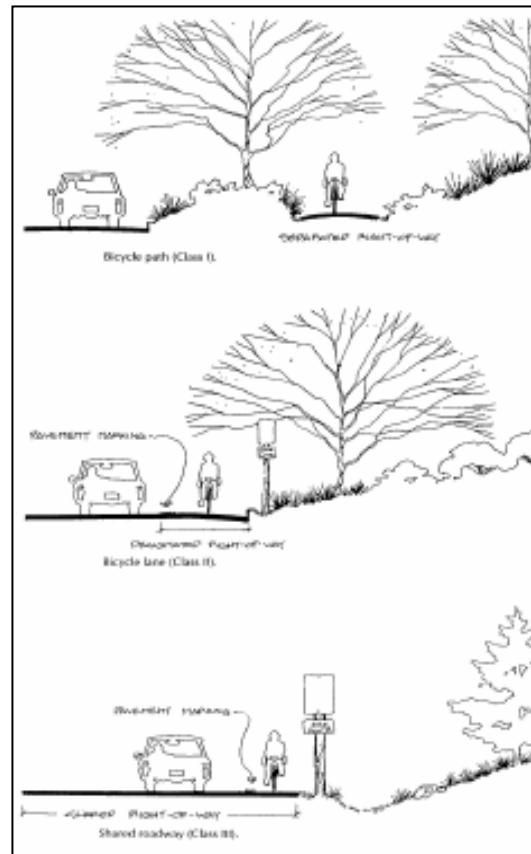
Trail Types and Design Standards

It is envisioned that two different trail types will be used for the Riverfront Trail System. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has different design standards for each type of trail. One is a striped lane adjacent to existing roadways (Class III as defined by AASHTO) and the other is a completely separated hard surfaced trail (Class I as defined by AASHTO).

Class I trails have a minimum width of eight feet wide and are completely separated from any motorized traffic. For the purpose of the Riverfront Trail, Class I trails should also be hard surfaced to allow for the maximum amount of uses. This type of trail will be utilized when the trail crosses park land and private property. This type of trail is by far the safest but is also the most expensive to construct.

Class III trails have a minimum width of four feet and are located on both sides of an existing roadway. Placing the trail on both sides of a roadway allows for safe movement of trail traffic in the same direction as motorized traffic. This type of trail will be used when the trail is parallel to existing streets. Many of the trail segments fall into this category.

An item that would help the success of this trail would be the establishment of uniformed signage along the entire length of the trail. The signs should be clearly marked and indicate where the users is on the Riverfront Trail countless of which park district or jurisdiction that they are in. The signs should be of a consistent size and color with uniform logos and information.



Types of Trails

Phases

The Riverfront Trail system has been divided into four phases and each phase has been further divided in multiple segments for the purpose of discussion. These various phases have no bearing on the order of construction or on level of importance and should not be construed as such. This section describes each of these phases and segments in detail.

Phase I

Total length: 12,028 Feet (2.27 Miles)

Phase I of the Riverfront Trail project consists of the area along the southern edge of the Kankakee River from the newly constructed Aquatic Center on the south end (at the intersection of River Road and 1500 E. Rd.) to the intersection of Schuyler Avenue and Water Street south of the Schuyler Avenue Bridge.

Segment 1

Type: New Build / Striping

Length: 2,946 Feet (.55 Miles)

The trail would begin at the Aquatic Center and head north along the access road for the River Road Park. The trail for this segment could either have a striped and signed area along the road or a paved trail separated from but adjacent to the road. This segment would end at the River Road Park Trail located at the end of the access road.

Segment 2

Type: Rebuild / Rehabilitate

Length: 4,554 Feet (.86 Miles)

The trail would follow the existing River Road Park Trail northwest to the existing trails termination point at Gar Creek which lies within the Gar Creek Prairie Forest Preserves boundaries. It also passes along the northern property line of the Kankakee Community College. The existing trail is five feet wide and made of crushed limestone. This trail could be left alone or completely reconstructed depending on funding. Reconstructing the trail with an eight-foot wide asphalt path would make the trail more accessible to a greater number of users. Restroom and other facilities and amenities are located within River Road Park and the Aquatic Center. An ice arena and fitness center is also being proposed somewhere near the College's property.

Segment 3

Type: New Construction / Striping

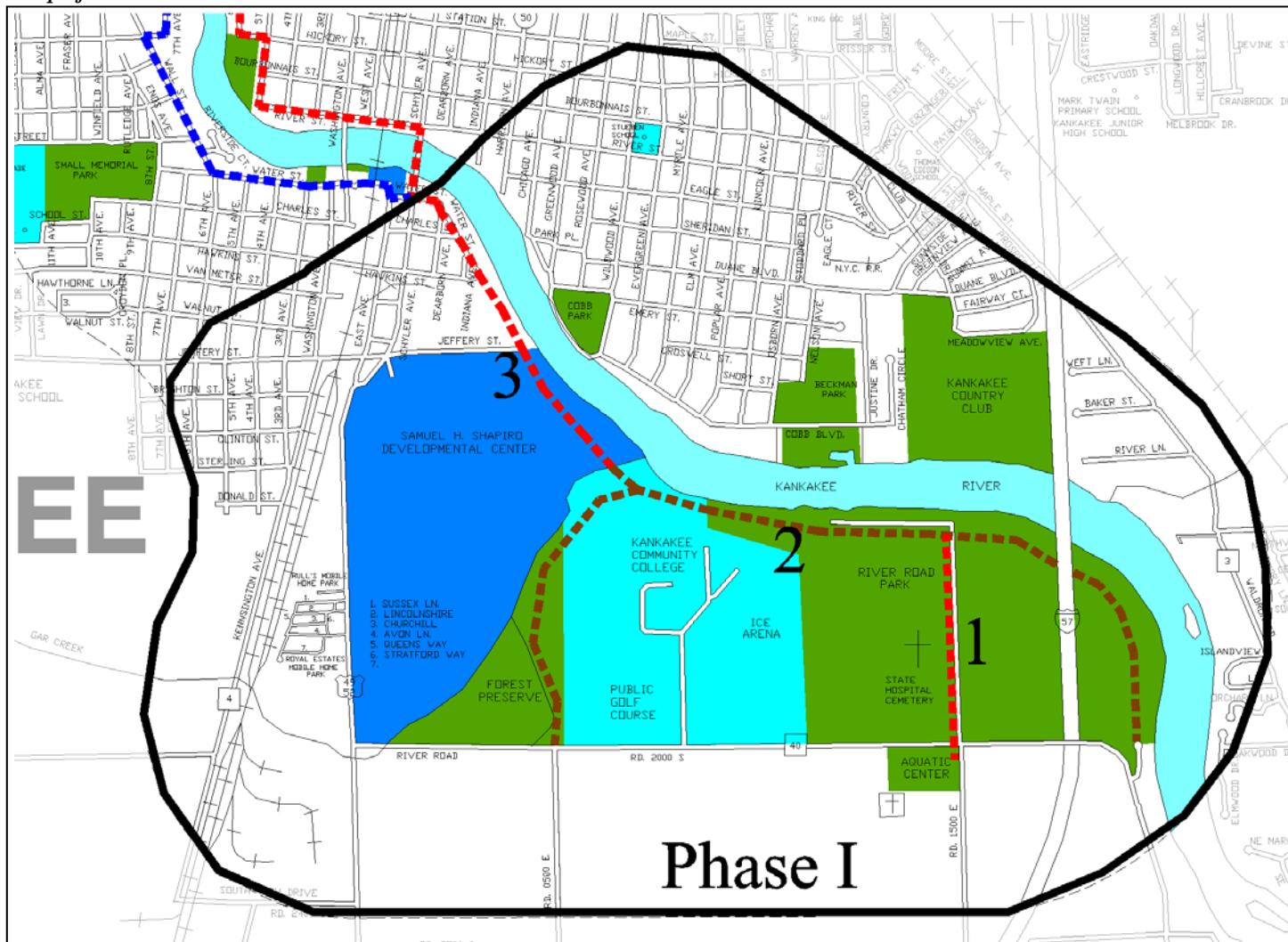
Length: 4,528 Feet (.85 Miles)

This part of Phase 1 crosses the Shapiro Developmental Center's property following an existing footpath until it reaches the end of Jeffery Street. From here it continues north across the Consumers Illinois Water Company property passing between the Kankakee River on the east and an abandoned quarry on the west until it reaches the end of Hawkins Street.

From Hawkins Street the trail would continue north along Water Street until it reaches the terminus of Phase I at Schuyler Avenue. The first two portions of this segment would require new trail construction, whereas the portion along existing streets would be completed with a combination of striping, signage and the removal of parking.

It should also be noted that this Segment stops in the southern end of Downtown Kankakee. Shopping and retail opportunities may be able to be explored in this area.

Map of Phase I.



Phase II

Total Length: 7,012 Feet (1.32 Miles)

This Phase of the project connects the northern end of the trail from Phase I to the Bird / Alpiner Park area located at the intersection of Court Street and the Kankakee River. Two different alternatives are given for Segment 1, each having it's own unique appeal. Countless of which of these alternatives would be selected, striped lanes along the existing city streets would be utilized.

Segment 1A

Type: Striping

Length: 6,412 Feet (1.21 Miles)

This route starts at the intersection of Water Street and Schuyler Avenue and follows Water Street west to its intersection of Wall Street and then turns north along Wall Street to Hickory Street. On Hickory Street the trail then heads east to Seventh Avenue and then turns north to the intersection of Seventh Avenue and Station Street. From this intersection it then goes east along Station Street to Sixth Avenue and follows Sixth Avenue north to the existing trail system in Alpiner Park.

Along the way, this trail passes by Jeffers Park, Bird Park and within one block of Small Park all with restroom facilities and other amenities. This trail utilizes existing roadways for its entire length requiring striping, signage and parking restrictions. Two obstacles to the use of this route are the underpass at the Canadian National Railroad and the bridge at Station Street. Both are narrow with inadequate non-vehicular access and as such, very costly to improve.



Photo of Water Street underpass.

Segment 1B

Type: Striping

Length: 5,587 Feet (1.05 Miles)

The preferred alternative for Phase II is segment 1B because it utilizes the new Schuyler Avenue Bridge and keeps the trail on the north side of the River. The segment starts at the intersection of Schuyler Avenue and Water Street and heads north across the Schuyler Avenue Bridge to River Street. On River Street the trail heads west until it reaches Fifth Avenue and then turns north. From here it passes Legion Park as it turns west down Hickory Street to Sixth Avenue. It then heads north again until it connects with the existing trail system at Alpiner Park. This segment would utilize existing streets for its entire length and would require striping, signage and parking restrictions. One obstacle along the way would be the underpass at the Canadian National Railroad as it is narrow and obsolete. A positive aspect of this trail is that the existing signals at Schuyler Avenue and Washington Avenue could be used with little or no improvement.



Photo of River Street underpass.

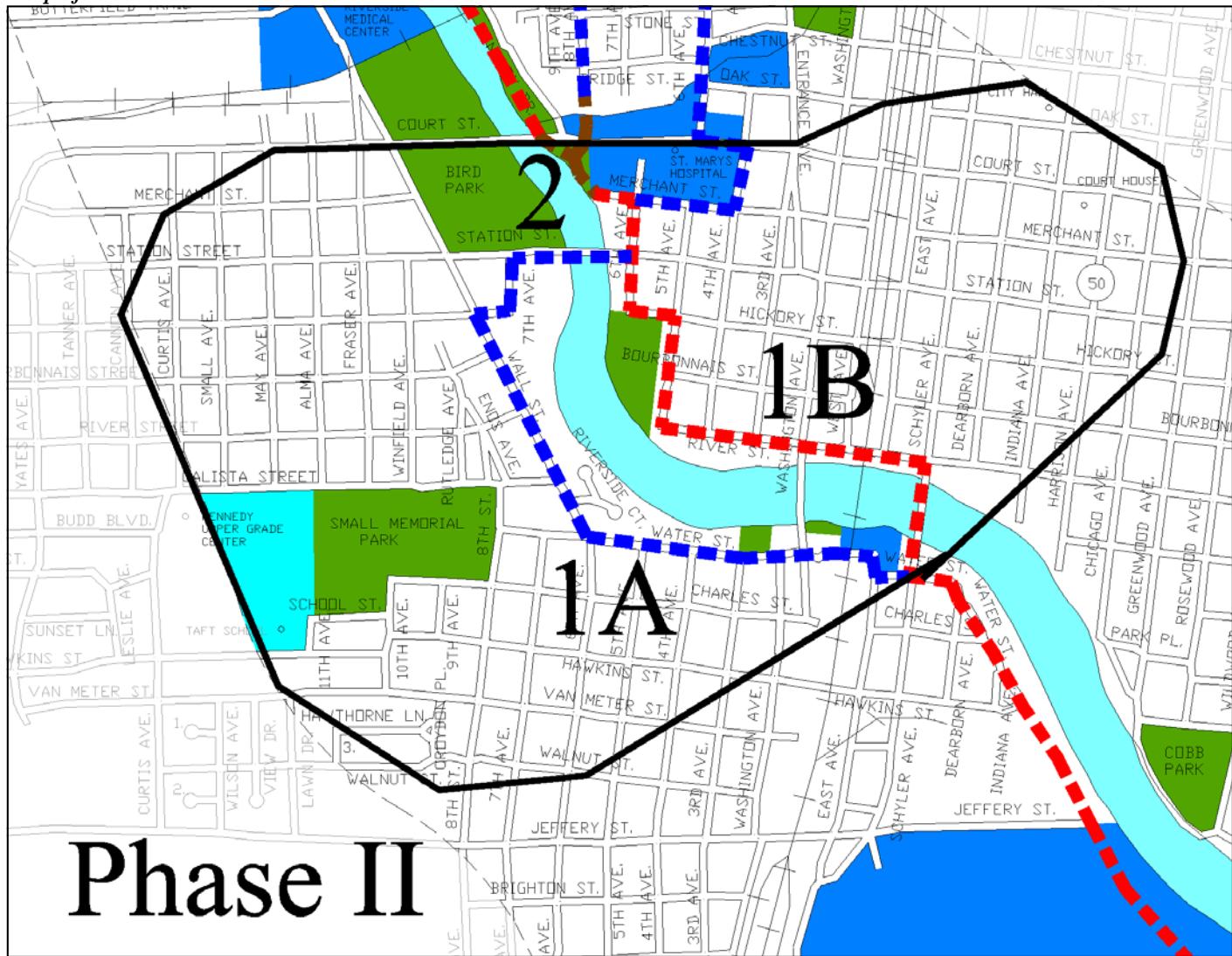
Segment 2

Type: Existing

Length: 600 Feet (.11 Miles)

This segment is very short and consists of the existing trail within Alpiner Park. At Court Street there are three possible alternatives for crossing Court Street at the north end of this segment. One is to cross under the Court Street Bridge utilizing an existing platform. However, a bridge would need to be constructed over Soldiers Creek into Fisherman's Park. This would be an expensive alternative because of the bridge. The second alternative involves using an existing pedestrian tunnel that links Alpiner Park with the residential areas north of Court Street. The tunnel is 5 feet wide and 7 feet tall with no lighting. There are two sets of stairs on the north side and a narrow footbridge crossing Soldiers Creek. Extensive renovation to the footbridge and conversion of the stairs to ramps would be needed to utilize this route. The third alternative would be to use the existing right-of-way on Merchant Street and head east behind Provena St. Mary's Hospital. This alternative would require striping, signage and parking restrictions.

Map of Phase II.



Phase III

Total Length: 15,129 Feet (2.86 Miles)

Phase III of the Riverfront Trail project includes the area from Court Street to the existing trail network that crosses LeVasseur Park, Helgeson Park, the Kankakee Wastewater Treatment Facility and the Perry Farm. The Perry Farm Trail has already been constructed and has been built from asphalt with a width of eight feet. The first segment for this Phase has three viable alternatives, all of which start near Court Street area at the end of Phase II and end at the start of the existing trails in LeVasseur Park. Many factors will contribute to the final decision as to which alternative will ultimately prevail, including cost, safety and community support.

Segment 1A

Type: New Build / Striping

Length: 3,973 Feet (.75 Miles)

The preferred and most direct route for the trail is Segment 1A. It begins at the existing platform under the Court Street Bridge and heads north over Soldiers Creek and through Fisherman's Park. A new bridge would need to be built over Soldiers Creek. The Kankakee Valley Park District has completed a study and has cost estimates for this structure. From Fisherman's Park the trail would travel north on a separated right-of-way parallel to Kennedy Drive. An engineering study would need to be performed to determine the best way to route the trail along Kennedy Drive. Safety however, should be a top priority. The trail would turn northeast on River Drive and follow its right-of-way to the start of the existing trail system located at the end of River Drive. This part of the Segment would utilize a striped area on the existing pavement and parking restrictions.



Photo of platform under Court Street Bridge.

Segment 1B

Type: Striping

Length: 3,139 Feet (.60 Miles)

Segment 1B begins at the pedestrian tunnel under Court Street located at Alpiner Park. As stated earlier, the tunnel and footbridge would require extensive renovation. From the tunnel, the trail would head north on Eighth Avenue to the Norfolk Southern Railroad using a striped lane with parking restrictions. A crossing or tunnel of some type would need to be built at the rail intersection. An engineering study would be needed to determine the best alternative. From the rail crossing the trail would head north along Ninth Avenue utilizing the same type of striping and parking restrictions.



Photo of pedestrian tunnel under Court St.

The trail would then turn west along Park Drive to Kennedy Drive where it would cross Kennedy Drive and enter River Drive. From here it would follow River Drive to the start of the existing trail system located at LeVasseur Park. Two major obstacles to this Segment are the rail crossing and the Kennedy Drive crossing. Both crossings could be dangerous and additional studies would be needed to determine the best type of crossings and safety features.

Segment 1C

Type: Striping

Length: 7,715 Feet (1.46 Miles)

This segment starts at Alpiner Park and travels along Merchant Street behind Provena St. Mary's Hospital. It then turns north on Fourth Avenue and follows it to Court Street. It turns west on Court Street until it reaches Fifth Avenue and proceeds north on Fifth Avenue to the existing trail system at LeVasseur Park passing Lafayette Elementary School and Meadowview Shopping Center along the way. This trail segment would utilize striping, signage and parking removal for its entire length. Advantages to using this segment are the existing signal at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Kennedy Drive and the existing rail crossing. However, Fifth Avenue is a heavily traveled two-lane road with parking on both sides for part of its length. In 2003, Fifth Avenue had an average daily traffic count of 8,520 vehicles per day. This could make the trail very dangerous if proper precautions are not taken.



Photo of Fifth Avenue

Segment 2

Type: Existing

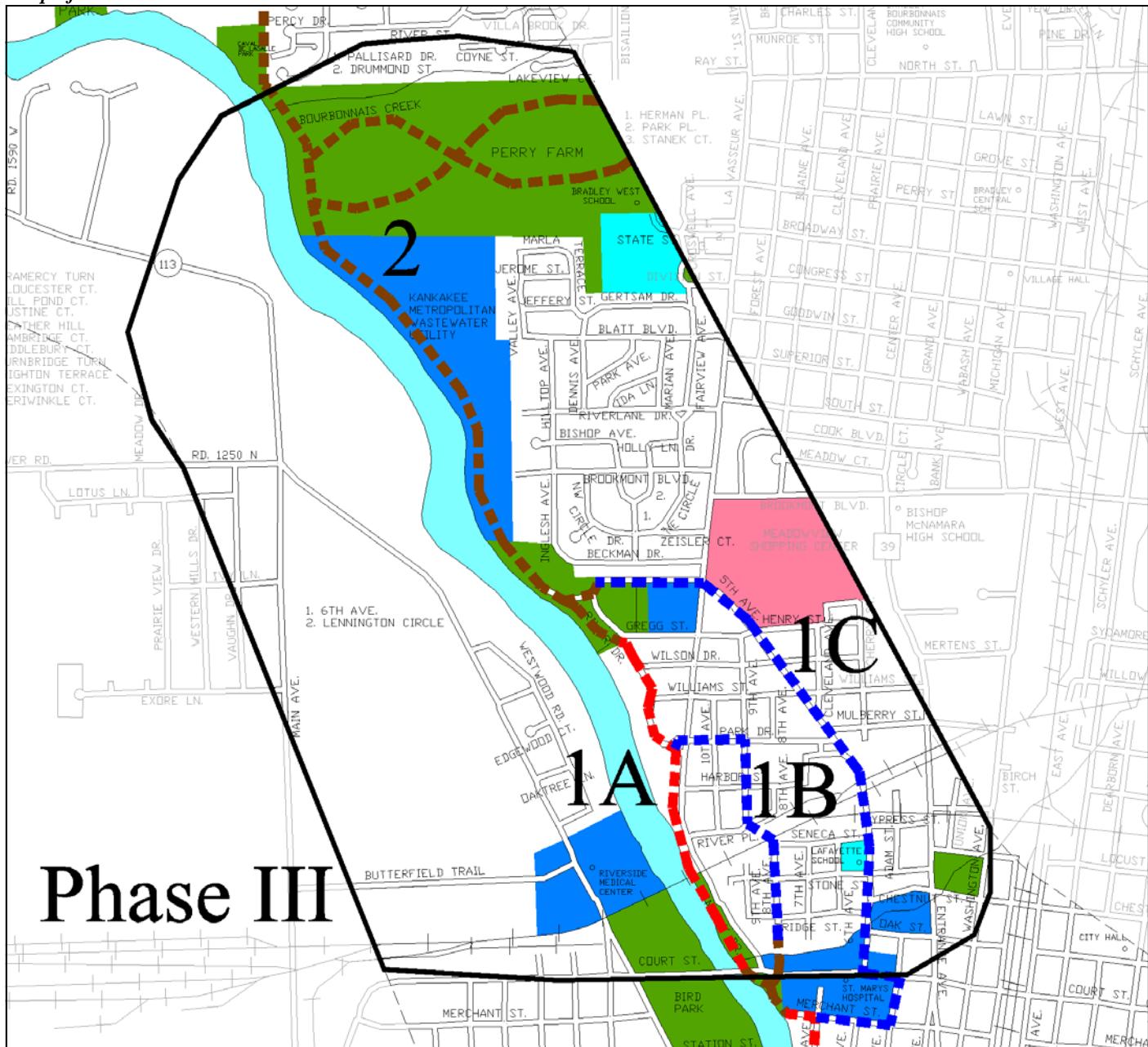
Length: 7,414 Feet (1.40 Miles)

The trail system for Segment 2 is already built and adequate for the purposes of the Riverfront Trail System. It has an eight foot wide asphalt trail running from LeVasseur Park on the South continuing to the northern edge of the Perry Farm on the north. This is a multi-purpose trail suitable for use by pedestrians, bicyclists and skaters.



Photo of Perry Farm Trail

Map of Phase III.



Phase IV

Total Length: 14,624 Feet (2.76 Miles)

This Phase links the existing trail system within the Perry Farm and the Village of Bourbonnais with the existing trail system within the Kankakee River State Park. A significant portion of this Phase has already been constructed. Some of it uses existing local streets while the areas within the parks have separated asphalt trails.

Segment 1

Type: Existing

Length: 4,800 Feet (.90 Miles)

Segment 1 begins at the north edge of the Perry Farm and travels north through the Cavalier de LaSalle Park and along side the residential development to Canterbury Lane. At Canterbury lane the trail heads west on a separated alignment and through Riverfront Park to Guildeford Drive. It continues east on Guildeford Drive utilizing a striped lane to Oak Street in unincorporated Bourbonnais Township. As the trail passes through the Briarcliff residential area it is joined by several on street, striped lane trails that link into it from various locations. These additional trails provide an excellent network throughout the area. This segment is completely built, however, parking restrictions need to be created and enforced and proper signage needs to be developed.



Photo of trail in Bourbonnais

Segment 2

Type: Striped / Existing

Length: 4,251 Feet (.80 Miles)

This segment starts at the end of Segment 1 on Oak Street and heads west to Sportsman's Club Drive where it turns north and follows Sportsman's Club Drive to Chippewa Drive. At Chippewa Drive it turns west and follows Chippewa Drive to 2530 N Road where the segment ends. A striped trail exists along this segment on the north side of Chippewa Drive between Osage Drive and the Bourbonnais Sportsman's Club. The Sportsman's Club has indicated in the past that they may be willing to allow trail access across their property on the north side of Chippewa Drive. If this is the case part of this trail would be off street and need to be built. Regardless the remainder of this segment would be a striped lane along the existing roadways with proper signage. There does not appear to be any on street parking along this segment so parking restrictions may not necessarily be needed.



Photo of trail along Chippewa Drive.

Segment 3A

Type: Striped / New Construction

Length: 2,233 Feet (.42 Miles)

This segment begins along 2530 N Road where Segment 2 ended. It travels west along 2530 N Road and crosses Davis Creek at which time it enters the Kankakee River State Park property. Once on the State Park property it travels west until it links up to the existing trail system near the parking area in the Davis Creek Campground. The first part of this segment would use a striped lane along 2530 N Road and the portion west of Davis Creek would require new construction. There is a steep ravine at the trail's intersection with Davis Creek and a bridge or similar structure may need to be built in this area. An engineering study would be needed to determine the best possible approach.

Segment 3B

Type: Striped

Length: 5,573 Feet (1.05 Miles)

Segment 3B was created in the event that the bridge structure on Segment 3A would be too difficult or expensive to accomplish. The segment would start at the intersection of Chippewa Drive and 2530 N Road and continue north on Chippewa Drive to 3100 N Road. At 3100 N Road the trail would turn west until it reaches the entrance road to the Davis Creek Campground where it would turn south and connect to the existing trail system within the State Park. This segment would utilize a striped lane along existing roadways.



Photo of Chippewa Drive.

Segment 4

Type: Existing

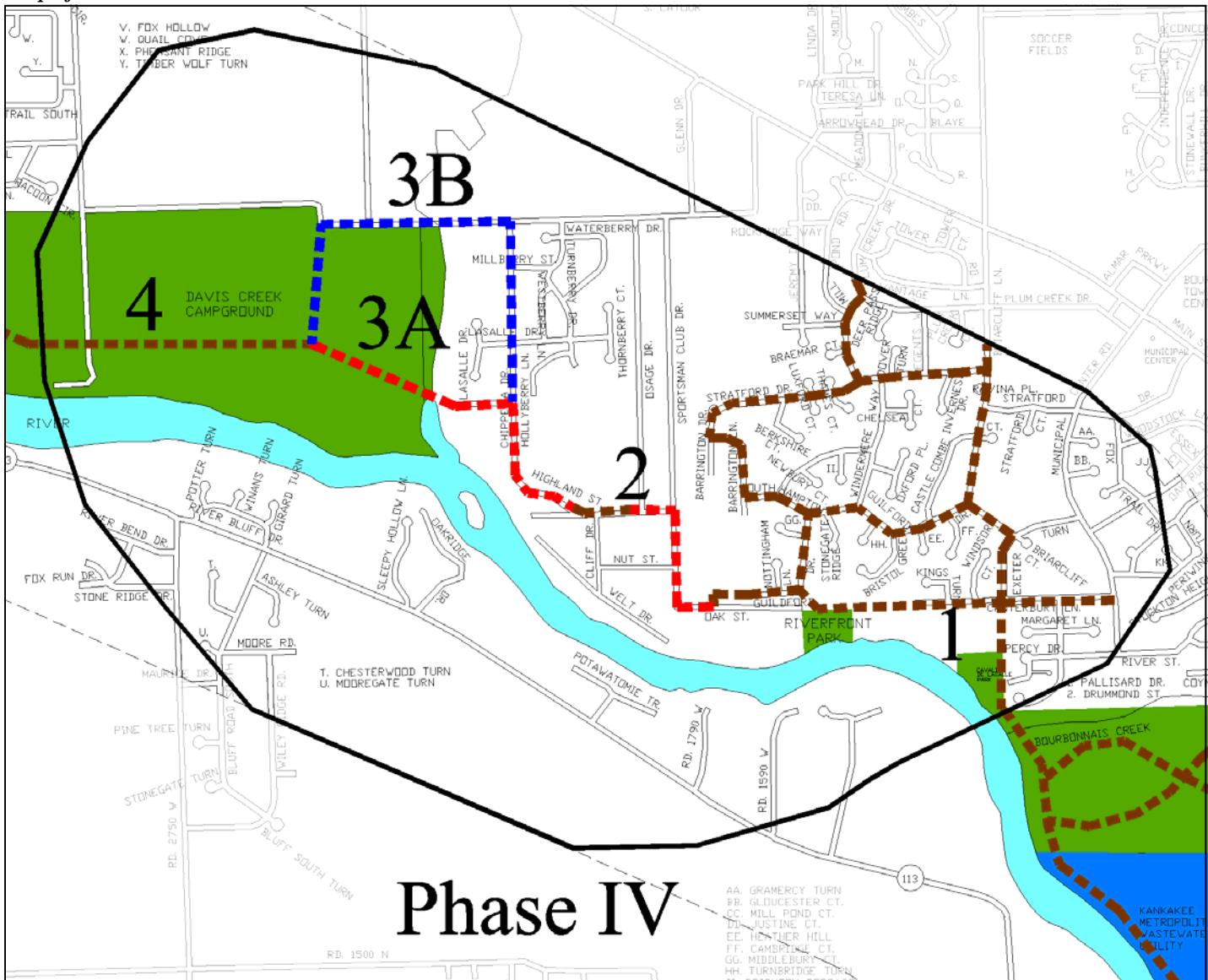
Length: Not Measured - Existing Trail

Segment 4 consists of the existing trails within the Kankakee River State Park. They start at the end of the access road for the Davis Creek Campground area and head west through the State Park to its western boundary in Will County. There are plans in Will County to link the State Park Trail with other existing trails via the proposed Wauponsee Glacial Trail at the park's western edge. For the most part, the trails within the State Park are eight feet wide and hard surfaced although the trail in the Davis Creek Campground is crushed limestone. No additional modifications would be needed to utilize this system.



Photo of the State Park Trail.

Map of Phase IV.



Funding Sources

Local governments and private organizations which promote recreational opportunities can apply for grants with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to protect and enhance the State's natural resources for outdoor recreation. IDNR's local grant programs utilize a cost-share arrangement with both partners contributing funds. For most programs, fund contribution is equal, with each partner contributing 50% of a project's cost. Local recreation grant programs are available to: 1) any units of local government or special taxing district with statutory authority to acquire, develop, and maintain lands for public parks, and 2) private, not-for-profit organizations. The State reimburses the grantee after the project is completed and paid for in full by the grantee.

The grant programs have focused funds for land acquisition and development on projects that are important to communities but also individually and cumulatively address statewide needs. While the grant programs are community-based, available to municipal governments, park districts, or other government entities, there is a definite priority placed on projects that extend benefits beyond the community.

Funding through the grant programs is competitively awarded on an annual basis, based upon written applications submitted to the Department by specified submittal dates for each program. Greenways and Trails identified in the Kankakee County Greenways and Trail Plan, generally, will receive a higher priority by IDNR than those that are not listed.

OPEN SPACE LANDS ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (OSLAD)

The OSLAD program provides up to 50% funding assistance for land acquisition and development projects which serve a wide range of open space and recreation purposes. OSLAD program objectives are multi-faceted. Land acquisition can serve many purposes, notably to protect significant natural resources and preserve open space.

ILLINOIS BICYCLE PATH PROGRAM (BP)

The Bicycle Path grant program assists with up to 50% of the cost for acquisition, construction and rehabilitation of public, non-motorized bicycle paths and directly related support facilities. The program's main objective is the development of long distance bike paths and trails for safe and enjoyable use by the public.

The new federal transportation bill, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), continues the requirement of States setting aside 10 percent of their Surface Transportation Program funds of projects that serve to enhance the transportation system. The enhancement program allows the scope of transportation projects to expand beyond the traditional accommodations for cars, trucks, and transit. A new federal transportation bill is currently being considered and this bill could change the funding sources and structure for this program.

To be eligible for enhancement funding, a project must be directly related to the transportation system.

The projects must enhance the transportation system by either serving a transportation need or providing a transportation use or benefit. For example, a bike trail that connects existing facilities is serving a need for people traveling to and from the facilities or communities. Federal funds will provide reimbursement of up to 50% for right-of-way and easement acquisition costs and up to 80% for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering, and construction costs. The 20% or 50% sponsor participation must come from a local government or state agency.

Resources

Below are web addresses for various organizations that were used during the creation of this document. Additional information and research may be found by visiting these sites.

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials - <http://transportation1.org/aashtonew/>

Bourbonnais Township Park District - <http://www.btpd.org>

City of Kankakee - <http://www.ci.kankakee.il.us>

George H. and Lura Lynn Ryan Family Aquatic Center - <http://www.splashvalley.com>

Illinois Department of Natural Resources - <http://dnr.state.il.us/>

Illinois Department of Transportation - <http://www.dot.state.il.us/default.html>

Kankakee Community College - <http://www.kcc.cc.il.us/>

Kankakee County Regional Planning Department - <http://www.k3county.net/plan.html>

Kankakee Valley Park District - <http://www.kvpd.com>

League of Illinois bicyclists - <http://www.bikelib.org>

Village of Bourbonnais - <http://www.villageofbourbonnais.com>

Village of Bradley - <http://www.bradleyil.org>

United States Census Bureau - <http://www.census.gov>