Project Location

The main project area is located in downtown Joliet. The downtown is bounded by the Des Plaines River on the west, the Ruby Street Bridge and Ironworks Park on the north, the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railroad viaduct on the east, and the Metra/CSX Railroad viaduct on the south. Several regional trails also converge in downtown Joliet. Please see the attached maps.

Project Description

Joliet desires to use a CMAP LTA grant to develop a bike plan for the downtown, which would include connections to regional trails. There are over 130 miles of regional bike trails that converge on the downtown area. Lack of signage, pavement markings and bike accommodations in the downtown, however, make safe travel and trail linkages difficult.

Goals

The goals of the project are to reconcile bike travel issues in the downtown area, establish a network of bike pathways that will serve as a node for regional trail connections, and provide multi-modal access to transit, services, recreation, tourism, and commerce. At the present time there is no coherent connection or linkage between the trails which converge in downtown Joliet. This project will coordinate and link with other local and regionally significant area plans that champion bike and pedestrian transportation options. They are as follows:

- **Heritage Park Plan 2008** - [http://cityofjoliet.info/home/showdocument?id=2519](http://cityofjoliet.info/home/showdocument?id=2519)
- **Route 53 Corridor Plan 2013** - [http://cityofjoliet.info/home/showdocument?id=2521](http://cityofjoliet.info/home/showdocument?id=2521)
- **Will County Bikeway Plan 2016** - [https://www.reconnectwithnature.org/getmedia/12f297e3-113c-4bfc-a988-82a6da8983bf/WillCountyBikewayPlan-2016.pdf.aspx](https://www.reconnectwithnature.org/getmedia/12f297e3-113c-4bfc-a988-82a6da8983bf/WillCountyBikewayPlan-2016.pdf.aspx)
- **Chicago Street Corridor Plan 2018** - [http://cityofjoliet.info/home/showdocument?id=11784](http://cityofjoliet.info/home/showdocument?id=11784)

Objectives

The main objective of this project is to identify preferred on/off roadway improvements to facilitate needed bike access to the downtown and a designated regional trail node linking the Iron Works Park trailhead, the [Illinois & Michigan Canal Trail](https://www.illinoisandmichigancanaltownpark.com/), the [Old Plank Road Trail](https://www.cityofjoliet.org/124/Railroad-History-Park), and the [Waupansee Glacial Trail](https://www.waupanseeautosafeway.com/).

The result of this planning project will guide connectivity improvements, such as a safe bike connection from the Iron Works Park trailhead through the downtown, shared-lane bike accommodations, bike paths, wayfinding and signage. There is a further need to reconcile recommendations for a new downtown riverfront trail, and a new trail south of the Metra/CSX railroad viaduct.
Previous Plan Implementation Efforts

The City and other stakeholders have been working on several plans over the past 10 years to leverage the region’s history, location, transportation assets, and access to natural areas as a strategy for revitalization. The Heritage Park Plan ties together a rich collection of history, culture, and natural resources. The Heritage Park planning area is an eight mile section of the Des Plaines River Valley that extends from Lockport to downtown Joliet and contains such treasures as the Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserve, the Gaylord Building and Museum, and Ironworks Park among many others. All of these resources are accessible along the Centennial Bike Trail, which begins in Lockport and winds south to Ironworks Park in Joliet.

Carrying that theme further to the south, the Route 53 Corridor Plan re-imagined the corridor stretching from downtown Joliet south to Braidwood as a destination for tourism and economic activity. As the region’s multi-modal transportation center, downtown Joliet provides access to transit and other amenities. Downtown Joliet would be a major jumping off point for bike riders wanting access to the Wauponsee Glacial Trail and the planned Route 66 Bikeway. Both trails connect to the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.

Enhancing safety and improving connectivity are two of the major goals of the Will County Forest Preserve Bikeway Plan. The 2015 Joliet Downtown Development Plan provided three recommendations that are aligned with this county-wide bikeway plan:

1. Upgrade regional trail connections in downtown Joliet through pavement markings on designated routes.
2. Establish two new bikeways in the downtown. The first would be a north-south riverfront bikeway that would connect with the Illinois & Michigan Canal Trail. The second is an east-west trail, south of the railroad viaduct connecting the riverfront trail to the new transportation center (Joliet Multi-Modal Regional Transportation Center) and the Old Plank Road Trail.
3. Redesign Chicago Street, in downtown Joliet, as an urban multi-modal corridor. The street could potentially be redesigned as an on-road shared bike path providing a vital north-south linkage from the trailhead at Ironworks Park on the north to a new central park in the downtown and east-west bike trail connections.

To help implement the Downtown Development Plan the City is utilizing a CMAP LTA Grant to develop the Chicago Street Corridor Plan. The consultant team’s scope includes a roadway redesign for Chicago Street that includes realigned vehicular lanes with shared bike accommodation and on-street parking.

The City also worked with Metra, Pace, BNSF, UP, and Amtrak through an RTA Community Planning Grant to develop the Joliet Regional Multi-modal Transportation Facilities Plan in 2010. The planning process brought stakeholders together to work on a blueprint that increases passenger safety, improves freight travel through the busy rail intersection, provides high speed rail improvements, and new rail and bus passenger facilities. IDOT funded the new facilities through a $32.0 Million grant in 2011. The rail improvements are complete and a new train station is nearing completion by the end of 2017.

The new Joliet Multi-Modal Regional Transportation Center Plan also envisions a major bicycle hub that would provide bike share facilities, lockers, and a repair station. These facilities would accommodate bicycle commuters, recreational cyclists, and bicycle tourism.
**Additional Strategic Partnerships**

Joliet City Center Partnership - see attached letter of support

Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce – see attached letter of support

Joliet Bicycle Club - letter of support to be forwarded upon receipt

Ride Illinois - letter of support to be forwarded upon receipt

Will County Center for Economic Development - letter of support to be forwarded upon receipt

Will County Forest Preserve – see attached letter of support

Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau – see attached letter of support

Joliet Junior College (City Center Campus)

University of St. Francis (City Center Campus)