Germantown Hills to McClugage Bridge Trail Feasibility Study

Illinois Route 116 Corridor

Woodford and Tazewell County, Illinois

November 2024

Prepared by Crawford, Murphy & Tilly Engineers and Consultants

For Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and the Village of Germantown Hills

Village of GERMANTOWN HILLS

TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

PEORIA WOODFORD TAZEWELL

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Chapter 1: Introduction

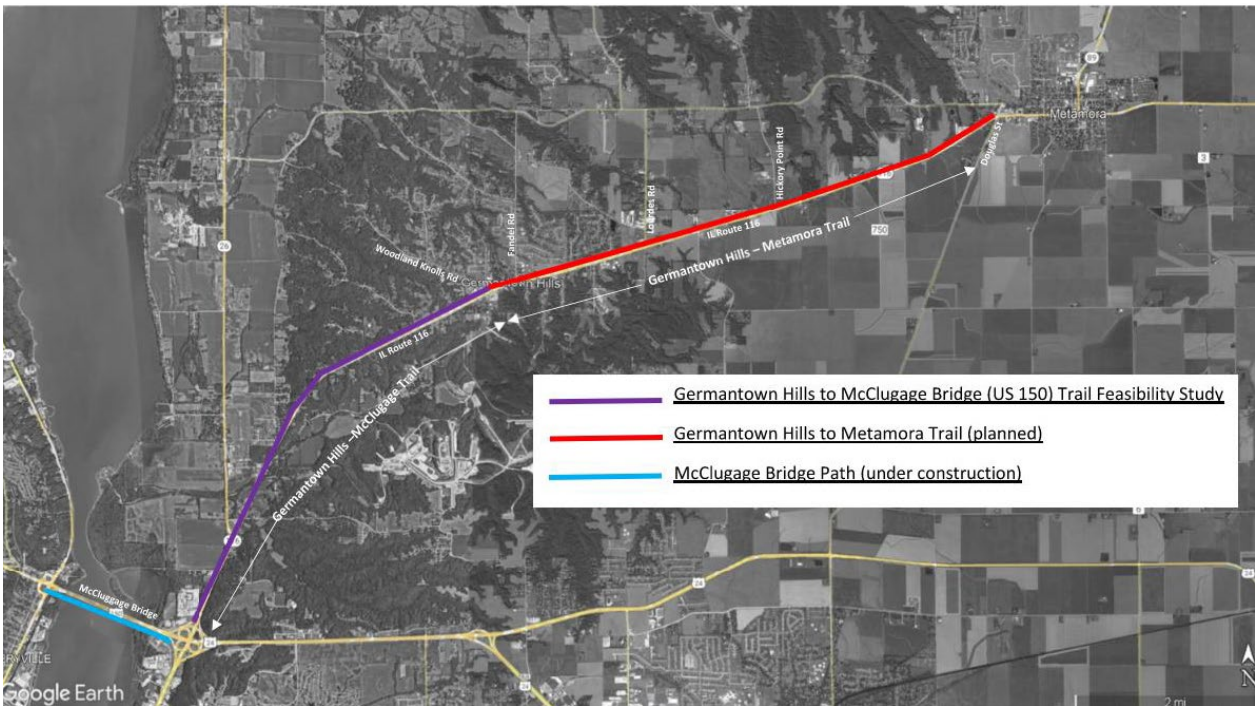


Figure 1: Trail location map - Woodford and Tazewell County, IL

The Village of Germantown Hills partnered with Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and engineering and planning firm Crawford, Murphy & Tilly to conduct this Germantown Hills to McClugage Bridge Trail Feasibility Study between the McClugage Bridge (US-150) in East Peoria and Woodland Knolls Road in Germantown Hills. The feasibility study consists of a study area along the west and north sides of Illinois Route 116 (IL-116), between the McClugage Bridge/US-150 and Woodland Knolls Road.

This study examines public right-of-way (ROW) on the north and west sides of IL-116 within the study area, including potential space constraints and topographical challenges, intersecting street crossings, crash and traffic data, cost estimates, public and stakeholder needs and considerations, alternative trail alignments, connections to other trails and community destinations, and other potential obstacles that may need to be overcome to accommodate a trail.

Regional Walking and Biking Network

Heart of Illinois Regional Bicycle Plan

This proposed trail segment fits into a larger trail network that would connect the future Germantown Hills – Metamora Trail to the new bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on the eastbound McClugage Bridge, to connect to Peoria and to the Rock Island Greenway/Trail.

The 2017 Heart of Illinois Regional Bicycle Plan identified a recommended regional bicycle network. This potential trail is not included in this recommended network, but it would connect planned improvements within the recommended network. This includes the Germantown Hills to Metamora Trail, new McClugage Bridge walking and biking path, and the existing Rock Island Greenway/Trail, as well as other connection improvements in both East Peoria and Peoria, as shown in Figure 2 from the Heart of Illinois Regional Bicycle Plan below.

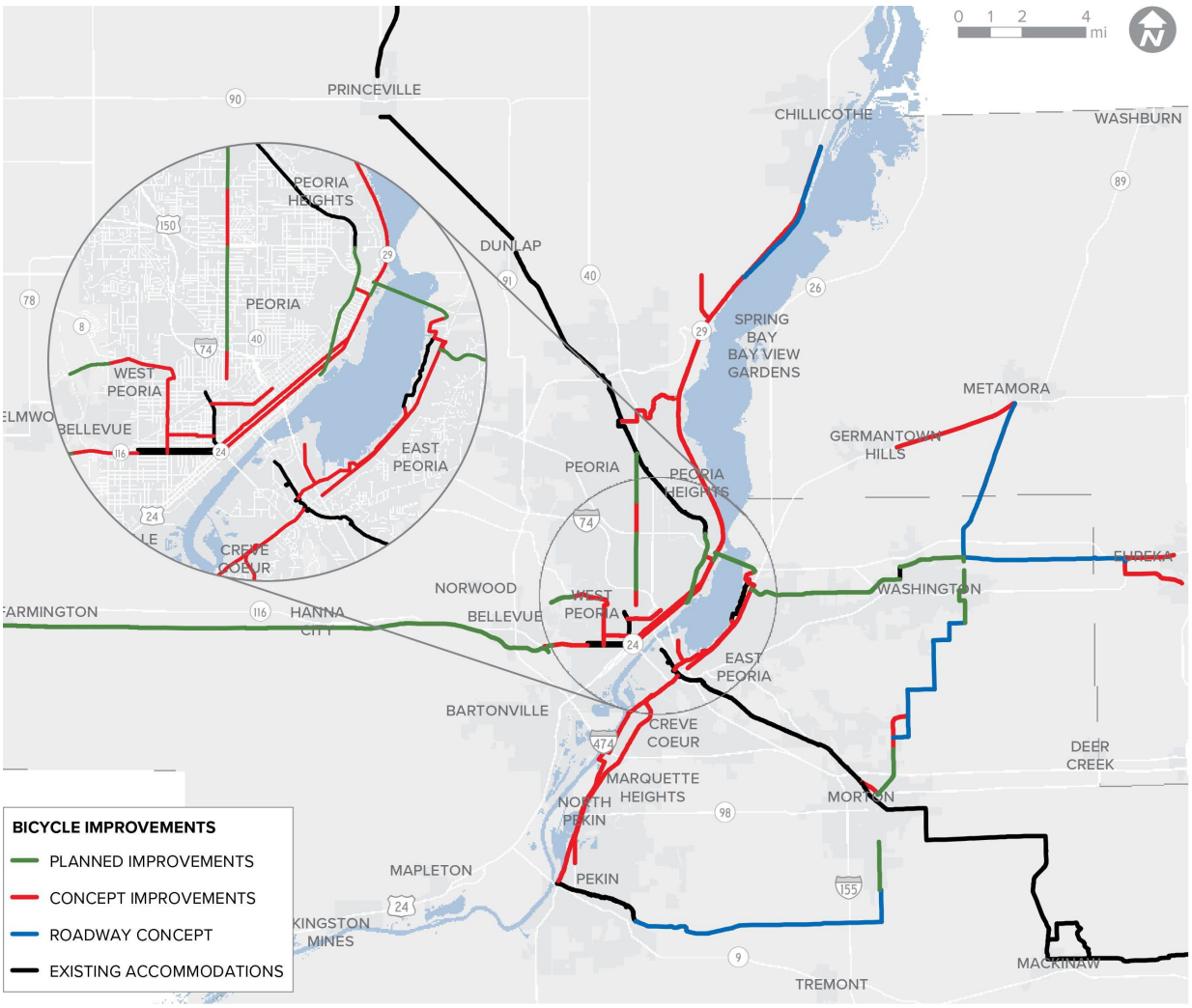


Figure 2: Heart of Illinois Regional Bicycle Plan future bike network map

East Peoria Trail Corridor Plan

The 2021 City of East Peoria Trail Corridor Plan and Feasibility Study identifies connections from the McClugage Bridge bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to the south and east, including to Illinois Central College. The proposed IL-116 trail could connect to this future East Peoria trail network, providing additional connections by foot or bike to important regional destinations in East Peoria, including Illinois Central College and the Levee District commercial area. A map from the East Peoria plan depicting a conceptual network is shown Figure 3.

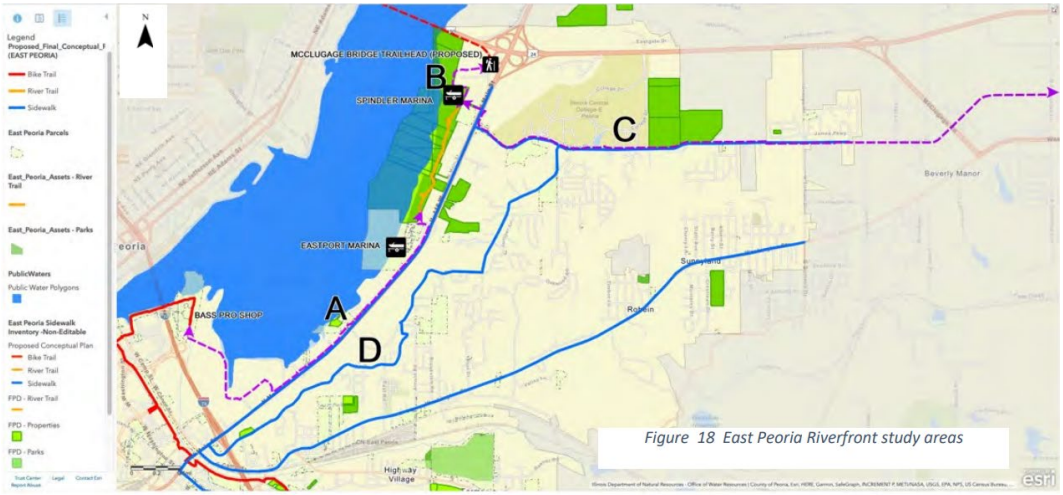


Figure 3: East Peoria Trail Corridor Plan and Feasibility Study conceptual walking and biking network map

Connections in Germantown Hills

Sidewalk connections and planned trails from within the Village of Germantown Hills to this potential trail offer additional community connectivity opportunities to build out a bike and pedestrian network. The local sidewalk network on the north side of IL-116 can feed into this trail to connect to the regional network to East Peoria, Peoria, and Metamora (via the planned connecting Germantown Hills – Metamora trail.

Potential connecting network limitations include difficulty reaching the trail from destinations on the south and east sides of IL-116, due to its high-speed limited-access highway condition. The only signalized intersection along this corridor that reaches destinations on the south and east sides of IL-116 is at Woodland Knolls Road/Ten Mile Creek Road in Germantown Hills. A crosswalk across IL-116 exists on the east leg of this intersection but does not connect to any pedestrian facilities on the south side of IL-116. People walking or biking from Old Germantown Road and Ten Mile Creek Road to cross IL-116 and reach the trail would have to do so on streets with no or very limited shoulders.

According to the 2022 American Community Survey, out of workers 16 years of age of older in the Village of Germantown Hills, an estimated 11% have only one vehicle available in their household, with the remaining estimated 89% having more than one vehicle available. No workers had zero vehicles available. Households with only one vehicle available may benefit from improved access to walking and biking connections, if multiple people in the household need to reach different destinations at the same, or if their car becomes inoperable.

Existing Walking and Biking Activity Near the Study Corridor

Existing walking and biking activity has been observed to be occurring on Old Germantown Road on the south side of IL-116. West of the signalized crossing at Woodland Knolls Road/Ten Mile Creek Road, only two additional crossings exist across IL-116, both of which are unsignalized and unsafe for people walking or biking to cross. This is a limiting factor that may prevent people living near and along Old Germantown Road from accessing and benefiting from a trail on the north side of IL-116.

Replica Travel Behavior Modeling

Replica provides travel behavior data based primarily on cell phone data. A travel behavior analysis was performed in Census Block Groups along the study corridor. Based on Fall 2023 data on a typical weekday, there are 2,820 estimated daily trips made by walking or biking within these Census Block Groups, as shown in Figure 4. This model has medium certainty, largely because of the low volume of trips. With smaller sample sizes (e.g. trip counts under 10,000), the smaller sample size provides a larger room for error. With that said, there is still confidence in this model. Replica filters out trips made for recreational purposes without a destination, such as walking a dog or going on a bike ride with no particular destination. All these estimated 2,820 daily trips made by walking or biking are made for transportation purposes, to reach a destination. A conclusion based on this travel behavior analysis is that walking and biking trips are already occurring near the study corridor for practical transportation purposes, and providing a trail within this area could provide a safer, more accessible, and more comfortable way to walk and bike to reach destinations, with the additional potential to convert shorter car trips to walking or biking trips.

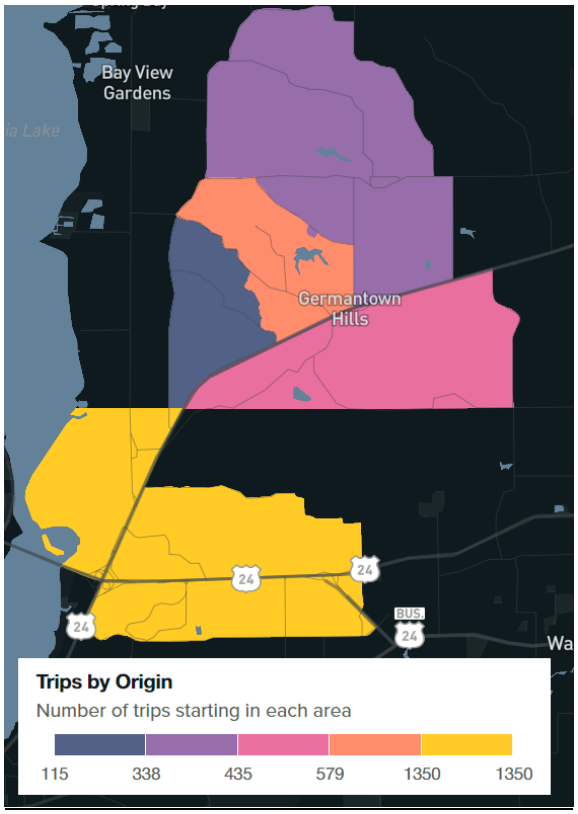


Figure 4: Walking and biking trips originating in Census Block Groups (Source: Replica HQ)

Chapter 2: Corridor Data

Traffic Data

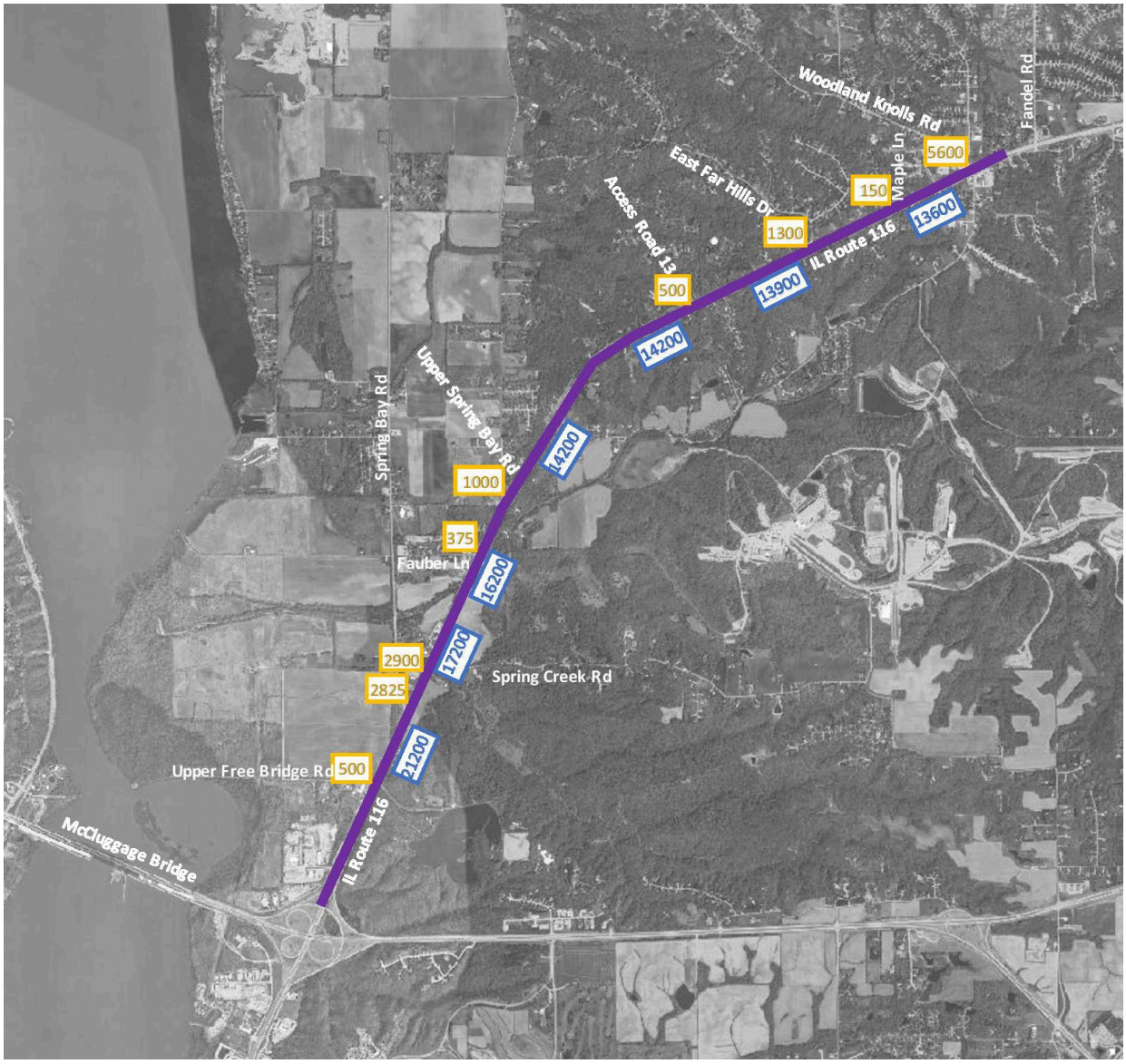


Figure 5: Traffic counts within study corridor (Data source: IDOT)

Proposed Germantown Hills – Peoria Trail

ADT Average Daily Traffic Count along IL Route 116

ADT Average Daily Traffic Count Intersections from the Northwest side

Traffic counts sourced from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) on IL-116 increase further south, as the roadway nears the McClugage Bridge interchange with US-24/US-150, ranging from 13,600 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) near Woodland Knolls Road to 21,200 ADT near Upper Free Bridge and the McClugage Bridge to the south. Traffic counts for intersecting streets on the north and west sides of IL-116 are also included, as these are streets that a potential trail would need to cross. The highest ADT of an intersecting street is Woodland Knolls Road, with 5,600 ADT. This intersection is signalized at IL-116, which limits the potential conflicts and challenges with navigating a trail through this intersection. The highest ADT of intersecting streets that are unsignalized are the southbound IL-26 merge lane to southbound IL-116 with 3,050 ADT, and Spring Creek Road, with 2,900 ADT.

Consideration for trail crossings at these intersecting streets will need to be made, including potential levels of traffic control, signage, physical crossing infrastructure, and setbacks from IL-116, especially at higher-traffic intersecting streets. A summary of traffic counts and signalization of intersecting streets within the study corridor is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Traffic counts and signalization of intersecting streets with IL-116 in study corridor (Data source: IDOT)

Intersecting Street	ADT of Intersecting Street	Signalized Intersection at IL-116
Woodland Knolls Rd	5600	Yes
Maple Ln	150	No
Far Hills Dr	1300	No
Saint Francis Ln	None provided	No
Access Road 13	500	No
Byerly Hills Dr	None provided	No
Hoppe Ln	None provided	No
Upper Spring Bay Rd	1000	No
Fauber Ln	375	No
Access Road 10	None provided	No
Spring Creek Rd	2900	No
IL-26 Mainline	2825	No
SB IL-26 Merge Lane	3050	No
Upper Free Bridge Rd	500	No
Access Road 8	None provided	Yes

Crash Data and Analysis

Crash data from the years 2019-2023 along IL-116 from the McClugage Bridge interchange in East Peoria to Woodland Knolls Road in Germantown Hills show several hotspots where crashes occur at a higher rate. These hotspots include:

- IL-116 & Access Road 8
- IL-116 & IL-26 & Spring Creek Road
- IL-116 & Fauber Lane/Ten Mile Creek Road
- IL-116 & Hoppe Lane
- IL-116 & Woodland Knolls Road/Ten Mile Creek Road

Notable high-crash areas and other observations include:

- Numerous rear-end crashes at the intersection of Spring Creek Road and IL-26.
- Several left-turning crashes at the intersection of Spring Creek Road and IL-116.
- Numerous rear-end crashes at the intersection of IL-116 and Access Road 8, primarily on the SB lanes of IL-116 approaching the traffic signal. This intersection is the first signalized intersection on SB IL-116 since Woodland Knolls Road in Germantown Hills, which may be contributing to the high rate of rear-end crashes at this intersection.
- Numerous crashes of multiple types and in multiple directions at the signalized intersection of Woodland Knolls Road and IL-116.

The most common type of crashes were front-to-rear crashes happening primarily at stopping or turning lane locations. The second most common type were crashes with animals, primarily with deer. Zero pedestrian or bicycle crashes occurred within the corridor from 2019-2023, at least partially attributed to the relatively low number of people currently walking or biking within the corridor due to the lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Two fatal crashes took place within the corridor, both in 2022, and the cause of both were determined to be driver error and traveling too fast, or DUI. Most crashes occurred on clear days during the day and resulted in only property damage. The percentage of crashes by day of the week is shown to be very evenly distributed, as the greatest difference in percentage is 10%, and the day with the most crashes was Tuesday, with 19% of the crashes.

Chapter 3: Stakeholder Engagement

Illinois Department of Transportation

As the trail is proposed to be located within IDOT ROW, IDOT was consulted on October 1, 2024 to introduce the study and identify tips or concerns noted by IDOT. Discussion included:

- Separation distance between the path and the shoulder, which per IDOT manuals is advised to be at least 10 feet without a physical barrier.
- Structures at Ten Mile Creek and Spring Creek, including that the Spring Creek series of bridges will likely need to be replaced and how reconstruction may be necessary rather than the widening of bridges to accommodate a path.
- Navigation of the path through the IL-116/IL-26 intersection – alternatives noted in this study were shown to IDOT, and IDOT noted slight preference of alternative A/green (shown in Figure 20) which has the path crossing IL-26 at Spring Creek Road, with the potential for future traffic control including a 4-way stop concept to facilitate a safer walking and biking crossing.
- Connection to the McClugage Bridge – it was noted that if an underpass were to be constructed, it likely would need ROW acquisition on the south side of US-24. IDOT mentioned the possibility of aligning the underpass further east within an open utility corridor as a chance to reduce the need for property acquisition. It was noted by IDOT officials that navigating the trail through surface crossings within the IL-116/US-150 interchange was not ideal, both from a safety and comfort perspective for both trail users and motorists.

Fondulac Park District and the City of East Peoria

The area within the trail study corridor in Tazewell County falls within the Fondulac Park District. Additionally, the trail ending location is within the City of East Peoria and has the potential to connect to other future connections within the City of East Peoria. As such, both were consulted on November 5, 2024, to introduce the study and identify concerns noted by either, as well as to discuss intergovernmental maintenance agreements. Discussion included:

- Flooding considerations for a potential underpass under US-150 to connect the trail to the McClugage Bridge bike path. Fondulac Park District noted nearby campgrounds flood at low flood stages of about 18-19 feet; the underpass proposed location may be in this low-stage floodplain. Additionally, major flooding can flood land almost up to the access roads. If a trail is to be aligned along these access roads, flooding considerations should be made.
- City of East Peoria noted that plans for trails in their 2021 Trail Corridor Plan are still in early stages. The hope for a completed network remains, but numerous identified projects have not yet been started, other than ideal corridor identification. The Centennial Drive to Illinois Central College and points further east, as well as the boardwalk that runs south on the west side of IL-116 are projects with decent levels of progress. Connecting a trail from the north to these planned trails would facilitate a connection to Illinois Central College and points south along the Illinois River in East Peoria.

- Both are hopeful for a trailhead at the southwest corner of the IL-116/US-24/US-150 interchange, which would serve as a starting point for the McClugage Bridge bike path and planned paths into East Peoria. The proposed IL-116 trail connecting to this future trailhead is a key connection opportunity. The agencies thought an easement from private property might be used for the trailhead location.
- Maintenance agreements were discussed: Fondulac Park District currently maintains approximately 8 miles of the Illinois River Trail from East Peoria to Morton and has familiarity maintaining trails. An intergovernmental maintenance agreement would likely be necessary for this proposed IL-116 trail, as IDOT likely would not maintain a trail, except for portions that share IDOT bridges and structures. Fondulac Park District could be an agency responsible for maintenance of the portion of the proposed trail within Tazewell County (approximately 2 – 2.5 miles in length) but would have to get any such maintenance agreement approved by its board and ensure adequate park district funding is available for trail maintenance.

Woodford County

Woodford County was consulted on November 8, 2024, to introduce the study and identify concerns.

- It was noted by Woodford County that they do not maintain any intersecting streets within the corridor and have no planned or programmed projects in the study corridor.
- Discussion on easements touched on whether it would be necessary to seek easements for the location of a trail, but it was deemed as likely unnecessary for most of the corridor as the goal is to place the trail within existing ROW wherever possible, except for potentially a few locations where existing ROW is not sufficient or conducive to a trail.
- Woodford County or local townships do not currently maintain any trails, so an intergovernmental maintenance agreement for the section of the trail within Woodford County will have to be examined carefully to identify ideal agencies with the resources and knowledge to properly maintain a trail.

Bike Peoria

Bike Peoria, a local community bicycling group, was consulted on November 5, 2024, at their Monthly Meetup and board meeting. An overview of the study was presented, and members shared input. Discussion included:

- If alternative A/green (shown in Figure 20) is chosen for the IL-26/IL-116 intersection, which routes the trail onto Spring Creek Road and crosses to the west side of IL-26, Bike Peoria members noted that this alignment may not be used by all users as intended; those more comfortable biking near car traffic may continue south/north on the IL-116 shoulder between IL-26 and Spring Creek Road to bypass the trail deviation. They asked if this alignment was chosen as the preferred alignment if it could be used as an interim connection before potential future IDOT intersection modifications to improve safety at the IL-16/IL-116 intersection. One member noted frequent vehicle crashes at this intersection and theorized if signalizing the intersection could help reduce left-turn crashes from northbound IL-116 to IL-26, which could also improve safety for those crossing IL-26 on foot

or by bike on a future trail. The uncontrolled southbound IL-26 to IL-116 merge lane would continue to be a trail crossing concern on alternatives other than alternative A.

- Members noted concern over flooding of a potential underpass under US-150 to connect the trail to the McClugage Bridge and asked if an overpass would be more feasible despite potential for higher upfront cost and increased land acquisition necessity. They said that ensuring the connection to the McClugage Bridge is critical to ensuring a cohesive network for both sides of the Illinois River, especially when considering desired future trail connections in East Peoria.
- Members reiterated initial findings from the study that effectively eliminated alternatives B and C to connect the trail to the McClugage Bridge. The hill on Centennial Drive and significantly longer route distance than alternative A were the most significant objections. However, members were supportive of valuing both Spring Creek Preserve and Illinois Central College as valuable connections to the trail, and connecting to East Peoria's desired future network may help facilitate the connection to Illinois Central College.
- A desire for trees and vegetation along the trail was voiced. Within current ROW, most of the trail would be in direct sunlight, so shade spots could make the trail more habitable. Additionally, trees and vegetation could help to muffle traffic noise from IL-116 to make the trail a more pleasant user experience.
- There was support overall for this trail from Bike Peoria, with several mentioning how it would serve as a new walking and biking connection where none currently exists. There was confidence among members that the trail would be utilized, especially locally near Germantown Hills. However, it was noted that only more advanced bicyclists may choose to bike the entire length of the trail, as the hill serves as an obstacle to casual riders. A member said that practically all routes in and out of Peoria involve hills given the natural topography of the Illinois River Valley, and hills have not been significant obstacles to usage and popularity of other trails in the region.

Online Survey

A public survey was available online from November 1st to November 20th, 2024. It was publicized by Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's November newsletter and by Bike Peoria on Facebook, which was subsequently shared by numerous Facebook community groups and local agencies' Facebook pages.

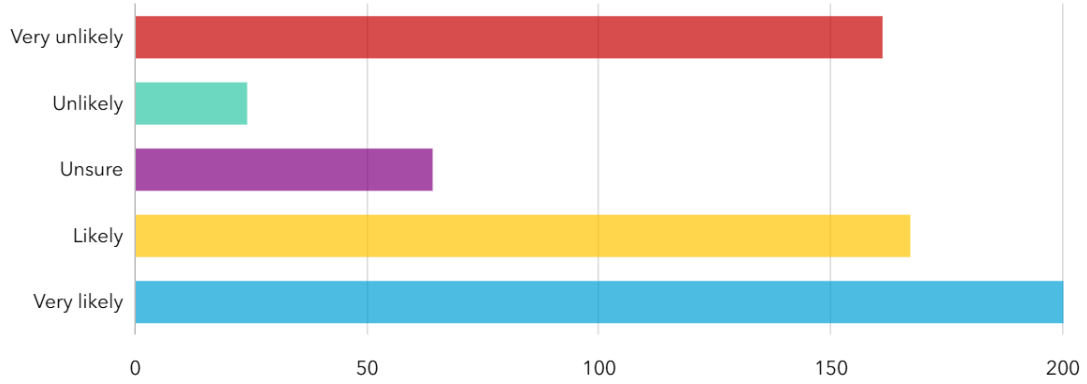
Current Walking and Biking Activity

621 total responses were collected. About 38% of respondents noted they currently walk or bike around Germantown Hills and/or East Peoria either daily or a few times a week, about 35% doing so a few times a month or year, and the remaining rarely or never walking or biking around Germantown Hills and/or East Peoria.

Likelihood of Using a Trail Along the Study Corridor

60% of respondents noted they would either be "likely" or "very likely" to use a trail along the IL-116 corridor between Germantown Hills and the McClugage Bridge. 30% of respondents noted they would either be "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to use a trail along the corridor, with 10% being "unsure". Chart 1 shows this breakdown.

Chart 1: How likely is it that you would use a trail along IL-116 between Germantown Hills and the McClugage Bridge?



Generally, comments in support of a trail mentioned how people would value increased walking and biking options, and the ability to reach other destinations by foot or by bike in a safer and more comfortable manner. Some others noted that while they might not personally use a trail in this location, they recognize the value that increased community connections can bring to an area, and are confident that people will use the trail if it is constructed, as it has been proven before with many other pieces of walking and biking infrastructure throughout the broader region.

Desired Destinations to Reach via Walking and Biking

Numerous respondents currently walk or bike on the Rock Island Greenway and Rock Island Trail, suggesting that the effort to ensure this proposed trail is connected to the Rock Island Greenway is important. Overall, destinations in Germantown Hills, Metamora, and the Rock Island Greenway were the top three destinations that respondents noted they would like to be able to access via walking and biking.

Concerns Regarding a Trail, Trail Use Obstacles, and Comfortability While Walking and Biking

A common concern noted by those generally opposed to a trail along the corridor is the desire to not increase tax burden or spend tax dollars on a trail. Some would rather prioritize local efforts and spending on expanding the local sidewalk network within Germantown Hills. Some noted they would not want a trail in this location and worry about a trail increasing crime.

Some shared that a trail along IL-116 would not feel like a safe, comfortable, and calm environment and that it would not be welcoming to those walking or biking along the corridor due to high traffic and high speeds on IL-116. The top obstacle that respondents think would keep them from using a trail is the lack of feeling safe while walking or biking and worrying about getting struck by a vehicle. Additionally, respondents noted higher levels of comfort while using separated off-street paths, bike lanes with a physical buffer from car traffic, and sidewalks, and lower levels of comfort while sharing lanes with vehicles as a bicyclist or pedestrian, using shoulders, and bike lanes only delineated from car traffic by paint.

Adequate physical separation is a critical piece to improve safety and comfortability along the corridor, but vehicle noise, lack of shade and scenery, and lack of seclusion from roads and vehicles are still concerns for some. Chart 2 displays the breakdown of what obstacles respondents thought would prevent them from using the trail the most, and Chart 3 shows what walking and biking facilities respondents would feel most comfortable using.

Chart 2: What are the biggest obstacles that you think would keep you from using a trail from Germantown Hills to the McClugage Bridge? (select all that apply)

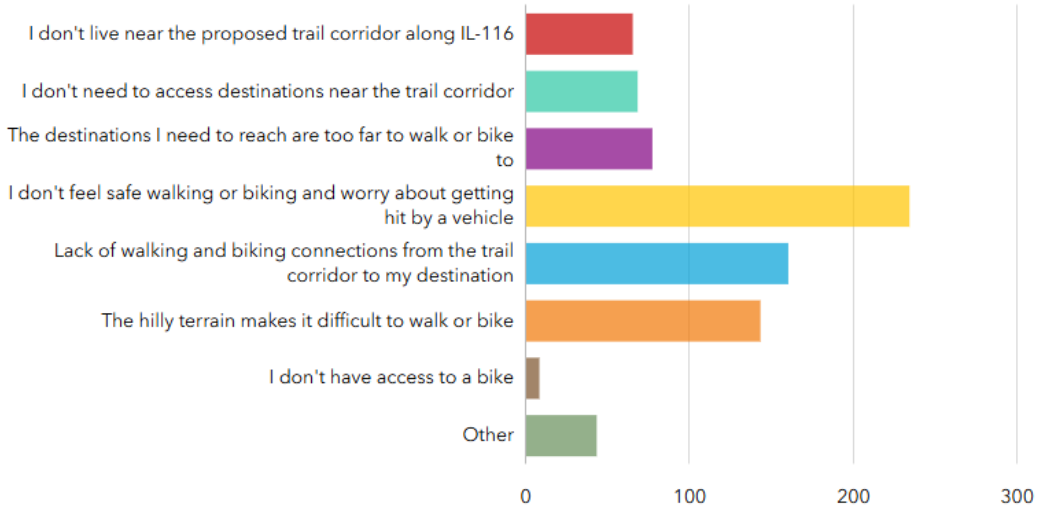
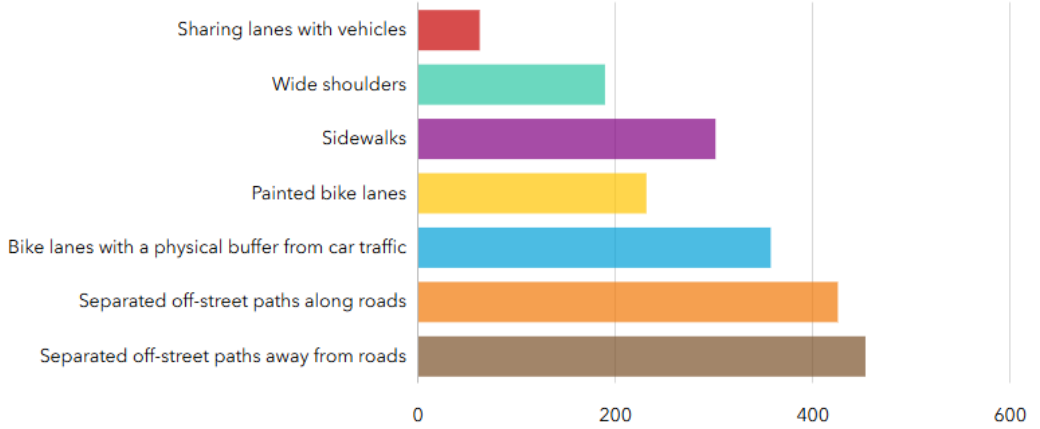


Chart 3: What walking and biking facilities do you feel comfortable using? (select all that apply)



The significant hill within the study corridor is identified as an obstacle that would discourage the use of the trail by some respondents. Several respondents stated that they would not choose to go up or down the hill and acknowledge that it is difficult to walk or bike up such a significant hill. Of note, an additional common location that people noted they currently walk or bike at is the Illinois River Trail between East Peoria and Morton. There is a several-mile long uphill segment of this trail, yet the trail is still used heavily. As the proposed IL-116 trail includes an uphill segment, while steeper than the Illinois River Trail incline, indicators that people are using other trails in the region with hills potentially suggest that the hill on the IL-116 segment may not be a barrier to some who are already walking and biking in the region.

Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents

The trail study corridor runs through the 61548 and 61611 ZIP Code, and about 72% of respondents noted they live in either of these two ZIP Codes. About 57% of respondents are from the 61548 ZIP Code, which encompasses Germantown Hills and Metamora. About 15% of respondents are from the 61611 ZIP Code, encompassing most of East Peoria. Most of the remaining roughly 28% respondents are from other ZIP Codes in the Peoria metro area.

Chapter 4: Observations and Challenges

From Woodland Knolls Road to Byerly Hills Drive

Between Woodland Knolls Road and Byerly Hills Drive, the ROW on the north side of IL-116 is relatively flat and unobstructed. The primary challenge within this stretch will be to coordinate trail placement in relation to existing drainage, as the area is served by an open ditch conveyance drainage system with sloping away from the roadway and away from the northern ROW limit.

Guidance on buffer separation between the roadway and the trail is provided from Chapter 42 of the IDOT Bureau of Local Roads and Streets Manual. As these are rural cross sections with posted speed limits over 45 mph, a minimum 10-foot separation is recommended. Where a 10-foot separation is not feasible, a physical barrier between the road and the trail is recommended.

As there is flexibility in the exact placement of the trail within this subsection of the corridor, consideration should still be given to the fact that the trail should have adequate physical separation from the high-speed roadway to maximize safety and comfort for trail users. An example placement of the trail is shown in the cross section in Figure 6, and a picture of existing ROW space in Figure 7, near Far Hills Drive.

Since there are several areas further southwest of this segment that will likely require the trail to be located immediately adjacent to the shoulder of IL-116 and thus requiring a physical barrier to protect trail users, it is preferred to set the trail back in this location in an effort to reduce costs associated with the installation of physical barriers where possible, and to provide a more calm and pleasant trail experience for users.

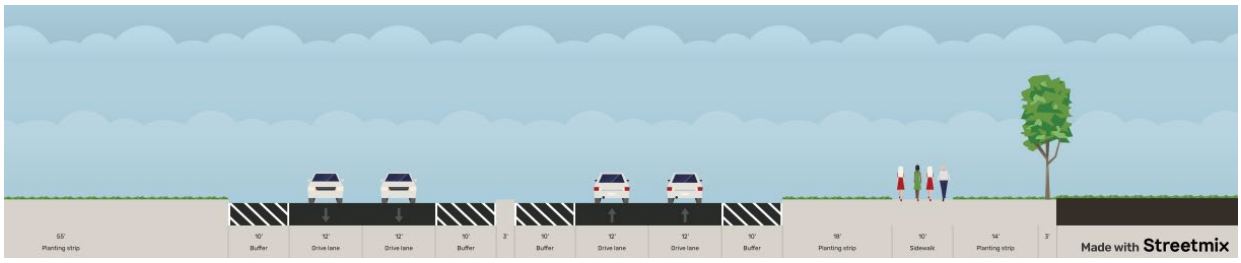


Figure 6: IL-116 Looking SW near Far Hills Dr (proposed approximate cross-section)

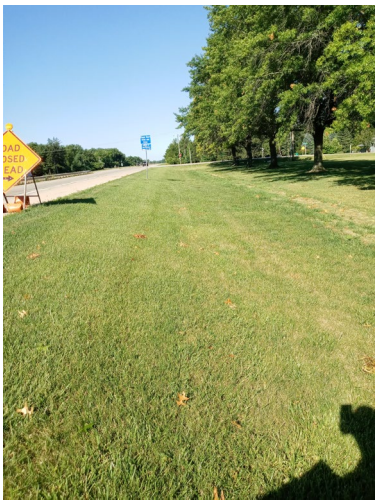


Figure 7: Existing ROW space with limited obstacles looking SW near Far Hills Dr

Near Maple Ln, while there are no steep slopes within the ROW, the drainage sloping is steeper than in some other areas of this subsection, with dense tree cover over a drainage ditch, as shown in Figure 9. Tree removal and re-sloping of drainage areas may be necessary, but significant engineering to prevent erosion or the need for supporting walls appears unnecessary. The trail could also potentially be routed through the trees, set back further from the roadway to provide shade and a noise buffer, as shown in Figure 8.

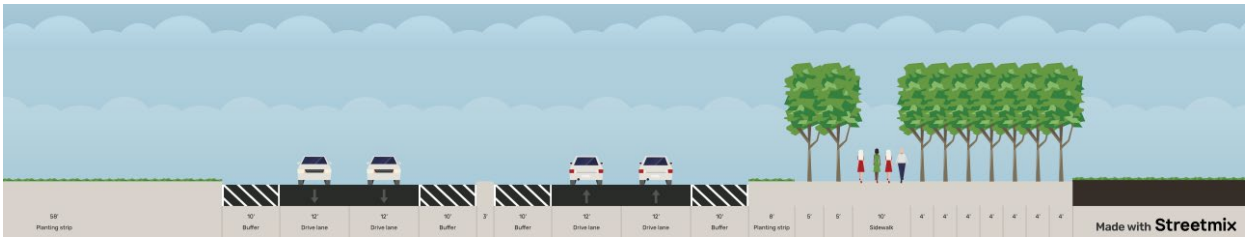


Figure 8: IL-116 looking SW near Maple Ln (proposed approximate cross-section)

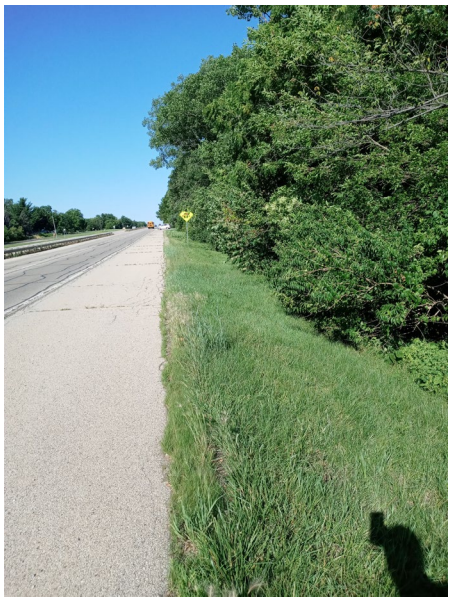


Figure 9: Existing ROW space and tree cover looking SW near Maple Ln

At Byerly Hills Drive

A significant challenge exists at Byerly Hills Dr, with an existing guardrail and an immediate steep side slope drop off into a ravine to the northwest of the shoulder, as shown in Figure 10. There is very limited additional space for a trail before the drop off. Without major alterations to IL-116 by narrowing the center median and/or shoulders to shift the southbound travel lanes to the east, a potential trail would need to be immediately adjacent to the shoulder with a physical barrier separation from the road, due to the immediate steep drop off. Additional engineering should pay special attention to potential erosion concerns from the trail into the ravine. An additional guardrail on the far side of the trail is advised to protect trail users from the steep drop off. Two alternatives are shown, one with the trail placement within existing space in Figure 11, and one that includes alterations to IL-116 that narrow shoulders to shift the roadway away from the drop off and to provide more space for a trail in Figure 12.

Figure 10: Existing guardrail and space constraints, looking SW at Byerly Hills Dr

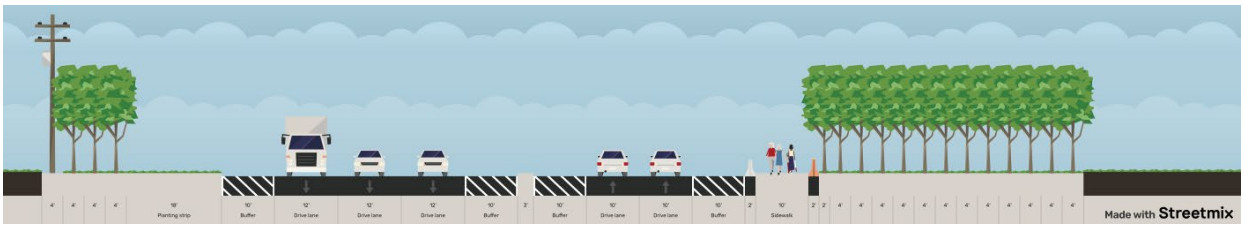


Figure 11: IL-116 looking SW at Byerly Hills Dr (proposed approximate cross-section without alterations to roadway)

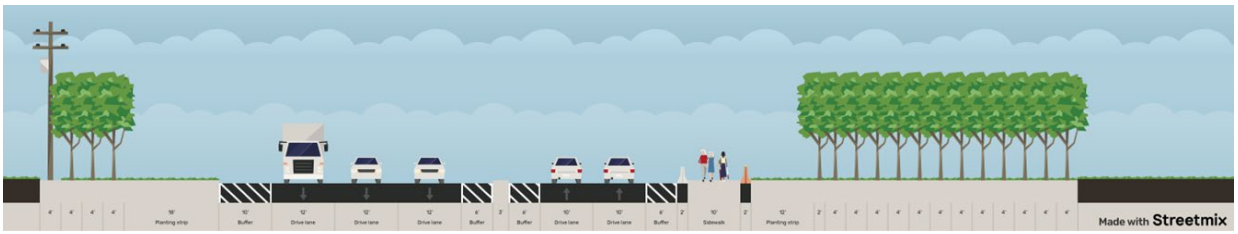


Figure 12: IL-116 looking SW at Byerly Hills Dr
(alternate proposed approximate cross-section with roadway shoulders narrowed and WB lanes shifted east)

On the IL-116 Descent into the Illinois River Valley

South of Byerly Hills Drive, as IL-116 travels downhill into the Illinois River valley, sloping within ROW will need special attention to accommodate a trail. While not as severe as the area immediately near Byerly Hills Drive, sloping near Hoppe Ln will likely require the trail to be immediately adjacent to the roadway without significant engineering. The sloping is shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Existing sloping away from IL-116 near Hoppe Ln

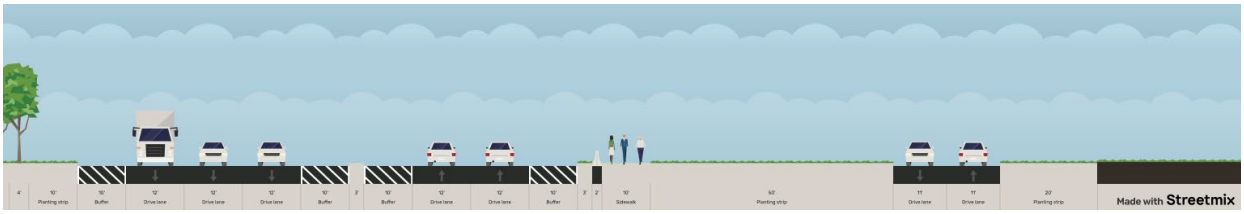


Figure 14: IL-116 looking SW near Hoppe Ln (proposed approximate cross-section)

Further south on the hill, near Upper Spring Bay Rd, a trail would still likely need to be immediately adjacent to the roadway, but with more available space before terrain-related obstacles significantly affect trail and erosion engineering, as shown in Figures 15 and 16.

Figure 15: Existing ROW and tree cover near Upper Spring Bay Rd

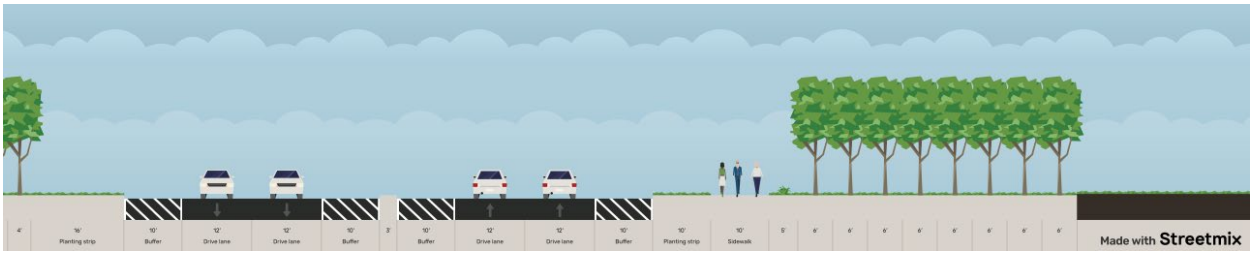


Figure 16: IL-116 looking SW near Upper Spring Bay Rd (proposed approximate cross-section)

At Ten Mile Creek and Spring Creek

At Ten Mile Creek

The southbound IL-116 bridge over Ten Mile Creek would need to be widened, or a new standalone pedestrian bridge would need to be constructed to carry a trail over Ten Mile Creek.

At Spring Creek

The culvert over Spring Creek would need to be widened or reconstructed, or a new pedestrian bridge would need to be constructed to accommodate the trail, if alterations are not made to IL-116.

Two alternative cross sections are shown. There is limited extra ROW on the west side of IL-116 at this location, with private property and a house and driveway near the property line, along with utilities, as shown in Figure 19. While the cross-section in Figure 17 shows approximately 6 feet of additional space to the right of the trail, this space is sloped down towards the property line, so the trail will likely need to be immediately adjacent to the shoulder with a physical barrier. Existing ROW goes all the way up to near the driveway of the residence, but minor property acquisition might still be necessary due to slope, if reductions to the width of the IL-116 footprint are not made. A retaining wall may also be necessary within this area due to limited space and sloping.

The alternative, as sketched in the cross section in Figure 18, would reduce the width of the center turn lane/median, and shift the SB IL-116 lanes east, to make more room for the path on the west side of the roadway. This would also provide additional space within existing ROW and may reduce or eliminate the need to acquire property on the west side of IL-116, but may also require more costly intersection redesign, as left turning vehicles from EB Spring Creek Road onto NB IL-116 might no longer be able to fit lengthwise within a narrowed center median while yielding to oncoming NB IL-116 traffic. Three left-turning crashes have been recorded at this location since 2019.

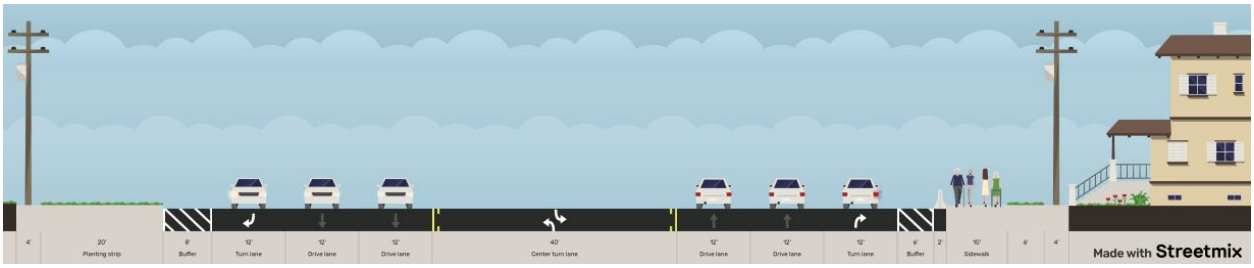


Figure 17: IL-116 looking SW near Spring Creek Rd (proposed approximate cross-section without roadway alterations)

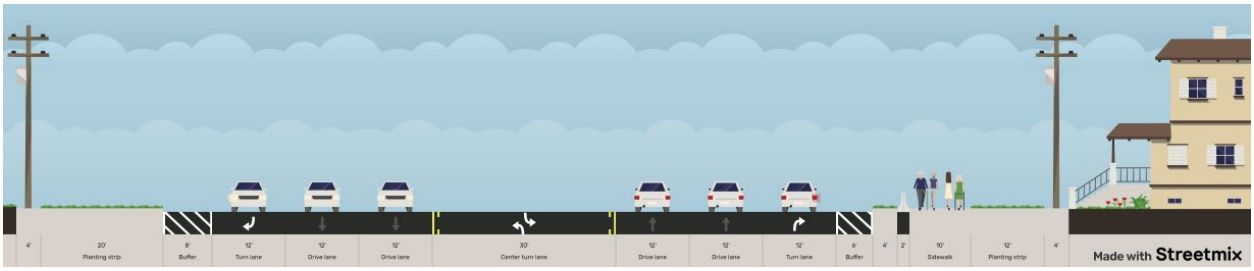


Figure 18: IL-116 looking SW near Spring Creek Rd (alternate proposed approximate cross-section with narrowed median and SB lanes shifted east)

Figure 19: Existing limited space in ROW at Spring Creek Rd

Chapter 5: Discussion of Alternatives

Intersection of IL-116 & IL-26

Three major alternatives were identified for the trail to navigate through the IL-116/IL-26 intersection and are sketched in Figure 20.

A (Green) – Utilize ROW to the west of IL-116 and continue the path on the west side of IL-26 until the intersection of IL-26 and Spring Creek Road, where the trail would cross over IL-26, before running parallel to Spring Creek Road to return to the alignment along IL-116. This alignment would avoid high speed merging traffic but would still necessitate crossing across 2-way higher speed traffic across IL-26. An enhanced crosswalk and/or converting the intersection of Spring Creek Rd/IL-26 to signalized or stop-controlled may be necessary to provide for a safe bicycle and pedestrian crossing, and to improve safety for vehicles as well. With limited ROW on both the north and south sides of Spring Creek Road, minor property acquisition may be necessary to accommodate the trail. To minimize traffic conflict with driveway access into the gas station and shopping plaza on the south side of Spring Creek Road, aligning the trail along the north side of Spring Creek Road is advised.

B (Orange) – Utilize a strip of ROW to the west of IL-116 to bring the path to cross across IL-26, before the SB IL-26 merge lane into SB IL-116 splits off from the IL-26 mainline. The trail alignment would then return to immediately west of IL-116, with available ROW to accommodate the trail on relatively flat ground. This alignment would avoid crossing high speed merging traffic while requiring crossing bi-directional IL-26 yet set back to avoid immediate conflict from left turning vehicles from NB IL-116 to NB IL-26.

C (Blue) – This alignment would require crossing the SB IL-26 merge lane with high-speed merging traffic, with drivers likely focusing on merging rather than watching for people walking or biking. This would also require crossing IL-26 near the IL-116 intersection, with stop-controlled left turning traffic from SB IL-26 to NB IL-116, but with uncontrolled left turning traffic from NB IL-116 to NB IL-26 as a potential high-risk conflict point, due to the tendency of turning drivers to be making a fast left turn to beat incoming SB IL-116 traffic, and not paying attention to people crossing on foot or bike, especially NB bike/ped traffic. If this alignment is chosen, signalizing the IL-26/IL-116 intersection would be recommended to increase safety for not only bicycles and pedestrians, but also to facilitate safer left turns for vehicles at this intersection.

D (Purple) – Same general alignment and crossings as the orange alternative but follows alongside the SB IL-26 merge lane rather than utilize the strip of ROW running north/south to the west.

IDOT officials noted that without extensive research into these alternatives, alignment A (green) may be preferred. Bike Peoria members noted that alignment A may not be used as intended, and those more comfortable walking and biking among traffic will likely use the IL-116 shoulder between IL-26 and Spring Creek Road, to create a shortcut. Bike Peoria subsequently noted a preference for alignment C (blue), contingent on added traffic control like signalization at the IL-116/IL-26 intersection and enhanced crossing across the SB IL-26 merge lane.

Various images of current conditions in this area are shown in Figures 21-24.

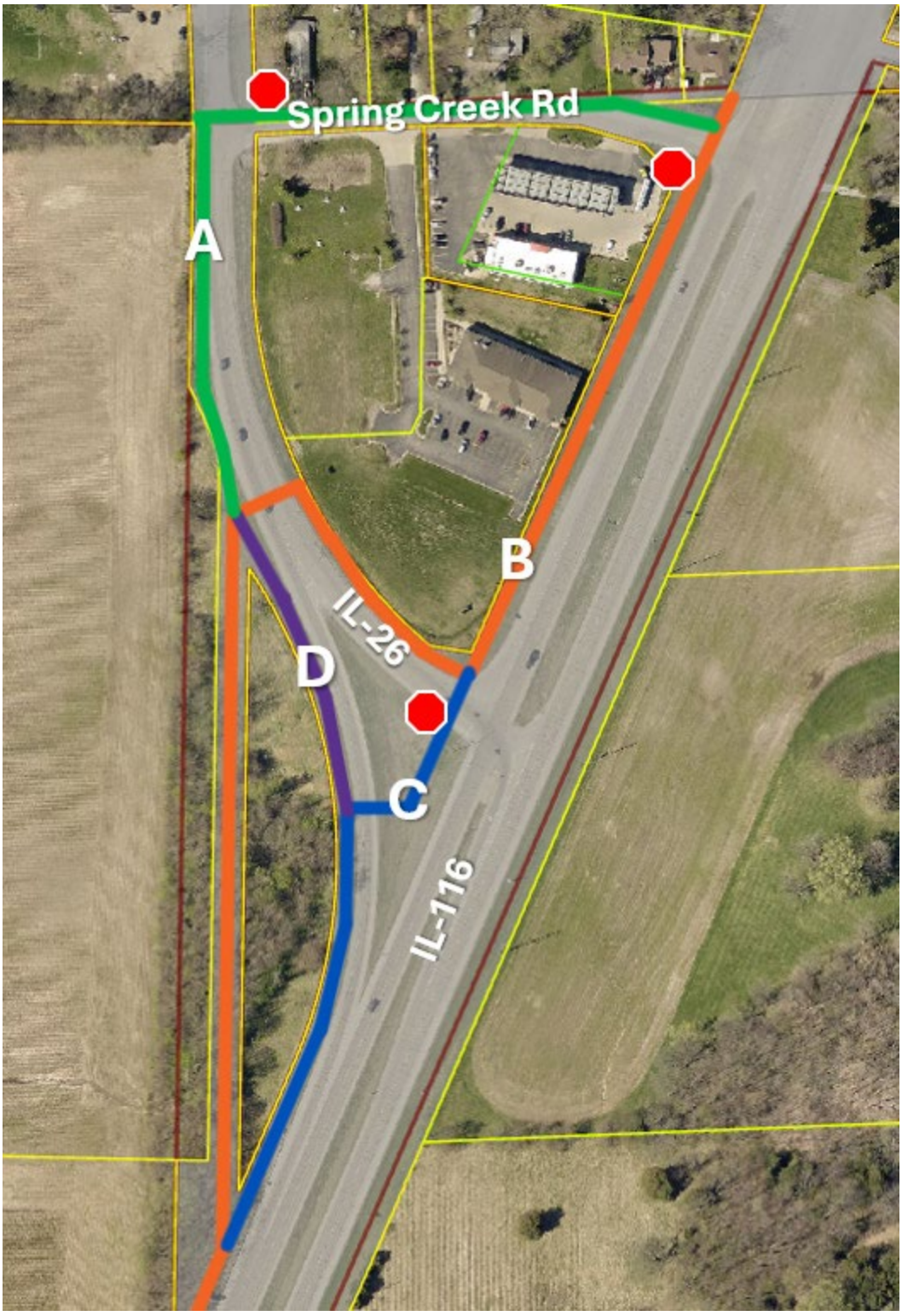


Figure 20: Trail alignment alternatives through the IL-116/IL-26 intersection

Figure 21: Existing ROW looking north on IL-116 at IL-26 (top left)

Figure 22: Existing SB IL-26 merge lane (top right)

Figure 23: Looking south on IL-116 where SB IL-26 merges (bottom left)

Figure 24: Existing intersection of IL-116 and IL-26, looking northeast (bottom right)

Connecting to the McClugage Bridge

Two alternatives were identified as the trail nears the McClugage Bridge at Upper Free Bridge Road. One alternative shown in Figure 25 continues the cross-section on the typical pattern of running the trail adjacent to/along IL-116. This would likely require the trail to be immediately adjacent to the shoulder with a physical barrier due to the downhill slope of the ROW towards Access Road 8, as shown in Figure 26.

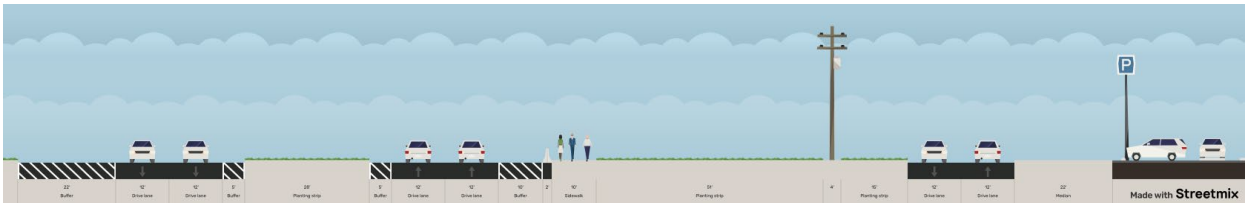


Figure 25: IL-116 looking SW at Upper Free Bridge Rd (proposed approximate cross-section with trail adjacent to IL-116)

Figure 26: Existing slope away from IL-116, looking towards IL-116 from Access Rd 8

A preferred alternative sketched in the cross section shown in Figure 27 shifts the trail west to follow alongside Access Road 8 as it continues south towards the McClugage Bridge. There is available flat ROW space along Access Road 8 in some parts, with some drainage ditch obstacles with densely covered tree strips near the Access Road 8 signal at IL-116, although flooding concerns along parts of Access Road 8 during major flooding events may be an issue. Additionally, as Access Road 8 has a lower posted speed limit and traffic counts than IL-116, a reduced buffer less than 10 feet wide without the need for a physical barrier would be an option to save space and avoid obstacles along the roadway.

A potential trail alignment along Access Road 8 south of Upper Free Bridge Road would help to avoid trail conflicts with on- and off-ramps within the IL-116/US-24 interchange. An overpass or underpass would then be necessary for the trail to travel over or under US-150 to reach the south side of the road, to connect with the McClugage Bridge walking and biking path. An underpass design would likely utilize an 8'-10' tall concrete box culvert with sufficient cover under the pavement structure. A challenge in constructability would be maintaining US-150 traffic while excavating and placing a proposed box culvert. An overpass would likely be designed as a pedestrian bridge providing a minimum 17 ft clearance above US-150 pavement. The approaches would include switchback ramps with embankment supported by MSE walls.

Due to the proximity of the Illinois River, locating an underpass within a floodplain with a high water table poses engineering, construction, and operational challenges. Not only is flooding and drainage a concern with an underpass in this location, but the flat grade of the roadway compared to adjacent land would create a need for significant amounts of ROW on both the north and south sides of the road.

Due to these identified challenges with an underpass, a pedestrian bridge overpass over US-150 is preferred. An overpass would not only avoid flooding and excavation concerns during construction, but will also lessen the risk of trail closures during flooding and high water events.

Regardless of whether an underpass or overpass is chosen, both will require property acquisition on both the north and south sides of US-150. To reduce the need for property acquisition and disruption to the business on the southwest corner of the IL-116/US-24 interchange, it is advised to, if possible, utilize open space along an overhead utility strip to the west of this business, closer to the McClugage Bridge. The preferred alignment is shown in orange in Figure 28.

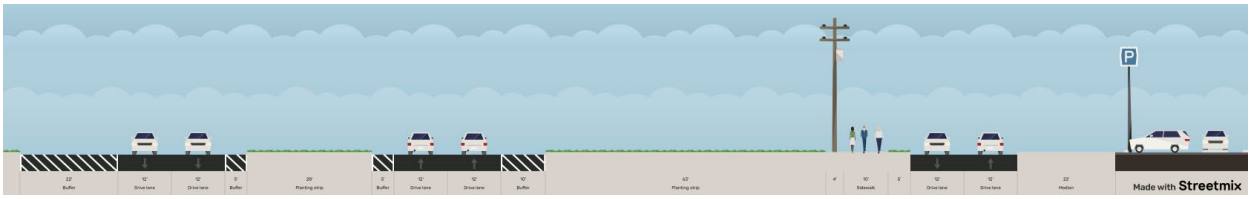


Figure 27: IL-116 looking SW at Upper Free Bridge Rd
(proposed approximate cross-section with the trail adjacent to Access Rd 8

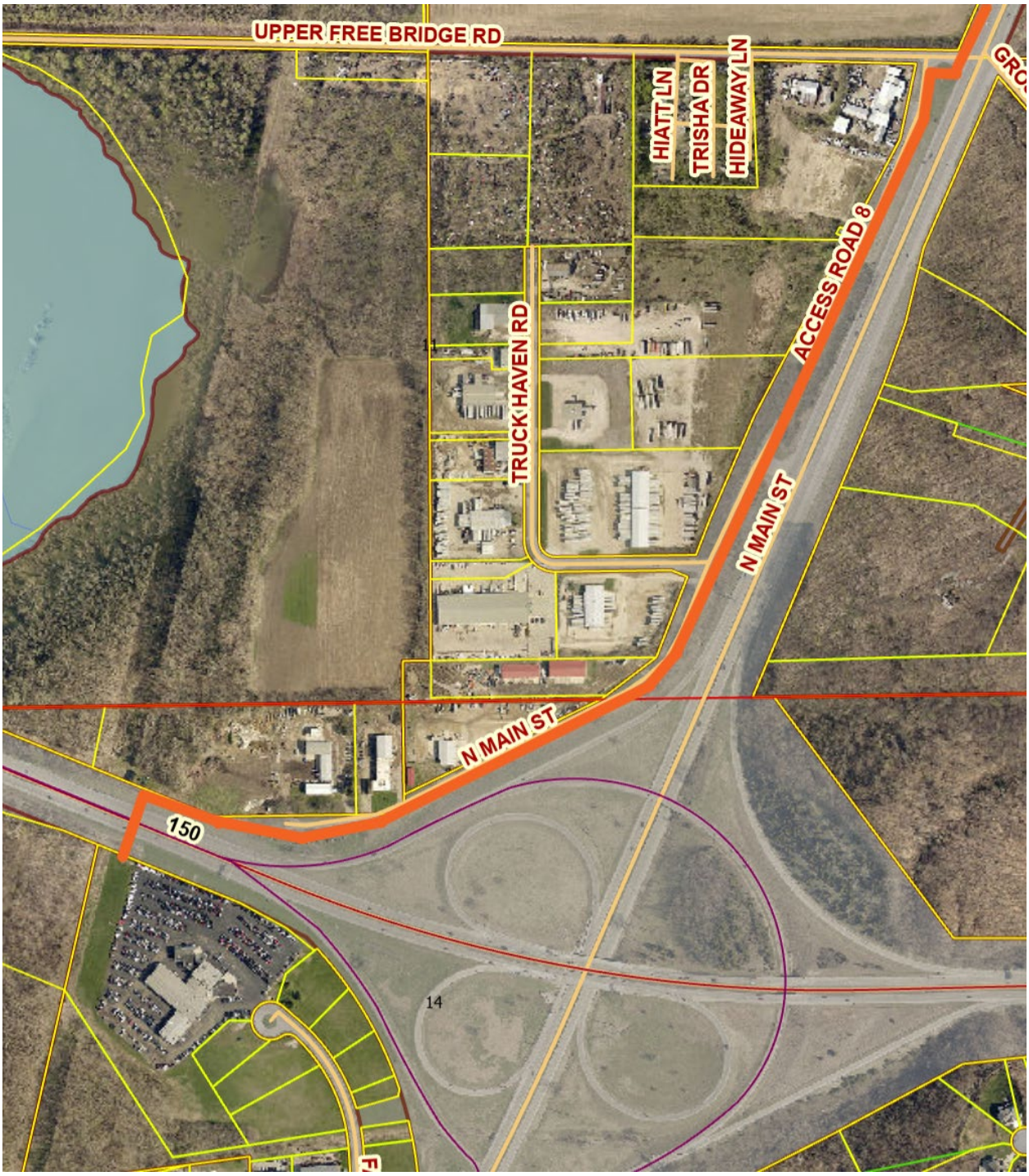


Figure 28: Preferred trail alignment (in orange) to connect to the McClugage Bridge via an underpass under US 150/US 24

South/East Alternative Trail Alignment and Interim Connections

Spring Creek Preserve is located east of IL-116, between Spring Creek Road and Grosenbach Road. It has been identified as a potential interim trailhead for the proposed IL-116 trail to connect to if the trail is to be phased in throughout several years. Spring Creek Preserve has also been identified as an asset as a recreational destination that would be a valuable connection by trail to the IL-116 trail, so more people from the region are able to access Spring Creek Preserve on foot or by bike.

Due to the complicated nature of identifying potential connections for the IL-116 trail to connect to the McClugage Bridge, routing the trail through Spring Creek Preserve to Grosenbach Road, crossing US-24 at College Drive, routing through the Illinois Central College campus to Centennial Drive, and connecting to identified planned trail connections in East Peoria's Riverfront Trail Corridor Plan and Feasibility Study along Centennial Drive. The proposed future trail along the Centennial Drive corridor is visioned to connect to the McClugage Bridge bike and pedestrian accommodations and would be an alternative way for the IL-116 trail to connect to McClugage Bridge while also directly serving the Spring Creek Preserve and Illinois Central College. This routing is visualized with the Alternative B (blue) in Figure 30.

Spring Creek Preserve is managed by the Fondulac Park District and includes several unpaved hiking trails. While a direct trail connection to Spring Creek Preserve would serve as a valuable recreational walking destination, it has limited practicality as a transportation connection for walking and biking due to extensive terrain and the unpaved nature of the existing trails within the preserve. For an effective trail connection through the preserve, a paved trail would be recommended, and while not evaluated extensively, does not appear feasible due to the terrain within the preserve. A map of Spring Creek Preserve is shown in Figure 29.

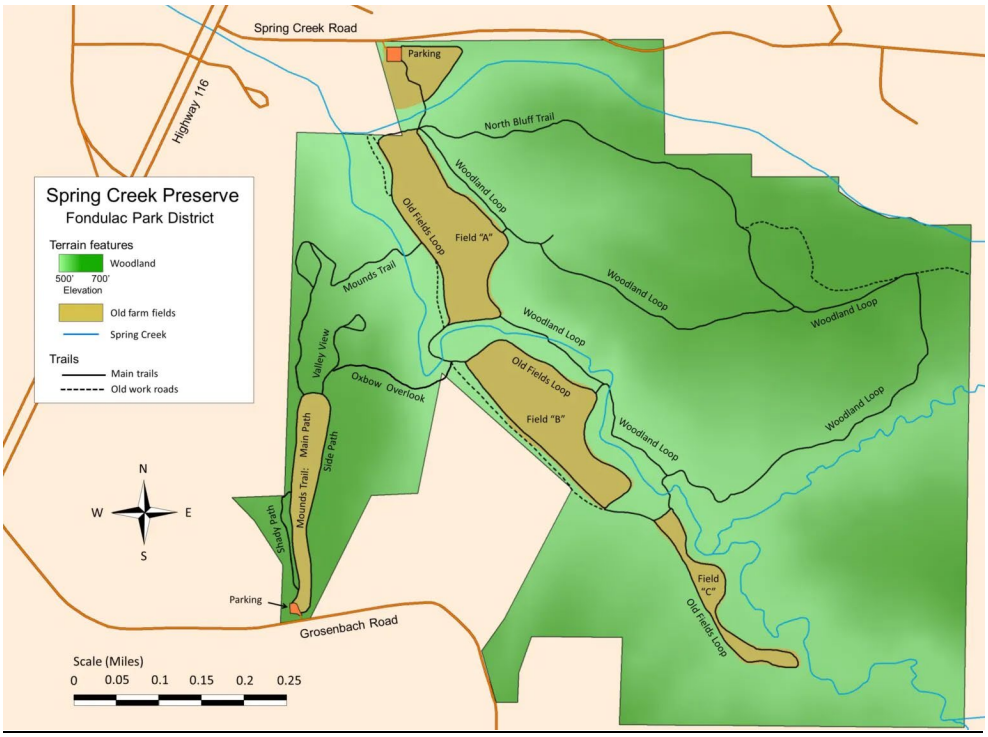


Figure 29: Spring Creek Preserve map (Source: Fon du Lac Park District)

An additional alternative identified and shown in Figure 30 as Alternative C (purple) to B/blue route includes the IL-116 trail crossing IL-116 at Upper Free Bridge Road/Grosenbach Road, which bypasses Spring Creek Preserve and runs parallel to Grosenbach Road to the east to complete the previously noted connection through Illinois Central College to the Centennial Drive corridor.

The crossing across US-24 at College Drive is currently signalized, while the crossing across IL-116 at Upper Free Bridge Road/Grosenbach Road is unsignalized. For a trail to safely and comfortably cross IL-116 at any point along the study corridor, it is recommended to either signalize the crossing or to provide a grade-separated crossing.

Existing ROW along Grosenbach Road provides for up to about 14 feet of available ROW, with less in some sections. Property acquisition would potentially be necessary to accommodate a trail along Grosenbach Road.

Due to the lack of a current safe and comfortable crossing across IL-116, terrain in Spring Creek Preserve, limited ROW along Grosenbach Road, the uncertainty of whether planned trails in the East Peoria trail study will be implemented, and the indirect routing of the IL-116 trail to the east of IL-116 to ultimately connect to the McClugage Bridge, these alternatives are deemed to be not favorable when compared to providing a direct IL-116 trail connection to the McClugage Bridge via an underpass underneath US-24/US-150 or by other connection means. The preferred direct trail alignment is shown as Alternative A (orange) in Figure 30.

It is still important to consider providing connections to both Spring Creek Preserve and Illinois Central College from a trail along IL-116.

South and East Sides of IL-116 Alternative Trail Alignment

As this study focuses on conditions for a trail along the north and west sides of IL-116, an alternative alignment was explored for the trail to run on the south and east sides of IL-116. Connecting from the planned Germantown Hills – Metamora trail from the northeast corner of IL-116 and Woodland Knolls Road, this alternative alignment would cross IL-116 at the signalized intersection at Woodland Knolls Road and run parallel to Old Germantown Road on the south side of IL-116. This alternative alignment would better serve people already walking and biking along Old Germantown Road. However, further to the south and west, west of where Old Germantown Road terminates, topographic challenges on the east side of IL-116 make the installation of a trail not feasible. Available ROW on the east side of IL-116 on the descent also drops to as low as approximately 15 feet in some sections, making property acquisition necessary.

For a trail to run alongside Old Germantown Road, an additional crossing of IL-116 to the north/west sides of the roadway would likely be required, as the west side of IL-116 on the descent, while not without its own terrain challenges and obstacles, is better suited for a trail than the east side. As there are currently no other controlled crossings of IL-116 west of Woodland Knolls Road on Old Germantown Road, a trail crossing would be unsafe and uncomfortable across uncontrolled IL-116.

Due to the attempt to minimize trail crossings across IL-116 and to minimize the addition of signalized or other traffic-controlled intersections on IL-116, the south/east alignment is deemed not practically feasible, and the original proposed alignment of the trail on the north/west sides of IL-116 remains the preferred alternative.

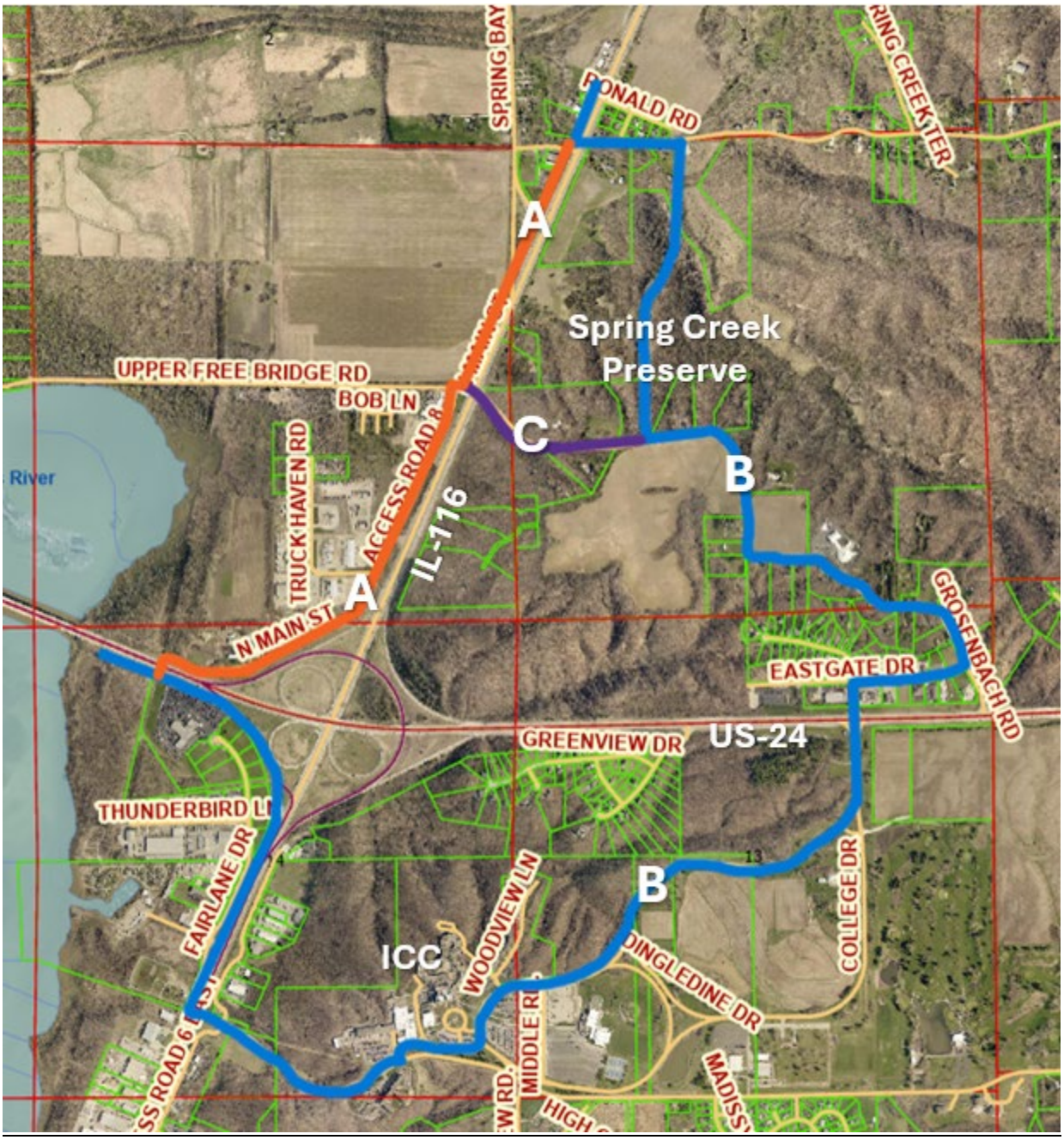


Figure 30: Alternative trail alignments to connect to the McClugage Bridge.
Preferred Alternative: A/orange.
Spring Creek Preserve and Illinois Central College Alternative: B/blue.
Illinois Central College/bypass Spring Creek Preserve Alternative: C/purple to B/blue.

Summary of Recommended and Preferred Trail Alignments

The recommended trail alignment throughout the corridor is on the north and west sides of IL-116, within existing IDOT ROW. The recommended northern trail terminus continues west from the western terminus of the planned Germantown Hills to Metamora Trail at Woodland Knolls Road.

The recommended southern trail terminus is at the eastern terminus of the shared-use path on the south side of the McClugage Bridge/US-150 that is almost complete at the end of 2024. To reach the southern terminus at the McClugage Bridge shared-use path, it is recommended that the trail parallels Access Road 8 south of Upper Free Bridge Road, with an overpass (pedestrian bridge) over US-150. An underpass is an alternative option for a connection across US-150, while surface trail crossings across US-150 or through the US-150/IL-116 interchange are not recommended.

The preferred trail alignment through the IL-116/IL-26 intersection is Alternative C/Blue on Figure 20, which crosses the southbound IL-26 merge lane and IL-26 at the IL-116 intersection, and parallels IL-116 between IL-26 and Spring Creek Road, with additional traffic control devices at the IL-26/IL-116 intersection. An interim alignment through this intersection is Alternative A/Green on Figure 20, which parallels Spring Creek Road and IL-26 rather than IL-116. This interim connection could be utilized if additional traffic control devices are not explored by IDOT at the IL-26/IL-116 intersection.

For most other locations within the corridor, the trail is recommended to be placed parallel to IL-116, with adequate (minimum 10-foot) separation from the road, or with a physical barrier in locations where a minimum of 10-foot separation is not feasible. It is preferred to have more than the minimum of 10 feet separating the trail and the road wherever feasible.

Chapter 6: Implementation Strategies

Funding Opportunities

State and federal funding and grant opportunities are available for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including, but not limited to:

TAP

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP) from the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) includes funding for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, and vulnerable road user safety assessments. There are approximately $3 billion total allocated in TA funds for FY 2025 and FY 2026.

ITEP

The Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program is a grant program administered by IDOT, which includes an on-road and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities category.

SS4A

The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) federal grant program allocated $5 billion in funds from 2022-2026 to fund initiatives that prevent death and serious injuries on roadways. As this proposed trail accommodates people walking and biking and would provide a safer form of travel than walking and biking along the roadway, this trail project could fall under SS4A requirements.

Two grant types are offered: Planning and Demonstration Grants are provided to fund safety action plans and temporary, quick-build improvements. Implementation Grants are provided to implement infrastructural, behavioral, and/or operational projects and strategies that have been identified in a safety action plan. There are two application cycles remaining under the current SS4A funding allocation, FY 2025 and FY 2026.

IDNR Bike Path Program

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has a Bike Path Grant Program that administers funding to local government agencies for costs associated with bike paths.

Federal Recreational Trails Program

Federal funding administered through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources provides 80% federal funding for trails, with a 20% local match necessary.

Right-of-Way and Maintenance Considerations

Most of the trail is proposed to be within IDOT ROW. ROW and maintenance agreements with IDOT should be prioritized. While the trail is proposed to be located within IDOT ROW, local jurisdictions within the study area should be prepared to organize trail maintenance agreements if the trail is constructed. These local jurisdictions include municipalities (Germantown Hills and East Peoria), counties (Woodford County and Tazewell County), and park districts (Fondulac Park District). IDOT

may maintain segments of the trail located on structures (notably the Ten Mile Creek Bridge and Spring Creek Bridge).

The Fondulac Park District has experience maintaining the Illinois River Trail from East Peoria to Morton, and the portion of the study corridor within Tazewell County (approximately 2.5 miles) is within the Fondulac Park District. Maintenance of the trail by Fondulac Park District would require park district board approval and adequate funding. Maintenance agreements with the City of East Peoria are an additional possibility for sections within Tazewell County, although there are sections of the trail corridor that are outside East Peoria city limits within Tazewell County. For the segment in Woodford County, additional intergovernmental agreements may be necessary due to the significant portion (roughly 2.7 miles out of the approximate 3-mile segment within Woodford County) of the trail corridor being in unincorporated areas without a park district.

Appendix A: Cost Estimates

A high-level cost estimate has been calculated based on anticipated engineering and construction costs at approximately $20.8 million. This cost estimate does not include utility-related costs or land acquisition costs. An approximate cost estimate breakdown is shown in the table below.

Germantown Hills to McClugage Bridge Trail				
Feasibility Study Estimate				
Preliminary Engineer's Opinion of Probable Construction Cost				
Date:	12/6/2024		Designer:	CMT
Route:	FAU 0673		City/County:	Germantown Hills
Section:			Base Year:	2024
Work Classification			**Estimated Costs**	
1	Clearing, Minor Removal Items			$50,200
2	Earthwork			$ 744,300
3	Erosion Control and Landscaping			$ 109,300
4	Drainage			$ 61,800
5	Subbase, Base, Surface, Shoulders			$ 1,374,900
6	Marking and Signing			$ -
7	Guardrail, Roadside Safety			$ 1,255,500
8	Traffic Signals and Roadway Lighting			$ -
9	Detours, Temporary Traffic Control - Roadway			$ 1,098,000
10	Railroad Crossing Improvements			$ -
11	Field Office and Laboratory			$ -
12	Environmental Mitigation/Incidental Items			$ -
13	Miscellaneous Items (10% Roadway Costs)			$ 469,400
14	Roadway Subtotal (Categories 1-13)			$ 5,163,400
15	Structure Removal			$ -
16	Major Culverts			$ -
17	Bridges			$ 8,770,000
18	Structures for Detours and Temporary Traffic Control			$ -

19	Miscellaneous Items (10% Structure Costs)	$ 877,000
20	Structure Subtotal (Categories 15-19)	$ 9,647,000
21	Roadway and Structure Subtotal (Lines 14 and 20)	$ 14,810,400
22	Contingencies (15% of Line 21)	$ 2,221,600
23	**Total Construction Cost (Lines 21 and 22)**	**$ 17,032,000**
24	Utility Adjustments	$ -
25	Land Acquisition and Relocations	$ Unknown
26	Preliminary Engineering (12% of Line 23)	$ 2,043,900
28	Construction Engineering (10% of Line 23)	$ 1,703,200
29	**Total Project Cost (Lines 23-28)**	**$ 20,779,100**

This cost estimate includes the following assumptions:

1. Crossing at US-150 – assumes a proposed pedestrian bridge, 2-span including approach trail, embankment, and MSE walls.
2. Spring Creek Crossing SN 090-0066 – assumes full structure replacement with widening.
3. Ten Mile Creek Crossing SN 090-0110 – assumes widening only for new path.

Appendix B: Right-of-Way and Utility Impacts

Possible Additional ROW or Easements

In general, the existing ROW along the north side of IL-116 is located at the top back slope of existing ditch or beyond the north side of adjacent frontage roads, generally providing space for the proposed trail to be constructed within existing ROW. A summary of possible ROW or easements which may need acquired to construct the trail are listed below, see Chapter 4 for an in-depth analysis of several locations with potential cross sections and images from the field. Further engineering design will be necessary to determine actual limits of improvements.

- Forested area between Far Hills Dr and Saint Francis Ln. The ROW constricts to 95 ft wide (from CL of IL-116) for approximately 360 ft and an easement may be needed to re-grade slopes.
- Forested area between Parkway Dr and Byerly Hills Dr. The ROW constricts to 100 ft wide (from CL of IL-116) for approximately 270 ft and an easement may be needed to re-grade slopes.
- Narrower ROW with steep terrain between Upper Spring Bay Rd & Fauber Ln. The ROW constricts to 100 ft wide (from CL of IL-116) for approximately 600 ft and an easement may be needed to re-grade slopes.
- Narrower ROW (83 ft wide) immediately north of Access Road 10 for approximately 500 ft adjacent to two commercial properties.
- Limited existing ROW and close adjacent property immediately north of Spring Creek Road may require easements or ROW. Use of retaining walls may help limit ROW needs.
- Proposed ROW will be needed to construct an overpass/underpass over US 150.

Potential Utility Conflicts

Along IL-116 identified potential utility or drainage related conflicts include:

- Underground electrical, fiber optic and telephone/communications utility lines run adjacent to northside of IL-116
- A sanitary sewer force main exists along IL-116 starting at St Francis Lane and heads east to Maple Lane and crosses Maple Lane and turns south and crosses IL-116 before heading east again along the south side of IL-116.
- A 12” underground steel gas main runs in the median or along the south side of IL-116. There are crossings to connect to mains at side roads.
- Existing watermain has crossings of IL-116 between Parkway Drive and Woodland Knolls Road, but no main running parallel to the IL-116 corridor.
- Pavement underdrain and storm sewer outlets are located throughout project limits and may need extended.
- Multiple storm culvert replacements or extensions at side roads and along mainline IL-116 are anticipated.

Appendix C: Environmental Impact Screening

Date last updated: 8 November 2024

Quick summary:

The proposed trail route would require field work for wetland delineations, stream crossings, bat bridge checks, and a habitat check for the RPBB (and maybe EPFO). About 2.3 miles of the 5-mile corridor is within the Rusty Patch high potential zone and may include suitable habitat. The stream crossings may also need additional coordination for the IDNR as potential breeding habitat for Lake Sturgeon. A cultural screening may be necessary depending on the age of the bridges involved and the depth of excavation, but it is not expected that any of these will be considered historically significant. There are no national register sites near the proposed route.

Project description:

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and Village of Germantown Hills are proposing to construct a new 5-mile stretch of multi-use trail and bike path connecting East Peoria in Tazewell County with the Village of Germantown Hills in Woodford County. Specifically, the trail would be located on the north and west sides of IL-116 from McClugage Bridge at the interchange with US-150 to the intersection with Woodland Knolls Road in the Village of Germantown Hills. The amount of tree clearing, if any, has not yet been determined for this project.

Waters:

Multiple streams and NWI wetlands are within or immediately adjacent to the proposed route, and the route crosses Ten Mile Creek and Spring Creek. Several additional streams are mapped nearby on the NWI and NHD, including Funks Run; it is unclear from aerial imagery and Google Streetview whether the trail route would cross any of these smaller streams. Mapped wetlands are associated with Ten Mile Creek and Spring Creek and are located within the Ten Mile Creek-Illinois River watershed (HUC 071300011705). The north portion of the route, which does not have any mapped wetlands, is located in the adjacent Funks Run-Illinois River watershed (HUC 071300011704). Field work will be necessary to assess all potential stream crossings and to confirm the presence of potential regulatory wetlands throughout the corridor.

According to the FEMA Flood hazard map, the north crossing at Ten Mile Creek is located within Regulatory Floodway, and the proposed route likely also falls within Zone AE, associated with 1% annual flood risk, and Zone X, associated with 0.2% annual flood risk. A permit for construction in a floodway will likely be necessary for the crossing at Ten Mile Creek. The remainder of the proposed trail route does not fall within zones of potential flooding concern.

T&E:

An IPaC Official Species List from the USFWS received on November 15, 2024, reported the following federally listed species or their habitats may be present in or near the proposed project:

- Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis),* endangered
- Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis)*, endangered

- Tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus)*, proposed endangered
- Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*), experimental population
- Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), candidate
- Rusty Patched Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*), endangered
- Western Regal Fritillary Butterfly (*Argynnis idalia occidentalis*), proposed threatened
- Decurrent False Aster (*Boltonia decurrens*), threatened
- Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*), threatened
- Lakeside Daisy (*Hymenoxys herbacea*), threatened

An EcoCAT Natural Resource Review request from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on November 15, 2024, reported records of the following state listed species in or near the proposed project:

- Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*), IL endangered
- Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), IL threatened

The IPaC indicated no federal critical habitat is located in the project area, and the EcoCAT reported that the project is near three state protected areas: Cooper Park North (INAI site), Cooper Park Wetlands Land and Water Reserve, and Spring Creek Land and Water Reserve. The project is currently not expected to directly affect any of these sites. The Spring Creek Land and Water Reserve is closest to the project area, located on the east side of IL-116 opposite the planned trail route; stormwater best management practices will be used to prevent any erosion or runoff that would impact the adjacent Spring Creek Land and Water Reserve. Coordination with the IDNR will be necessary if the proposed trail route is changed to directly affect any of these state protected sites.

The **Tricolored Bat, Monarch Butterfly**, and **Western Regal Fritillary Butterfly** are not yet listed and therefore do not require Section 7 consultation. The **Whooping Crane** also does not require Section 7 consultation because it is listed as an experimental population. The **Decurrent False Aster** and **Lakeside Daisy** are primarily found in high-quality prairie (and also open sandy floodplain for the Aster) and likely do not have suitable habitat within the project area.

A site visit will be necessary to determine whether suitable habitat is present for the following state- and federally-protected species: Indiana Bat, Northern Long-eared Bat, Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid, and Lake Sturgeon.

For the **Indiana Bat** and **Northern Long-eared Bat**, suitable summer foraging habitat is likely present either within or immediately adjacent to the project area, such as the riparian buffers associated with Ten Mile Creek and Spring Creek. Any tree removal for this project should take place during the winter inactive season (Oct. 1 – March 31) to avoid a possible effect on the Northern long-eared Bat and Indiana Bat. If the project involves modifications to any bridge or culvert, these structures will need to be assessed for bat usage.

The **Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid** is found in high quality wetlands, which are relatively uncommon outside of protected natural areas. If wetlands are present within the project area (as

the NWI indicates is likely), and those wetlands are determined to be high quality based on a site visit, an additional species-specific survey may be required to determine the presence or absence Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid.

A site visit will be necessary to check for suitable habitat for the **Rusty Patched Bumble Bee**, particularly the 2.3-mile stretch of the proposed route within the High Potential Zone (HPZ). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines and regularly updates the HPZ map (see attachments) based on confirmed observations and will assume presence of this species in any suitable habitat within the HPZ. Aerial imagery indicates that the majority of the proposed route within the HPZ follows existing mowed right-of-way and is adjacent to developed areas such as suburbs, both of which are typically considered low-quality summer foraging habitat for this species. Natural areas such as the riparian buffer adjacent to the stream crossings may also include suitable habitat. It may be possible to reduce or avoid an impact on the species entirely with seasonal date restrictions based on the type of habitat within the project area. For example, construction occurring in open meadow, prairie, and mowed grass or lawn should take place outside the summer foraging season (July 15 – October 14). Coordination with the USFWS under Section 7 may be necessary due to a possible impact on the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.

Lake Sturgeon occupy large lakes, rivers, and coastal areas, and migrate regionally up river to lay their eggs in fast-flowing rivers and streams in water depths of 0.3-8 meters. Depending on how the project will address Ten Mile Creek and Spring Creek, which are tributaries of Peoria Lake and the Illinois River, additional information about these creeks may be needed to determine if suitable habitat is present in the project area. Coordination with the IDNR may be necessary if the project has the potential to affect Lake Sturgeon. Seasonal date restrictions may also mitigate potential impact due to Lake Sturgeon moving to different habitats within stream systems after hatching.

Osprey are an Illinois state-listed species in Illinois and are also protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This species hunts and nests in a variety of areas with access to riparian habitat, including trees in suburban yards. Any tree trimming or removal for this project should take place during the winter nonbreeding season to avoid a possible impact on the Osprey.

MBTA:

Because the project may include work on a bridge, which may serve as nesting habitat for swallows and other bird species, any bridge work should take place during the winter nonbreeding season to avoid a possible impact on species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Otherwise, a bridge assessment for use by nesting birds will need to be completed prior to any construction affecting the bridge. Similarly, any tree trimming or clearing for this project should take place during the winter nonbreeding season to avoid a possible impact on protected migratory birds.

Cultural resources:

The proposed trail will not affect any National Register Historic Districts or Historic Places; the nearest registered site is 1.3 miles from the south end of the proposed trail. Coordination with the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office may be necessary depending on the depth of excavation required for the trail construction, and if any structures more than 40 years old will be affected by

the project. The bridges in the project area will likely not be considered culturally significant, although if any bridges are more 40 years old, they will need to be reviewed by the SHPO. Overall, the preliminary review indicates the project will likely not influence any protected cultural resources.

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