

PLAN ELEMENT III: TRANSPORTATION

Transportation systems affect most aspects of how we live - how and when land is developed and for what use; economic activity; movement and trade of goods; jobs (and therefore wages) for local residents; energy and resource allocation; access to the places where we work, go to school, obtain health care, shop or get entertained; environmental quality; general social equity; and the overall livability of our community. Therefore, how and how well a transportation system functions have deep and long-term consequences for a community. Consequently, it behooves us to look at all aspects of Rockford's transportation system and its potential impacts as we plan for the future.



As is the case with the rest of the urbanized area, transportation planning for Rockford is carried out by the Rockford Area Transportation Study (RATS). The RATS Long-Range Transportation Plan adopted in 1995 and updated in 2000 is included by reference as a part of the 2020 Plan, with some modifications. Because the RATS plan is regional in nature, it does not reach the level of detail required by a plan such as this one that relates to one municipality only. One role of the 2020 Plan is to provide that necessary detail in the form of proposed local connecting streets. Another equally important role is to address other aspects of transportation such as the non-transportation impacts of transportation "improvements" and how to minimize the negative ones. It should also be noted that, although the RATS

Long-Range Transportation Plan was updated in 2000, the update included very few modifications over the previous version and was intended primarily to meet minimum federal requirements. It is anticipated that there will be significant and comprehensive revisions to the LRP in 2004-2005 upon the completion of the Winnebago-Boone County Transportation Study now in process. Once this occurs, the revised LRP should be adopted as an amendment to the 2020 Plan.

Goals

The following statistics illustrate the magnitude of the transportation situation in the Rockford area. Each day, more than 790,000 trips are made in the Rockford urban area (Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park, Cherry Valley and surrounding urbanized areas). On average, these trips are 6.3 miles long, making the average total miles traveled in the urban area nearly 5 million miles a day. Fuel cost alone for these trips is in the order of \$600,000 daily. Recent surveys show over 625 miles of roadways in the City of Rockford alone. Clearly, providing an efficient transportation system in Rockford and the surrounding area is no small task.

The overall goal of the 2020 Plan is to provide a transportation system that is safe, efficient and gets both people and goods where they want or need to be with as little aggravation as possible. At the same time, an attempt has been made to minimize the negative impacts of streets and highways on adjacent land uses, especially residential ones. The end result should be a system that meets residents' needs within their neighborhoods, throughout the City as a whole, and as a link to the rest of the urban area.

In doing this, it is critical to take into account the fact that Rockford's transportation needs are diverse. With that in mind, the 2020 Plan seeks to provide for a multi-modal transportation system that does the following:

- ▶ Provides for both motorized and non-motorized travel.
- ▶ Serves shipping and other economic development needs as well as those of individuals.
- ▶ Provides for recreational as well as utilitarian needs.
- ▶ Serves the needs of all segments of Rockford's population.
- ▶ Serves the needs of those who are disenfranchised from, do not desire to use, or are otherwise unable to take full advantage of the predominantly automobile-oriented transportation system that dominates our community.

To achieve these goals, the 2020 Plan not only seeks to continue to improve and expand our system of streets and highways, but also to improve our system of pedestrian walkways and bicycle pathways, and our public bus

and paratransit systems.

In addition to providing for better transportation within the corporate limits of Rockford, this plan recognizes that Rockford is not a self-contained, independent, closed community. The physical and economic health of Rockford depends on interaction, exchange, communication and commerce with the surrounding region, the country and the world. This plan, therefore, seeks ways to improve our transportation interconnection with and accessibility to adjacent municipalities, counties and regions.

Components of a Multi-modal Transportation System

Physically, a multi-modal transportation system has many diverse components, all of which must be planned for together and coordinated if they are to gel into a true system. What follows is a partial list (there are many subcategories) of the facilities or services that comprise such a system:

- ▶ **Paved roadways** for vehicular traffic, which are divided into four basic classes:
 - ▶ *Freeways* Controlled access or limited access highways, such as I-39, I-90 and US 20 (the Bypass). Generally, freeways are designed to accommodate traffic volumes up to and sometimes in excess of 1,700 vehicles per lane per hour. This is accomplished by the freeway designs where the only access allowed is at grade-separated interchanges.
 - ▶ *Arterials* Highways designed for high speed and/or high volume traffic. Arterials may limit access for abutting properties (such as East State Street east of Arnold Avenue and parts of Mulford Road), although some (such as Spring Creek Road) do not. Arterials provide the basic framework of the city's transportation system. They vary widely in capacity depending on the number of direct access points, intersection control and other factors. Well designed arterials can accommodate between 1,000 and 1,300 vehicles per lane per hour. An arterial with access limited to signalized public street intersections is called an expressway.
 - ▶ *Collectors* Roadways designed for lower-speed, lower-volume traffic than arterials. Collectors "collect" traffic from neighborhoods and direct it to the nearest arterial (or disperse it from the arterials into the neighborhoods). Access is not controlled as strictly as with arterials; in most cases, driveway cuts may be allowed from every property. Collector roadways also vary widely in the traffic they can accommodate. They are generally designed for roughly 900 vehicles per lane per hour but many collectors in Rockford carry considerably more traffic.
 - ▶ *Local streets* Roadways that allow direct access to individual homes and businesses. Through-traffic is discouraged from using these streets, particularly in residential neighborhoods; however, heavier use can occur when nearby higher level roadways become congested or blocked. Local streets, as designed in the Rockford area, can often accommodate traffic volumes close to that of collectors but volumes in excess of 400 vehicles per hour can be oppressive, especially in residential areas.
- ▶ **Sidewalks** Paved pedestrian facilities.
- ▶ **Bikeways** Paved facilities for bicyclists and in-line skaters.
- ▶ **Pathways** Paved facilities for use by both pedestrians and bicyclists.
- ▶ **Mass transit services**
 - ▶ *Public transit buses* Full-sized buses that generally travel on fixed routes with regular schedules.
 - ▶ *Public paratransit buses* Smaller buses and vehicles that transport people door to door or curb to curb on an on-call basis.
 - ▶ *Private buses and taxi services.*

Impact of Streets & Highways

Street projects do not exist in a vacuum. They have the potential for significant impacts, good and bad, on adjacent land uses. This has led to the use of what has been termed "context-sensitive design" in some areas, a concept that this plan recommends be adopted by RATS. Context-sensitive design involves taking into consideration the land use and environment next to a roadway that is being planned or designed. Designers make decisions based on the impact of the roadway on the community, not just on geometrics and other engineering considerations. The ultimate goal of this approach is to find ways to meet the needs of motorists while at the same time addressing the concerns of the community that the road passes through.

In preparing this Plan, we have tried to take into account not just how to get people from Point A to Point B as efficiently as possible, but also safely and with as little impact on residential areas as possible. Sometimes this has to be done in ways that are not evident on a plan map, such as traffic control measures. A prime example of where "unmappable" measures are needed is dealing with the high volume and/or speed of traffic using collector streets within residential neighborhoods. The collectors are needed to connect the local neighborhood streets with the arterial streets, but they need to be designed in a way that gives residents along those streets the same measure of safety and, if possible, privacy as those who live on strictly local streets. One way to do this is by using what have become known as "traffic calming" measures. Any number of things can be done to slow down traffic - speed humps, curves in a street, traffic circles, or narrower streets. However, as Rockford's experience has shown, traffic calming devices can have an adverse impact to the extent that drivers simply move over a street to avoid them, thereby causing a new problem on another street. Another option the City could consider would be to require larger front yard setbacks for homes fronting on collector level streets, as well as more intense landscaping, through the subdivision and zoning ordinances.



In similar fashion, internal circulation within major commercial areas, such as what is commonly referred to as "The Strip" on East State Street from the Rockford College area east can create serious problems for motorists and pedestrians alike. Some approaches considered by the Rockford Gateway Association in their 1995-96 planning effort should be considered by the City and, where appropriate, adopted. These approaches are outlined below. At the same time, we need to recognize that the City has made it possible for some of these conditions to exist. In the future, any waivers of standards contained in the zoning or subdivision ordinance should require an evaluation of the long-term impact of the waiver - not just on the subject property, but on adjoining ones. Criteria would need to be developed for the City to use in determining when a waiver could be allowed and when it should not. While this may cause some short-term difficulties for developers or property owners, it avoids creating long-term problems that the City - and all of its taxpayers - will have to deal with for years to come.



The Gateway Association's proposals for improving circulation along the Strip include the following:

- ▶ Begin with a complete evaluation of traffic circulation along the Strip, both internally and along the major traffic corridors. Include new aerials as a component of the study, ideally two sets of them - one taken on a weekday and one on a weekend since problem spots may differ. The objective is to determine where the bottlenecks are, their relative degree of severity, and the best way to cope with each without compounding problems elsewhere.
- ▶ Based on this evaluation, identify through routes for collector and frontage roads, with special attention to situations where significant improvements in traffic flow can be made by filling in gaps in existing roadways. An efficient system of collectors and frontage roads is important for two reasons - it can reduce traffic on East State Street and other major arterials by reducing the need to re-enter a major roadway to go from store to store, and it can provide pedestrians and bicyclists with a safer alternative to travel on a major roadway.

At the same time, ensure that there is sufficient spacing between streets so that new problems of traffic backups (such as what now sometimes occurs at North Trainer Road at State Street with additional traffic backing up on Puri Parkway) are avoided.

- ▶ Where appropriate, incorporate elements of the previous step into the City's Capital Improvements Program.
- ▶ To increase safety, find a way to make it obvious to drivers that internal streets, such as Puri Parkway, are real city streets, not just an extension of adjoining parking lots.
- ▶ Work with developers to find ways to increase safety within parking lots for both pedestrians and motorists. We need to find ways to better mediate or balance the often divergent needs of pedestrians and automobiles within individual parking lots and within the "Strip" as a whole, especially when reviewing and approving site designs for new development.
- ▶ Continue to expand the system of pathways in the area, as shown on the Plan map.
- ▶ Make names of cross streets and addresses easily visible for motorists.
- ▶ Clearly indicate where lanes are for turning only or are ending, and when there are multiple turn lanes. This should be done in such a way that drivers have sufficient time to change lanes if necessary.

These proposals should be used in planning all major transportation corridors and the adjacent development. On North Perryville Road, for example, McFarland Road will be used to provide access to the commercial properties fronting on Perryville while the connection of Rote Road between Perryville and Bell School Roads provides a local traffic circulation function as well as a through-traffic function.

Finally, streets and roads need to be viewed within the context of their surroundings, not simply as a means for cars and trucks to get from one place to another. This means balancing the need for additional traffic lanes on, for example, East State Street, against the long-term results of creating a sea of pavement through the middle of what is today a prime retail area. Put another way, in 20 or 30 years when retailers have moved on to other areas, how will the community view the 6-10 lanes of pavement that now constitute East State Street along with the acres of parking lots bordering it? It is the recommendation of this Plan that the City evaluate alternatives for softening the effects of such major streets through such things as parkways or boulevards, while at the same time determining what needs to be done to make areas such as The Strip as redevelopable as possible in the long term. At the same time, we would be wise to begin thinking about what the next means of individual transportation will be. After all, it has only been the last 50-60 years that the automobile has achieved supremacy. At some point in the future, it too will pass into history in favor of something newer and better.

Framework For Acquisition, Preservation and Protection of Future and Existing Right of Way

With the adoption of the new Subdivision Ordinance last year, the City took additional steps to ensure the construction and right of way dedication of the collector road system through the subdivision process. Planned arterial streets are more difficult to protect and a comprehensive approach must be applied, including the following: 1) dedication of right-of-way of County and Township roads when the adjacent subdivision plat is approved and recorded; 2) working with the Winnebago County Highway Department to preserve future right-of-ways through the County's "reserved right -of-way" powers; and 3) acquisition of property for sale along arterial streets planned for major improvements ie. widening from two to four lanes, providing right and/or left turn lanes.,etc. The combination of these three techniques will help ensure effective protection of planned rights-of-way.

Maintenance of Existing Transportation Components

Rockford has invested nearly \$300 million in rebuilding its infrastructure since 1982. This includes streets, bridges, and drainage and water systems. Since the mid 1980s, decisions on which capital improvements will be done have been governed by policies contained in the Capital Improvements Program. These policies contain criteria for financing projects as well as for selecting projects. As the Public Works Department completes development of a pavement management system, the information it generates can be added to the decision-making process in selecting projects each year. Since the CIP policies were last reviewed by City Council in 1986, the City should reevaluate them in light of developments over the last 15 years and of technological changes that allow for better information on which to base decisions.

In addition to roadways, other components of the existing transportation infrastructure that need to be maintained are the City's sidewalks, pathways and alleys. Currently, the City's policy is to share the responsibility for maintaining these less intensely used facilities with adjacent property owners. Sidewalks (and, potentially, pathways or bikeways) are maintained through a 50/50 program whereby adjacent property owners pay half of the reconstruction costs and the City pays the other half. Annually, the City budgets approximately \$150,000 to this program, allocating the funds on a first-come/first-serve basis. Related to this, the City

also allocates \$25,000 or more per year for the construction of ADA-approved wheelchair curb-cuts/ramps on the City's sidewalk system. Similarly, the City assists in the maintenance and rebuilding of alleys, with the City paying 70% if all of the owners along an alley agree to pay the remaining 30%. The City annually allocates \$50,000 for the alley program. The 2020 Plan recommends continuation of these sidewalk, pathway and alley maintenance programs. When financially possible, this Plan recommends increased spending in these programs. Recent sidewalk surveys have noted extensive segments of deteriorated sidewalks or sidewalk conditions that are troublesome for frail pedestrians or persons with disabilities. Those attending the public information meetings on the Draft 2020 Plan in 2002 repeatedly asked for the installation of sidewalks throughout Rockford but especially in areas linking with schools, bus routes and commercial destinations.

Streets and Highways: Performance Measures

New roadways are built and major roadway capacity improvements made for one of three reasons - to reduce or contain existing traffic congestion; to accommodate new development in order to avoid creating congestion; or to complete a missing link in our basic street and highway system.

A 1996 study sponsored by RATS evaluated the "Level of Service" provided by major roadways (collector level and higher) in the urban area. The method of computing "Level of Service" is based on the Transportation Research Board's 1994 Highway Capacity Manual. It combines detailed roadway statistics with subjective judgment and identifies six levels of service. The first three levels are generally considered to be "acceptable" and are often combined. The results of this analysis for the Rockford urban area are shown in the following table.

Table 9 below shows that approximately 115 new lane miles of major roadway (collector and above) were planned to be added to the area's roadway network between 1990 and 2015. If these improvements are made, levels of service will remain roughly the same with some slippage in the D and E categories but an improvement in the F category. Many of the proposed improvements were included in the Year 2000 Plan. The status of those proposals with respect to the 2020 Plan is listed following the table.

City of Rockford CIP Project Selection Policies	
1.	Contribute to an equitable distribution of service for facilities throughout the City.
2.	Encourage private capital investment, improving the City's tax base, and improving job opportunities.
3.	Benefit the greatest number of City residents.
4.	Eliminate conditions detrimental to the health, safety and general welfare of the community.
5.	Are cost effective in terms of capital outlay and probable operating costs.
6.	Are coordinated with other public or private projects. Priority goes to those projects that have the necessary funding available to do integrated work. Major projects should be

Table 9 Levels of Service in the Rockford Area					
Level of Service	Characteristics	Major Roadway Lane Miles - Rockford Area			
		1990 Traffic Network	Percent of Total	2020 Traffic Network	Percent of Total
A, B, C	Generally free flowing at high speeds, good vehicle spacing	1,185	94.9%	1,300	93.7%
D	Traffic flow and spacing become limited, speeds decline	23	1.8%	51	3.7%
E	Flow and spacing severely limited and speeds are slow	7	0.6%	23	1.7%
F	Stop and go traffic, no spacing between vehicles	33	2.6%	13	0.9%
Total		1,249	100.0%	1,387	100.0%

Status of major road improvements proposed in the Year 2000 Plan and the RATS Long Range Transportation Plan.

- ▶ ***I-39 between Rockford and Bloomington, Illinois*** Completed and experiencing traffic volumes beyond preconstruction forecasts.
- ▶ ***South Alpine Road from Linden to Samuleson Road*** Completed and in use.
- ▶ ***Seminary Street*** Extended south to Harrison Avenue; completed and in use.
- ▶ ***Harlem/Elmwood Bridge*** Completed and in use as a toll bridge.
- ▶ ***North Mulford Road*** Extended from Riverside Boulevard to Perryville Road; completed and in heavy use.
- ▶ ***Spring Creek Road*** Realignment from Reidfarm Road to Perryville Road; completed and in use.
- ▶ ***North Perryville Road*** Extended north from East State Street to Illinois Route 173; completed and in heavy use.
- ▶ ***Springfield/Harrison Connection*** Completed between South Main and West State Streets and in use, making it the most recently completed major link in Rockford's street system.
- ▶ ***South Central Avenue Connection*** Partially completed and continuous north of Ogilby Road; connection southward permanently blocked by creation of Klehm Arboretum.
- ▶ ***Highcrest Road*** Connection from Mohawk to Guilford Roads; project is uncompleted and of low priority, but retained in this Plan.
- ▶ ***The Woodruff Expressway*** This long-planned crosstown expressway was the subject of an extensive justification / feasibility study in recent years. However, active pursuance of the project was again rejected because of its high cost (over \$200 million), its disruptive influence on Rockford neighborhoods, and its less than convincing benefits compared to costs and alternatives. As a complete crosstown proposal, this project will not be actively pursued unless traffic conditions and funding situations change significantly. However, the easternmost segment of the proposal



warrants further consideration. Specifically, the segment between Harrison Avenue and Perryville Road that also connects with I-39 could pose a valuable means of collecting and disbursing growing traffic volumes in that region (see the Woodruff Spur, below).

- ▶ **Woodruff Spur** The interchange of US 20 with I-39 was designed, engineered and graded in anticipation of the future construction of a northward extension or spur that would traverse the half mile distance between the interchange and the proposed Woodruff Expressway alignment. This spur could be of value if it were constructed to the Woodruff alignment and extended eastward to Mulford Road which could be improved north to Harrison Avenue. Extension westward would also be beneficial, but more costly. Further investigation and evaluation of these alternatives is recommended as part of this 2020 Plan.
- ▶ **Additional I-90 Interchanges** The Year 2000 Plan recommended construction of a new I-90 interchange at Illinois 173. However, in the mid-1980s, Illinois 173's priority was interrupted by the opportunity to construct a new interchange at East Riverside Boulevard and I-90. Illinois 173 is reestablished, as part of this 2020 Plan, as the area's next priority interchange. High but second priority is recommended for another I-90 interchange in the vicinity of Town Hall Road in Boone County. Although both of these sites are well beyond the Rockford City Limits, these projects are of such regional significance to be noted in this Plan.
- ▶ **Madison/First Street Crossover north of Jefferson Street** This project was first planned in 1970 as a means of directing traffic from Madison Street, which ends just south of Grove Street, to First Street, enabling drivers to cross the proposed Woodruff Expressway south of east downtown and then connect to Seminary Street. This was before Haight Village was recognized as a historic district and as a residential neighborhood worth preserving. Consequently, although it is included in the RATS Long-Range Plan, this project is dropped from this 2020 Plan. It is considered too expensive and disruptive to be warranted given current and projected traffic volumes. As an alternative, the City (and RATS) should investigate the feasibility of a crossover from Second to Third Streets north of Jefferson, thereby diverting through traffic to Kishwaukee Street (IL-251) before it ever gets to Haight Village and making Third Street a two-way street as the arterial and Second Street as a two-way collector south of Whitman Street. This realignment would eliminate the major truck turning movements at S. Second / Walnut St. and at Kishwaukee St /First Ave for trucks following Ill. 251
- ▶ **Prospect Street/Fifth Avenue Crossover** Another project included in the RATS Plan but considered to be too disruptive and expensive is the proposed crossover that would link Prospect Street and Fifth Avenue to form the southeast segment of an inner loop. Construction of this project would bring with it a considerable cost, not just for construction but also for property acquisition and relocation, and in serious negative neighborhood impacts. For the project to have its optimum effect, North and South Prospect would have to be aligned, thereby eliminating the offset intersection at East State Street. The most likely means of doing this would be to shift South Prospect eastward, resulting in the demolition of nine or ten structures, many of them of historic quality. This project is not included in the 2020 Plan.
- ▶ **Realignment of Rockford/Welty at State Street** Similar to Prospect Street, this offset intersection greatly reduces through-movement capacity on State Street and contributes to congestion in that area. However, because of its expense and potential disruptiveness to nearby residential neighborhoods, the proposed project is not retained in this plan. A much less disruptive project would be to realign North and South Rockford Avenue with the actual intersection occurring between them. This alternative option is what is shown on the Plan map.
- ▶ **Alpine Road/State Street Intersection** The corner of State and Alpine has been a problem intersection for many, many years. How to improve it was a topic of serious discussion when the Year 2000 Plan was prepared. Because standard changes to the intersection - adding turn lanes, for example - are complicated by the presence of several businesses that would have to be moved and a cemetery, RATS came to the conclusion that the only way to really resolve the problems at this intersection would be to build an interchange instead. This first appeared in their 1996 Long-Range Transportation Plan.



The project is retained in this 2020 Plan but is assigned low priority until such time traffic conditions absolutely dictate implementation and all less disruptive alternatives have been exhausted.

One major change from the original Year 2000 Plan map was the location of the newest interchange on I-90 in Winnebago County. While the Plan proposed a new interchange at Illinois 173, one was actually built at East Riverside Boulevard instead, resulting in major land use changes along the East Riverside corridor. This serves as a prime example of the impact a transportation project can have on its surroundings - what had been planned as primarily residential has become a major commercial and office center for both Rockford and Loves Park.

Three other major projects being considered by RATS that could impact the City of Rockford in the future are:

- ▶ **Northwest ByPass** Recently, RATS was assigned the task of determining the need and feasibility of a major new roadway in the northwest and north part of the urban area that would function as an outer ring road, similar to how US 20 functions on the south side of Rockford. This work has not yet reached the stage where definitive recommendations can be made, but there appears to be substantial logic supporting the need for such a facility. It is likely that this northwest territory will become a prime growth area for Rockford in the next 10-30 years. Areas on the east are fast filling in and the northwest area is becoming more and more attractive, especially if public sewer, water and adequate transportation facilities are provided. A western terminus for the project has not been determined yet. While early discussions have centered around Winnebago Road, Rockford's Department of Public Works recommends that it be at Meridian Road. The rationale behind this is that Meridian Road is closer into the urban center that a west side bypass would be intended to serve. To the north the facility is likely to fall somewhere between or coincide with Latham or Roscoe Roads. Ideally, from a circulation and continuity standpoint, the facility would cross the Rock River and extend eastward to intersect with I-90. However, this eastward segment may be impossible due to existing development, in which case the facility might terminate at North Second Street. The 2020 Plan recommends continued consideration of this concept.

- ▶ **Illinois 2** Throughout Rockford and in developing areas both north and south, Illinois 2 serves as a major facility for north-south movements west of the Rock River. IDOT currently has plans or is developing plans to improve several segments of this roadway. Most notable is the stretch north of Elmwood Road, all the way to Roscoe. Current plans are to expand this roadway from 2 lanes to 4 lanes. The 2020 Plan endorses this project. However, it is equally important to evaluate the role of Illinois 2 as it traverses highly developed portions of Rockford, including its downtown. If the role of the marked route (as opposed to plain Main Street) is to facilitate the movement of through traffic, then the traveling public might be better served if this designation as a State route were to be moved to other roadways, possibly to Riverside Boulevard and Springfield Avenue, then south along the Springfield-Harrison extension. Obviously, the section of Springfield that is owned by IDOT would need to be improved to accommodate truck movements. This would help reroute truck traffic around sensitive neighborhoods, including the downtown area. This would also be a short-term measure to accommodate traffic until such time as the proposed Northwest ByPass can be built. Another state route that could help facilitate truck traffic is IL 251. The City is conducting a feasibility study in order to facilitate a two-way realignment of IL 251 between the Whitman Street interchange and Walnut Street that would greatly improve truck movement within the downtown area. It is the recommendation of this plan that RATS and IDOT seriously consider such a change before making any significant changes to Main Street north of US 20. Also, the potential of restoring IL-2 as a two-way street through the downtown should be considered in conjunction with the State Route bypass (Harrison/Springfield/West Riverside).

- ▶ **West State Street/Business US 20** RATS and a consultant have completed the evaluation of West State Street from just west of downtown to Meridian Road. This study provides a framework for the physical and functional enhancement of the West State Street Corridor. The objective of the study is to illustrate unified corridor enhancement strategies and policies in order to guide new development, redevelopment, improvement of existing businesses and beautification of public rights-of-way. From the Study, a conceptual plan was developed with recommendations and cost estimates for corridor improvements, including roadway improvements, driveway consolidation, landscaping and signage treatments, natural buffer areas, lighting, and a potential bike path



alignment. Because the State of Illinois has programmed major roadway improvements for this corridor in its five-year plan, this Study was being carried out as a coordinated effort involving the State, the City of Rockford, and Winnebago County. The recommendations of this planning effort, the West State Street Framework Plan, have been incorporated into the 2020 Land Use and Transportation Plan Maps.

Additional proposed streets and roadways are shown on the maps that accompany this Plan. These include everything from freeways, such as the I-39 extension, to local streets. For a complete listing of proposed streets, see Table 10 beginning on the following page.

New Minor Roadway Components

New roadway components below the arterial level are considered separately for obvious reasons but mostly because of the way in which such roadways are funded and built. Local streets and collector roadways are primarily created by the private sector as part of the land development process. They are then turned over (dedicated) to the public sector for future control and maintenance. Public control over these roadways has four major components, all of which are specified in the land development or land subdivision process - spacing, construction standards, access control, frontage and setbacks, and funding.

- ▶ **Spacing of local streets is simple.** Under the City's Subdivision Ordinance, all properties must have access to a public street. This is generally accomplished by the developer's building a local street (which all properties have access to) which is then connected to an existing street. Spacing of collector streets is set by the long-standing local policy that the publicly-provided arterial streets are, on the average, set one mile apart with at least one privately provided collector street half way between each arterial.
- ▶ **Construction standards** are also part of the City's subdivision and development codes. Typical local streets have a minimum 60-foot right-of-way, 30-foot paved area; include curbs, gutters and storm sewers; and are paved to accommodate the vehicle weights of automobile and light truck traffic. Collector streets have a minimum right-of-way of 66 feet, 30 feet of paved area, and other standards similar to local streets. In commercial and industrial areas and areas where heavier vehicles are frequent, the construction standards are greater.
- ▶ **Access** is very loosely controlled on local streets. Reverse frontage has sometimes been required on collector streets, but the extra cost of this has not been well received by local developers. Setbacks are typically half the right-of-way width, and minimum width of lots at the front setback line is usually 60-70 feet. Minimum lot sizes are also set.
- ▶ **Funding** of local and collector streets is the developer's expense with the exception of bridges and other attributes that are beyond the norm.

Table 10

PROPOSED STREETS AND ROADWAYS

MAP #	LOCATION
Freeways	
22, 31	Extend I-39 north to the Union Pacific RR
22	Construct new freeway from the I-39 extension east along the Union Pacific RR to South Perryville Road
New Interchanges	
19	Replace the at-grade intersection of East State Street and Alpine Road with an interchange
19, 23	Replace the at-grade intersection at 5 Points with an interchange
Arterial Streets and Roadways	
2, 3	Connect Owen Center Road to North Main Street, ± 1 mile south of Latham Road
4	Extend Elmwood Road west to Kilburn Avenue
6	Connect Bauer Parkway to Elmwood Road west of North Main Street
9, 10	Extend North Lyford Road north from Spring Creek Road to East Riverside Boulevard
10	Extend Perry Creek Parkway east to North Bell School Road
17A/18A	Construct Chestnut Street crossover from West State Street to existing Chestnut Street in conjunction with the Winnebago County Criminal Justice Center
19	Construct a connection between Highcrest Road and Guilford Road
33, 34	Extend Falcon Road west from Belt Line Road to Kishwaukee Road, providing a connection around the Airport
I-6*	Modify the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Montague Road to form a T intersection
I-9	Construct Jefferson Street crossover at West State Street
Collector Streets and Roadways	
2, 3	Connect Owen Center Road to North Main Street north of Elmwood Road
4	Construct a new roadway to connect Porter Road and Clikeman Road
5	Connect Lost Trail to Toulon Drive
9, 10	Reconfigure North Bell School Road north of Spring Brook Road so that it connects to Riverside Boulevard and aligns with Harvey Road to the north
10	Extend McFarland Road south to Rote Road
11	Extend Shaw Woods Road south to Guilford Road
13	Extend Eddy Avenue west to Huffman Boulevard
15	Extend Mila Avenue from North Memorial Boulevard to North Meridian Road
15	Extend North Memorial Boulevard from Doris Avenue to Safford Road
15, 16	Extend North Memorial Boulevard from West State Street to School Street
18	Construct crossover at State Street between North and South Rockford Avenues
19	Connect Easton Parkway to the Rockford College Entrance at East State Street
20	Connect Orchard Avenue to Laurel Cherry Drive
20	Extend North Trainer Road north to Guilford Road at Shiloh Road
21	Connect the pieces of Walton Street (parts of which were formerly called Tower Drive)
21	Construct a set of collector streets south of East State Street east of Showplace Drive
22	Connect the pieces of Arnold Avenue between Charles Street and Harrison Avenue
25	Connect Sauk Lane to West Harrison Avenue extended and to Prairie Avenue extended
29	Extend Lookout Drive west to 11th Street
30	Extend Houston Road north to Scarlet Oak Drive/Linden Road
30	Extend Maywood Drive from Golden Prairie Avenue to Blackhawk Road
30	Construct a series of collectors tying together Linden Road, Samuelson Road and Antelope Drive
30	Extend South Alpine Road south of Samuelson Road to 35th Street

Collector Streets and Roadways (continued)

- I-3 Connect Reed Avenue to American Road; connect O'Connell Street to Balsam Lane
- I-5 Connect Halsted Road to Safford Road
- I-5 Construct new portions of Penn Road from Kilburn Avenue to Searls Ave
- I-7 Connect Webster Avenue between North Springfield and North Pierpont Avenues

Local Streets

- 7 Connect Tatum Road to North Alpine Road at Innsbruck Drive
- 8 Connect two portions of Hermitage Trail together
- 9 Extend Glen Drive east to the new North Bell School Road with the new street extending north from this to East Riverside Boulevard 1/4 mile east of McFarland Road
- 17A/18A Cul-de-sac South Third Street on both sides of the UP RR bridge (south side of Haight Village)
- 20 Construct a series of local streets in the area bounded by Mulford Road, Fincham Drive, Stony Creek Way and Newburg Road
- 21 Extend McIntosh west to North Lyford Road
- 22 Extend Sockness Drive west to complete the loop with International Drive
- 24 Connect Johnson Avenue to Rexford Drive
- 24 Extend Marshall Street south to Sandy Hollow Road
- 30 Connect Big Foot Trail to Antelope Drive
- 30 Connect the two parts of Lund Avenue
- I-1 Connect Conrad Avenue between South Phelps Avenue and South Mulford Road; connect Orchard Avenue to Laurel Cherry Drive; construct 2 new north-south streets in the area bounded by Newburg and South Mulford Roads, Alma Drive and South Phelps Avenue
- I-2 Construct a series of local streets in the southeast quadrant of North Alpine Road, East Riverside Boulevard
- I-3 Extend local street from Wintergreen Drive north to new Laude Drive/American Road collector
- I-4 Construct a series of local streets in the area bounded by West State Street, North Pierpont Avenue, Auburn Street and North Springfield Avenue
- I-5 Construct a series of local streets in the area south of West Riverside Boulevard on either side of North Central Avenue
- I-6 Construct a series of local streets in the area east of South Pierpont Avenue and north of Ogilby Road
- I-8 Extend Liberty Street west to Daisyfield Road; construct new streets in area bounded by Daisyfield Road, Liberty Street, South Springfield Avenue and West State Street
- I-9 Connect Leather Court to Hess Court and extend northward, ending in a cul-de-sac
- I-9 Connect the Leather Court extension to Underwood Street south of Hess Court
- I-9 Reconfigure the Ogden Avenue/Mulberry Street intersection so it no longer intersects with West Jefferson Street
- I-9 Construct a new street from the west end of Acorn Street north to School Street
- I-9 Eliminate Tanner Court; Maple Street west of Kilburn Avenue; Lee Street north of Maple Street

* Map numbers beginning with an I are Infill Area maps found in Appendix C.

While the existing framework for creating new local and collector streets works well in most cases, a number of problems or concerns have been voiced in recent years. The 2020 Plan does not have a solution to these situations, but they are posed here for further study and consideration.

- ▶ As was noted earlier, street projects do not exist in a vacuum. Streets have the potential for significant impacts, good and bad, on adjacent land uses. It is becoming increasingly apparent that moving people (and goods) from point to point as efficiently as possible is not the only concern. Equally important is how to get them there safely and with as little adverse impact on the community as possible. As noted above, residents along many collector and local streets frequently complain regarding the volume and speed of the motoring traffic. Unnecessary through-traffic movements need to be discouraged from local streets. Collector-level streets that traverse residential areas need special design considerations that will give the residents along those streets the same levels of safety and, if possible, privacy that exists along local streets. These considerations can include using traffic calming measures, requiring larger front yard setbacks for homes along collector streets, and/or requiring more intense landscaping along collectors within residential neighborhoods. All

need to be evaluated for their effectiveness in meeting the needs of Rockford residents.

- ▶ Some members of the planning/engineering community, locally and nationwide, have voiced concerns that many local street standards have been set too high, thereby causing unnecessary construction and maintenance expense and a waste of land resources. Conversely, there are arguments that collector street design standards are too low, thereby inherently causing the complaints from residents noted above. Rockford's standards for local streets should be reevaluated in light of information contained in the recently released third edition of Residential Streets, jointly published by the Urban Land Institute, the National Association of Home Builders, the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Institute of Transportation Engineers.
- ▶ The abandonment of the rather boring but functional grid pattern arrangement for local streets has fostered problems of roadway continuity. Extra effort should be devoted, as part of the land development/subdivision process to ensure that collector roads are both continuous and logically laid out so that unfamiliar travelers can make their way easily through subdivisions without becoming lost.
- ▶ The practice of requiring land developers to construct and dedicate collectors is troubled by the fact that these roadways often serve more than one development creating disputes over equitable cost sharing.
- ▶ More troublesome is the timely completion of missing collector links. A collector does not function as a real collector until all links are constructed and it becomes continuous. In the meantime, persons living along such discontinuous collectors begin to perceive them as local streets. In turn, completion of the final missing links is often thwarted by public opposition.
- ▶ Another significant problem that has intensified over the last two decades result from the internal circulation arrangements (for both motorists and pedestrians) within major strip commercial areas. The best example is the East State Street Strip between Alpine Road and the I-90 Tollway. Internal circulation within this strip is haphazard, at best. Important collector links are missing. Local circulation and/or frontage roads are discontinuous and/or poorly defined or missing altogether. Travel between abutting businesses or parking areas is often blocked by physical barriers. The result is inconvenience for shoppers and traffic congestion on the arterials because motorists are forced back onto the arterials to access adjacent or nearby businesses. Equally troublesome is the distinct lack of sidewalks and other accommodations for pedestrians in this auto-oriented area.
- ▶ In 1995-96, a planning effort was initiated by the Rockford Gateway Association to address some of these situations in the State Street corridor. This Plan recognizes that effort and recommends implementing those proposals. (See page 124.)

In conclusion, with regard to streets and roadways, especially those major facilities (collectors and above) that are designed primarily for motorized traffic, this Plan emphasizes the increasing need to recognize these facilities within the context of their surroundings, not just as conduits for cars and trucks. Unlike other conduits, i.e., storm or sanitary sewers, roadways do not fully contain the materials that flow through them. The noise, pollution and hazards created by the cars and trucks spill openly, and often harshly, onto the adjacent land uses. It is not good enough just to provide access to a land use, especially if the means of access degrades the land use itself. We must begin to view roadways the same as we view sanitary sewers and water mains. Just as we are intolerant of leaks of effluent or water, we must begin to correct for the leaks of noise, pollution and hazards from our roadways. It is the recommendation of this Plan that the City constantly seek, evaluate and, where feasible, implement alternatives that will eliminate or, at least, soften the adverse effects of major roadways on surrounding uses. In doing this, we need to find a way to balance the critical role of roadways to the economy and our community in general while limiting any negative impacts they may have.

Sidewalks, Bikeways and Pathways

Everyone becomes a pedestrian at some point every day, whether it's to walk from their car to their office or a store, between bus stops and their home and place of employment, or along neighborhood sidewalks for an evening stroll. Everyone who leaves their home has to walk or wheelchair for at least a short distance at some point during the day. For that reason, how we provide for pedestrians is of critical importance. How we accommodate and plan for the needs of pedestrians, as well as other non-motorized means of transportation, should be viewed as being of equal importance as how we accommodate and plan for automotive traffic.

The goal of this portion of the Plan is to define ways in which Rockford can strive to make walking trips in Rockford accessible, convenient, safe and enjoyable. Basic policies to be followed include:

- ▶ Providing a physical environment that encourages walking and that through its location, design and maintenance provides convenient, accessible, safe and enjoyable pedestrian travel. This physical environment should take into account how the land use pattern, street pattern and site design impact pedestrian travel.
- ▶ Developing and implementing in conjunction with the Rockford Park District and the Rockford School District education programs that improve pedestrian safety and promote awareness of pedestrian transportation issues and the benefits of walking.
- ▶ Encouraging the perception of streets as community space, not just the domain of motorized vehicles.
- ▶ Encouraging good design to enhance the feel and look of the pedestrian environment. The pedestrian environment includes open spaces such as plazas and courtyards, as well as the building facades that give shape to the street. Amenities such as street furniture, banners, art, plantings and special paving, along with historical elements and cultural references, should promote a sense of place.
- ▶ Enforcing laws and regulations guiding the interaction between pedestrians and motorists. This could extend to installing cameras at problem intersections to catch drivers running red lights or committing other infractions that endanger pedestrians.



To accomplish all of the above, this Plan endorses and encourages pedestrian and non-motorized means of transportation and the continued development and expansion of the City's system of sidewalks, bikeways and pathways. This pedestrian system has great value. It reduces trip demand on our highway and bus systems. It provides a means of wholesome exercise for the general citizenry. It has significant recreational/leisure value. It provides a means of safe transportation for children and adults alike who are disenfranchised from the automobile-oriented system. It is pollution-free. It contributes to overall aesthetics, appearance and livability of the community. This Plan endorses the sidewalk, bikeway and pathway plans and recommendations of the RATS Long-Range Plan. It also endorses taking the following concrete steps to ensure the presence of a complete pedestrian system:

- ▶ Severely limiting waivers for sidewalk construction in the development process to extreme cases only, such as a small cul-de-sac with just three houses on it.
- ▶ Completing a comprehensive survey of the City's sidewalk system to determine where the gaps are as a preliminary step to preparing a CIP for sidewalks. Initial attention should be paid to arterial and collector level streets ; to public streets in the areas surrounding public and private schools; and to enable people who ride the bus to get to their bus stop safely. Once, the survey is complete, missing sidewalk segments should be prioritized according to these three objectives, and added to the CIP bond program.

Table 11

EXISTING & PROPOSED PATHWAYS

MAP #	LOCATION
Existing Pathways	
6	Along the west bank of the Rock River from Harlem Road to West Riverside Boulevard, then across the bridge to Martin Park in Loves Park
8, 10, 11, 20	Along North Perryville Road from East Riverside Boulevard to Colosseum Drive, then west to the Perryville Path loop
11	Along Reidfarm Road from Spring Creek Road to Sentinel Road
13, 14, 18	Bicentennial Recreation Path along the east side of the Rock River from the YMCA into Loves Park
14, 15	Mel Anderson Recreation Path from Safford Road to Talcott-Page Memorial Park, traversing Searls Memorial Park and the Kent Creek floodway
17A/18A	Along the west bank of the Rock River from Davis Park to Jefferson Street, then under the Jefferson Street bridge to the Riverview Ice House
20	Perryville Path loop south to Guilford Road, just west of the Rockford Museum Center, with extension south to Garrett Lane, then east along Garrett Lane to the west side of Perryville Road, then south along Perryville Road to Argus Drive
22, 23	Along the south side of Charles Street from Forest View Avenue to Bluebell Trail
41,42	Pecatonica Prairie Path west from Meridian Road
Proposed Pathways	
4	Parallel the proposed collector street connecting Porter and Clikeman Roads
4, 15	Extend the Mel Anderson Recreation Path westward from Safford Road to Meridian Road, traversing Lockwood Park and Anna Page Conservation Forest
4	Construct path within Anna Page Conservation Forest to connect the two preceding pathways
6	From Boylan High School to the existing pathway along the Rock River, traversing the rear portion of the Singer Mental Health and Development Center property and the River Bluff Nursing Home property
6	Along Bauer Parkway from North Main Street east to Northrock Drive
6	On the west side of the Rock River from Halsted Road to West Riverside Boulevard
6, 13, 14	Connect the Mel Anderson Recreation Path to the Rock River Path, following railroad right-of-way to West Riverside Boulevard
9, 10, 21	In the ComEd right-of-way just west of Paulson Road from East Riverside Boulevard to East State Street
10	From North Perryville Road east along Rote Road extended to North Bell School Road, then southwest to Guilford Road midway between Perryville and Bell School Roads
12, 13	Along Spring Creek Road from the Rock River to Spring Brook Road
14	Extend the Mel Anderson Recreation Path south from Talcott-Page Memorial Park to the Union Pacific RR
14	Bisect Summerdale Park
16	Along West State Street from Laclede Avenue across Meridian Road
16	Along South Memorial Avenue from Claremont Street to the south end of Memorial Avenue, then across Ingersoll Memorial Park and Golf Course to Dennis School
16	Connect pathways along Cunningham Road and West State Street via Park-Er-Woods Park
16, 17	Along South Pierpont Avenue from Cunningham Road to Levings Park, south to Montague Road, east across the north side of Klehm Arboretum to South Main Street, south to West Harrison Avenue, east to the Rock River
16, 17, I-8, I-9	Along West State Street from Meridian Road to Kent Creek
16-18, 22-24	Along railroad right-of-way north of Cunningham Road from Meridian Road to South Mulford Road
17, 18	Extensions from the preceding path south to Levings Park; south to Tinker Street; south to Morgan Street, then across to the east side of the Rock River, with extension into Blackhawk Park
18, 25, 28, 34	Along the east side of the Rock River, from the Union Pacific RR south to the Kishwaukee River
19	From Hunter Avenue just north of Charles Street through Twin Sisters Park to Dahlquist Park
19	From the east end of 9th Avenue at East High School across Charles Street and north to Wind Point Drive
19, 20	From the west end of Strathmoor Drive, west across the Rockford College campus into Aldeen Park
19, 20	From South Alpine Road through Alpine Park east to the east side of the Gregory School site
19, 23	Extension from the preceding pathway south through Alpine Park to Forest View Avenue
21	Along North Perryville Road from Garrett Lane to Argus Drive, then east to Bell School Road, then south to Walton Street, then east along East State Street to Lyford Road
22	South side of Charles Street from Bluebell Trail east to Rockford's Planning Area limit
29, 33, 38	From Riverdahl School south along the railroad right-of-way to Kilbuck Forest Preserve
32, 33, 34	Along the north bank of the Kishwaukee River from the Rock River to I-39

- ▶ Consider reconstructing or constructing sidewalks at the same time the adjacent street is rebuilt or resurfaced, especially when the sidewalk would be beneficial to meeting these three objectives.
- ▶ Reevaluate how the City's 50/50 Program works.

In addition to streets and roads, the 2020 Plan map shows an extensive system of existing and proposed pathways. (See listing in Table 11.) These are all termed Class I facilities, i.e., pathways where the facilities are completely separated from motor vehicle traffic lanes. They are designed for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with as little crossflow with motorized traffic as possible. These Class I pathways represent the greatest difference between this plan map and the original Year 2000 Plan map. When the Year 2000 Plan was adopted in 1980, the only existing pathway was the Bicentennial Recreation Path along the east bank of the Rock River just north of downtown and the Pecatonica Prairie Path. Since then, eight additional pathways have been constructed.

Bicycle system planning has been a part of the Rockford Area Transportation Study for the past 20+ years. The Rockford area has chosen the "separate pathway" system of providing for mixed bicycle/pedestrian/rollerblade traffic with, when the Plan is fully implemented, paved trails that will 1) parallel the Rock River north and south; 2) radiate from the downtown in several directions; 3) form a grid to connect with other trails; and 4) link with the Grand Illinois Trail System. (The design of these trails is regulated by the state and federal governments and must meet strict standards because they are often constructed using state and federal funds.) These trails would be supplemented by the local residential street system to provide a high level of service overall. The overall system, however, is only about 20% complete, with some portions of the community having excellent access to major trail segments and other parts of the community having no safe access except by automobile.

Because the Rockford area chose the separate pathway system, however, the arterial street system is not designed to safely accommodate bicycle traffic. The higher the traffic volume and traffic speed, the more difficult it is for bicyclists to safely use the arterial system because there are no bike lanes or extra-wide lane widths to accommodate cyclists on the arterial system. The same is generally true of the collector street system, with a few exceptions such as Spring Brook Road which has paved shoulders and no parking or passing.

The City of Rockford and the Rockford Area Transportation Study have incorporated pathway planning into corridor planning and brownfield redevelopment planning. Both the West State Street Corridor Study and the South Main Street Corridor Study have included separate pathways in their proposed designs. The Concept Plan for Barber Colman Village includes a pathway along the Rock River and Kent Creek, linking with the proposed Davis-Pec Path. Although these pathways are several years from being completed, our Pathway Plan did result in the pathway connection on Bauer Parkway, including the bridge across the Rock River.

The 2020 Plan identifies both the existing and proposed pathways which together comprise the Pathway Plan for the City of Rockford. The Rockford Area Transportation Study includes a much larger area and extends this pathway plan to surrounding areas.

The **key performance measures** for these non-motorized transportation facilities are as follows:

- ▶ Sidewalk miles, bikeway miles, and pathway miles
- ▶ Arterial Street sidewalk miles, Arterial Streets without sidewalk (miles)
- ▶ Collector Level street sidewalk miles, Collector Level Street without sidewalk (miles)
- ▶ Local Street sidewalk miles, Local Streets without sidewalk (miles)

Public Mass Transportation

Public mass transportation is provided in the City of Rockford and vicinity by the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD). By its mission statement, "RMTD is dedicated to providing safe, efficient, affordable, dependable and accessible transportation to the people of Rockford and the surrounding area."

RMTD has been in operation since the early 1970s under a charter granted in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois. It is governed by a three-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Mayor of Rockford.



Currently, RMTD maintains a fleet of 35-40 full-sized buses, 27 of which are in operation during peak hour over a regularly scheduled fixed route system extending throughout Rockford and surrounding areas. This includes contractual service to Loves Park and Machesney Park. Service extends north to West Lane Road, east as far as Showplace 16, south as far as Jefferson High School and the Greater Rockford Airport, and west as far as Farm & Fleet. RMTD also operates a fleet of 15-25 smaller paratransit vehicles, using them to provide demand/response, door-to-door or curb-to-curb service for people with disabilities. All told, RMTD provides over 1.5 million passenger trips annually with a staff of 107 employees, 54 of whom operate fixed-route buses.

RMTD implemented a new route system in March of 2004. Standard-fixed route service (Monday through Friday) runs from 5:15 AM through 6:45 PM on 15 routes throughout the Rockford area. During that time, the buses do not exceed one-hour headways (the time between buses at the same spot on a route). During morning and evening peak ridership times, headways are reduced to a half hour on many routes. By contractual agreement, RMTD operates three standard routes through Loves Park and Machesney Park., two of which continue into Rockford .

Of the 15 total routes, 12 operate from the downtown transfer center while 3 serve outlying areas and do not come to downtown Rockford. These three "external routes" serve the following areas:

- ▶ The State Street Circulator covers East State from K-Mart to Showplace 16;
- ▶ The Alpine Crosstown covers Alpine Road from IL-173 (West Lane Road) to RVC-Jefferson High School (Samuelson Road); and
- ▶ The Loves Park Route travels North Second Street and surrounding neighborhoods from Landstrom Road to IL-173.

This new route system offers several points where two or more routes connect in outlying areas while still retaining the radial pulse system from the downtown transfer center.

Transit service is irreplaceable for the area's transit dependant population, i.e., the financially poor, elderly citizens, citizens with disabilities, those too young to have a drivers licence, people who have lost their drivers license, and countless others who are disenfranchised from the auto-oriented system because they cannot drive, cannot safely drive, do not like to drive or do not have access to an automobile. Disruption of public transit service would create tremendous hardship for these individuals and would result in loss of jobs, health care and other rippling effects throughout the community. Continuation of reliable, safe public transit is extremely important to the overall welfare of the community.

Recent modifications of welfare law have made mass transit even more important. Welfare reductions forced hundreds of people to seek independent means of support. Most were transit dependent when they were on welfare. The automobile-oriented transportation system was beyond their means or abilities. As they left welfare and began to acquire gainful employment, they became even more dependent on public transit for access to jobs.

The recent major changes to the RMTD route structure were made after an intensive review by a consultant and with the needs of the transit-dependent population in mind. The performance of the new route system should be closely monitored and evaluated. Other possibilities and/or needs for service expansion are likely to develop as the community grows and changes. Although some items are more important than others, implementation should proceed where opportunities arise or where public and financial support can best be rallied.

As with all public services the primary obstacle to such expansions is funding. RMTD should be constantly on the look out for additional revenue sources. Further, this Plan recommends that the City of Rockford continue to be as financially-supportive of public transit to the fullest extent possible. To the extent that funding support can be obtained sufficient for sustained implementation, this Plan recommends the following:

- ▶ *New Route System.* The performance of the expanded route system should be closely monitored and evaluated for possible adjustments. This expanded system should be considered a major step forward in serving the transit-dependent

population.

- ▶ **Night Service.** Night service is essential to aiding people as they become part of the work force. Second or third shift hours often represent the primary opportunities for new jobs. RMTD started limited night service in January 2001, but expansion to this beyond 11:45 may still be needed and should be explored.
- ▶ **Day Care Facility.** A serious obstacle for parents who are seeking jobs is finding competent and conveniently located care for their children or other dependents. The situation is even more difficult for those who are transit dependent. With the current 30-60 minutes bus headways, taking a young child to a care facility by bus requires that the person get off the bus, drop off the child and then wait 30-60 minutes for the next bus. On return, they encounter another 30-60 minute wait. To remedy this situation, RMTD has proposed construction of a care facility in close proximity to the downtown transfer center. All buses lay over at the transfer center for 5-10 minutes. With this arrangement, parents will be able to drop off their children and return to the bus without having to wait for the next bus run.
- ▶ **Classroom/Training Facility.** While there is no shortage of classroom or training facilities in the Urban Area, there is a distinct lack of such facilities in close proximity to the most transit-accessible point in Rockford, the Downtown Transfer Center. RMTD, in cooperation with several of the area's social service agencies, proposes to construct a small classroom/training room/meeting facility adjacent to the Transfer Center. The current proposal is for the training facility to share the same building with the Day Care Facility, proposed above.
- ▶ **Shorter Headways.** For all bus patrons, whether they be regular frequent riders or just occasional users, a long wait time at the bus stop is a serious inconvenience - more so in winter or during other periods of inclement weather. Miss a bus by 30 seconds. . . and the bus patron has a minimum of a half-hour wait for the next bus, often an hour wait, and sometimes longer. For the transit patron whose personal schedule does not coincide with the bus schedule, the current bus headways can necessitate arriving at a destination a half-hour or more earlier than desired, returning a half-hour or more later, or both. Making multi-stop trips by bus can be extremely time consuming. To the extent possible, RMTD should strive to reduce bus headway times.
- ▶ **Link to Chicago/Metra.** Community interest in establishing a commuter rail link between the Rockford Urban Area and the Chicago Urban Area has been rekindled in recent months. RMTD's role in such a link is uncertain at this time but could range from a highly active leadership role to one of simply providing bus links to the rail terminals. RMTD has been engaged in preliminary discussions with Chicago's Metra and should continue exploring options and feasibilities.
- ▶ **Regional Maintenance Center.** At the request and with financial assistance from IDOT, RMTD has initiated a paratransit vehicle regional maintenance program for all agencies operating publicly-provided paratransit vehicles in northwestern Illinois. This program was conceived because competent cost-effective maintenance services for these unique and, sometimes, difficult to repair vehicles, was hard to find. In assuming this role, RMTD adds to its capabilities of maintaining its own vehicles, and helps reduce overall paratransit costs statewide. By making paratransit maintenance more efficient, RMTD helps to extend the State's limited paratransit funding resources - resources that RMTD taps on a regular basis for operating and capital equipment assistance. RMTD should continue, periodically evaluate, and appropriately nurture this new program to ensure cost-effective vehicle maintenance and operation, and maximum vehicle life.

Public Transit and Congestion Management

The term "Congestion Management" has a specific meaning defined by federal law. Coined first in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and reinforced by the successor to ISTEA, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, TEA-21, Congestion Management refers to planning processes, programs, and specific measures which, when taken together as a system, are applied to the problems of measuring, monitoring, and reducing or minimizing motor vehicle congestion on our roads and highways.

To qualify for federal funding assistance for transportation improvements, the states and large communities such as the Rockford Metro Area, must have a Congestion Management System (CMS) developed in accordance with Federal guidance and included and approved by the Federally-required Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which in this area is the Rockford Area Transportation Study (RATS).

A CMS has been developed and approved by RATS and was recently reinforced in the RATS Long-Range Transportation Plan. The 2020 Plan supports the activities and strategies recommended by RATS to monitor and manage vehicular congestion. Among the strategies identified as related to public transit, that this Plan supports are the following:

- ▶ By-pass ramps and turnouts for bus stop/passenger boardings and deboardings to improve traffic at bus stops and increase safety for drivers and passengers.
- ▶ Vehicle upgrades that would take advantage of technological advances and improvements such as GPS and bus surveillance systems.
- ▶ Vehicle Management Systems to strengthen RMTD's already strong maintenance program.
- ▶ Park and Ride Lots may become important as RMTD expands its service to outlying communities.
- ▶ Signal preemption would give buses the ability to override signal timing (extending green time) which can be helpful in heavy traffic corridors where maintaining time points is difficult. In corridors without bus turnouts, signal preemption could also decrease congestion by allowing buses to flow more freely and not block traffic. The City should explore this concept wherever major signal upgrades are considered.

The **key performance measures for mass transit** are as follows:

- ▶ Route miles: system, annual , weekly
- ▶ Passenger miles: annual, daily
- ▶ Passengers: daily, annual
- ▶ Fairbox Revenues: daily, annual
- ▶ Fairbox revenues as a percentage of operating expences: annual
- ▶ The key performance measures for individual routes are similar:
- ▶ Route miles: daily, weekly, annual
- ▶ Passenger miles: daily, weekly, annually
- ▶ Passengers: daily ,weekly annual
- ▶ Farebox revenues: daily,, weekly, annual
- ▶ Farebox revenues as a percentage of operatin expenses: daily, weekly, annually

Greater Rockford Airport

As the 23th busiest airport in the country for freight traffic, the Greater Rockford Airport (GRA) clearly plays a key role in the community's economy. What that role should be in the future is being determined now as the City works to find ways to expand the Airport's role into the realm of passenger service. The GRA has the capability of boarding almost a million passengers a year, with a modern terminal facility, ample parking and a highway system that serves the Airport. After several years of marketing efforts, GRA now has non-stop service to Orlando and Las Vegas. Efforts are being made to expand service beyond this foundation.

The City of Rockford, in conjunction with the four other jurisdictions who appoint members to the GRA Authority's Board, the Chamber of Commerce and members of the local business community, need to continue to work together to raise the profile of the GRA in Washington, in Springfield and in the corporate offices of airlines throughout the country. It is only through such concerted efforts that we will draw additional passenger service back to the GRA. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the critical role that freight plays at the Airport, and in Rockford's economy. We need to continue to evaluate how we can capitalize on the location and infrastructure already in place to build on the freight traffic already going through GRA. With continuing congestion problems at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, the GRA has great potential to continue to grow as the freight logistics hub of the Midwest. To accomplish this, we need to determine what we and/or the GRA can do to strengthen the Airport's position as a freight terminal.



And finally, we need to investigate the possibilities of converting the airport into a “travelport” — a transportation hub where

travelers can choose from a variety of transportation modes — air, rail or automotive. As a component of this, the high speed rail service between Rockford's Airport and O'Hare should be reevaluated if and when discussions concerning capacity at O'Hare and a Third Chicago Airport become major discussions again.

Passenger Rail Service

Rockford's last regularly scheduled passenger rail service, Amtrak, ended operations here over 20 years ago. Several attempts have been made since then to reintroduce passenger service to Rockford, none of them successful. In the last few years, these efforts have gained momentum as efforts have been made to convince METRA to expand its commuter service to Rockford while at the same time exploring the possibilities of bringing high speed rail service to the community. Either approach will enable us not only to provide a convenient way to travel to and from Chicago, but will also allow us to market Rockford to existing and potential employers and employees in a way that we have not been able to in the past. Because of this, efforts to bring either METRA or some other form of passenger rail service to Rockford need to continue unabated until we succeed in bringing service here. A feasibility study funded through RATS will soon be underway.

When rail service does return to Rockford, we must be sure to plan how it will enter and traverse the community so that we don't create new problems as we solve an old one. This means careful planning along the corridor the service will take and, most importantly, of any new stations that may be created. Properly planned, such stations can play an important economic development role for the area that surrounds them; improperly planned, they can cause severe problems for the adjacent area.

Rail Freight Service

Four rail companies currently provide rail service to and through Rockford. These are the Canadian National with its through line from Chicago to Omaha and industrial spurs; the Union Pacific line, Chicago to Rockford with a spur to Loves Park; Illinois RailNet, a short-line from Rockford to Rochelle; and the Iowa, Chicago and Eastern operating between Janesville and its east west main line in Davis Junction sharing the Illinois RailNet bridge over the Rock River and trackage to Davis Junction.

The recently completed Railroad Consolidation Study performed by Wilbur Smith and Associates for the City of Rockford identifies ways to free-up rail corridors , rail yards and bridges over the Rock River for other land uses through rail consolidation. If the City is successful in implementing the recommendations of this study, there will be two railroad bridges, a five-mile long rail corridor and two rail yards near downtown available for redevelopment. The City Council has approved the Rail Consolidation Study, and the recommendations of this study are included in this plan as Appendix D .

Transportation Implementation Matrix

Goal	Objective	Action	Who	When
Provide both motorized and non-motorized travel	Paved roadways including freeways, arterials, collectors and local streets	Construct the interchanges, arterial roadways and, where appropriate, collector streets listed in the draft plan. Work with developers to ensure construction of the local streets.	Public Works	Ongoing
	Maintain Sidewalks, bikeways and pathways		Public Works	Ongoing
	Mass transit services including public transit buses, public paratransit buses, private buses and taxi services.		RMTD	Ongoing
Serve the needs of all those who are disenfranchised from, do not desire to use, or are otherwise unable to take full advantage of the predominantly automobile-oriented transportation system that dominates our community	Mass transit services including public transit buses, public paratransit buses, private buses and	Continue existing mass transit services and, to the extent feasible, expand RMTD's services to provide the best service possible to the citizens of Rockford.	RMTD	Ongoing
		Continue exploring options in developing a connection to Metra rail facilities.	Public Works	Ongoing
		Periodically assess the feasibility of extending RMTD service to other communities.	RMTD	Ongoing
		Work to include by-pass ramps and turnouts for bus stops in new road projects	Public Works	Ongoing
		Continue to work to increase passenger rail service to Rockford.	Mayor's Office	Ongoing
	Sidewalks	Limit waivers for sidewalks to extreme cases	Public Works	Ongoing
		Maintain	Public Works	Ongoing
	Bikeways	Maintain	Public Works	Ongoing
		Monitor and Update Pathway Plan	RATS	Ongoing
	Pathways	Maintain	Public Works	Ongoing
	Provide for recreational as well as utilitarian needs		Park District, Public Works	Ongoing

Transportation Implementation Matrix cont.

Goal	Objective	Action	Who	When
Serve the needs of all segments of Rockford's population	Serve shipping and other economic development needs as well as those of individuals	Determine what Rockford and/or the GRAA can do to strengthen the Airport's position as a freight and passenger terminal.	Public Works	Ongoing
		Work to raise the GRA's profile.	Mayor's Office	Ongoing
		Develop a system for evaluating development proposals in areas such as the State Street "Strip" to ensure that they fit in the overall circulation system for the area, not just their individual site.	Community Development	Short term
	Reevaluate Rockford's CIP policies in light of developments over the last 15 years, including technological changes that allow for better information on which to base decisions.		Community Development	Short term