

I-355 Area Trails Master Plan

A Framework for Regional Coordination

May 2009



Table of Contents

Section One: Introduction.....	1
Section Two: Trail Types	5
Section Three: Meetings and Outreach.....	7
Section Four: Evaluation Criteria.....	13
Section Five: Facility Design Guidelines and Recommendations	15
Section Six: Trail Recommendations	19
Section Seven: General Cost Estimates.....	27
Section Eight: Implementation Strategy.....	29
Section Nine: Appendix.....	31

Section 1: Introduction

The I-355 Area Trails Master Plan was created as part of a joint effort made by members of the I-355 Planning Consortium to develop a comprehensive regional trails plan along the I-355 Corridor area. The Consortium consists of the Village of Homer Glen, the Village of Lemont, the City of Lockport, the Village of New Lenox, and the Will County Land Use Department. The Forest Preserve District of Will County also participated in the process. The location of these four municipalities can be seen on Figure 1.

The I-355 Trails Master Plan is intended to serve as a framework for regional coordination, allowing local municipalities, the County, and other agencies to better coordinate and plan their individual trail efforts and initiatives. This Plan is not intended to replace or otherwise diminish the need or overall importance of individual local trail plans. Municipal, agency, and other local trail plans can provide a level of detail and local prioritization that this Plan is not intended to provide. This Plan will improve the overall connectivity of the regional trails system as individual communities and agencies develop their own plans.

The Trails Master Plan sets forth recommendations for the enhancement, maintenance, and construction of trails for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the I-355 Corridor area. The Trails Master Plan will guide the decision making efforts of the Consortium as it relates to trails within their collective jurisdiction and will coordinate their efforts with those of other regional agencies and municipalities.

By taking a regional approach, the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan emphasizes the importance of connectivity. A Regional Trails System will benefit the residents living along I-355 by providing an enhanced trail experience.

The I-355 Area Trails Master Plan was developed based on input from representatives of the Village of Homer Glen, Village of Lemont, City of Lockport, Village of New Lenox, Will County Land Use Department, Forest Preserve District of Will County, and the various existing trails/bicycle plans from each of these agencies. The Plan contains maps illustrating where existing trails are, where trails have been proposed for future construction, and identifies gaps in the regional trails system. The Plan also provides participating municipalities and agencies with a Composite Trails Map of all of the existing and planned trails. These maps will further create a more integrated and coordinated regional trail system along the I-355 Corridor area. The Plan also makes a series of trail recommendations to improve the existing trail system.

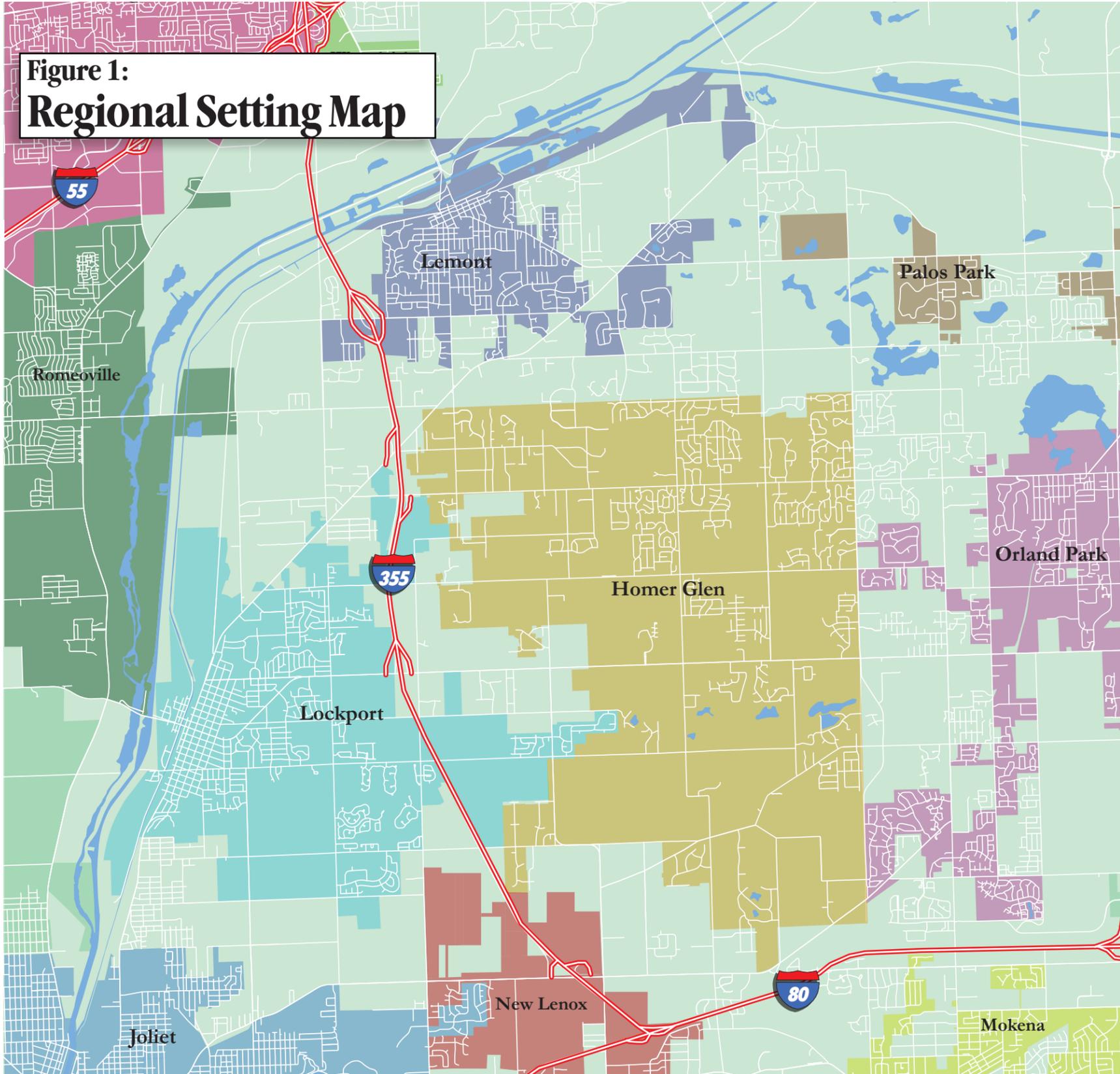
The I-355 Area Trails Master Plan will serve as a guide for trail development, construction, and prioritization for member agencies of the I-355 Planning Consortium. The Plan will allow member agencies to budget and plan for trail enhancements, improvements, and new construction. The Plan also details trail evaluation criteria that can be used to prioritize future trail development.

Meetings held with representatives from the members of the Planning Consortium revealed the important role trails play for residents in the region on a day-to-day basis. Many residents in the area surrounding I-355 utilize the trail system for recreation and as an alternative mode of transportation to reach various destinations throughout the region. A coordinated regional trail system would enhance the overall quality of life for all residents along I-355.

With the creation of this Plan, funding for various trail projects will become more widely available to member agencies of the I-355 Planning Consortium. Receiving funding from grant programs from State and Federal sources often requires compliance with a comprehensive trails/bicycle plan. Obtaining funding from these sources can drastically reduce the cost of implementing the recommendations of this Trails Plan and can make them more easily attainable.



**Figure 1:
Regional Setting Map**



Regional Setting Map

The I-355 Trails Master Plan planning area runs along I-355 from the Village of Lemont south to the Village of New Lenox. The planning area cuts through the planning jurisdictions of Lemont, Homer Glen, Lockport, New Lenox, and the Forest Preserve District of Will County.

* Municipal boundaries shown in Figure 1 are generalized and based on available County GIS data.

Benefits of Trails

An integrated, coordinated, and regional trails system provides an area with many benefits. A trails system can serve as an alternative mode of transportation for people to get to and from work, restaurants, urban centers, entertainment areas, and other destinations. With more people using a trails system, fewer vehicles will be on the road, air quality in an area will improve, traffic will be reduced, less gas will be consumed, and overall quality of life will be enhanced.

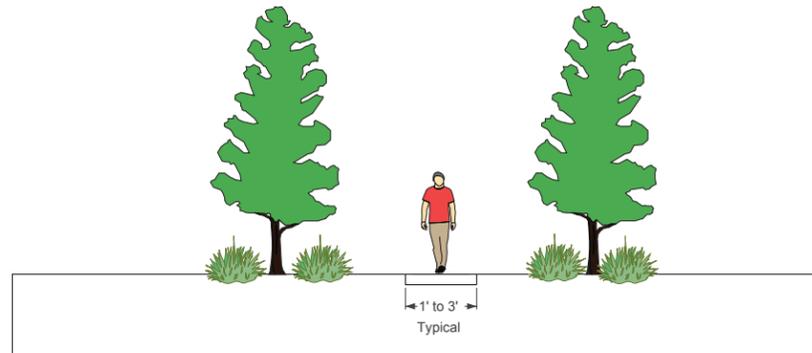
Trails also offer recreational and exercise opportunities to area residents. Bicyclists, joggers, walkers, cross-country skiers, equestrians, and more often use trails systems for recreation and/or exercise purposes. Trails reduce the exposure of these users to vehicles and provide them with a safer arena to utilize. Tourism may also increase in communities connected to an integrated, coordinated and regional trail system.

Trail systems are unique because they are open to everyone. No equipment or other gear is needed to use them. They are a public good anyone can enjoy and they improve the quality of life for all residents.



Section 2: Trail Types

The following cross sections illustrate the typical dimensions of various trail types found within the I-355 planning area. This information is meant to serve as a reference for members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other agencies to utilize for future trails projects. It is important to note that not all of these trail types are necessarily recommended or approved for construction in the planning area but are listed primarily for reference. Approved trail types should be decided upon by municipal and organizational leaders.



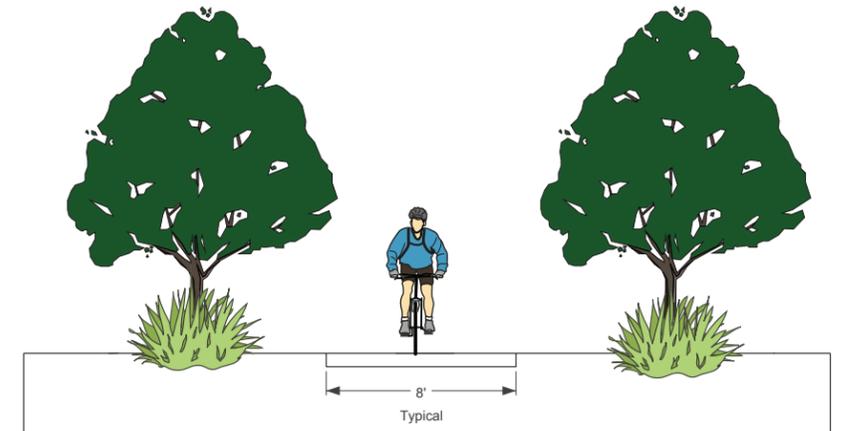
Paths of Desire (POD)

PODs are walking paths 1 to 3 feet that are infrequently used. There may be PODs that should be upgraded to a permanent surface and to provide additional linkages between existing trails.



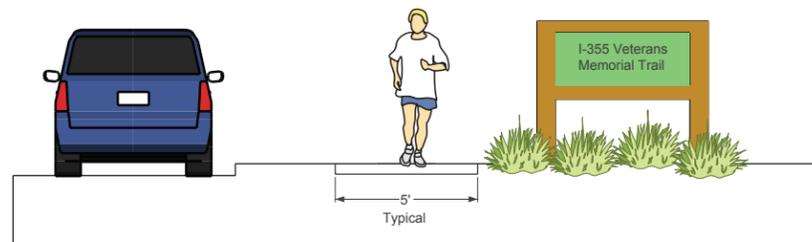
Limestone Trails

Crushed limestone trails are typically less expensive to install than paved asphalt trails and require minimal maintenance. These trails are normally about 8 feet in width and accommodate many users.



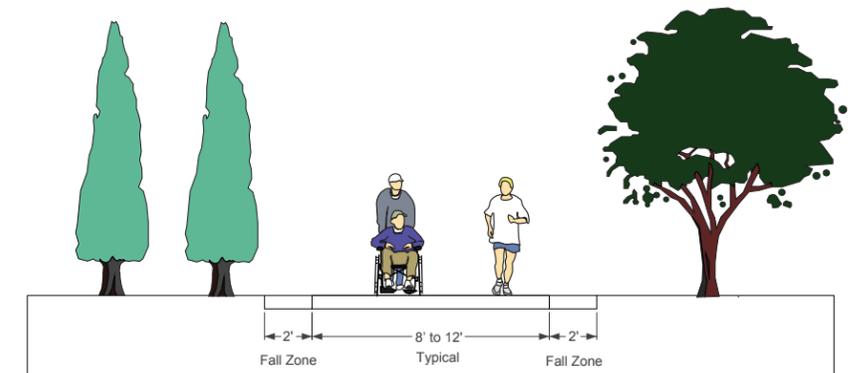
Right-of-Way Trails/Sidewalks

A variety of trail types may fit into this category including: asphalt multi-use trails running parallel to the street; standard concrete sidewalks; and, designated bicycle lanes on streets. The width and location of these right-of-way trails varies based upon type and location.



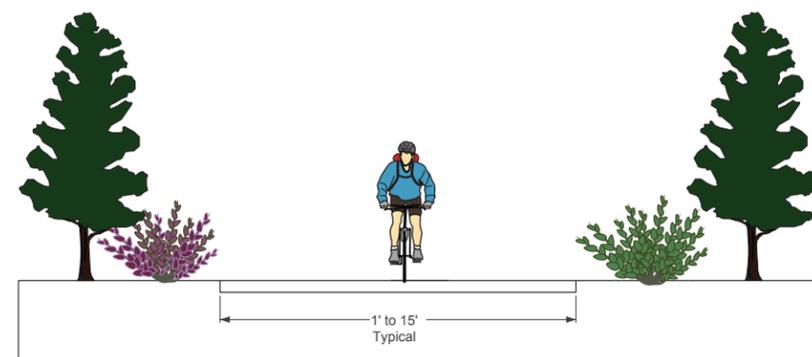
Asphalt Multi-Use Trails

Asphalt Multi-Use Trails are constructed for the use of pedestrians, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, and others. Paved with asphalt, these trails provide a wide range of services for its users. Asphalt Multi-Use Trails are typically 8 to 12 feet wide and have 2 feet graded shoulders on each side for a total cross-section of 12 to 16 feet.



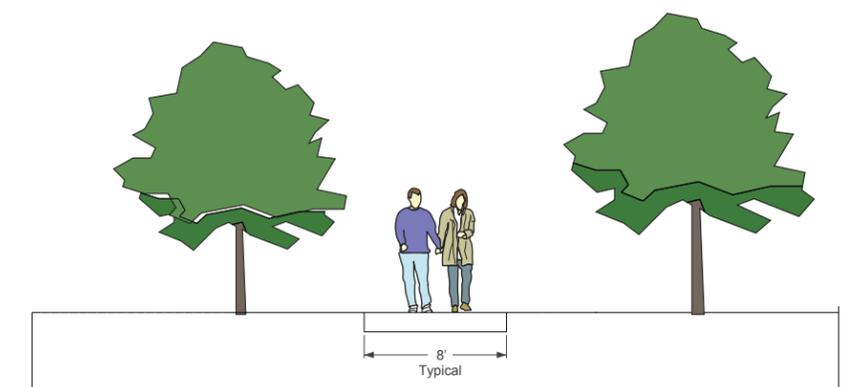
Dirt Paths

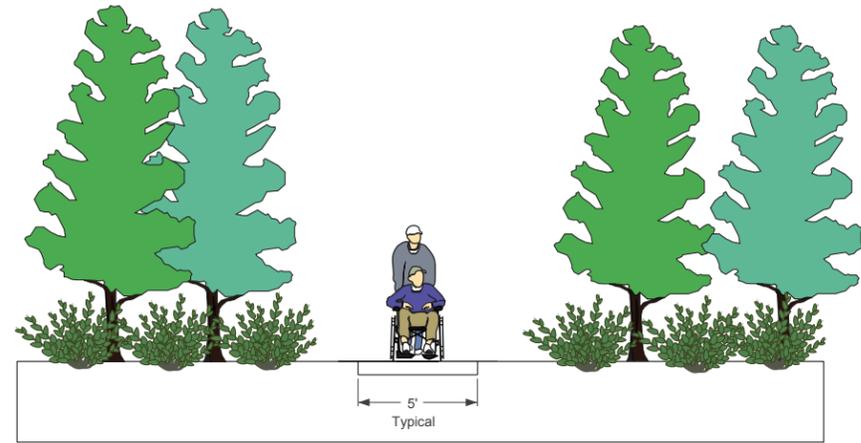
Dirt paths are typically found in natural parks. These paths have been created over time from a consistent high-volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic using them. Many eventually become mulched or possibly even paved. Often, dirt trails are used in heavily wooded or forest-like areas to maintain an aesthetic quality and atmosphere in a particular area. Dirt paths generally range between 1 to 15 feet in width.



Brick Pavers

Trails laid in brick are more aesthetically pleasing than all other trails, however, these trails are often more expensive to construct due to the high-quality of the paving materials used to build them. Brick trails are more durable than others and last significantly longer. Bicyclists, in-line skates and skateboards are often prohibited on brick trails.





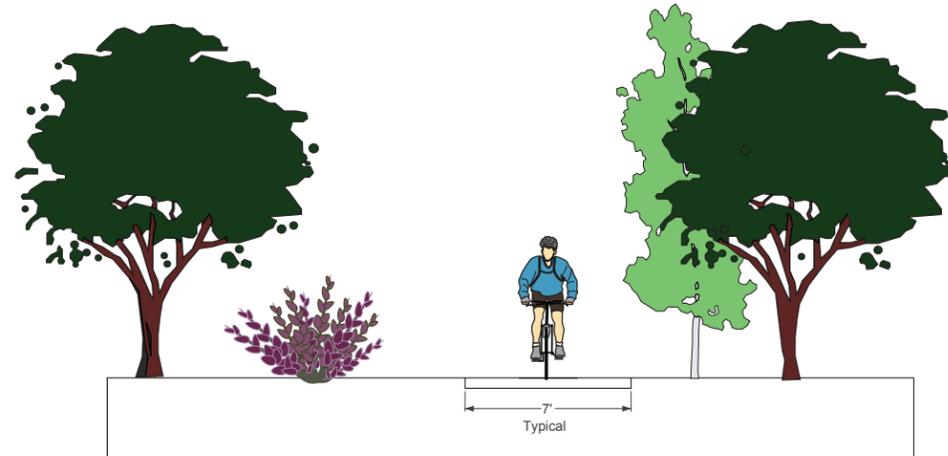
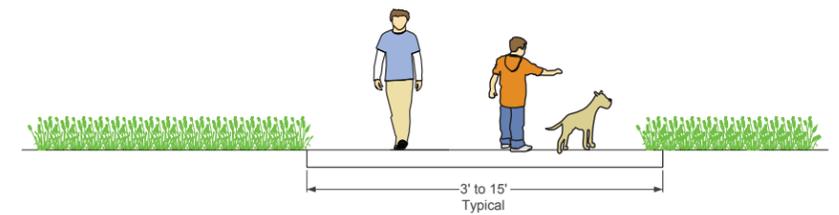
Concrete Trails

Concrete Trails are often found in urban areas and double as sidewalks for a community. Of a higher quality than asphalt trails, concrete trails are more costly to construct. Once constructed, concrete trails will last longer than asphalt ones and are more aesthetically pleasing.



Mowed Trails

Mowed Trails are composed of grass and other vegetation. These trails are used by bicyclists, and pedestrians in primarily natural settings. These trails require only seasonal maintenance (i.e.: mowing) and can typically traverse steep grade changes and meander through tall grasses or wooded areas.



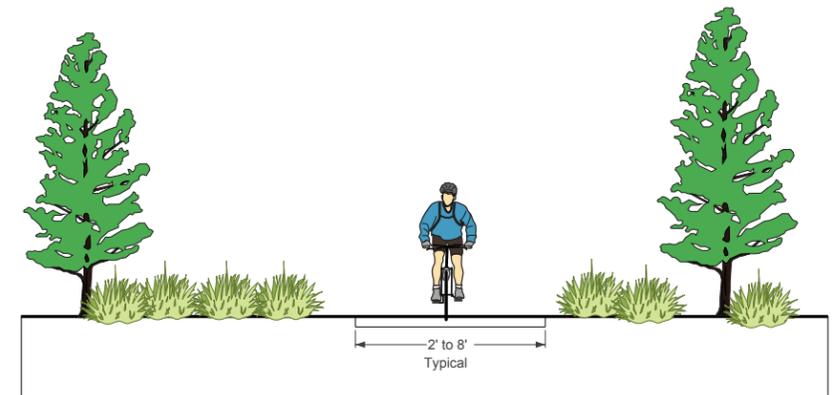
Mulch Trails

Made from wood chips, mulch trails help maintain an atmosphere in forested areas. Often used by bicyclists and pedestrians, mulch trails are the most environmentally-friendly of all trails due to their all-natural composition. Maintenance is minimal for this type of trail, however, each year these trails typically receive new mulch.



Gravel Trails

Gravel trails are typically used for vehicular travel in addition to pedestrian and bicycle travel. Gravel trails often connect trail facilities together.



Section 3: Meetings and Outreach

The members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other agencies met multiple times to discuss the development of the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan. Representatives from the Village of Homer Glen, the Village of Lemont, the City of Lockport, the Village of New Lenox, the Will County Land Use Department, and the Forest Preserve District of Will County attended these meetings.

Attendees discussed what the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan should contain and confirmed the locations of existing and planned trails in their respective jurisdictions (Figures 2 and 3). Meeting attendees agreed that a unified “Composite Trails Map” (Figures 4 and 5), illustrating all existing and planned trails throughout the I-355 Corridor area with no color differentiation, and a “Gap Map”, depicting where gaps in the existing trail system are located, should be included in the Plan. The purpose of the “Gap Map” would be to show where communities and agencies need to coordinate their trail development and construction efforts in the future to create an integrated and connected regional trail system.

Planning Consortium members also wanted a Key Community Facilities Map displaying the locations of existing parks, schools, and transit stations in addition to potential trailhead locations. This map would graphically display how well the existing and future trails system services/will service these areas of the I-355 Corridor area. These meetings also allowed municipalities and agencies to express any other issues or concerns they would like to see addressed by the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan.

Before this Plan is adopted, each of the Municipalities should host a series of meetings in each community to obtain important input from area residents. Their feedback is valuable and important to the planning process. Holding these community outreach meetings would help garner support for the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan and would help the process as it moves forward by giving area residents a chance to voice their opinions on and influence the development of the Plan.

Input given by community members would also help ensure that any and all issues and/or concerns of the community are heard and addressed in the Plan. Following the completion of the community outreach meetings and other activities, a Vision for the I-355 Master Trails Plan should be established based on the input of community members. Goals and objectives could then be derived from the Vision and the planning process could move forward.



Trail Legend

- Lockport Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Lemont Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Homer Glen Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- New Lenox Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Forest Preserve District of Will County**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- I-355 Trail**
 - Planned
- Incorporated Area**
- Unincorporated Area**
- Forest Preserve**
- Open Space**
- Water Feature**

Figure 2: Existing and Planned Trails Map - North

Trails plans were obtained from members of the I-355 Planning Consortium. The information from these plans was then compiled to form Figures 2 and 3. These figures display the existing and planned trails throughout the I-355 planning area. In some instances, trails overlap with one another because the master trails plans of various consortium members overlap in these areas.

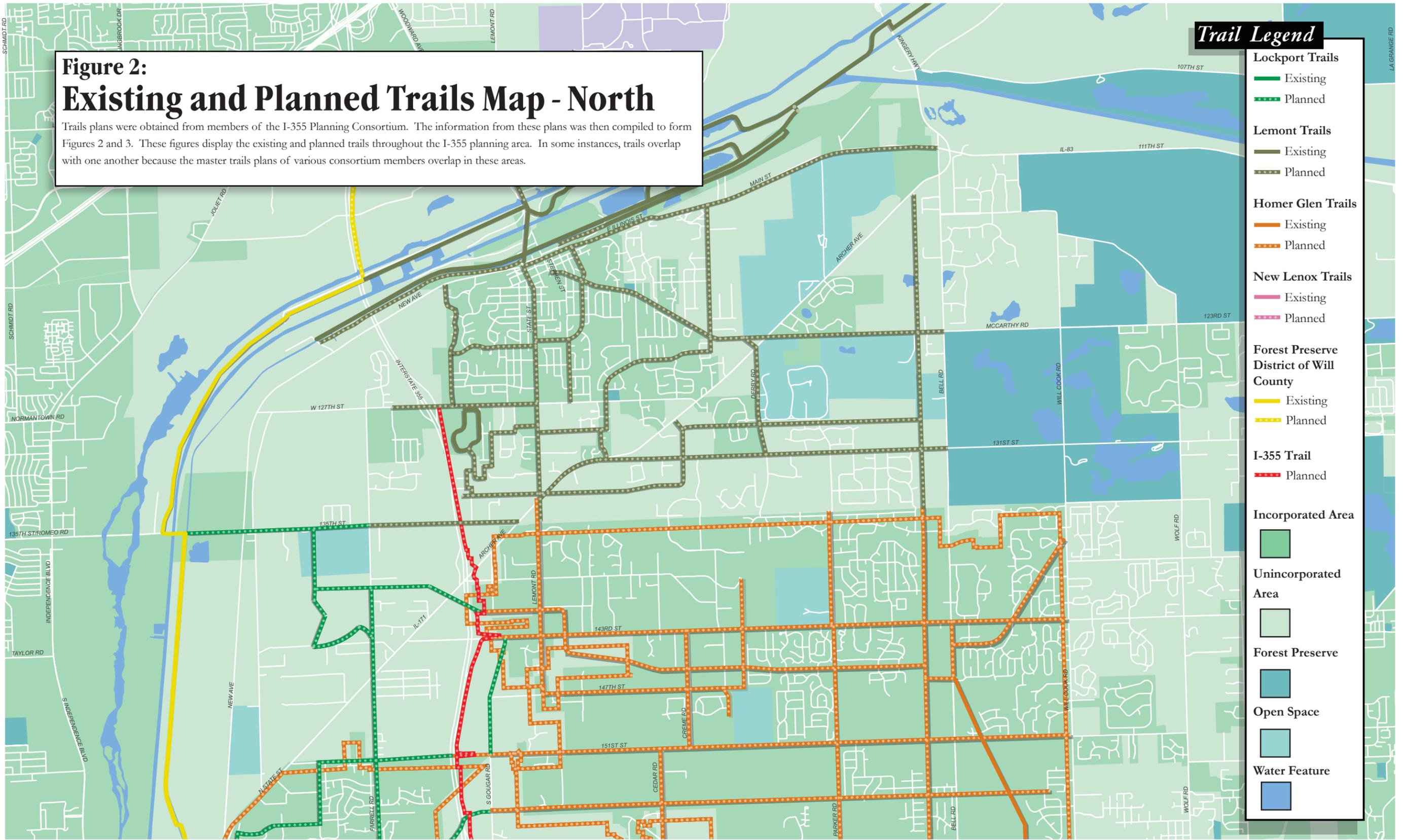


Figure 3: Existing and Planned Trails Map - South

Trails plans were obtained from members of the I-355 Planning Consortium. The information from these plans was then compiled to form Figures 2 and 3. These figures display the existing and planned trails throughout the I-355 planning area. In some instances, trails overlap with one another because the master trails plans of various consortium members overlap in these areas.

Trail Legend

- Lockport Trails**
 - Existing (Solid Green Line)
 - Planned (Dotted Green Line)
- Lemont Trails**
 - Existing (Solid Orange Line)
 - Planned (Dotted Orange Line)
- Homer Glen Trails**
 - Existing (Solid Yellow Line)
 - Planned (Dotted Yellow Line)
- New Lenox Trails**
 - Existing (Solid Pink Line)
 - Planned (Dotted Pink Line)
- Forest Preserve District of Will County**
 - Existing (Solid Yellow Line)
 - Planned (Dotted Yellow Line)
- I-355 Trail**
 - Planned (Dotted Red Line)
- Incorporated Area**
 - (Dark Green Shaded Area)
- Unincorporated Area**
 - (Light Green Shaded Area)
- Forest Preserve**
 - (Blue Shaded Area)
- Open Space**
 - (Light Blue Shaded Area)
- Water Feature**
 - (Dark Blue Shaded Area)

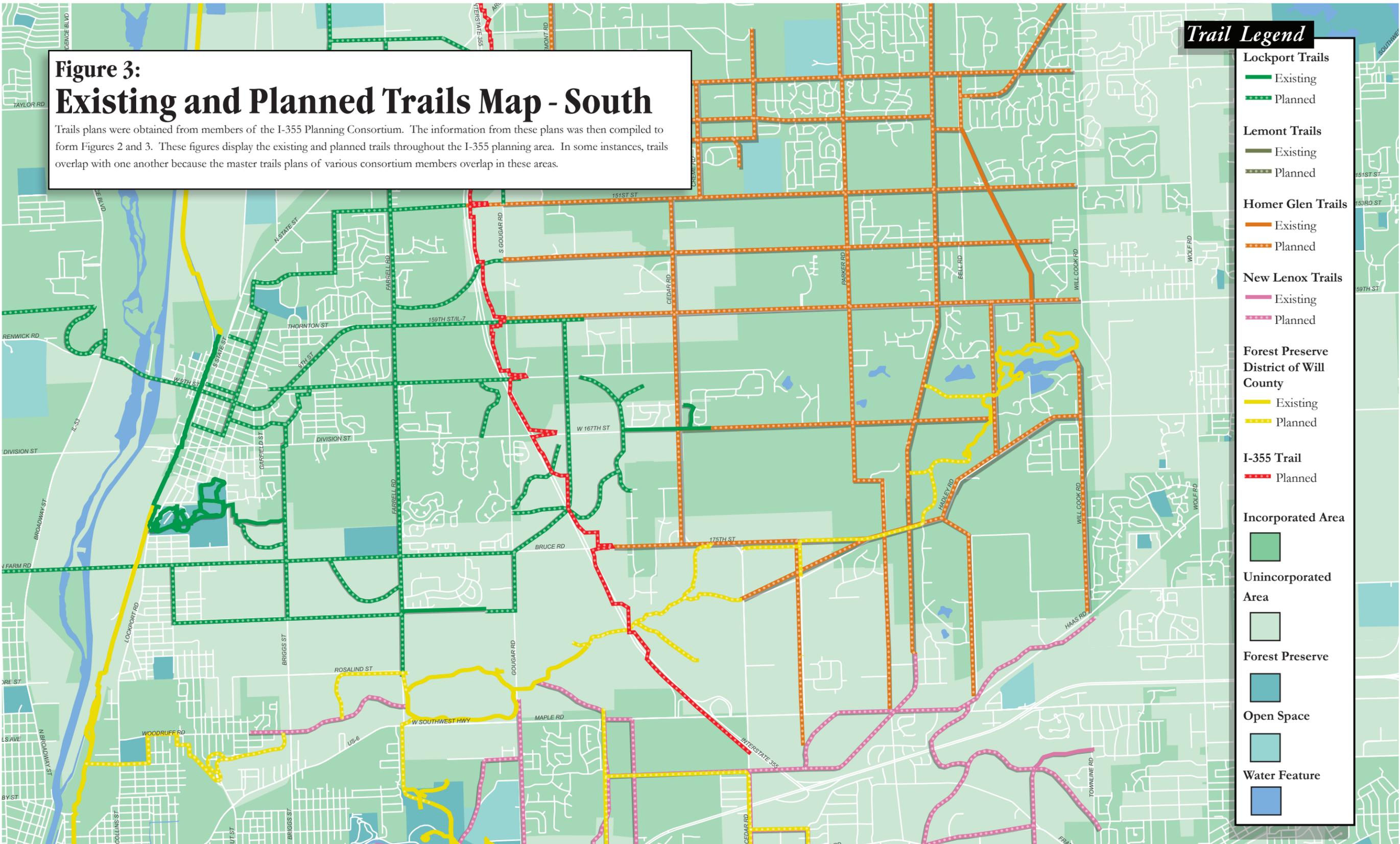
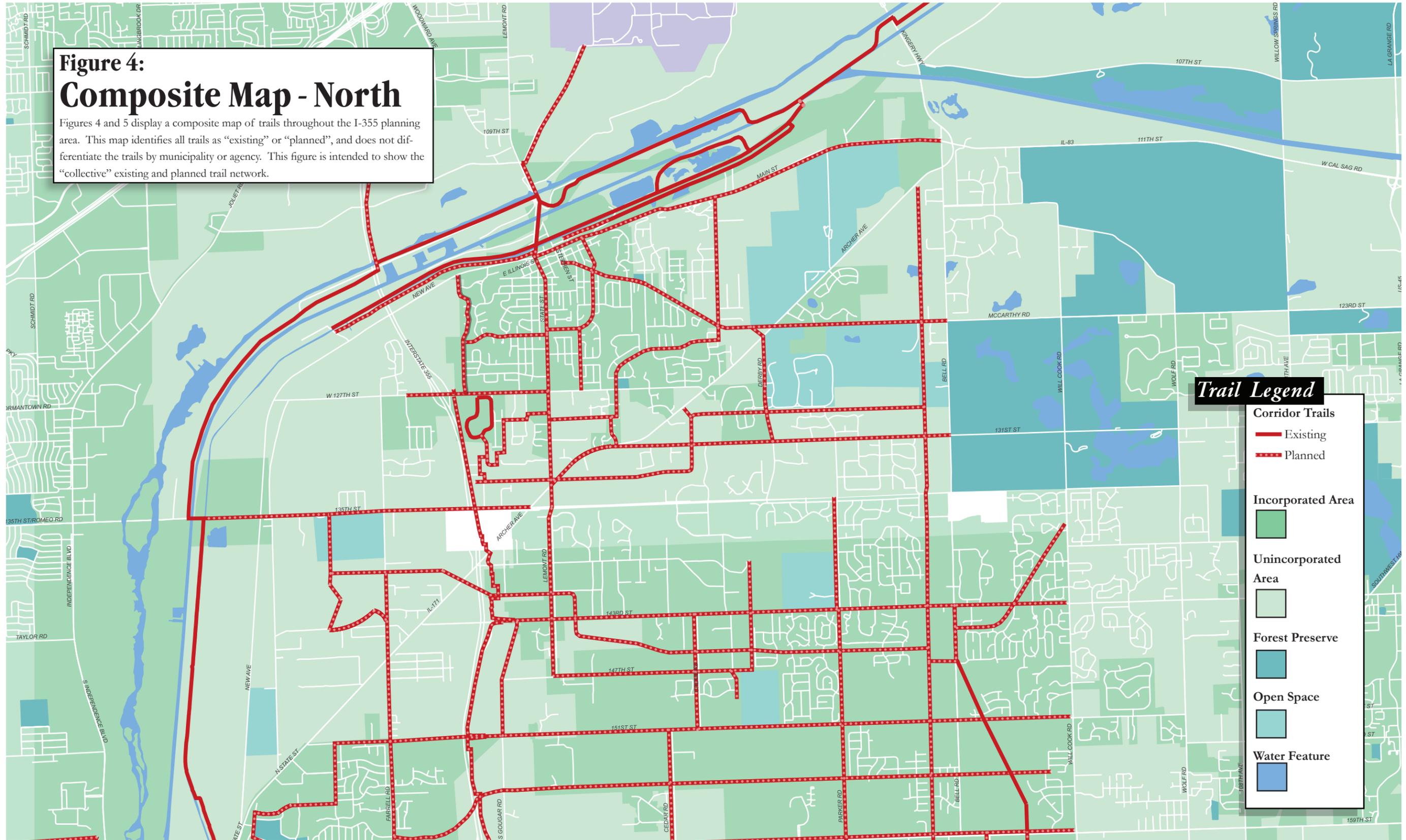


Figure 4: Composite Map - North

Figures 4 and 5 display a composite map of trails throughout the I-355 planning area. This map identifies all trails as “existing” or “planned”, and does not differentiate the trails by municipality or agency. This figure is intended to show the “collective” existing and planned trail network.

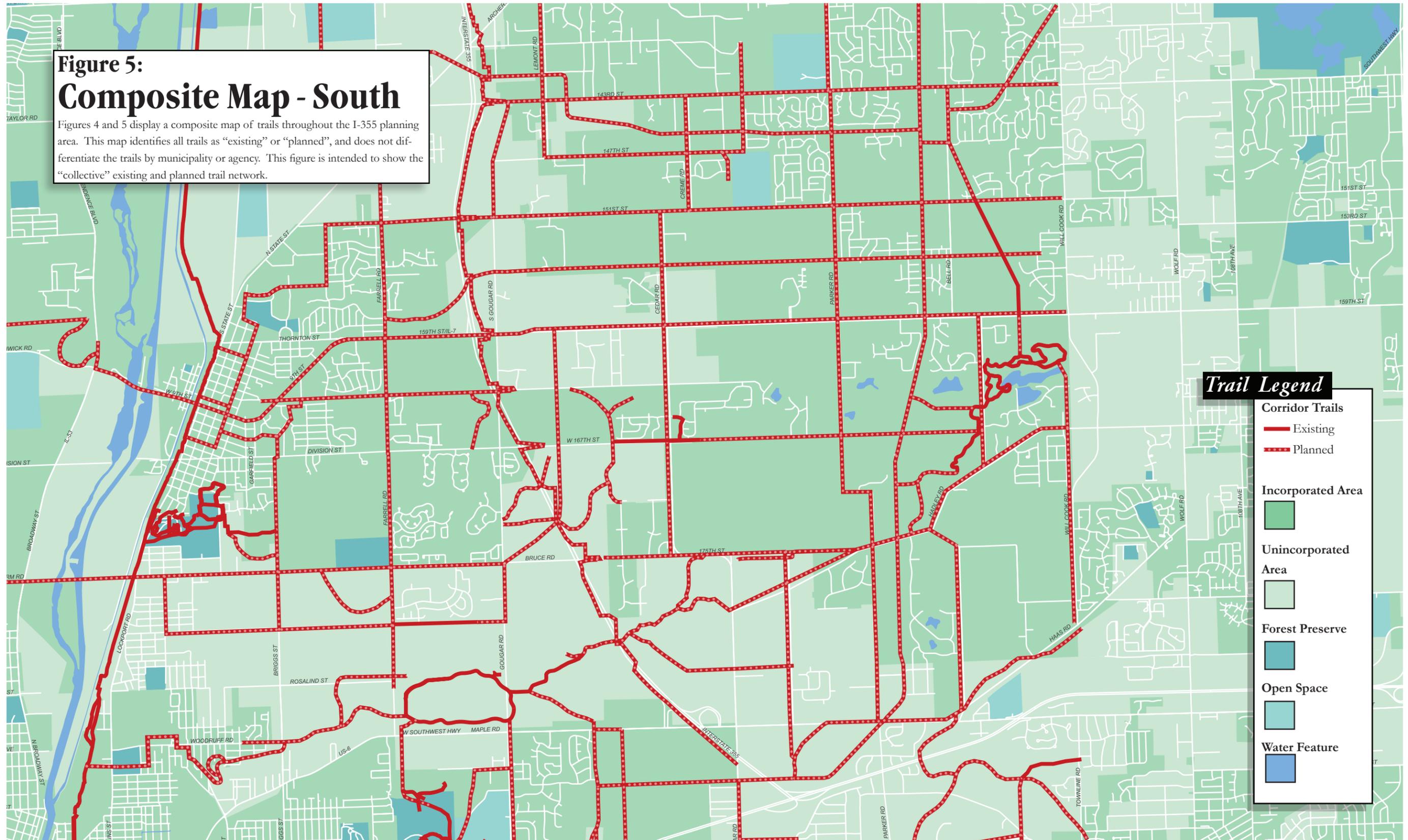


Trail Legend

- Corridor Trails**
 - Existing (solid red line)
 - Planned (dashed red line)
- Incorporated Area** (dark green square)
- Unincorporated Area** (light green square)
- Forest Preserve** (teal square)
- Open Space** (light blue square)
- Water Feature** (blue square)

Figure 5: Composite Map - South

Figures 4 and 5 display a composite map of trails throughout the I-355 planning area. This map identifies all trails as “existing” or “planned”, and does not differentiate the trails by municipality or agency. This figure is intended to show the “collective” existing and planned trail network.



Trail Legend

- Corridor Trails**
 - Existing
 - - - Planned
- Incorporated Area**
 -
- Unincorporated Area**
 -
- Forest Preserve**
 -
- Open Space**
 -
- Water Feature**
 -

Section 4: Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria should be used by the various members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other agencies involved with the creation of this plan to evaluate existing and future trail projects. The criteria should be used to assist with the planning of future trails and trail amenities including their construction and maintenance. The evaluation criteria will allow these municipalities and agencies to prioritize projects in a practical and logical manner. While the evaluation criteria can be used to prioritize projects and evaluate them, no timeline should be set for an individual project until necessary funding is made available. The I-355 Area Trails Master Plan recommends using the following criteria for each trail segment to see how well they meet these criteria.

Purpose:

- *Will the new trail be a connection between existing or proposed trails or other recreational amenities?*

Discussion: New trails connecting to existing or proposed trails or other recreational amenities should be given priority over those that do not. By connecting to existing trails and other amenities, “gaps” in the existing trail system will become fewer in number. New trails should also be designed for use by multiple users like pedestrians and bicyclists. Trails designed for multiple types of users should be prioritized and preferred over trails designed for only one type of user.

Ownership:

- *Will the trail be constructed on property currently owned by a member of the I-355 Planning Consortium or other agency assisting with the development of this Plan?*
- *Does land need to be purchased?*
- *Do easements need to be acquired?*

Discussion: Trail projects not requiring property to be purchased or easements to be acquired should be given priority over those that would require the purchase of property and acquisition of easements. By building trails on property already owned by consortium members, the development and construction of a trail becomes more financially feasible.

Construction Cost:

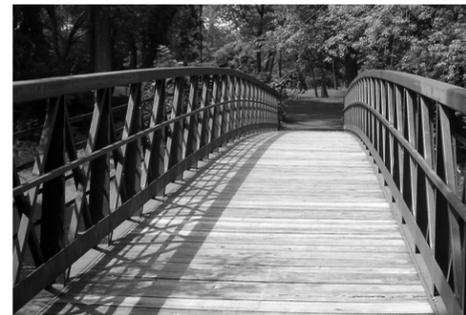
- *What is the estimated cost to construct the new trail?*
- *Will the trail be constructed solely by funds provided by a member of the I-355 Planning Consortium or other agency assisting with the development of this Plan?*
- *Is the trail construction eligible for alternative funding (i.e. State or Federal grants)?*

Discussion: Trail projects can be expensive to construct. Therefore, projects eligible for alternative funding from the State and Federal government should be given priority over those being solely financed by a member of the I-355 Planning Consortium.

Maintenance:

- *What is the expected annual maintenance cost for the trail?*
- *Will the trail require year-round maintenance (i.e. snow removal)?*
- *How often will it need to be reconstructed?*

Discussion: All trails require maintenance. Trails requiring less annual maintenance and a lower annual maintenance cost should be prioritized over those requiring more maintenance and a higher annual maintenance cost. Trails requiring less frequent reconstruction should also receive a higher priority.



Connection:

- *Does the new trail fill a “gap” in the trail system, either within a specific park or within a larger trail system?*

Discussion: A goal of the I-355 Planning Consortium should be to create a trails network high in connectivity. Therefore, a trails project filling in a gap of the existing trails system should be given priority over other projects not filling in a “gap”.

Looped:

- *Is the new trail a looped trail within a park site?*
- *Does it provide access to a park facility (i.e. playground or tennis court)?*

Discussion: Looped trails in parks or forest preserves are unique and provide residents of a community with a number of benefits including an unlimited number of trail miles to enjoy. Looped trails should be prioritized. Proposed trail projects connecting to a trail facility, park facility, or forest preserve facility (i.e. playground) should also be prioritized.

Pedestrian Barriers:

- *Will the trail cross or meet with pedestrian barriers (i.e. arterial streets, railways, and rivers)?*
- *Will major crossing improvements be necessary (i.e. bridges, underpasses, signalized intersections)?*

Discussion: Pedestrian barriers, including arterial streets and rivers, can inhibit the enjoyment of trail users by forcing them to slow or stop or by creating an atmosphere that is pedestrian unfriendly. Proposed trail projects that do not meet or cross with pedestrian barriers should be prioritized over those that do.

To cross pedestrian barriers, significant crossing improvements are often needed including bridges, underpasses or signalized intersections. These crossing improvements are costly and proposed trail projects requiring them should not be preferred.

Amenities:

- *Is the trail planned to have amenities (i.e. mileage markers, fitness stations, benches, etc. . .). Although these are often desired by trail users, most amenities will add to construction and maintenance costs.*
- *Setbacks from Surrounding Properties: What are the adjacent land uses to the park site? What will be the distance from neighboring residential uses? Is buffering or screening required?*

Discussion: Trail amenities enhance the trails experience for all users. Amenities like restrooms, rest areas, information signage, mileage markers, and others are often preferred and welcomed by trail users. Despite their benefits, trail amenities add to the construction and maintenance costs of a trail. The benefits and costs of trail amenities should be weighed by consortium members before decisions of what, if any, amenities to include are made.

Trails are often within close proximity to residential uses. While residents living close to trails would benefit from their ready access to them, a large setback is preferred. Proposed trail projects with large setbacks from nearby residential areas should be prioritized over those with small setbacks. Trail projects that include landscaping, fences, and other buffers to minimize their impact on adjacent residential uses should be given priority over those that do not include buffers.

Destinations:

- *Does the proposed trail provide connections to community destinations such as district and community parks, recreation centers, or other civic destinations?*

Discussion: Trail projects connecting users to destinations along the I-355 Corridor area should be prioritized over those that do not. Trail destinations should include downtown areas, places of employment, transit stations, entertainment uses, and others.

Surface:

- *What type of trail surface is proposed?*
- *Does the proposed surface type meet with the design guidelines within the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan?*

Discussion: Surface types are important because they can often dictate the kinds of uses for which a trail is best suited. Proposed trail projects meeting the design guidelines within the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan should be given priority over those that do not. The design guidelines listed in this document provide effective standards for consortium members to reference and implement.

Construction:

- *Is construction of the trail possible?*
- *Are permits required?*
- *Are there floodplain issues or other physical factors affecting the buildability of the trail?*

Discussion: A proposed trail project should be possible or feasible to construct. Projects that are unfeasible to construct should not be given any kind of priority and should not be considered. Trail projects may also require a permit before construction can begin. Obtaining a permit may increase the cost of a project and slow its construction. Trail projects not requiring a permit should be prioritized and preferred over those that would require a permit.

Physical factors, like floodplain issues, can affect the buildability of a trail. Trail projects absent of impairing physical factors should be prioritized over those with impairing physical factors.

Section 5: Facility Design Guidelines and Recommendations

This section discusses and defines trail types and trail amenities and makes general recommendations to the trail system within the I-355 Corridor area. The guidelines and recommendations are based upon research and analysis of trail systems within the region and discussions held at the I-355 Planning Consortium meetings. These guidelines and recommendations should be presented to the residents of Homer Glen, Lemont, Lockport, and New Lenox by their respective municipalities to obtain their feedback and input.

Trail Types, Definitions, and Classifications

The I-355 Area Trails Master Plan builds off of the existing network of trails in the I-355 Corridor area to make the following recommendations of trail types. The following definitions of trail types are presented in this Plan to provide members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other involved agencies with a clear description of existing trail types within the I-355 Corridor and to help standardize trail classification.

Brick Pavers

Brick trails are best suited for walking. Their rough texture and surface are not very friendly to bicyclists or other mode of wheeled transportation. These trails are typically 8 feet in width and are mostly used by pedestrians.

Concrete Trails (Sidewalks)

Concrete trails are the strongest of all surface types and its maintenance costs are the lowest as well if properly installed. Environmental concerns accompany concrete trails however and this is a factor that must be taken into consideration. Sidewalks primarily serve pedestrians with safe and direct connections. Consortium members and other agencies considering the use of concrete trails should ensure that the trail is ADA accessible. Concrete trails are typically 5 feet in width and their surface is concrete. These trails can be used by many types of trails users including pedestrians, bicyclists, skaters, joggers, and others. Forms of wheeled transportation are often prohibited in the downtown areas of municipalities.

Dirt Paths**

Dirt paths are typically informal trails that have been created over time from consistent use by users. The width of these paths is typically determined based on existing topographic and environmental considerations. The width can vary from as narrow as 1 foot and as wide as 15 feet. Their surface type is dirt and they are most often used by pedestrians and mountain bikes.

Gravel Trails

Gravel trails are typically used for vehicular travel in addition to pedestrian and bicycle travel. Like dirt paths, gravel trails can vary greatly in width from 3 feet to 15 feet. Their surface type is composed of gravel and they are typically used by pedestrians and mountain bikes.

Limestone Trails*

Typically less expensive to install than paved asphalt trails, crushed, densely-compacted limestone trails generally require minimal maintenance. Limestone trails are environmentally-friendly and are very compatible with the surrounding environment making them ideal for use in greenways. Limestone trails can be constructed to accommodate bicyclists and can be made ADA accessible. Limestone trails are typically 8 feet in width and their surface is made of limestone screenings. Users include the previously noted bicyclists and wheel-chair users in addition to pedestrians, joggers, equestrians, and non-motorized users.

Mowed Trails**

Ideal for use in natural settings, mowed trails are composed of grass and other vegetation. These trails are commonly used by pedestrians, mountain bikes, joggers, and other non-motorized users. Maintenance of mowed trails is seasonal. Mowed trails can vary from 3 feet to 15 feet in width and their surface is composed of grass.

Mulch Trails**

Similar to mowed trails, mulch trails are ideal for natural settings, especially wooded areas. Mulch trails are the most environmentally-friendly of all trails due to their all-natural composition. They are most often used by bicyclists and pedestrians. Roller-skaters and wheel chair users are not well suited for this type of trail. Maintenance costs are minimal due to the composition of these trails, however, these trails will typically receive new mulch. Mulch trails are typically between 5 feet and 8 feet wide and their surface is made from wood chip mulch.

Multi-Use Asphalt Trails*

Asphalt trails provide a wide-range of services for their users. These trails are paved with asphalt and are commonly used for regional trail systems. Asphalt is a flexible pavement and it can be installed on most slopes. Asphalt trails are designed to accommodate two-way bicycle and pedestrian traffic and they typically have their own right-of-way. These trails should be able to accommodate emergency and maintenance vehicles. Asphalt trails are typically between 8 feet and 10 feet in width and might also include graded shoulders 2 feet in width. The surface of these trails is asphalt and it should be coated with a special sealant. These trails accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, joggers, and other users.

Paths of Desire**

Paths of desire are created from consistent bicyclist or pedestrian use. These paths are not maintained by any agency or governing body and do not add to annual maintenance costs. The widths of paths of desire vary widely and their surface is often dirt.

Right-of-Way Trails*

A variety of trail types fit into the “right-of-way trails” category. On-street bicycle lanes, asphalt multi-use trails running parallel to the street, and standard concrete city sidewalks fall into this category. These trails are typically 5 feet in width and are used by pedestrians, bicyclists, skaters, wheelchair users, joggers, and other non-motorized users.

Notes:

* ***Trail type currently exists in the I-355 Corridor Area and is a preferred trail type.***

** ***Trail type currently exists in the I-355 Corridor Area but is not a preferred trail type.***

Trail Amenities

Adding trail amenities to a regional or local trail network enhances the trail experience for all trail users. Trail amenities placed in proper locations are preferred by trail users. Below, are descriptions of commonly desired trail amenities that should be considered for development throughout the I-355 Corridor area.

All trail amenities (those listed below and any other) should be carefully reviewed and considered for installation by the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies based on several factors. The I-355 Planning Consortium should consider the costs of building and maintaining a trail amenity, determine if any comparable amenities are located nearby, and conclude what the overall programming and recreational goals for the regional trail system along I-355 are.

The construction of trail amenities provides the Village of Homer Glen, the Village of Lemont, the City of Lockport, the Village of New Lenox, the Forest Preserve District of Will County, and all other participating agencies with the opportunity to create a unique and distinguishable regional trail network within and I-355 Corridor area. Trail amenities should be used to create a uniform and distinguishable regional trails network.

Informational Signage

Strategically located informational signage is often used to enlighten trail users about any unique plant or animal species commonly seen along a trail or to inform them of the history of an area or trail. This signage is mostly targeted towards pedestrians and hikers. Planning Consortium members and other participating agencies should coordinate efforts to erect informational signage throughout the I-355 Corridor area.

Drinking Fountains

Bicyclists, joggers, walkers, hikers, and other trail users would all benefit from the installation of drinking fountains throughout the I-355 Corridor area. Drinking fountains provide trail users with cool refreshment after and during trail use. Drinking fountains are especially appreciated on warm summer days after a long jog, walk, bicycle ride, or other trail activity. Planning Consortium members and other participating agencies should install drinking fountains throughout the I-355 Corridor area where feasible and logical.

Bicycle Parking

Bicycle parking provides bicyclists with a designated area to lock their bicycles. Constructing bicycle parking at trailheads and other key destinations along a trail (i.e. downtowns, places of work, etc.) makes the use of the trail system within the I-355 Corridor area more practical and user-friendly. Bicycle Parking also encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation to access and use the trails system. The I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies should construct designated bicycle parking areas where logical for these benefits and more.

Automobile Parking

Parking for automobiles and other motorized vehicles should be provided at trailheads. Providing parking is essential to achieve a high rate of trail accessibility for all residents in the I-355 Corridor area. Parking allows bicyclists the ability to transport their bicycle from home to the trail system and allows those living far from the trail system the opportunity to drive to the trail system and utilize it.

Rest Areas

Benches, shading, shelter, drinking fountains, restrooms, informational signage, picnic tables, and other amenities are often found in rest areas. These areas make trails more usable for all groups by providing a place to sit and rest along a trail system. Rest areas should be relaxing places and should be strategically located along trails.

Trash Receptacles

Placing trash receptacles at trailheads, rest areas, and other logical locations along a trail system helps keep a trail system clean and aesthetically pleasing. Installing trash receptacles at these locations will display to the public the importance members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies place on being environmental stewards. Making the trail network along I-355 environmentally-friendly should be a priority of the Consortium and other participating agencies. Placing trash receptacles along the trail system is a good way to minimize the impact of trails on the environment.

Pet Amenities

Where appropriate, members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies should consider installing pet amenities along trails. An example of a pet amenity is a drinking fountain placed low to the ground for a dog to use. Signage informing trail users about any leash laws in the Corridor should also be displayed.

Vistas/Views

Many trails are located in scenic areas with aesthetically pleasing surroundings. When and where possible, trails should make the most of these surroundings and provide trail users with scenic vistas/views. These vistas/views are often provided with the construction of “look out” points or other structures.

Restrooms

Restrooms should be placed at trailheads and rest areas along multi-use trails, primarily along regional trails. Restrooms are necessary and highly sought after by trail users. Providing restrooms at trailheads is convenient and essential, however, due to their costs, careful consideration for their location at only specific, key locations is recommended.

Directional Signage/Maps/Kiosk

Directional signage, trail maps, and/or kiosks help guide trail users along a trail system. Directional signage, trail maps, and/or kiosks often inform trail users where any trail amenities are located along the trail, what users can expect from the trail in general, and how long the trail is. Trail safety information should also be posted at these locations. The I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies should install one or all of these trail amenities at trailheads and other strategic locations.

Mileage Markers

Mileage markers are an effective way for trail users to monitor how far they’ve come on a trail and how far they have yet to go. Joggers, bicyclists, and other trail users often reference mileage markers to ensure they achieve whatever distance goal they’ve set for themselves.

Fitness Stations

Pull ups, push ups, balancing on a beam, and climbing up a rope wall are some of the many challenges commonly offered at fitness stations along a trail system. Installing fitness stations along a trail is an effective way of breaking up a trail users experience.

Boat Launch Site/Canoe/Kayak

Water trails can only be used with the installation of a boat launch site. Boat launch sites provide access to water trails for canoe and kayak enthusiasts. Providing accessible boat launch sites and rental facilities are essential trail amenities for the proper use of these trails.

Multi-Use Trail Striping

A 4 inch wide centerline stripe should be painted on all regional trails and multi-use trails 12 feet in width or greater. Trails connecting to regional trails should also contain striping. Painting centerline striping on trails will allow for a more orderly flow of pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Accessible Trails

The I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies should make every effort to ensure all trails within the I-355 corridor are ADA accessible. Trails are a public use that should be made as widely available as possible. All asphalt and concrete trails should not contain slopes exceeding 5% to eliminate the need for handrails and minimize maintenance costs. These trails should be 5 feet wide to comfortably accommodate a wheelchair. Consortium members should reference ADA standards before any new trail construction or enhancements take place.

Safe Routes/Eliminate Potential Hazards

AASHTO standards for on-street bicycle routes should guide any new construction of on-street bicycle routes within the I-355 corridor area. Using the standards established by AASHTO would eliminate a number of potential hazards and create a safer environment for all trail users. Making trail safety information widely available to users throughout the I-355 Corridor area would also reduce risk of accidents and hazards.

Section 6: Trail Recommendations

As shown on the existing trails maps, the trail networks of the Villages of Homer Glen, Lemont, New Lenox, the City of Lockport, and the Forest Preserve District of Will County vary in scale and development. A majority of the trails in the municipalities are “planned” and only a few of them are “existing” while the Forest Preserve District of Will County trails system is far more developed and has a greater number of “existing” trails. The recommendations of this Plan are presented to improve and enhance the existing and future trail system along the I-355 Corridor area. These recommendations should be enacted through the use of partnerships and other agreements among the municipalities of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies.

The following recommendations should supplement the Trails Master Plan Evaluation Criteria in evaluating future proposals and in guiding the actions of the I-355 Planning Consortium.

Meetings held with Planning Consortium representatives and other participating agencies produced a number of trail system improvement suggestions including linking trails systems to transit stations, making trails ADA accessible, adopting a regional trail network name, and others. Additional recommendations should be obtained from the residents of each municipality in the I-355 Corridor area to further enhance the regions’ trail system. The following is a list of trail improvements that should be undertaken, promoted, or encouraged by the members of the I-355



I-355 AREA TRAILS MASTER PLAN May 2009
Houseal Lavigne Associates

Consortium and other participating agencies that were discussed at Plan meetings.

Fill in the Gaps

To enhance the connectivity of trails throughout the I-355 Corridor area, members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies should take necessary steps to “fill in” existing trail gaps. In many instances, a community will have multiple trails leading into a neighboring community, but the neighboring community will have no plans to meet those trails. To prevent these trail system “gaps”, municipalities and other agencies should discuss and coordinate their trails planning efforts. Figures 6 and 7 contain the locations of existing gaps within the trail system.

Link Trails to Key Community Facilities

Meeting attendees expressed a desire for the trails network throughout the I-355 Corridor area to link to transit stations and other key community facilities in the area, including Metra and Pace stations, schools, parks, and trailheads. By linking trails to these locations, residents would be provided with additional access to alternative modes of transportation.

Linking trails to these locations would also make it more feasible for area residents to refrain from using an automobile or other motorized vehicle to get to and from work and other key destinations. With fewer drivers on the roads, the cost of maintaining roads would decrease, air quality would improve, traffic would lessen, and quality of life



of key community facilities throughout the I-355 Corridor area.

Develop Trails Using AASHTO Standards

Trails in the I-355 Corridor area should be developed using AASHTO Standards as they pertain to bicycle use. AASHTO provides guidelines for the development of on- and off-road bicycle trails and bicycle facilities. Their guidelines create safe, convenient, and well designed facilities for bicyclists to use. Constructing facilities according to AASHTO standards would make the use of bicycles and trails a more viable mode of transportation. AASHTO has also developed standards for various trail types. A two-directional trail is recommended to have a minimum width of 10 feet and 2 foot shoulders should also be provided on each side of the trail. Developing these shoulders ensures safe passage for pedestrians, bicyclists, and others from trees, poles, signs, and other objects that may obstruct trail users.

Adopt a Name for the I-355 Trail

The “Veterans Memorial Trail” and the “Limestone Heritage Corridor” were two of the names suggested by consortium members and other participating agencies for the trail along the I-355 Tollway. Adopting a name for the trail would help unify the trails throughout the I-355 Corridor area and would make the trail more recognizable. Marketing the trail would also become easier. Adopting a trail name would also assist the Planning Consortium and other participating agencies in obtaining state and federal funding for trail



The I-355 Planning Consortium should organize efforts to adopt an official name for the trail along the I-355 Tollway.

Make all Trails ADA Accessible

The trails in the I-355 Corridor area should be made accessible to as many groups as possible. To achieve this, new trails should be made ADA accessible and existing ones should be modified to be ADA accessible where feasible. Trails should be built wide enough and sturdy enough to accommodate wheelchairs comfortably. Ramps standards and all other ADA requirements should be complied with.

Require Developer Fees and/or Donations

To help fund the construction of trails in their communities, municipalities in the I-355 Corridor area should require developers to assist with the development of their trail networks. Municipalities should require developers to either put cash into a trails fund in lieu of installing a trail, build a trail already planned by the municipality to run along or through their development, or secure easements for future trail development if they fail to build the trail immediately.

Add Crossing Enhancements

Many existing and proposed trails in the I-355 Corridor area cross wide and busy streets. Crossing enhancements should be made at these sites to provide a safer and more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere for trail users. Members of the I-355 consortium



should consider include installing signalized crosswalks or crossings indicating when a trail user should cross a street and “refuge islands” which provide an oasis for trail users and break up the distance a trail user must travel to cross a street.

Other crossing enhancements that should be considered include pedestrian over- and underpasses. Pedestrian over- and underpasses would provide trail users with safe passage over busy streets by separating them entirely from the path of passing vehicles. Crossing enhancements vary in cost and effectiveness. I-355 Planning Consortium members and other participating agencies should weigh the benefits and costs of each crossing enhancement type and determine which would be most effective.

Obtain Community Input

The I-355 Area Trails Master Plan should be presented in its current form to the residents of the Village of Homer Glen, Lemont, New Lenox, the City of Lockport, and others living in the I-355 Corridor area to obtain their input. These municipalities should host a series of community outreach events including workshops and charrettes to ensure the desires and opinions of residents in the I-355 Corridor area are known and taken into consideration. Collecting and incorporating the opinion of the public will help garner support for the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan among the public and make the Plan more complete. Obtaining the opinion of residents is also likely to make implementation of the Plan easier.



Trail Legend

- Lockport Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Lemont Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Homer Glen Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- New Lenox Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Forest Preserve District of Will County**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- I-355 Trail**
 - Planned
- Existing Gaps in Trail System**
- Gap Reference Number**
- Incorporated Area**
- Unincorporated Area**
- Forest Preserve**
- Open Space**
- Water Feature**

**Figure 6:
Existing Gaps In Trail System - North**

Figures 6 and 7 display the location of “gaps” identified in the existing/planned trail system. Providing trails in these identified areas would increase the overall connectivity of the trails system in the I-355 planning area and make it more integrated. The “gaps” identified in Figures 6 and 7 should be used to help target areas for additional trails. The path of the black dashed lines are not meant to display exact locations for trails, but show general areas where connections should be made in the trails system.

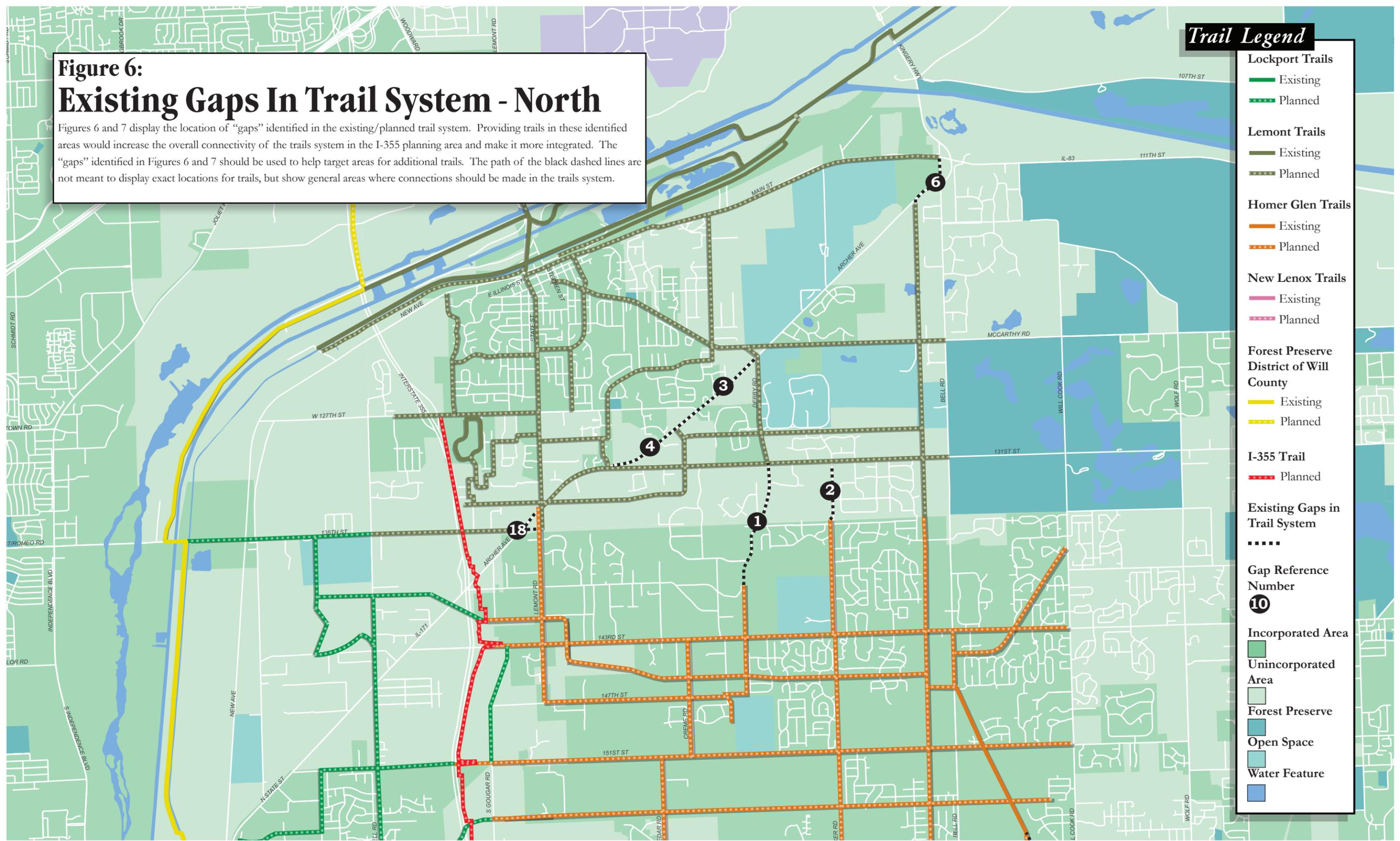
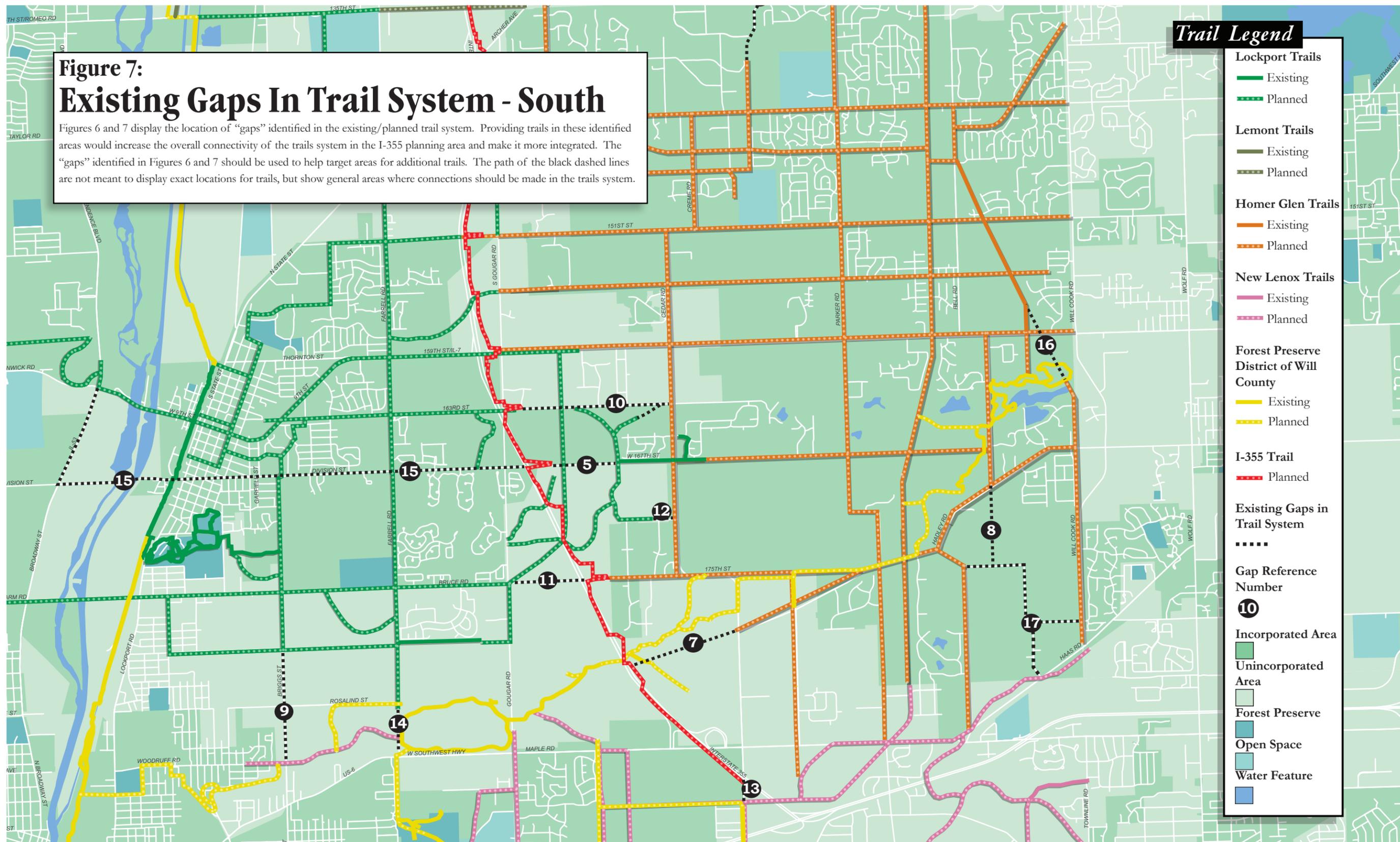


Figure 7: Existing Gaps In Trail System - South

Figures 6 and 7 display the location of “gaps” identified in the existing/planned trail system. Providing trails in these identified areas would increase the overall connectivity of the trails system in the I-355 planning area and make it more integrated. The “gaps” identified in Figures 6 and 7 should be used to help target areas for additional trails. The path of the black dashed lines are not meant to display exact locations for trails, but show general areas where connections should be made in the trails system.



Trail Legend

- Lockport Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Lemont Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Homer Glen Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- New Lenox Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Forest Preserve District of Will County**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- I-355 Trail**
 - Planned
- Existing Gaps in Trail System**
 -
- Gap Reference Number**
 - 10
- Incorporated Area**
 - Green
- Unincorporated Area**
 - Light Grey
- Forest Preserve**
 - Dark Green
- Open Space**
 - Light Blue
- Water Feature**
 - Blue

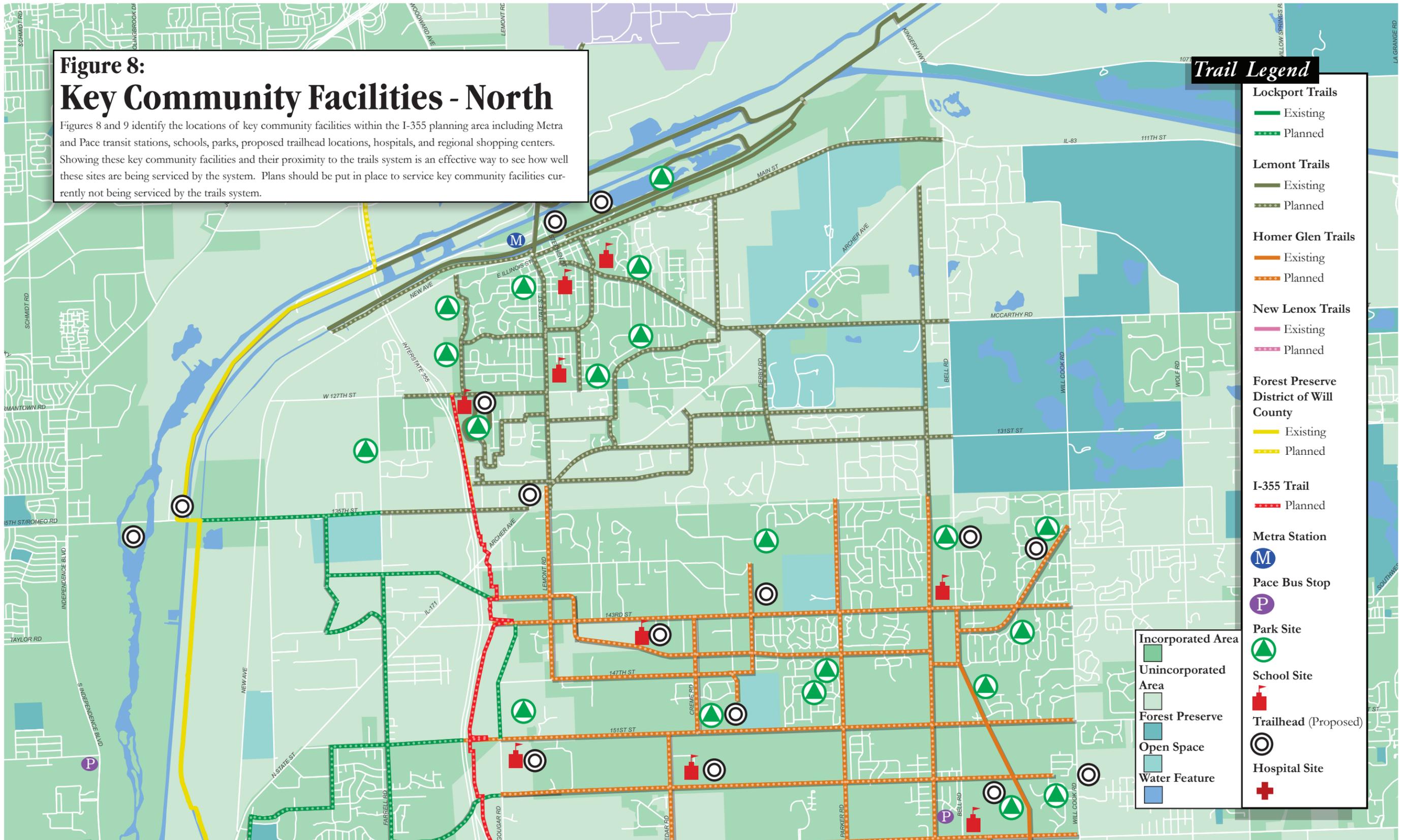
Figure 8: Key Community Facilities - North

Figures 8 and 9 identify the locations of key community facilities within the I-355 planning area including Metra and Pace transit stations, schools, parks, proposed trailhead locations, hospitals, and regional shopping centers. Showing these key community facilities and their proximity to the trails system is an effective way to see how well these sites are being serviced by the system. Plans should be put in place to service key community facilities currently not being serviced by the trails system.

Trail Legend

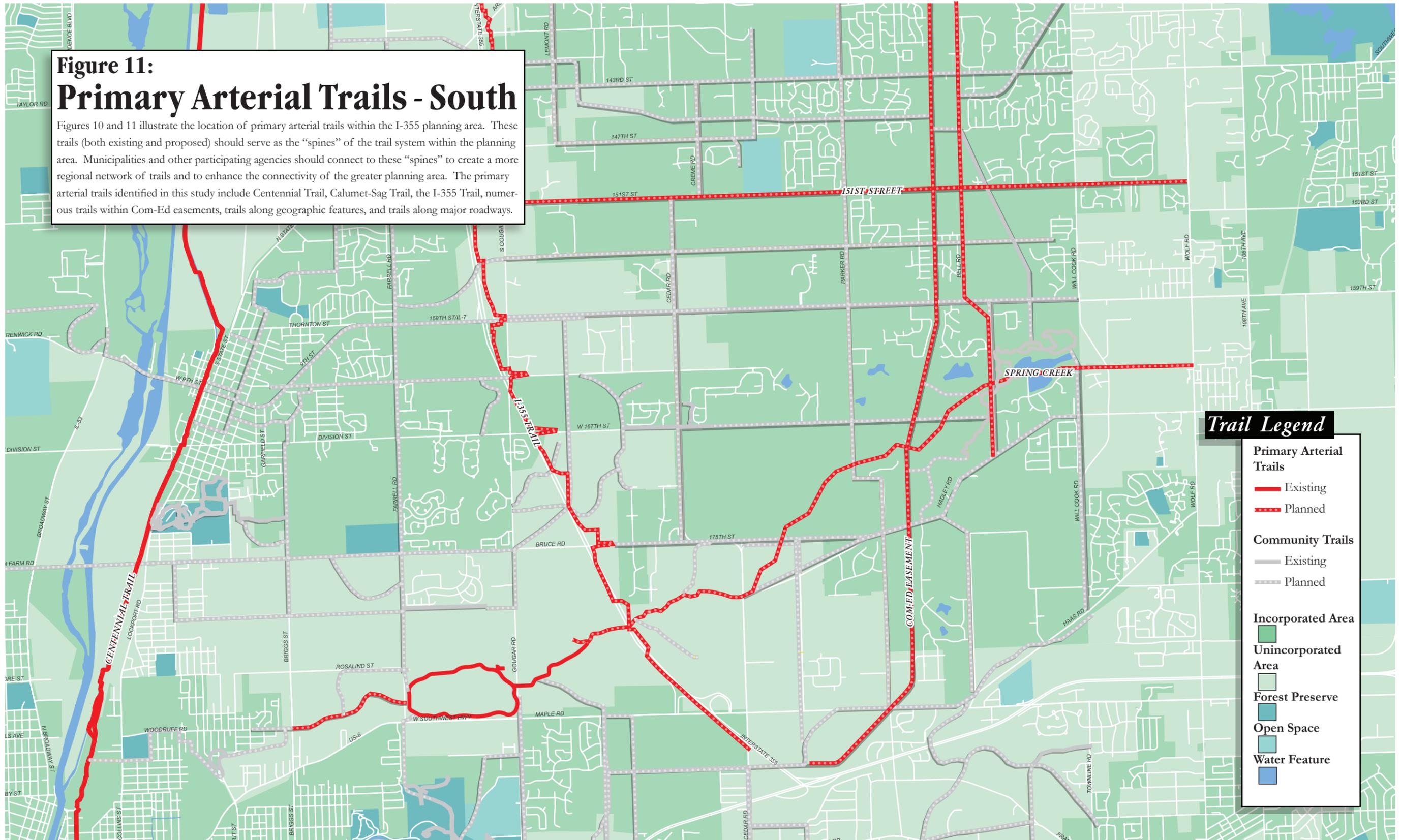
- Lockport Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Lemont Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Homer Glen Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- New Lenox Trails**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- Forest Preserve District of Will County**
 - Existing
 - Planned
- I-355 Trail**
 - Planned
- Metra Station**
- Pace Bus Stop**
- Park Site**
- School Site**
- Trailhead (Proposed)**
- Hospital Site**

- Incorporated Area**
- Unincorporated Area**
- Forest Preserve**
- Open Space**
- Water Feature**



**Figure 11:
Primary Arterial Trails - South**

Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the location of primary arterial trails within the I-355 planning area. These trails (both existing and proposed) should serve as the “spines” of the trail system within the planning area. Municipalities and other participating agencies should connect to these “spines” to create a more regional network of trails and to enhance the connectivity of the greater planning area. The primary arterial trails identified in this study include Centennial Trail, Calumet-Sag Trail, the I-355 Trail, numerous trails within Com-Ed easements, trails along geographic features, and trails along major roadways.



Trail Legend

- Primary Arterial Trails**
 - Existing
 - - - Planned
- Community Trails**
 - Existing
 - - - Planned
- Incorporated Area**
 -
- Unincorporated Area**
 -
- Forest Preserve**
 -
- Open Space**
 -
- Water Feature**
 -

Section 7: General Cost Estimates

It is important for the Villages of Homer Glen, Lemont, New Lenox, the City of Lockport, the Forest Preserve District of Will County, and other participating agencies to perform an internal analysis of their cost estimates for constructing and maintaining different types of trails. By performing these analyses, consortium members and other agencies can more effectively budget and plan for future new trail construction and existing trail maintenance.

Presently, different types of trails have varying construction and maintenance costs. Mulch trails, for example, can require new wood chips as often as every year but at a relatively low cost while asphalt multi-use trails and concrete trails require less frequent higher-level maintenance. Maintenance for dirt, limestone, mowed, and gravel trails is minimal.

The construction and maintenance cost figures listed below are general estimates based on typical costs in 2008 dollars. Prices of materials, labor, and other costs are constantly fluctuating and exact figures would be impossible to predict. The 2008 costs below are included in the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan to provide members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies with an estimate of the expected costs for both trail and trail amenity construction and maintenance costs. These estimates are for budgeting purposes only and should be updated annually to reflect the most current and accurate figures.

Estimated Construction Costs

The costs for trails and trail facility construction vary widely depending on trail and facility type. A list of typical unit construction costs in 2008 dollars is shown below. Though

this information can be useful in making preliminary cost estimates, large construction projects like bridges or pedestrian overpasses/underpasses are not reflected in them. Trail construction projects with detailed design development requirements are also not accounted for in these cost estimates (including architecture, engineering, and utility fees). The cost estimates are based upon recent construction bids obtained for various trails projects throughout the Chicago region.

Construction Cost per Trail Type

- Asphalt - \$35 per linear foot (10' wide)
- Concrete - \$30 per linear foot (sidewalks are typically 5' wide and are replaced every 15 years)
- Brick - \$90 per linear foot (8' wide).
- Mowed – no construction costs
- Dirt – no construction costs
- Mulch - \$5 per linear foot (7' wide)
- Gravel - \$20 per linear foot (10' wide)
- Limestone - \$15 per linear foot (8' wide)
- Boardwalk - \$45 per linear foot (12' wide)

Signage

- Informational/Educational - \$1,250.00
- Directional - \$400.00
- Mile Markers - \$300.00
- Entry Sign - \$750.00

Furniture/Amenities

- Benches - \$600.00
- Picnic Tables - \$1,000.00
- Trash Receptacles - \$700.00
- Drinking Fountains - \$4,000.00 (without utilities)
- Bollards - \$1,500.00
- Bicycle Racks - \$750.00
- Fitness Stations - \$2,000 - \$3,000 per station depending on design.
- Landscaping - Depends upon variety and amount of landscaping.
- Screening/Fencing - Depends upon material types, height of fence, and proposed length.

Facilities/Buildings/Parking

- Restrooms - Typically, \$40,000.00 without utilities, \$175,000.00 with utilities. Also depend upon distance of existing infrastructure.
- Shelter - \$50,000.00 to \$100,000.00
- Paved Parking Space - \$2,000.00 per space

Maintenance Costs

All trail types require maintenance. The type, amount, and frequency of trail maintenance depend on trail type and volume of use. The following maintenance costs are estimates based upon recent bids obtained from throughout the Chicago region. These costs are not exact and are likely to fluctuate over time. This maintenance should serve as guides however and should be updated annually.

Part of the burden of maintaining trails can be lifted from members of the I-355 Planning Consortium, the Forest Preserve District of Will County and other participating agencies by developing an "Adopt-a-Trail" program or other volunteer trail maintenance initiatives. Trail maintenance volunteers can provide some routine maintenance to trails.

- Bike Trail per mile (Paved/Routine Maintenance) - \$6,000 - \$10,000 based upon annual maintenance and life cycle for a 10' wide asphalt trail. Cost should include mowing and clearing of shoulders and litter pick-up.
- Parking Lots - \$1,000 per parking lot of approximately 20-50 parking spaces. Should include maintenance and possible snow removal.
- Mowing - Operational expense based upon hourly rates, equipment costs, and fuel.
- Bridges and Piers - Varies depending on materials and length of bridge/pier.
- Restrooms - Varies depending on type of restroom, amenities, and frequency of use. Estimate \$5,000 per year to maintain facility.

Operational/Promotional Costs

I-355 Planning Consortium members and other participating agencies should factor costs associated with operating and promoting the trails system into their budgets. The creation and distribution of trail maps, trail safety guides, special event notices, and other materials could be included in those costs. Other costs could include conducting counts of individual trail use and other on-site operations.

Section 8: Implementation Strategy

The I-355 Area Trails Master Plan is an agreed upon strategy for moving forward with the planning and development of trails throughout the I-355 Corridor area. The Plan makes a series of recommendations to enhance and improve the trails system and provides graphics visualizing them. The recommendations are meant to plan for the construction of a regional trails system along I-355 and to make the finished trails system product ADA accessible, cost-effective, safe, convenient, and a practical alternative mode of transportation. The implementation section outlines the next steps members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other agencies should take to implement the recommendations in this Plan and bring it to fruition.

Adopt the Plan

The Villages of Homer Glen, Lemont, New Lenox, the City of Lockport, the Forest Preserve District of Will County and all other agencies participating in the planning process of the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan should adopt the Plan and use it on a daily basis for all trails-related decisions. Adopting the plan would ensure the creation of an coordinated and integrated regional trails system in the I-355 Corridor area. Each consortium member and other participating agencies should incorporate the Trails Master Plan into their annual budgeting process. Municipalities involved with the development of this plan should also consider passing a resolution of support for this document.

It is important to note that at the time this document was created, the Village of Homer Glen was in the process of creating its own Master Trails Plan. The location of its trails may vary slightly from what is shown on the maps in this plan.

Use the Evaluation Criteria

All trail projects, including new construction, maintenance, enhancement, and others, should be analyzed using the evaluation criteria of this Plan. Utilizing these criteria will allow municipalities and other agencies to establish trail project priorities and make decisions based on sound and consistent reasoning. The evaluation criteria will assist municipalities and agencies with their budgeting as well by ensuring that tax dollars are being spent in a fashion that addresses the needs of area residents.

Coordinate Plans and Connections

It is critical for members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies to coordinate their trail plans and trail connections with one another and other governmental agencies. Representatives from each entity and the I-355 Tollway should continue to meet consistently to update others on their respective plans. Meeting consistently with other governmental stakeholders and representatives from the I-355 Tollway will ensure a coordinated effort by all governments and other agencies involved in the process. Consistent meetings will also ensure a consistency in the construction of trails beyond jurisdictional boundaries.

Follow Government Standards

The members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies should continue to follow federal, state, and local standards when developing or maintaining their trails. The resulting trails system would be safe, accessible, and well-maintained.

Budgeting

The recommendations in this Plan should be incorporated into the operating budgets of I-355 Planning Consortium members and other participating agencies. Including the recommendations in various budgets would allow trails and trail facility development to be budgeted for and prioritized when enough funding becomes available. Funding for trails projects can also be obtained through alternative funding sources including government grants, donations, and volunteer efforts.

Alternative Funding Sources

Members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies should explore all available funding sources when implementing the recommendations of this Plan, including alternative funding sources. These funding sources should supplement the annual budgets of cities. Some potential funding sources include donations, volunteer efforts, and grants.

Grants

The Federal government and the State of Illinois administer a number of grants to assist local governments and other agencies with the acquisition of land and park development including the Illinois Department of Natural Resource's Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) and the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant program.

- The Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) program is a state-financed grant program providing funding to local municipalities and other agencies for the acquisition or development of land for public parks

and open space. Trails are eligible for funding from this program. Projects can receive as much as 50% of a project's cost in funding assistance. Grants can be awarded for up to \$750,000 for land acquisition and up to \$450,000 for development/renovations. This program is similar to the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program (LWCF).

- Illinois Bicycle Path Program - The Illinois Bicycle Path Program assists local governments and other qualifying units of government construct, rehabilitate, and acquire non-motorized bicycle paths and directly related support facilities like rest areas and drinking fountains. Up to 50% of a project's cost can be obtained from this program with a maximum request of \$200,000 per year. No maximum exists for acquisition projects.
- Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program - The Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program or ITEP is a state-run program providing funding for community based projects expanding travel choices. Projects improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the transportation infrastructure also can receive funding from the ITEP program. Projects can receive as much as 80% in project reimbursement while the other 20% remains the responsibility of the project sponsor.
- Members of the I-355 Planning Consortium and other participating agencies should consider establishing a program to actively seek-out donations from local businesses to help fund the implementation of the I-355 Master Trails Plan. If events are held on a portion of the trail system, municipalities and other agencies should attempt to attract sponsors for the

event to help lessen the cost burden of hosting the event. Any sponsor-provided funds left over from the event could then be put towards implementation of the Trails Master Plan.

- Municipalities and other organizations should consider reserving a sales tax increment for the portion of trails they oversee. Funds raised could be used for the implementation of the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan.
- Forming partnerships with affiliate organizations is an effective way to lessen the cost of maintaining trails throughout the I-355 Corridor area while maintaining control of the trails. Consortium members and other agencies should consider forming partnerships to fund the construction, maintenance, and improvement of the regional trail system.
- Municipalities should require developers to donate cash into a trail fund in lieu of installing a trail, build a trail already planned by the municipality to run along or through their development, or secure easements for future trail development if they fail to build the trail immediately to help fund the construction and maintenance of trails is another option municipalities should consider to help implement the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan.
- Donations and volunteering efforts should be considered as forms of alternative funding sources. I-355 Planning Consortium members and other participating agencies should pursue donations and volunteers to help alleviate some of the costs associated with operating, maintaining, and constructing trails. Donations can come from residents, businesses, and corporations. Groups may also volunteer to help maintain

a section of trail. “Adopt-a-Trail” is a program commonly found throughout Illinois where various groups or organizations “adopt” a section of trail and are responsible for maintaining it. Having community members maintain trails helps create a sense of community and a pride of ownership for the residents who volunteer.

Promote Cooperation, Partnerships, and Participation

The I-355 Planning Consortium and other agencies participating in the development of the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan should continue to cooperate and coordinate trails efforts with one another to help further establish a regional trail network through the I-355 Corridor area. These same entities should form partnerships with one another and other agencies to maximize their ability to plan for, construct, and maintain trail facilities. Partnerships could be formed with School Districts, Will County, and other organizations.

Monitor Trail Usage

Usage of existing trails should be monitored to justify future actions including adding restrooms, places to sit, rest areas, drinking fountains, signalized crossings, and other trail amenities and safety features. Data collected can also be included in grant applications and would be extremely useful in justifying new trails and new trail amenities when seeking grant funding. Consortium members and other interested agencies should consider teaming with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to undertake annual counts of multi-use trails.

Promote the Plan

I-355 Planning Consortium members and other agencies should keep a copy of the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan on file at each of their main offices and at libraries for corridor residents to view. Electronic versions should also be posted on each municipality’s/agency’s website for viewing.

Making the Plan widely available would increase resident awareness of the trails system in their community and increase their use of the trails system.

Update the Trails Master Plan on a Regular Basis

The I-355 Planning Consortium should update the I-355 Area Trails Master Plan regularly to help ensure the Plan remains up-to-date and relevant. The consortium and other participating agencies should schedule regular updates to the Plan to ensure the Plan does not become outdated.

Appendix: Regional Trails Map

Figure 13: Comparing Local Trails to Regional Plans - South

Figures 12 and 13 compare regional trail plans from CMAP/NIPC, the Council of Mayors, and Will County to those of the I-355 Planning Consortium. These figures are included in the appendix for reference only and are not an element of the I-355 Trails Master Plan. Local municipal trail plans contain substantial trail overlap with regional and local plans. To lessen this and to better coordinate their efforts, members of the I-355 Planning Consortium should meet with these regional entities to avoid overlap and clarify trail responsibilities and plans.

