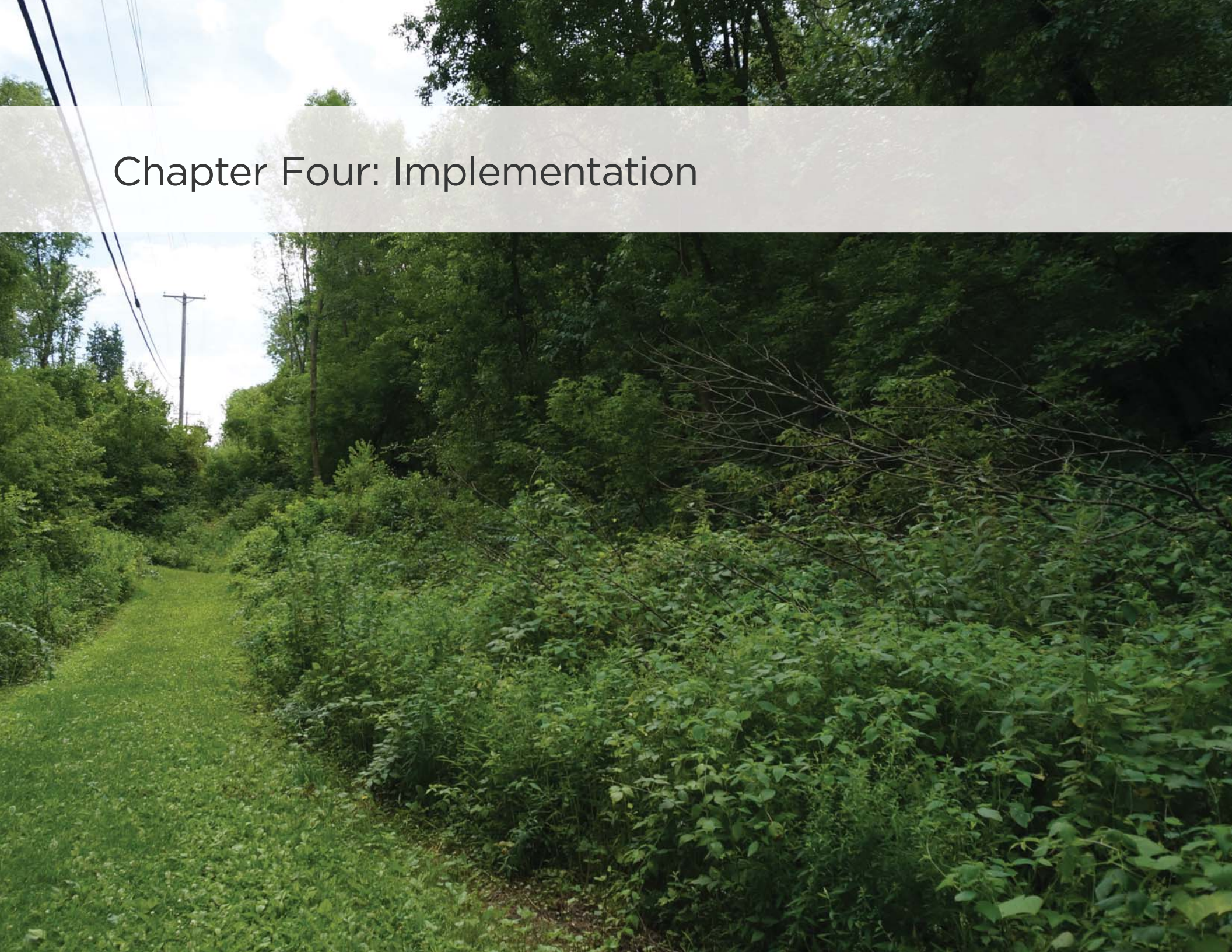


Chapter Four: Implementation



The Flyway Trail will offer area residents and visitors unique and diverse recreation and transportation experiences.

Implementation

Introduction

The Flyway Trail Feasibility Study provides a comprehensive set of recommendations for trail alignments along the Mississippi River corridor that, once implemented, will firmly establish the Flyway Trail as one of Wisconsin's great bicycling trails. Implementing the recommended alignments contained in this document will require commitment, persistence, creativity, partnerships, funding, and continued community support.

As Buffalo County and its local, state, and federal partners work to bring the Flyway Trail to life, a clear, action-oriented implementation strategy is necessary for success. This chapter of the study provides guidance to assist with implementation activities. The chapter begins with a set of five early action items to sustain momentum for the Flyway Trail as the young brand and concept grows into a tangible destination and activity. A general phasing strategy is provided to guide the allocation of resources over a ten to fifteen-year period. Cost estimates for the different trail typologies and recommended alignments are listed in this chapter, as are various local and external funding sources to assist with project financing. The chapter concludes with a discussion of administrative structure and responsibilities to maximize the full capacities and resources of all parties involved in creating the Flyway Trail.

Early Action Steps

The following early action steps provide lower-cost opportunities to sustain momentum built by the Buffalo County Land & Trails Trust during the course of this study and lay the foundation on which the Flyway Trail can grow and evolve over time. These early action steps are not listed in sequential order, but all are essential to making the Trail a reality.

Establish an Administrative Structure

At first glance, the number of potential partners involved with the development of the Flyway Trail may seem intimidating. In addition to the BCL&TT, local businesses and engaged citizens, there are more than a dozen local, state, and federal agencies and organizations that can play a role in shaping the Flyway Trail. An administrative structure and accompanying responsibilities for project partners should be established in order to develop effective partnerships and utilize the resources and capacities of Flyway Trail collaborators to the fullest extent possible. The end of this chapter provides a potential administrative structure put forth by the BCL&TT. It offers guidance for creating a joint powers administrative model. Such a model has worked successfully for implementing and operating multi-jurisdictional trail projects across the country.

Develop a Wayfinding Plan

The placement of wayfinding signs along the Flyway Trail will indicate to bicyclists their direction of travel, location of destinations, and the distance (and travel time by bike) to those destinations, in turn increasing comfort, convenience and utility of the bicycle network. Wayfinding signs also provide a branding element to raise the profile of the Flyway Trail.

Buffalo County should create a Flyway Trail Wayfinding Signage Plan that identifies:

- Sign locations along existing and planned bicycle routes

- Sign type – the information to include and the sign design
- Destinations to highlight on each sign – key destinations for bicyclists
- Approximate distance and riding time to each destination

The wayfinding system can integrate Flyway Trail branding elements with guidance from the Federal Highway Administration's *Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) to identify regional and local trail facilities and distinguish signature trail segments and elements.

WAYFINDING SIGNAGE FAMILY

Sample wayfinding signage illustrations for the Flyway Trail, including a directory map, an orientation map, directional wayfinding signs, and trail mile markers.



Create a Bike Rack Program

A bicycle rack program should be developed to encourage local bicycle parking installation at local businesses, parks, schools, museums, tourist destinations, and other area landmarks. Buffalo County Land & Trails Trust should seek external funding sources to assist with rack production and installation in order to offer these racks to community partners at no cost or at a discounted rate. In exchange for discounted bicycle parking installation, community partners should agree to provide marketing materials and information at their place of business to raise awareness of the trail and encourage its use.



Sample bicycle racks incorporating the Flyway Trail logo.

Continue Public Outreach and Engagement Activities

Public outreach and engagement activities are integral to the success of the Flyway Trail. Building a strong brand and identity, growing and sustaining public support, and transforming public agencies and the community at-large into stewards of the trail all rely on continued public outreach and engagement. Events like the September 19, 2015, Fun Ride raise awareness for the trail and provide opportunities for area residents to play an active role in shaping recreation, transportation, and tourism assets and amenities in Buffalo County. The Buffalo County Land & Trails Trust and its community partners should develop an engagement strategy that combines fun and engaging public events for local community members, a strong online and social media presence, and an emphasis on recreational tourism to position the Flyway Trail as an indispensable community resource.



Flyway Trail cupcakes awaited participants at the end of the September 19th Fun Ride



Establish the Highway 35 Shoulder Bikeway as the Spine of the Flyway Trail

Highway 35 is the backbone of the Flyway Trail. While parallel shared-use paths, local bike routes, and scenic recreational routes will add to the Flyway Trail experience, Highway 35 provides a continuous and easily implementable foundation on which the trail can grow and evolve over time. Through Buffalo County and much of Wisconsin, this highway also doubles as the Mississippi River Trail, a national bike route along the Mississippi River, and the Great River Road National Scenic Byway, one the longest and most important scenic byways in America. Buffalo County, the Buffalo County Land & Trails Trust, the Wisconsin DOT, and local project partners should coordinate efforts to sign the entire length of Highway 35 from the Chippewa River to the Great River State Trail as the Flyway Trail using branded Flyway Trail route signs in accordance with MUTCD standards.

Continue Land & Easement Acquisition

While many segments of the Flyway Trail can be implemented using existing rights-of-way, the majority of shared-use path projects will require the acquisition of additional property and/or easements. Because shared-use paths provide the most accessible, comfortable, and enjoyable trail experience for users of all ages and abilities, it is imperative that the Buffalo County Land & Trails Trust pursue opportunities to assemble land and easements for shared-use path development throughout the corridor. Although acquisition of land and easements should be prioritized for trail segments connecting to existing population centers and recreation areas like Rieck's Lake Park and Merrick State Park, opportunities to acquire any lands for shared-use path development along the Flyway Trail corridor should be pursued when they arise.



Easements along utility corridors like this will be critical to the success of the Flyway Trail.

General Phasing Strategy

Constructing the Flyway Trail is a long-term endeavor that will require the proper alignment of political will, local, and external funding, rights-of-way and easements, and community support. In order to maximize the impact of the Flyway Trail's growth and development over time, the following phasing strategy provides general guidance for project partners to implement the recommended alignments. This phasing strategy consists of four general themes that balance the need for short-term successes, sustained momentum, and long-term realization of the Flyway Trail as a premier recreation and transportation asset for Buffalo County and the surrounding region.

Laying the Foundation on Highway 35

As described in the early action steps, Highway 35 is the spine of the Flyway Trail. The establishment of Highway 35 as the primary route for the Flyway Trail in the first two years (by the end of 2017) is essential to create an immediate physical presence for the trail, sustain the momentum generated during the feasibility study process, and provide a foundation for future trail development.

Expanding into Local Communities

There are numerous recommendations to provide additional on-street routes through local communities within the corridor, including Alma, Buffalo City, Cochrane, and Fountain City. These on-street routes represent low-cost, easily implementable projects that can expand the reach of the Flyway Trail and continue to sustain interest in and support for the trail in its beginning years. These on-street routes should be completed by 2020.

Changing Form, Changing Minds

Developing the first shared-use path within the corridor will be a significant milestone in the evolution of the Flyway Trail. This project will change the perception and use of the Flyway Trail from a tourism and recreational bicycling amenity to a community-wide asset that encourages walking, bicycling, and other trail-related activities for people of all ages and abilities. This first shared-use path project should be selected based on a variety of factors, including proximity to population centers and recreation areas, ease of property and easement acquisition, and topography. Because limited property ownership data was available at the time of the feasibility study, the time frame for this phase of project development is difficult to project; however, completion of the first shared-use path project should occur by 2022 to sustain project momentum, increase the diversity of trail users, and change public perception of the trail from a tourism asset to a community-wide, quality of life asset.

Ongoing Shared-Use Path Development

Land acquisition, easement procurement, engineering and design, and project funding can be time consuming processes. In order to facilitate continuous, incremental development of the shared-use path segments of the Flyway Trail, the study team recommends that the project partners pursue opportunities for shared-use path development on an ongoing basis.

Opinion of Probable Cost

Cost opinions are an essential planning tool used for programming capital improvements and drafting applications for external funding sources. Cost opinions were developed for each facility type based on initial planning-level examples of similar constructed projects and industry averages. These costs were then refined with the assistance of local staff based on local experience. All facility designs and associated cost estimates proposed in this plan are conceptual in nature and should undergo final engineering design and review through

coordination between all concerned departments in order to arrive at detailed project costs. These costs are provided in 2015 dollars and do not include costs for right-of-way acquisition or project design, which can include planning, public process, facility design, and other background work required to implement the project. Cost for right-of-way acquisition can vary considerably. Costs for project design can generally be estimated at 25% of the facility construction cost.

A project cost range (rounded to the nearest thousand dollars) for each type of linear trail facility is listed in the table below.

Table 1: Cost Opinions by Facility Type

Facility Type	Total Miles	Unit Cost Per Mile	Total Cost*	Description
Paved Shared-Use Path	22.0	\$935,000	\$20,570,000	Assumes 10-ft wide paved shared use path, 2-ft shoulders, retaining walls, landscaping, drainage, 4" dashed yellow centerline stripe, and wayfinding signage repeated every 1000'.
Shoulder Bikeway	39.6	\$3,500 \$280,000	\$139,000** \$5,544,000***	Assumes wayfinding and warning signage placed every 1000'. Assumes roughly 50% of recommended shoulder bikeways require widening to provide a 5-ft paved shoulder.
On-Street Signed Bike Route	56.5	\$3,500	\$198,000	Assumes wayfinding and warning signage placed every 1000'.
Bike Lane	3.4	\$30,000	\$102,000	Assumes one 6" stripe and one 4" stripe in each travel direction; Bike Lane symbols placed every 250', and wayfinding, regulatory, and warning signage placed every 1000'.
Total	121.5		\$26,553,000	

* Total costs rounded up to the nearest thousand dollars.

** Cost for signage only for all recommended shoulder bikeways.

*** Cost for addition of paved shoulders for 50% of recommended shoulder bikeways

Funding Sources

Funding the Flyway Trail and its many recommended segments will require a diverse and creative approach. While the funding landscape at the federal level remains uncertain, the project partners must still pursue federal transportation dollars through the current extension of the transportation bill, yet be flexible and spontaneous enough to capitalize on partnerships, in-kind matches, and other non-traditional opportunities to implement the trail. The following section of this chapter provides an overview of funding sources that project partners should utilize.

Federal Funding Sources

The federal government has numerous programs and funding mechanisms to support bicycle and pedestrian projects, most of which are administered by the US Department of Transportation in cooperation with state and regional entities.

MAP-21

The Federal Highway Administration directs the current surface transportation funding and authorization bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, commonly referred to as MAP-21. Many of the funding programs from the previous transportation bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), have been consolidated and reorganized in a manner that allows for greater discretion for state and local entities. The bill has been reauthorized several times.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

MAP-21 divides TAP funding between statewide and local agencies for allocation to transportation projects. According to WisDOT, the agency awarded over 13 million dollars in TAP funding for bicycle- and pedestrian-related projects for the 2014 through 2018 fiscal year cycle. The diverse array of selected projects included a number of trail-oriented initiatives.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)

CMAQ funds transportation projects to reduce ozone and carbon monoxide pollution and meet national ambient area air quality standards (NAAQS) in Clean Air Act non-attainment areas. The construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities using CMAQ funding must explicitly provide a transportation function. CMAQ can provide funds for projects that bring sidewalks into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Non-construction projects such as printed materials related to safe walking are eligible for CMAQ funds as well. These projects must be geared towards walking primarily for transportation rather than recreation and must be included in a plan developed by the State and each Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is intended to achieve significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads by funding projects, strategies and activities consistent with a state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides funding that may be used by States and localities for projects to preserve and improve the conditions on any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects, public road projects, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects include ADA sidewalk modification, recreational trails, bicycle transportation, on- and off-road trail facilities for non-motorized transportation, and infrastructure projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.

Section 402 State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program

Section 402 funds can be used to develop education, enforcement and research programs designed to reduce traffic crashes, deaths, severity of crashes, and property damage. Eligible program areas include reducing impaired driving, reducing speeding, encouraging the use of occupant protection, improving motorcycle safety, and improving bicycle and pedestrian safety. Examples of bicycle and pedestrian safety programs funded by Section 402 are comprehensive school-based pedestrian and bike safety education programs, helmet distribution programs, pedestrian safety programs for older adults, and general community information and awareness programs.

TIGER Discretionary Grants Program

The Department of Transportation's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grants Program was created as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 with the purpose of funding road, rail,

transit and port projects that achieve critical national objectives, including livability, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and safety. Applicants can apply for planning or construction projects. Of the 39 projects awarded nearly \$500 million funding in 2015, sixteen of the projects explicitly incorporate bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities as either a key component of the project or the sole component of and singular purpose for the project. These diverse projects will take place in 34 states. Several of the awards incorporate multiple states. FHWA divides projects into three categories: safety projects, innovation projects, and opportunity projects.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The goal of the Land and Water Conservation Fund is the creation and maintenance of high quality recreation resources through the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. LWCF grants are often combined with grants from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. Interested potential applicants can often access information about both funds in the same materials. Towns, villages, cities, counties, tribal governments, school districts or other state political subdivisions are eligible to apply. Applications are due annually by May 1.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

While not traditionally viewed as a source of funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides money for streetscape revitalization and other improvements that can enhance walking and bicycling. Federal Community Development Block Grant grantees may "use Community Development Block Grants funds for activities that include, but are not limited to: acquiring real

property; reconstructing or rehabilitating housing and other property; building public facilities and improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, community and senior citizen centers and recreational facilities; paying for planning and administrative expenses, such as costs related to developing a consolidated plan and managing Community Development Block Grants funds; provide public services for youths, seniors, or the disabled; and initiatives such as neighborhood watch programs.”

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The federally administered Recreational Trails Program (RTP) uses federal gas excise taxes to fund recreational trails and their facilities. Eligible projects may receive up to 50 percent of the total project cost. RTP funds may be used to build new trails. Towns, villages, cities, counties, tribal governing bodies, school districts, state agencies, federal agencies or incorporated organizations may apply for project funds. In Wisconsin, eligible incorporated organizations must be incorporated under section 181.32 of Wisconsin Statutes. These organizations promote, encourage, or engage in outdoor recreation activities.

State Funding Sources

From 1993 to 2014, Wisconsin has distributed over \$226 million in state and federal funds for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Until 2015, when funding was cut by Governor Walker, Wisconsin was one of 19 states with dedicated bicycle and pedestrian funding. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program dedicated \$1 million per year from year 2013 to 2015. The following section describes bicycle and pedestrian funding provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers a variety of subprograms under the Stewardship Program umbrella. The two most relevant subprograms for potentially funding the Flyway Trail are the Urban Rivers (UR) subprogram and the Acquisition of Development Rights (ADR) subprogram. While the subprogram emphasizes individual goals, each works towards the major goal of supporting “nature-based outdoor recreation”. Funds are acquired through state general obligation bonds. The State raises money by selling bonds to investors and pays off the debt over time.

Applicants may represent towns, villages, cities, counties or tribal governments. Both subprograms described in the preceding section require a local match. Specific rules and funding criteria depend on the subprogram. Program funds may cover up to 50 percent of total project costs. Again, rules vary and should be confirmed by the applicant prior to submitting for funding.

Local Funding Sources

While external funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs continue to be in short supply and high demand, local funds can often be the most reliable funding source to get a project done or develop an encouragement or education program. In addition, local funding is often required as match for external funding sources. With this in mind, it is imperative that Buffalo County and partnering local agencies explore, identify, and pursue one or more of these local funding strategies as a means of implementing the Flyway Trail.

Private and Foundation Funding Sources

People for Bikes Community Grants Program

People for Bikes is a national organization working to make bicycling better throughout the United States through programs and advocacy work. People for Bikes has funded numerous infrastructure projects and education and encouragement programs. Since it first launched in 1999, the program has awarded 341 grants in 49 states, including nine in the State of Wisconsin. Seven of the projects focused on trail development or were related to trail access. The most recent trail related project to use this funding source was entitled “Moving Platteville Outdoors: Improving and Extending the Rountree Branch Recreational Trail” in 2014. The \$10,000 grant was awarded to Platteville Community Arboretum to provide trail upgrades and safe access to adjacent destinations.

Community Foundations

Community and corporate foundations can play an important role in funding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and programs. With a growing evidence base highlighting the connection between the built environment and community health outcomes, health foundations throughout the country have joined environmental foundations to support infrastructure projects that increase opportunities for walking, bicycling and physical activity. National, state, and local foundations have funded initiatives to reduce obesity, increase physical activity, and achieve other positive health-related outcomes.

Local Business Community

Businesses large and small recognize the benefit of bicycling, walking, and related infrastructure as economic drivers and indicators of quality of life. Businesses and communities of all sizes have expressed interest in investing in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that fosters healthy and active communities, creates recreation and transportation choices, and improves quality of life. Support from the business community is often the result of strong relationship-building efforts and may come in a variety of forms, from the funding of capital projects or associated amenities to the provision of volunteers to assist in trail maintenance activities.

Administrative Structure and Responsibilities

Trail governance and administration can take a variety of forms, usually determined by a multitude of factors, from the length and location of the trail to the number of local agencies and their capacities to administer and maintain the facility. Clearly articulated and delegated roles and responsibilities for each partner agency, organization, and group involved in trail development and maintenance are critical to the long-term success of any trail.

While it is common for trails within a single park or trails along an abandoned railroad corridor to have a single managing agency, many larger trails that cross multiple jurisdictions or utilize roadway rights-of-way often require greater oversight and inter-agency collaboration, acquisition, construction, maintenance and operations tasks.

Two potential administrative structures were examined during the course of this study for their potential application to the Flyway Trail: a lead agency model and a joint powers model.

Unlike many trails managed and operated under the lead agency model, the Flyway Trail lacks a contiguous corridor for trail development, like an abandoned railroad. In addition, the trail will consist of both on-road bikeways and off-street shared-use paths, traversing public lands and rights-of-way owned and operated by a multitude of federal, state and local jurisdictions. For these reasons, the single-entity administrative model is not likely a feasible option. The joint powers model, in comparison, provides a more collaborative structure to facilitate trail management and operations through a governing board with representation from

Trail Administration & Management: The Lead Agency Model

The lead agency model for trail management consists of an existing entity providing oversight for all administrative, management, maintenance, and operations tasks. In this model, it is still common for local agencies, non-profits, or foundations to provide financial assistance, assist with litter and trash removal, and develop programming and events to activate the trail facility and increase usage. Support from other project partners is formalized through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or contract to provide services.

State agencies and county governments often employ this administrative model for trails entirely within their jurisdiction, particularly for trails along abandoned railroads or riparian corridors where the governing agency owns a significant length of contiguous property (or has easements granting use). In Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources owns and maintains a number of trails, including the Great River State Trail, the Buffalo River State Trail, and the Elroy Sparta Trail, all of which were built along abandoned railroad lines and connect various state and local recreation and conservation areas.

In southern Wisconsin, the Rock County government receives support from multiple foundations and “friends of the trail” groups to develop and maintain the county’s growing network of linear trails. The functions of these groups are to assemble land for trail development, assist with maintenance activities and costs, encourage trail stewardship among county residents, and address other pertinent needs in order to increase trail usage and create a high quality experience for trail users.



The Great River State Trail (Source: Wisconsin Department of Tourism)

Trail Administration & Management: The Joint Powers Model

Many trails traverse multiple jurisdictions, run through public parks and open spaces, and utilize local roads and state highways where no off-street alternatives are available. In such instances where activities transcend jurisdictions and boundaries, municipalities, counties, local school districts, and other public authorities can exercise joint powers to provide a service, such as a regional trail. The regulations describing such intergovernmental cooperation are expressed in the Section 66.0301 and 66.0303 of the Wisconsin Statutes. As stated in the statutes, a commission created to plan and administer the joint powers of the participating entities “may finance the acquisition, development, remodeling, construction and equipment of land, buildings, and facilities for regional projects. Participating municipalities acting jointly or separately may finance the projects, or an agreed share of the cost of the projects.”

Joint powers boards and commissions have been particularly successful with trail development projects in Minnesota and California, where these intergovernmental agreements are more commonplace. Notable examples include the Cannon Valley Trail Joint Powers Board in Minnesota, the Honey Lake Valley Recreation Authority in Lassen County, California, the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority in San Diego County, California, and the Centennial Trail Joint Powers Board in Kootenai County, Idaho. Joint powers agreements for trail development and maintenance can vary significantly in terms of content, delegation of responsibilities, administrative structure, and other characteristics that outline the nature of the agency and the terms to which all parties agree.

JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT ROCORI Trail Construction Board

The parties to this Agreement are governmental units of the State of Minnesota. This Agreement is made pursuant to the authority conferred upon the parties by Minnesota Statute §471.59.

1. PURPOSE

The Cities of Rockville, Cold Spring and Richmond (collectively, “Cities” and individually, by their common names) have been working together to design, construct and fund a regional trail connecting the terminus of the anticipated Glacial Lakes Trail outside of Richmond, through Cold Spring, to the northern boundary of Rockville

partner agencies and citizens from the community. This model better accommodates the unique conditions along the study corridor and is the recommended administrative structure to govern the Flyway Trail.

Through a joint powers agreement and memoranda of understanding, the participating agencies and organizations can play an active role in securing funds, designing and constructing the trail, and maintaining the facility as a valuable asset for the region. The joint powers agreement can be amended to include additional partners as the scope or scale of the project changes. Potential entities to be included on the joint powers board include:

- Buffalo County Land & Trails Trust
- Buffalo County
- Local Municipalities (Alma, Buffalo City, Cochrane, Fountain City, and Nelson)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

For those agencies that do not participate as members of the joint powers board, involvement in the project should be determined based on their interest, resources, and capacity. The joint powers board should document such involvement through a memorandum of understanding.