

This Document Serves as An Assessment of the Existing Amenities within Clay County Illinois, and as a Blueprint for Creating and Preserving a Future Network of Greenways and Trails for the Enjoyment and Travel of its Residents and Visitors.

# Clay County Greenways & Trails Plan

November, 2014



South Central Illinois  
Regional Planning &  
Development Commission



# Clay County Greenways & Trails Plan

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## Prepared by

South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission  
120 S. Delmar Avenue  
Salem, IL 62881

Phone: (618) 548-4234 Fax: (618) 548-4236  
Web: [www.scirpdc.com](http://www.scirpdc.com)

## In Cooperation With

Clay County Greenways & Trails Steering Committee

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## Contributing Agencies

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## Clay County Greenways & Trails Steering Committee Members

Randy Bukas, Flora City Administrator  
R.C. Franklin, Clay City Village Board of Trustees  
Dina Hilmes, Clay County 4-H  
Jacque Leuking, Clay County 4-H  
Sue Pettit, Clay County Board Chair  
Jerry Stringer, Flora City Council  
Dan Sulsberger, Flora Economic Development Director  
Dr. Brittani Walker, Back & Bodyworks, Louisville IL

## SCIRPDC Contributing Staff

Jonathon Hallberg, Former Executive Director & Project Facilitator / Contributing Author  
James Patrick, Executive Director & Primary Author



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Regional Planning &  
Development Commission



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## Introduction

### Healthy Living

Many may ask, why develop greenways and trails in our county? The answer is, many people realize that with our current lifestyles that healthy living is coming ever more important. Many people realize exercise is important for maintaining good health in all stages of life; however, many do not regularly exercise. The U.S. Surgeon General estimates that 60% of American adults are not regularly active, and another 25% of the population is not active at all. In communities across the nation, people do not have access to trails, parks, or other recreational area close to their homes. Greenways and Trails provide a safe, inexpensive avenue for regular exercise for people living in rural areas.

Greenways and trails also provide countless opportunities for economic renewal and growth. Greenways and trails increase property values, provide an avenue for tourism and recreational spending within the community, inviting citizens to spend money on such items as: bikes, shoes, camping, souvenirs, and lodging. These are just some ways that greenways and trails can impact the local economy.<sup>1</sup>

### History and Culture

Greenways and trails also have the possibility of connecting us to our heritage by preserving historic places and sites. They give people a sense of understanding and the enormity of past events. In Clay County, this can be the B&O Railroad Depot within the City of Flora, the Clay County Museum located in Louisville, or the restoration of a school in the Village of Sailor Springs.

### Environmental Benefits

Greenways and trails are also a way to protect important habitat and provide corridors for people and wildlife. Illinois alone has 25 species of plants and wild life that are listed as endangered. Clay County is known to be home of three of these species; the Indiana Bat, Northern Long Eared Bat, and the Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid.

Additionally, greenways and trails help to improve air and water quality. For example, communities with trails, provide an enjoyable and safe option for transportation, which reduces air pollution. By protecting land along rivers and streams, greenways prevent silt erosion, and filter pollution caused by agricultural and road run off. Greenways and trails also serve as an environmental classroom. People of all ages can see the intriguing natural world first hand, a world from which many of us have been removed.

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<sup>1</sup> \* According to a study conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, bird watchers spend over \$5.2 billion annually. Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails and Greenway Corridors, National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, 4th Edition, 1995.

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## Purpose of the Plan

The activities undertaken in preparing the County Greenways and Trails Plan focuses on consensus building among stakeholders, and on planning and prioritizing improvements and additions to the existing network of trails and greenways within Clay County. SCIRPDC has gathered preliminary data. It helped organize a steering committee and conducted committee meetings. SCIRPDC has helped develop, implement and report the results of surveys and other opportunities for public input; create a process for future project prioritization; create maps; assist in promoting public events and workshops related to the plan development.

## Defining Greenways and Trails

Greenways are corridors of protected open space managed for conservation and recreation purposes. Greenways often follow natural land or water features, and link nature reserves, parks, cultural features and historic sites with each other and with populated areas. Greenways can be publicly or privately owned, and some are the result of public/private partnerships. Overall, greenways enhance the natural beauty and quality of life in neighborhoods and communities, or stimulate economic development opportunities.



Trails are paths used for walking, biking, horseback riding or other forms of recreation or transportation. Some greenways include trails, while others do not. Some appeal to people, while others attract wildlife.

## The Planning Process

The Clay County Greenways and Trails Plan was completed during a 13-month process extending from November 17, 2013 to December 31, 2014. During this time, SCIRPDC staff and the steering committee appointed by the Clay County Board held monthly steering committee meetings; updated and expanded the greenways and trails inventories, created and processed greenways and trails surveys, implemented goals, objectives, and activities; created new maps, and identified and prioritized greenways and trails projects for the next 20 years. The steering committee held two public meetings for public input. (See appendix for results)

## Public Involvement

Without public involvement of the community, a greenways and trails plan will not realize its full potential. When residents have an interest in a project or ideas, comprehension of goals and objectives and plan realization comes more quickly and with more benefits to the county residents. The exchange and of knowledge and ideas between residents and local government can enhance the outcome of a plan and its products. For these reasons the Greenways and Trails Steering Committee sought the early and active participation of residents during the planning process. SCIRPDC staff used the following methods to involve the public in its planning efforts: resident surveys, information sharing, and public workshops.

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## Resident Survey

SCIRPDC staff created a nineteen-question survey that was distributed throughout the county in various locations for resident participation: Clay County Circuit Clerk/Recorders office, the Treasurer's office, Clay County Hospital, Clay County Hospital Clay, and Clay County Medical Center, Flora, City Hall, Flora City Library, the Village Halls of Louisville, Sailor Springs, Xenia, and Iola. Survey respondents were provided with an open-ended comment opportunity at the end of the survey and were implemented as part of the results of the surveys.

## Information Sharing

SCIRPDC staff and the Clay County Greenways and Trails Steering Committee makes every effort to provide information to the public upon request. All final greenways and trails related documents are available for review and SCIRPDC offices, and at Flora City Hall. In addition, SCIRPDC staff and the Committee welcome all comments and information from stakeholder. The process can play a vital role in planning and implementing greenways and trails.

## Public Workshops

Critical for generating momentum for the implementation stage, the SCIRPDC staff and the Clay County Greenways and Trails Steering Committee held two public meeting during the planning process. Press releases were placed into local newspapers, and fliers were placed throughout the county. Furthermore, a radio spot featuring the open house, a presentation to the Louisville Rotary Club, and to the Interact High Schools Service Club was used for promotion of the open houses. The open houses were promoted online as well with Clay County, the City of Flora, SCIRPDC, and WNOI Radio Station.

The first open house was held at the Flora Public Library, 216 N. Main St., Flora, Illinois on February 20, 2014 from 6:30PM-8:00PM. Approximately 48 people attended the Open House of which four were Steering Committee Members, and two were members of the local news; four were members of the Rotary Interact High School Service Club; 21 were Flora residents; two were Clay County Residents; two were Xenia residents; and four were Clay City residents. Most everyone filled out surveys and many took extra surveys with them.

The second Open House was held again at the Flora Public Library on May 20, 2014 from 6:00-7:30PM. This time approximately 15 people signed the attendance sheet with three of them being current members of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee gave opening remarks, and a summary of the survey results compiled from the February 20, 2014 meeting.

Items discussed were: priorities of interest, review of proposed routes, and progress & priorities report card. From this information, goals and objectives and project prioritization factors were developed based on the input from the public and best planning practices.

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## **Greenways and Trails located in Adjacent Counties**

### **Effingham County**

The first portion of the TREC (Trail Recreation Effingham County) system, totaling approximately 3 miles of concrete trails, is complete, although eventually 30 miles of county-wide biking and walking trail will be developed. The trail is wide and well-maintained. A portion of the trail will have a destination that will run to Edgewood, Illinois, which will give a potential connection point to the Clay County Greenways and Trails.

#### **Current TREC Projects**

The Ryan Wolters Memorial Bridge is currently under construction and will complete Phase I of the TREC project. The bridge, which will be completed this summer, will cross the Little Wabash River in 2015 and link the two sections of Phase I to eliminate the current gap in the trail system.

#### **U.S. 40 Extension to Effingham High School**

The southern portion of the trail ending at the intersection of Outer Belt West and U.S. 40 will extend eastbound on U.S. 40 to Effingham High School. The addition will allow trail users to access the trail system from both the high school and Effingham Junior High School.

#### **Phase III**

Phase III is currently under way, including the construction of a 10-foot-wide concrete trail extending the existing trail to the Lake Sara area, which has a population of about 500 residents near an 800-acre recreation lake. Phase III more than double the size of the existing trail and allow for recreational trail users to access two areas of the county, including access to Effingham High School and Effingham Junior High School. Also, two parking lots that include eight spaces each are part of this phase. All areas of the trail are handicap accessible. As part of this phase, a landmark trestle bridge was constructed and is an architectural highlight of the trail. Phase IV will extend the trail from Nazarene Church Road northwest into the Hilltop area northwest of Lake Sara.

### **Fayette County:**

Ramsey Hills Nature Trails is a 1-mile trail that winds through Ramsey Lake State Park located in Ramsey, Illinois. A visitor can also often use the unmarked fire lanes which make good paths for easy walking. A 13-mile horse trail is located in the northern end of the area along with a small campground for horse enthusiasts. This area is 1 mile north of the park entrance. There are no plans to extend these trails outside of the state park.

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## **Jasper County:**

Jasper County currently has the Eagle Trails Plan mostly surrounding Sam Parr State Park & the Embarrass River. This City of Newton is also included in the current plan and has a long-range plan to extend the trail to Crawford, Effingham and Richland County.

### **Newton Lake**

Twenty-two miles of trails along the shoreline of 1,775-acre Newton Lake were opened in 1980. The trail system begins at the North Access parking lot. The trails are opened to hiking, cross-country skiing and equestrian use. A five-mile mountain bike trail is also open. No other plans exist to extend these trails beyond Newton Lake.

### **Sam Parr State Park**

Sam Parr State Park is a major part of Jasper County's Eagle's Trails plan, which includes a 183-acre lake with 9 miles shoreline with more than 2 miles of foot trails, and 13 miles of equestrian trail surrounding the lake.

### **Robert Ridgway Grassland Nature Preserve Walking Path**

The Robert Ridgway Grassland Nature Preserve is a one-mile trail that has been restored to prairie and has an interpretive trail and wildlife viewing platform overlooking a wetland surrounded by native prairie plants. This grassland and nature preserve is also a part of the Eagles Trail Plan.

## **Marion County**

### **City of Centralia**

Foundation Park is a 235-acre park and home to miles of hiking trails, an exercise trail, an ice-skating pond, and two fishing ponds.

Kaskaskia College features greenways with a 2,800 foot fitness trail to the south of the campus.

Lake Centralia is a 400-acre body of water that was constructed in 1910. It is located within the City of Centralia surrounded by 580 square miles of prairie and timberland with an extensive shore line, and hiking trails.

Raccoon Lake features over 20 miles of shoreline and 707 acres of water with nature trails among its features.

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## Omega



Forbes State Park, is a 3,103-acre state park of which 1,150 acres is greenways and trails, which includes 15-mile horse trails that circle the lake, also available are four established nature trails for hiking enthusiasts. The Oak Ridge Trail is a 2.5-mile loop trail located in the campground. For those preferring shorter walks, the Marlow Pond Trail is half-mile long, the Henneman Trail which guides the hiker to an early settlement

cemetery is only a quarter-mile long, or take the Phillips Creek Trail a quarter mile with access to the lake. No plans to extend trails from Forbes State Park exists at this time.

## City of Salem

The Bryan Nature Trail is located at the north end of the Bryan Memorial Park. The Trail is a 1.75 mile interpretive trail that encompasses the City reservoir and surrounding forested land. It is open to hiking and biking for those wishing to enjoy this Natural area.

## Planned Projects

An additional trail is planned for construction and will course through Bryan Memorial Park and connect with Bryan Nature Trail. No further plans to extend trails outside the City of Salem exists at this time.

## Richland County

### Olney

Olney City Park is located on 55-acres between Illinois Route 130 and N. Ludlow Street, across from Olney Central College. The City Park offers a wide variety of recreational activities and facilities. The park also offers 1 mile of paved and graveled multi-use trail throughout the park.

East Fork Lake consist of 934 acres with a shoreline of 32-miles and draws visitors nationwide. The lake is best known for its fishing, boating and camping experience.

## Wayne County

### Fairfield

Leo French Park is situated on wooded acreage; it features a small lake also surrounded by a 1/3 mile paved walking path.

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## Johnsonville

Sam Dale Lake is a wildlife area was established in 1959 with 40 acres and has grown to cover more than 1,300 acres and includes a 194-acre lake. The lake is surrounded by eight miles of hiking trails. Wayne County has no trail plan at this time.

## Existing Conditions

### Clay County

Established in 1824, Clay County was created from merged portions of Wayne, Crawford, & Fayette Counties. It is named in honor of famous American statesman, Henry Clay. Henry Clay was a member of the United States Senate & House of Representatives for Kentucky and also served as Secretary of State in the 1820's. Clay County was originally established for its rich agricultural land and was later known for its oil resources.

Clay County is located in south-central Illinois and is home to 13,815 citizens, as of the 2010 US Census. Flora is the only city within Clay County; however, the villages of Clay City, Iola, Louisville (county seat), Sailor Springs and Xenia also serve as population centers. Clay County is located 295 miles southwest of Chicago and 100 miles due east of St. Louis. Major infrastructure running through the county is US Route 50 and US Route 45.

Clay County has a total area of 470 square miles (300,800 acres), with the area consisting of 468 square miles (227,934 acres) of land and .97 square miles (621 acres) of water. Of this land, 209,834 acres are dedicated to agriculture, of the 72,866 acres remaining, 1,705 acres is low density residential; 427 are medium density residential, 138 acres of commercial, 61,827 acres in forest; 3,017 acres are considered wetlands. Finally, 2,316 acres are developed open space. Of the developed open space, approximately 260 acres are dedicated to parks, recreation areas, and reserves, which makes up approximately .0036% of the non-agricultural area.

All the locations listed in this section were selected by Clay County citizens for possible stops on greenways and trails throughout the Clay County.

### City of Flora

Flora was founded by Samuel White in 1854 on 85 acres purchased and donated by his family. Samuel White also donated land to the City of Flora for several buildings and the city park. The City Park, at that time called the Public Square, is present day Library Park where Flora Public Library is located. White donated the land for the first schoolhouse, the Baptist Church and parsonage. Land was also donated for streets and alleys of the original town of Flora.

As of the 2010 US Census, Flora is the home of approximately 5,070 citizens and serves as Clay County's major population and employment center. Flora consists of roughly 3,027 acres (4.73 sq. miles) of land with no significant water ways within the city. The city of Flora is bounded by US Route 50 to the North and Road 300N to the South. The City begins on the west on Country Club Dr. and is bounded on the east by Camelia Road (Old Route 45).

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## Points of Interest

### City of Flora

#### Historical Places

**The Flora B&O Depot** has been an important part of the town's history. In 1872, the first depot was built. This building was built from the liberal subscriptions of local citizens. It served the City of Flora until 1916, when it was destroyed by fire.

In 1998, the Flora B&O Depot was named one of three sites in Clay County on the National Register of Historic Places. With this recognition and the interest of many citizens of the community, the Flora Community Development Corporation (FCDC) purchased the depot from CSX Railroad.

Flora Community Development Corporation successfully obtained three federal grants to restore the building, matched by local donations of citizens. Today, the University of Illinois Extension Service rents the third floor. The second floor houses a community room ready to use for various activities. The first floor houses the Flora Chamber of Commerce office, a museum containing city and county historical artifacts and meeting room and HO Train Lab.<sup>2</sup>

**WWII Memorial** located at the Flora Library identifies those persons from the local area who served in WWII. Surrounding the central monument is a terrace constructed of inlaid bricks, most bearing the name and branch of service of those other local area citizen-honorees who served in uniform, helped America win the war, and survived the conflict.

#### Business & Public Facilities

This type of multi-purpose often provide business opportunities, locations and resources for commercial activities such as: recreation equipment rentals and sales, lessons, and other related businesses.

Studies have shown that walking and biking trails have increased usage of the medical, public, and commercial facilities listed below.<sup>3</sup> Many studies demonstrate that parks, greenways and trails increase nearby property values ranging from 4% and 20%<sup>4</sup>, thus increasing local tax revenues. Such increased revenues often offset greenway acquisition and maintenance costs. Below is a list of selected points of interest throughout the City of Flora.

- Clay County Health Department
- Clay County Hospital
- Charley Brown Park
- Flora City Hall
- Flora Library
- Flora B&O Railroad
- Flora Theater
- Flora Industrial Park
- Flora Municipal Airport
- Walmart

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<sup>2</sup> [http://floradepot.com/?page\\_id=8](http://floradepot.com/?page_id=8)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.americantrails.org/resources/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.carolinathreadtrail.org/what-economic-impact-do-trails-have-in-our-communities/>

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Furman University recently released an in-depth study of the health and economic impacts of the Greenville Hospital System Swamp Rabbit Trail. The study provides a baseline for the impact of the multi-use trail connecting Greenville to Travelers Rest, SC. For a segment of the study; interviews were conducted with nine managers or owners of retail businesses abutting or within 250 yards of the trail. Data from that study includes the following:<sup>5</sup>

- Most of the businesses reported increases in sales/revenue ranging from 30% to as high as 85% since the trail was completed.
- One business decided to open as a result of the trail being built.
- One business reported changing locations to a site on the trail and observed a 30% increase in sales.
- One business reported that 75% of Saturday business and 40% of normal business were trail users.

## **Parks & Recreation**

### **Charley Brown Park**

The history of Charley Brown Memorial Park starts in the 1930's. The land now known as Charley Brown Park started as a 100 acre cattle pasture that was owned by Charley Brown of Flora. Charley and Minn Brown were well to do farmers and held many other investments as well. Charley died on April 30, 1934. Minn inherited most of his estate. It was during the depression that a federal employee was looking for a site to locate a public park in southern Illinois. A deal was made with Minn to sell the City of Flora 100 acres. She only had one stipulation - that it be named after her husband Charley Brown.

The public park is still owned by the City of Flora. The park remains a valuable asset to Clay County. The Charley Brown Park is located adjacent to the Flora Golf and Country club located along Old US Route 50. The park contains the City Pool, the Little Toot Railroad, two ponds, playground equipment, camping sites, and is home of many event and activities for the community, including the Clay County Fair.<sup>6</sup>

### **Kiwanis Parks**

Flora has one recreation parks in town, known as Kiwanis Park. The playground equipment at the park was installed and maintained by the Flora Kiwanis Club. The park is on the east end of town, adjoining the city's six public tennis courts, on East North Avenue.

The City of Flora has introduced a lighted basketball court on the west side of the Kiwanis Park and a skate park on the east side of the tennis courts on East North Avenue that has been made possible by the Flora Rotary Club. In addition, the city and school district maintain and operate several ball diamonds for many age groups on East Drive on the southeast edge of Flora.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.carolinathreadtrail.org/what-economic-impact-do-trails-have-in-our-communities/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.infinitevillage.com/html/cbpark/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.florail.govoffice2.com/index.asp>

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## Schools:

**Flora High School** is located on 600 South Locust Street within the City of Flora. The high school has an enrollment of approximately 370 ninth through 12th graders. Its sports and recreation facility is located two blocks to the east and consists of nearly 32-acre sports complex complete with a track, football game field, an all-purpose field, and four baseball/softball diamonds used for many leagues throughout the year.

**Floyd Henson Junior High School** is located on 609 N. Stanford Road within the city limits of Flora, along US Route 50. The junior high school has an enrollment of approximately 300 students and is located on approximately 15 acres of land consisting mostly of green space.

**Washington School** is located at 114 East Washington Street. This location is used as a pre-k and kindergarten school in south-central Flora. The school has an enrollment of approximately 185 students. The school sets on 1.75 acres with about 0.33 acres dedicated to playground and green space. McEndree, Lincoln (not listed above) and Washington elementary schools will be shuttered at the end of the 2015-2016 school year due to the construction of a new, updated school located on Emory Street in Flora, Illinois.

## Village of Louisville

The first settler in the limits of Louisville Township was George Goble, who moved to Louisville from Indiana, and settled there on, or before 1820. He homesteaded eighty acres of land that year, in Section 23, where the Village of Louisville now stands. Goble, at one time, owned the Old Water Mill on the Little Wabash River. The village soon after, was known as Goble's Mill. Goble's Mill was later named Lewisville after the Lewis family. However, it became Louisville from Lewisville and after a misspelling occurred on a plat map made by a map maker from Vandalia.

Louisville is the county seat of Clay County. The village is located near the center of Clay County with US Route 45 passing through the villages leading north 25 miles to Effingham or eight miles south to the City of Flora. As of the 2010 Census, Louisville is home to 1,139 people. The Village is 0.75 square miles or 480 acres with no major waterways located within the Village. Louisville is bordered by West Street on the west, Hickory Street on the East, Vandalia Road on the North and Third Street on the South. Points of interest for greenways and trail destinations are listed below.

## Points of Interest within Louisville

### Historical Places



The **Clay County Museum** is located on the east side of the square in Louisville. The Clay County Museum occupies the former Clay County Jail and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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## Business & Public Facilities

**Clay County Courthouse** located 111 Chestnut St (S. Main St), Louisville, is a building that is home to local law enforcement and the regional county government.

**Louisville Village Hall** located at 177 S. Main Street and serves as the chief administrative building of Louisville. It houses the mayor, the village council, its associated departments, and employees.

## Parks and Recreation

**Louisville Village Park** is approximately 13 acres located on Park Drive southeast of Louisville. The park is used by the School District during spring and fall during baseball/softball season. The park has a summer program that begins in May and runs through part of July.<sup>8</sup> The park also features two baseball/softball diamonds, two tennis courts, and playground equipment surrounded by forested green space.

**Wabash Roller Rink** was founded in 1984. Wabash Roller Rink of Louisville, IL is an indoor rink and open year round. Roller skating sessions for the public are one of the main attractions.

## Schools

North Clay High School is located at 500 Kinmundy Road. The school enrollment is approximately 180 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The school is adjacent, to the north of the Elementary/Jr. High School. The school is situated on 9.5 acres with most of the site being dedicated to roads and parking facilities.

North Clay Elementary/Jr. High School is located at 550 South Route 45. The school has an enrollment of 520 PK-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The school sets on a 14.5-acre site with a track situated behind the school along with playground equipment, and five acres of green space.

## Village of Clay City

In 1810 John McCawley and Seth Evans were traveling west from Fort Vincennes along the old Buffalo Trace when one of their horses died. McCawley sent his companion back for another horse. McCawley stayed behind in a cabin built on the west bank of the Little Wabash River just south and east of the future Clay City. This made McCawley the first white man to settle in this area. McCawley later decided to build a stagecoach stop and trading center on the location which was known as McCawley's Tavern. It provided a place for travelers to stop, eat, and spend the night. Clay County was created by an act of the legislature on December 23, 1824.

The Village of Clay City is 1,113 acres (1.74 sq. mi.), and is located in southeastern Clay County and east of the City of Flora seven miles, and west of Olney 15 miles on US Route 50. As of the 2010 US Census, the Village of Clay City serves as home to 959 citizens. Clay City

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/North-Clay-Park-District/10150139748025298>

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is bordered on the north by Third Street, on the south by Mead Street, on the east by Morning Glory Road, and on the west by Sunset Road.

## **Points of Interest within Clay City**

### **Historical Places**

None listed during the public meetings.

### **Business and Public Facilities**

Clay City Village Hall is located at 318 Walnut Street SE. The Village Hall serves as the administrative center for the Village.

### **Parks and Recreation**

The Clay City Park consists of 8.75 acres complete with a community center, two baseball/softball diamonds, tennis courts and a playground area. There is also a chat based driveway on the west side of the park encircling a ball diamond often used for walking activities and other exercise activities.

### **Schools**

**Clay City Jr. /Senior High School** is located at 607 South Walnut Street. It has a combined student enrollment of about 190 students. It is situated on approximately 10 acres with 2.5 acres of play and green space.

## **Village of Xenia**

### **Points of Interest within Louisville**

#### **Historical Places**

None listed during the public meeting.

#### **Business and Public Facilities**

Xenia Village Hall is located at 250 Front Street. This location serves as the government offices of the Village of Xenia. This location is where all Village business occurs.

#### **Parks and Recreation**

The Xenia Playfields are located along Filson Street. It is an approximate 7.5 acres complete with ball fields and a tennis court and two buildings along with about 2.5 acres of green space.

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## **Schools**

Xenia Grade School is located at 601 Church Street adjacent to the Xenia Playfields along Church Street. It has a combined enrollment of about 150 K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students. It is located on 2.5 acres with a playground area.

## **Other Significant Sites within Clay County**

Clay County is the home of many historical places. Those historical sites that won't be mentioned anywhere else in the document, but should be considered when constructing greenways or trails is historical school sites and cemeteries. Many may wonder why you would want to walk or ride to an old-school site or cemetery. The answer to this is that these historical establishments serve as reminders of the past. Understanding the past, having reminders of the past even just in architecture or a historic site will allow people to understand where they are and where they are headed. When people understand what the community has gone through and have visual reminders of their past then they can feel more connected to a place. The historical buildings and sites can allow people to understand what happened in the past and how things could possibly play out in the future. Preserving our past gives us more understanding and hope for the future.

### **Historical School Sites**

Historical Schools once served many purposes. They served as polling places, churches, public meeting location for school, township or village boards, and sometimes even serving as hospitals in community emergencies. Historical School building and sites are fundamental elements of the built environment. A well-balanced school was vital to the future of its community as it forms and shapes generations. Schools are tangible relics of community pride because of their construction, design, and programs. A school's importance is usually portrayed by its prominent location once held within the community; they also reflect the evolution of educational policy as communities, and the Commonwealth strived to provide children with the best possible learning opportunities.

Clay County is the home of 46 such historical schools and recorded school sites scattered throughout the county, mostly clustered around US Route 45 and US Route 50. See the Map in the appendix of the document.

### **Cemeteries**

Philosopher Immanuel Kant said, "Perpetual peace is only found in the graveyard," and for many walkers and bikers, a graveyard offers a sense of peace and calm. Cemetery planners include trees, flowers and benches for grave visitors, and many designers also include trails and paths for walking and hiking. The following trails, all with scenic graveyard views, offer a variety of paths for the novice to the most experienced walker or biker. Clay County is the home of 68 total cemeteries some of which are currently used with many being historical. Cemeteries can serve as destinations for exercise and historical enthusiast alike.

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## **Maps: Points of Interest**

1. Clay County
2. Flora
3. Charley Brown Park
4. Louisville
5. Clay City
6. Xenia

## **Other Points of Interest**

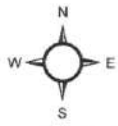
7. Historic School Sites
8. Cemeteries

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# Clay County Points of Interest

## Clay County



To Effingham

| Legend |                |
|--------|----------------|
|        | parks          |
|        | US 45          |
|        | US 50          |
|        | Railroad       |
|        | Roads          |
|        | Streams        |
|        | Clay City      |
|        | Flora          |
|        | Iola           |
|        | Louisville     |
|        | Sailor Springs |
|        | Xenia          |

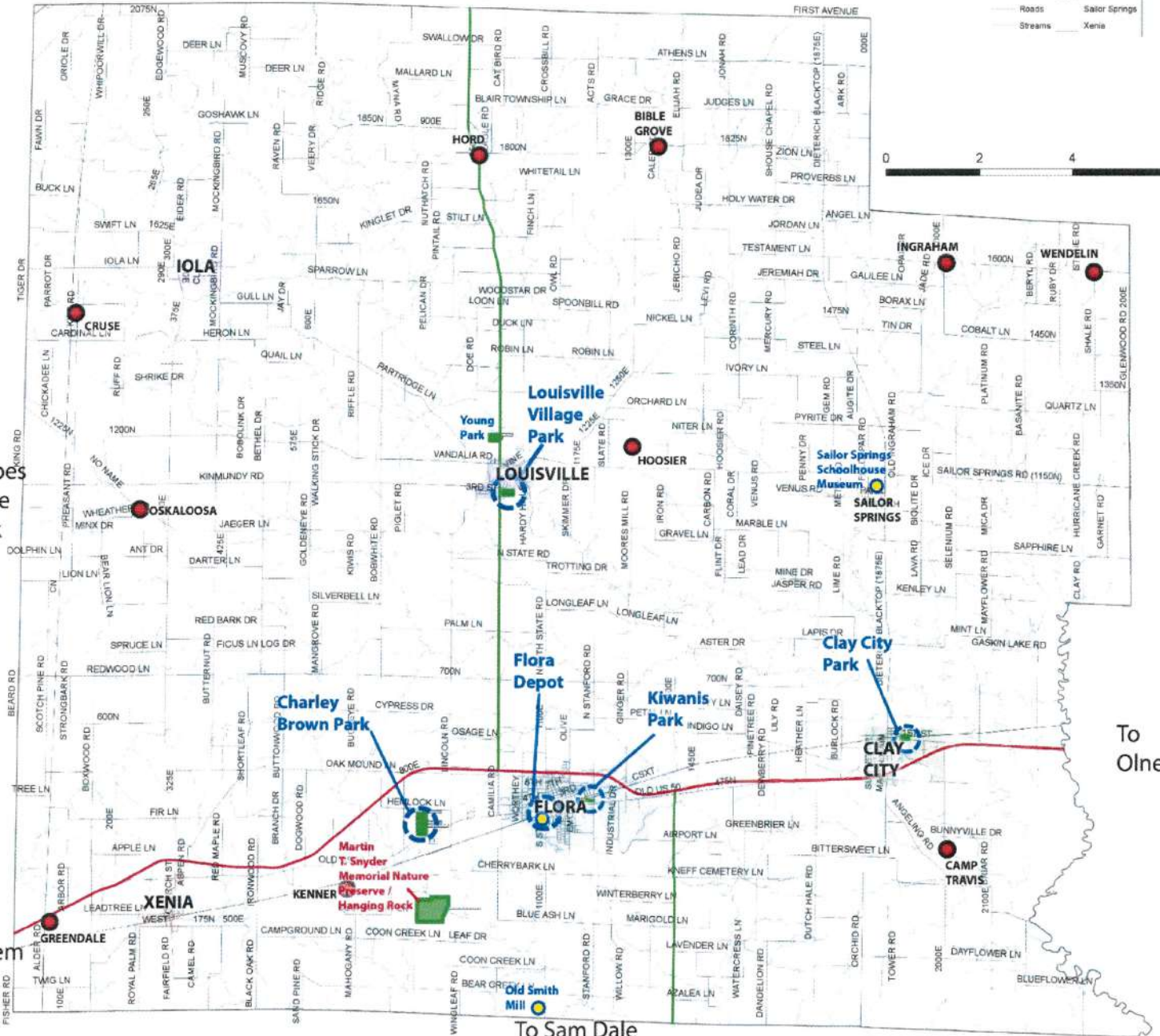
0 2 4 6 Miles

To Forbes State Park

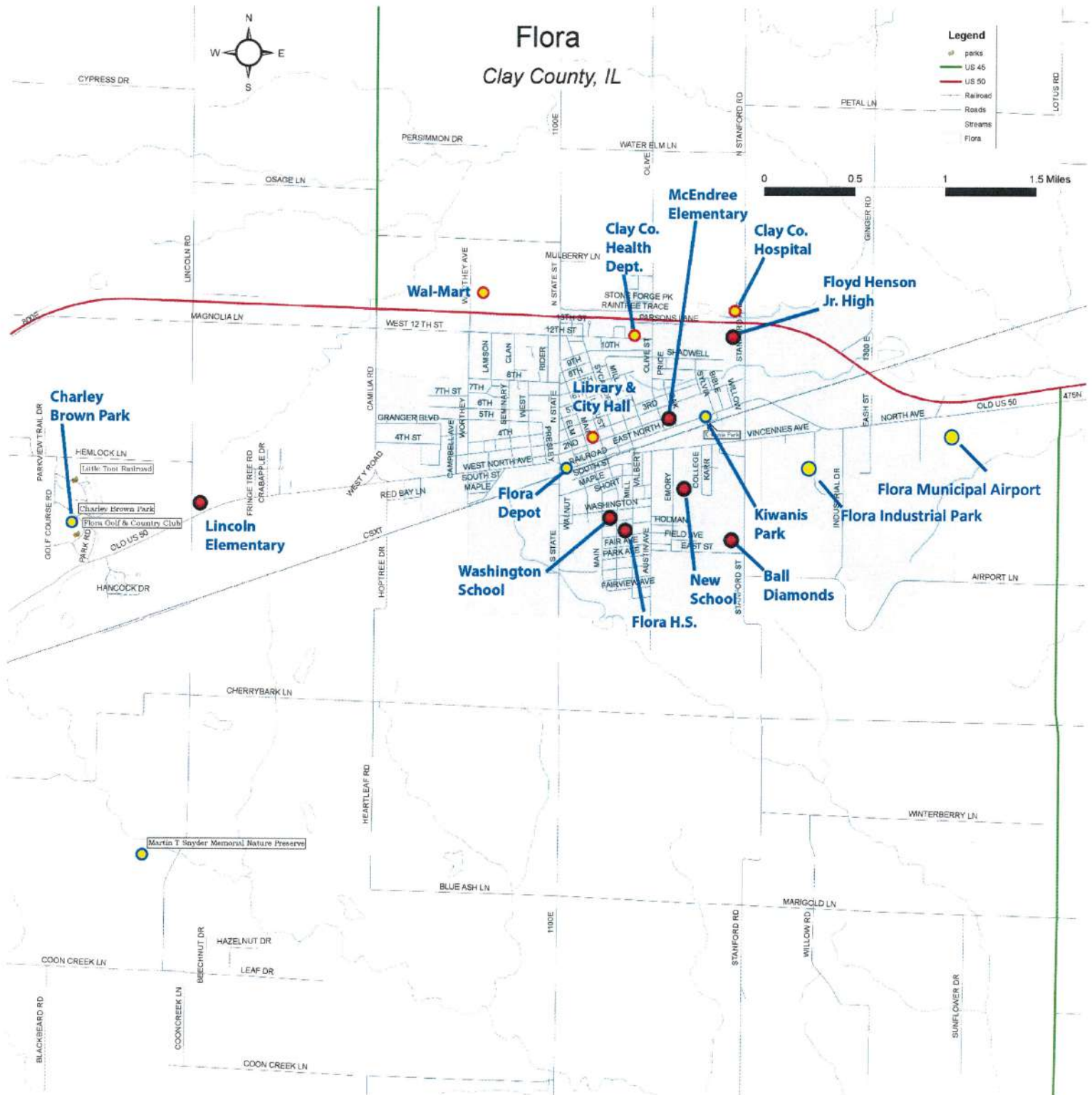
To Salem

To Olney

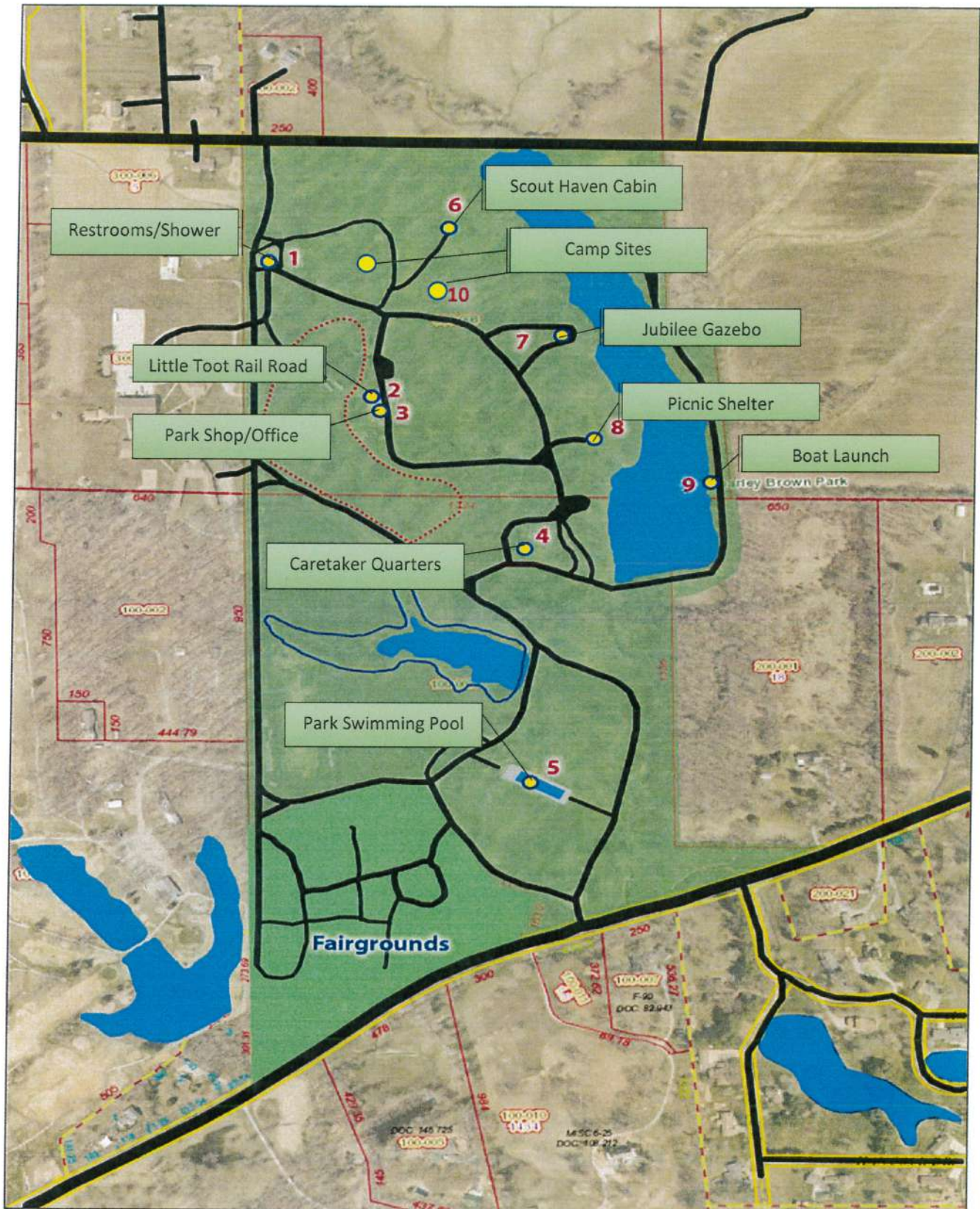
To Sam Dale Lake Park



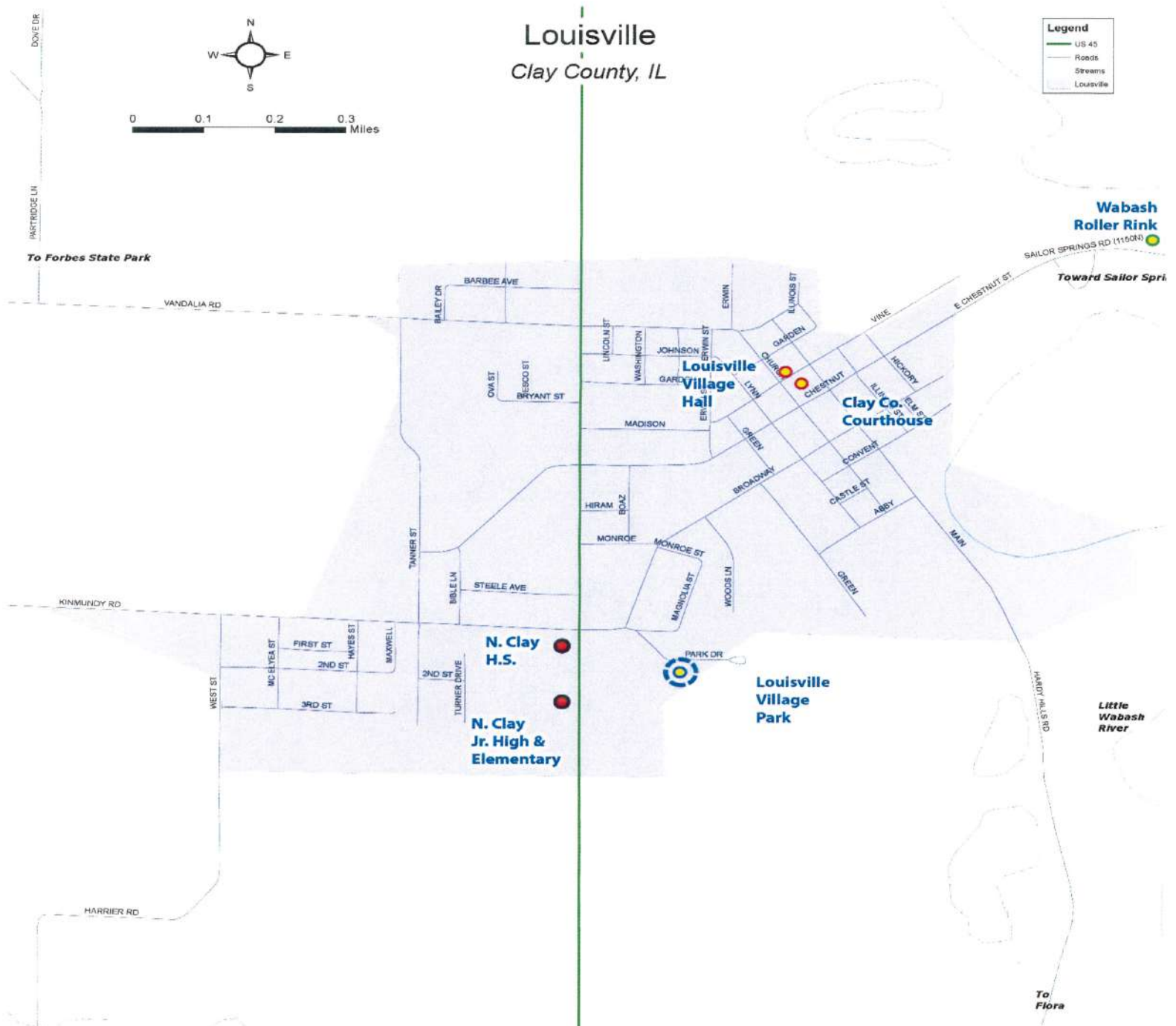
# City of Flora Points of Interest



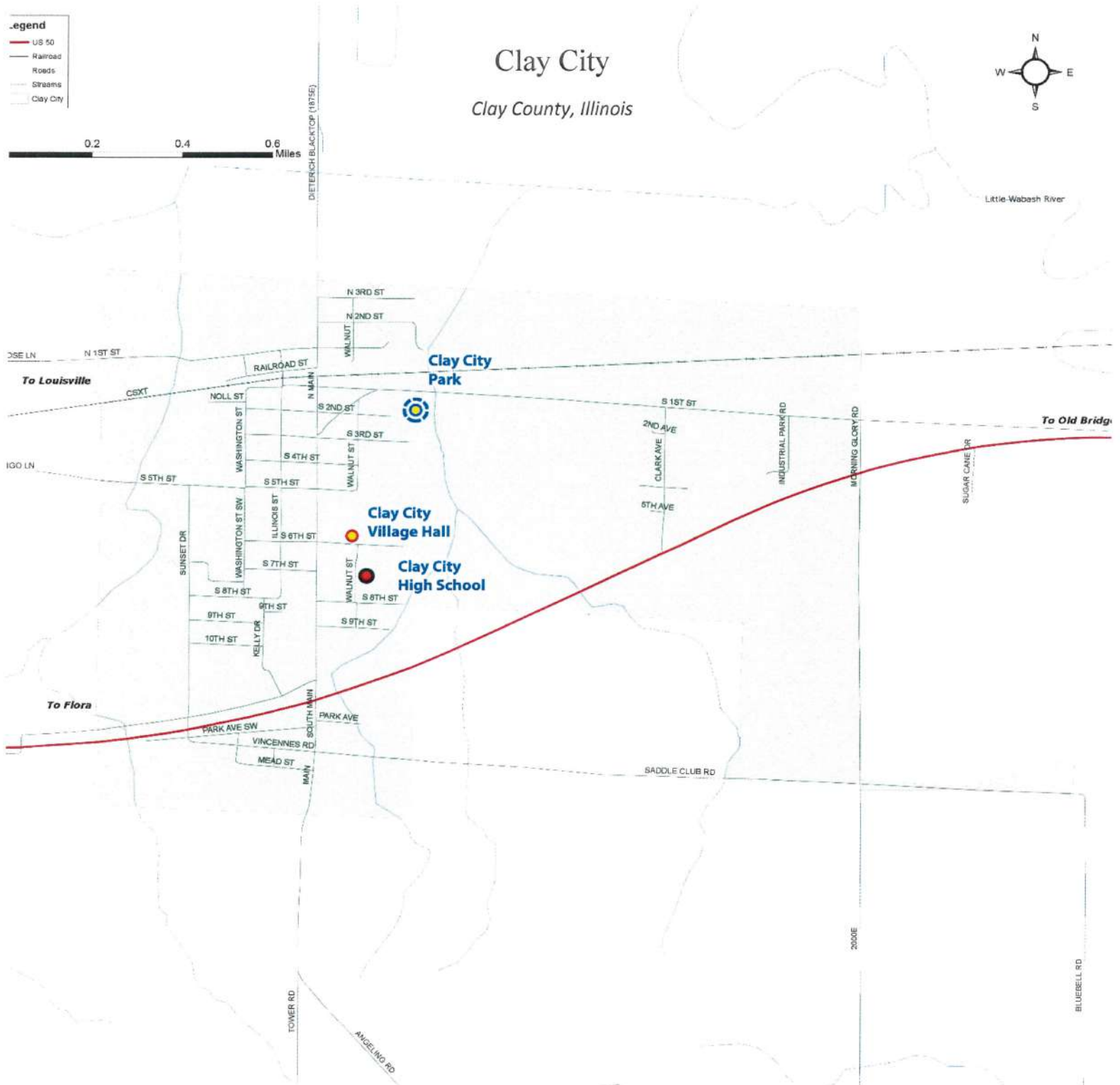
## Charley Brown Park Points of Interest



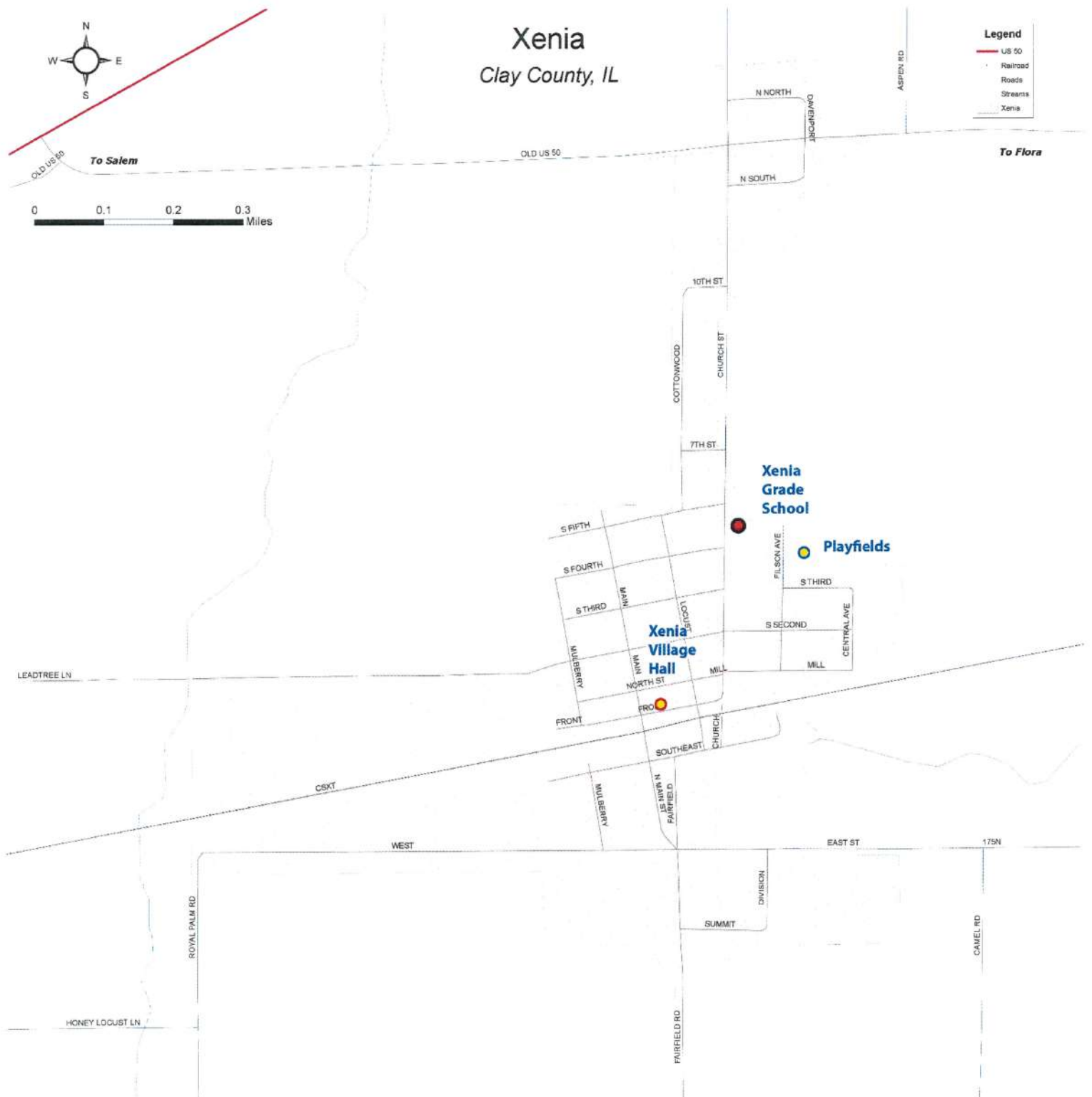
# Village of Louisville Points of Interest



# Clay City Points of Interest

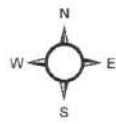


# Village of Xenia Points of Interest



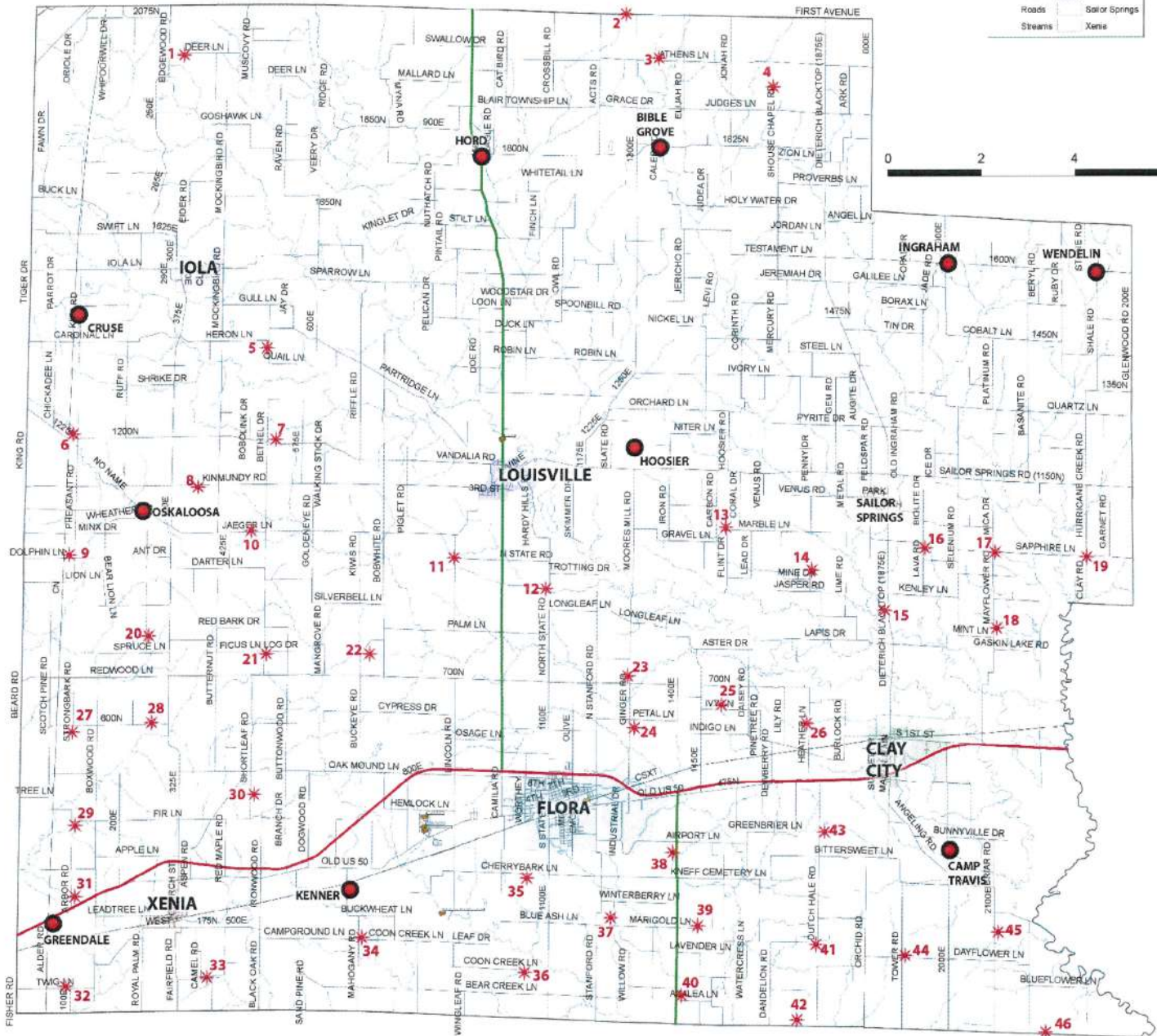
# Clay County Historical School Sites

## Clay County

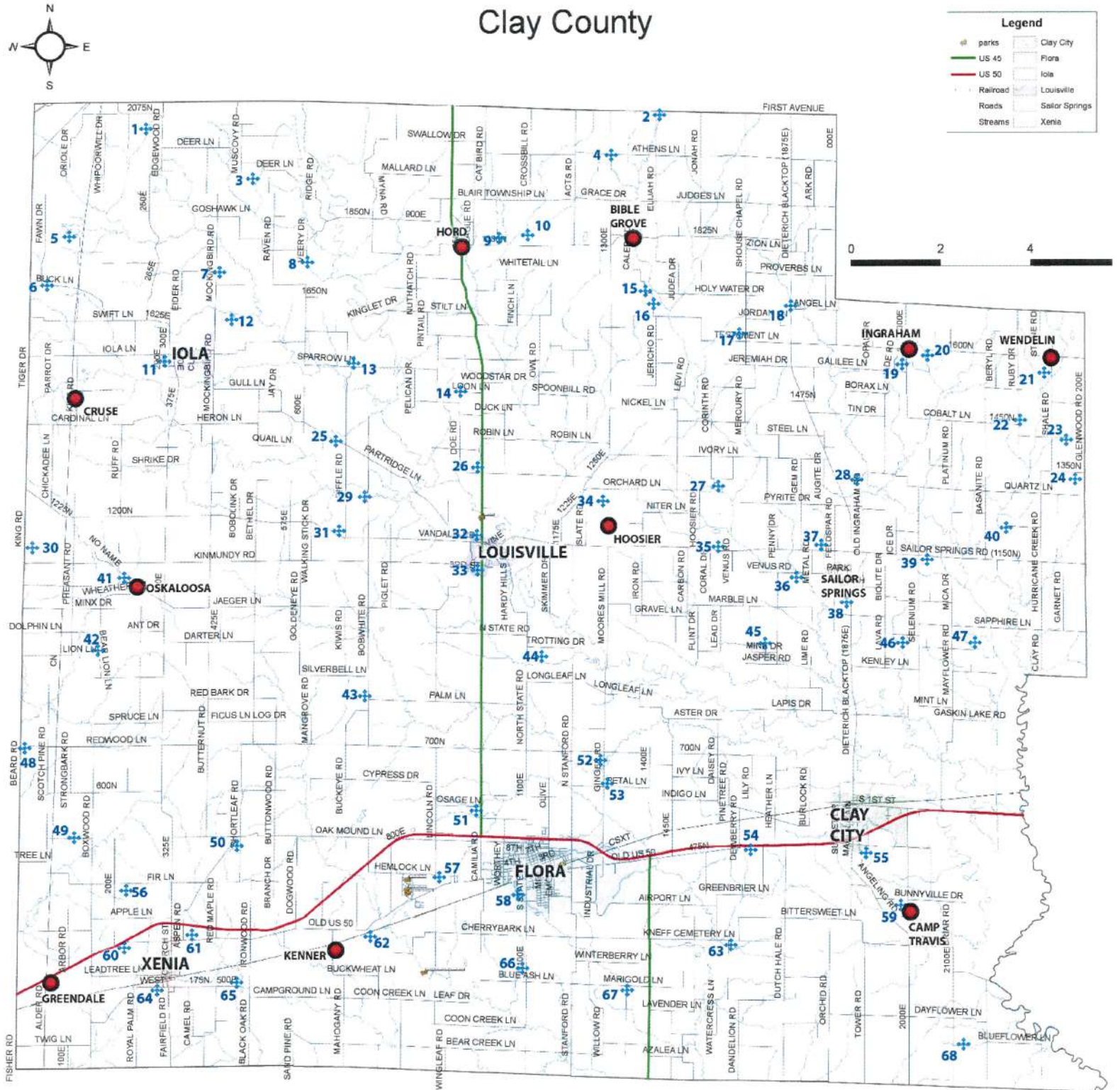


| Legend |                |
|--------|----------------|
|        | parks          |
|        | US 45          |
|        | US 50          |
|        | Railroad       |
|        | Streams        |
|        | Clay City      |
|        | Flora          |
|        | Iola           |
|        | Louisville     |
|        | Sailor Springs |
|        | Xenia          |

0 2 4 6 Miles



# Clay County Cemeteries: Active and Historical



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## Issues and Forces

Through the public involvement process and Clay County Greenways and Trails Steering Committee input, many issues and forces have been identified for the future greenways and trails system. Issues have ranged from safety of the system to what material should be used for the greenways and trails system.

### Issues

User-friendliness appeared to be one of the most popular issues during the public meeting. The suggested improvements to help users make the greenways and trails in the area were:

1. Paved vs. Gravel
2. Bike Racks
3. Water Fountains
4. Areas of Shade
5. Benches
6. Rest Areas

Secondly, parking and accessibility to the trails once completed; The citizens would like to have nearby parking, or sidewalks leading to the greenways or trails. If this issue isn't addressed the trails may be perceived as too hard to access.

1. Accessibility for rehabbing or disabled persons: While many recreational facilities and trails are accessible by all users, there are aspects that make using the system difficult for some users.
  - a. Flat Paved Surfaces
  - b. ADA accessible amenities (i.e., water fountains, restrooms).

Thirdly, maintenance of the greenways or trails; If the greenways or trails go unmaintained, it can often lead to the deterioration of existing facilities and lead to perceived safety issues that lead to destruction or defacing of amenities.

1. Who is responsible for upkeep?
  - a. city
  - b. organizations
  - c. volunteers
2. Who is going to be charged with opening and closings of trails?

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## Issues cont.

User safety is a multi-faceted issue that can include having difficulty crossing busy streets, poor lighting, and conflicts with other trails users.

1. Safety Issues
  - a. safe road crossing signs
  - b. lighting
  - c. designated bike/running lanes along busy roads
  - d. trail width
  - e. trail users with dogs
    - leash rules
    - pet waste disposal

Understanding the trail ways system rules is important. Many systems users are not aware of the Rules of the Road/Trails that apply to bicycle and pedestrian rights on road systems/trails. In addition, intended use of the trails system is often misinterpreted due to lack of signage and perception of who can use specific trail types.

## Forces

The Clay County Greenways and Trails will require interagency coordination. The Clay County Greenways and Trails Steering Committee has members from local governments aboard and however, may require more organizations to help plan and create buy in for the future of the Clay County Greenways and Trails system.

What local laws and ordinances need to be created or changed in order to allow or facilitate the implementation of greenways and trails system? The use of programs such as Complete Streets will help guide that process. Complete Streets is designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.<sup>9</sup>

One of the major forces affecting this Greenway and Trails plan is the lack of funding. There are several streams of revenue, but most require matching dollars at the local level. Can the county, cities and villages within Clay County contribute or agree to fund such an initiative?

Would the citizens of Clay County agree to a tax hike in order to fund such an initiative to improve the quality of life and health for those living within Clay County?

Would local road infrastructure, signage and signalization support a greenways and trails plan without changing major infrastructure?

Developing trails with the adjacent counties and possibly the state to contribute to the statewide greenways and trails systems.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>

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## Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are meant to determine what direction planning efforts should take, independent of a time frame and individual projects. A goal is defined as an end state that will be brought about by implementing the greenways and trails plan. Objectives are basic sub-goals are tools that underlie all planning and strategic activities with a possibility of creating future policy and evaluate the overall performance of the project(s).

By using the priorities of the Clay County Greenways and Trails Committee, along with the suggestion and comments from the open houses, the goals and objectives below were established:

**Goal 1:** Greenways and Trails Steering Committee and local governments will provide education material and information about the countywide greenways and trails plan to all interested persons.

### Objectives:

1. The Clay County Greenways and Trails Steering Committee will develop a marketing and publicity plan for the future greenways and trails system
2. Market the Clay County Greenways and Trails system as one that draws at local and regional attention.
  - a. Promote the implementation of the Clay County Greenways and Trails Plan.
  - b. Market the greenways and trails system by including the plan on the Clay County and Flora's web site, press releases and include other public educational material as needed.
3. The greenways and trails local partners will apply for green ways and trails projects funding as a part of road, infrastructure, and new development projects as appropriate.
  - a. Keep abreast of upcoming transportation projects and how they could contribute to the greenways and trails systems.
  - b. Advocate for the inclusion of greenways and trails in new road projects and roadway repairs.
  - c. Apply for funding to enhance road repair and construction aside from allocation from the local governments, businesses, or organizations.

**Goal 2:** Planning and implementation of a greenways and trails system project that will be done in a coordinated manner emphasizing rational and cost effective measures that promote the economic vitality of Clay County and the municipalities within.

### Objectives:

1. Consider the prioritization of project in order to efficiently implement the systems in a logical, cost-effective manner.

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**Goal 2 cont.**

- a. Utilize the project prioritization established during the greenways and trail open houses and greenways and trails meeting planning process to best plan for fundraising efforts by member agencies.
  - b. Combine projects that can be geographically linked for implementation.
2. Create model ordinance provisions to require greenways and trails in new development that connect these new additions to other parts of Clay County.
3. Develop a coordinated review process for all major new developments.
4. Promote the connection of Clay County with the Central Illinois Region contributing to the possibility of a future statewide system of greenways and trails.
  - a. Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to connect to those places of interests noted within the plan. (Historical sites, Parks, Schools, and places of business).
  - b. Pursue connections along abandoned old route 50 frontage roads and bridges along with railroad rights of way which offer significant rail-2-trail possibilities and eventual connection to neighboring communities.

**Goal 3: All Clay County residents will be provided with a greenways and trails systems that emphasizes safety, user-friendliness, and accessibility.**

1. Reduce the number of modal conflicts as transportation improvements occur.
  - a. Monitor the planning and implementation transportation project to ensure bicycle and pedestrian friendliness.
  - b. Improve any existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as identified as points of interest within the plan.
  - c. Create a database of known modal conflicts.
2. Increase pedestrian safety by continuing to maintain and augment street light systems in all areas with bicycle and pedestrian facilities as per municipal code.
3. Create a standardized trail design to ensure user-friendliness.
  - a. Research and create a design guideline for the future County greenways and trails system development.
4. Increase pedestrian safety by implementing well marked trail/intersection markings.
  - a. Create a standardized crosswalk/intersection marking system as trails are created or existing areas used for exercise are improved.
  - b. Adopt policies that require “no right turn on red” for high pedestrian and bicycle traffic areas.
5. Implement well placed pedestrian and bicycle related signage on all roads adjacent to railways or greenways.
  - a. Once constructed, provide trail and path information such as maps, trail distance, and park amenities.
  - b. Design and install standard signage for existing trails and future trails.

6. Ensure through construction of the greenways and trails system that all types of travelers are considered.
  - a. Support bicycle and pedestrian commuters by monitoring new road planning and construction and ensuring adequate space and signage for such commuters.

**Goal 4:** All Clay County residents will be provided with a greenways and trails system that emphasizes efficiency, mobility, and convenience.

1. Ensure through construction of the system that all types of users can connect between all parts of the greenways and trails system without moving into vehicular traffic.
  - a. Support the creation of bikeways and designated bike lanes in bicycle traffic areas.
  - b. All new subdivision or development must plan for non-vehicular infrastructure that will potentially connect to other non-vehicular lanes or trails.
  - c. Ensure during the planning process for road construction and repair that pedestrians are also considered.
  - d. Support local efforts to implement more non-vehicular paths
  - e. Seek funding that will help accomplish the above

**Goal 5:** The continued planning and development of a greenways and trails system that will preserve and enhance the natural environment.

1. Require an “environmental friendliness” evaluation of all greenways and trails projects.
  - a. Create a set of criteria that can be applied to all projects in the greenways and trails plan based on best planning practices
2. Greenways and trails members will support other agencies efforts to maintain and improve the environment in Clay County Greenways and Trails.
  - a. Support tree planting and prairie preservation and wildlife habitat improvements and follow best management practices
3. As trails are constructed, attempt to connect them to natural features such as bodies of water, wooded areas, and open spaces.
  - a. Based on the countywide inventory and analysis done for this Plan, seek financial and local support for pedestrian and bicycle access to public, non-agricultural areas.
4. Educate the public about the greenways and open spaces within the future greenways and trails system with intentions of encouraging a respect for the natural environment.
  - a. Support the provision of public environmental classes that target all residents, but especially children.
  - b. Provide the amenities that promote cleanliness on trails and greenways and trails areas such as restrooms, trash disposal, pet waste stations, etc.

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## Benchmarks

In order for the Greenways and Trails Plan to be successful, the bench marks set forth by the committee for implementation must be achieved. Most of the listed bench marks are derived from the goals and objectives or other ideas put forth by the Clay County Greenways and Trails Committee or by public comment during the open houses. The bench marks are more specific and put within a timeline for implementation. Short term bench marks are most achievable and should be completed within five-years of plan approval, midterm benchmarks should be completed within 10 years, and long term should occur at the end of the 20 year implementation schedule. These should include, but are not limited to<sup>10</sup>:

### Short-term Benchmarks [5-Years]

- The Greenways and Trails Plan should be listed on all municipalities with a website, along with the plan being listed on the South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission's website.
- Clay County Greenways and Trails members will partner with other agencies and sponsor environmental education classes to promote greenways and trails.
- An agenda item will be created for the Clay County Greenways and Trails meeting agenda regarding development project within the county to be discussed with the County Greenways and Trails Committee and other stakeholders.
- Design standards for trails and open space facilities will be created.
- Begin acquiring rights-of way.
- A review process regarding the inclusion of public greenways and or trails in all major development will be designed and implemented by local municipal government.
- A model ordinance for the creation of public paths in new development will be created.
- A data base of modal conflicts will be created.
- Potential trail and open spaces that connect the inventoried natural areas will be maintained.
- Environmental friendliness criteria for new greenways and trails project will have been created, adopted, and implemented by Clay County Greenways and Trails Committee.
- A list of funding sources will be maintained.

### Mid-term Benchmarks [10-Years]

- How to create an accessible community for pedestrians and bikers will have been researched and implemented in pilot areas.
- There will be more street lighting installed near high activity centers.
- All commercial centers built in the next 10 years will have bicycle racks or similar facilities.
- Traffic calming measures will be researched and implemented in the pilot areas
- Standardized pedestrian and bicycle related signage will have been designed and implemented adjacent to existing facilities and all new facilities.
- Pilot amenities will have been developed in selected areas some existing in open or green spaces where such facilities did not exist prior to 2015.

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<sup>10</sup> Champaign County Greenways & Trails Plan

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### **Long-term Benchmarks [20-Years]**

- There will be fewer modal conflicts in 20 years.
- There will be at least 20 miles of trails constructed in 20 years.
- There will be at least 20 more miles of trails connecting population centers with rural recreation sites.
- All new roads constructed during the next 20 years will consider the inclusion of bicycle facilities in their design.
- For all on-street bicycle facilities constructed, an adjacent pedestrian path will have been constructed or already existing.
- All greenways and trails projects planned in the next 20 years will have successfully passed an environmental friendliness evaluation.
- All open spaces construct during the 20 years will consider habitat fostering measure in the design.
- Where financially feasible, all rails-to-trails efforts will have been implemented.

## **Classifying Trails**

Recreational trails are defined as a corridor, route or pathway, generally land or water based, primarily intended for recreation purpose, and included walking, hiking, biking, canoeing and horseback riding. Recreational trails may be single use or shared use trails and may be located in rural or urban environments.

A fundamental principle in planning and developing a trail is that it should meet the needs and expectations of those who will use it, and that it is appropriate for the land type in which it exists. This can be summarized as - 'the right trail in the right place'.

As described below, classification of a proposed trail before proceeding with development or upgrading will help ensure this is achieved.<sup>11</sup>

A Trail Classification System provides a means of classifying trails based on the nature of the trail, and the class is assigned based primarily on the key physical attributes of the trails as follows:

- the width of the trail
- the gradient on the trail
- the nature of the trail surface

While the general principals are the same, there are different classification systems for each of the categories of trails addressed in this document.

### **Who are the Trails for?**

In planning new trails the intended users of the trail should be clearly established by the trail provider. (For example, it should be decided if a trail is intended for use by all, including less mobile users or is it for enthusiasts who will require a challenging trail? Is it primarily aimed at local casual walkers, enthusiasts from outside the area or international visitors?) When this

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<sup>11</sup> [www.trails.ie/national-trails.com](http://www.trails.ie/national-trails.com)

evaluation has been completed an appropriate class for the proposed trail can be determined such that a trail can be designed and developed to meet the needs of the intended users.

The strategy should identify a need for the development for classifying trails for use by all organizations involved with recreation trail development. The strategy should recognize that consistent standard and classification across the county. The steady use of the established strategy will lead to a better trail system, better resources and maintenance planning and; in the long term, a more sustainable trails network.<sup>12</sup>

Whatever method the county uses for classifications should be a consistent method and followed for all created trails showing no favorability to one type of trail or one type of organization involved.

Not all trail types were mentioned by those participating in public meetings, this does not mean that other types of trails cannot be considered in future development.

## Walking Trails

Using the terrain of Clay County as a guide, walking trails have been divided into three classes. The three class are typical of the range of walking trails likely to be provided in Clay County.

| Class 1-Walking Trail      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Description</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Specifically, multi-access trails, which can accommodate users with reduced or limited mobility.</li><li>Will be serviced by a vehicle parking area.</li><li>Can readily facilitate frequent two-way traffic.</li><li>Will have minimal cross slopes and gradient.</li><li>Will have a firm surface.</li><li>No steps, water bars, stiles, barriers or trip hazards of any kind.</li><li>Would have resting places with seating approximately every 100 yards.</li></ul> |
| <b>Site Suitability</b>    | City/City Fringe or core recreation areas with some trails providing access to reduced mobility users also may be appropriate in other areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Trail Surface</b>       | Sealed non-slip surface, non-slip timber board walk, tarmac or compacted surface with no loose stone or gravel greater than one-quarter of an inch.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Trail Width</b>         | Range: from 6ft to 10ft in width                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Trail Gradient</b>      | Range: flat to 5% up to 8% allowed for ramps where required.<br>Desirable: flat                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

Source: [www.trails.ie/national\\_trails.com](http://www.trails.ie/national_trails.com)

<sup>12</sup> [www.trails.ie/national\\_trails.com](http://www.trails.ie/national_trails.com)

### Typical class 1 walking trail:



| Class 2- Walking Trail     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Description</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Essentially trails for casual use, by people of all ages.</li><li>• Serviced by vehicle parking area.</li><li>• Reasonably flat and wide enough to accommodate two-way traffic.</li><li>• Will have a relatively smooth surface with minimal loose material.</li><li>• No water bars or climb over stiles should be used. Step should be minimal and if used should be limited.</li><li>• May use bridges and boardwalks.</li><li>• Should have resting places with seating approximately every one-quarter to one-third of a mile.</li><li>• May have lighting where approved</li></ul> |
| <b>Site Suitability</b>    | City/City Fringes or Core Recreation Areas or Rural landscapes/forest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Trail Surface</b>       | Consistently sealed surfaces, non-slope timber boardwalk or compacted aggregate- stone dust to three quarters of an inch aggregate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Trail Width</b>         | Range: 4ft. to 10ft. wide                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Trail Gradient</b>      | Range: Flat to 8% grade<br>Desirable: 5% grade                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

Source: [www.trails.ie/national-trails.com](http://www.trails.ie/national-trails.com)

### Typical Class-2 Walking Trail



| Class 3- Walking Trail     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Description</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically relatively narrow undulating trails.</li> <li>• Will have moderate gradients.</li> <li>• Surface may be variable, including loose material and can be uneven in places.</li> <li>• May include steps, protruding roots and racks, water bars, stiles and gates.</li> <li>• May include bridges, bog bridges, and boardwalks.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Site Suitability</b>    | Core Recreation Areas or Rural landscapes/forests                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Trail Surface</b>       | Variable surfaces, including some loose material not greater than the two-inches in size                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Trail Width</b>         | Range: 2ft. to 4ft. wide                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Trail Gradient</b>      | Range: Flat to 12%<br>Desirable 5% grade                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

Source: [www.trails.ie/national-trails.com](http://www.trails.ie/national-trails.com)

### Typical Class 3 Walking Trail



## Biking Trails

Biking Trails can broadly be categorized as follows:

- Road based trails.
- Off-Road/ Mountain Bike Trails

The classification and difficulty rating systems for both off-road and road based biking trails are described below.

Off-road biking trails have been divided into three classes and are described below. The three classes of trails are typical of the range of biking trails likely to be provided in Clay County.

Off-road biking trails by definition must be traffic free. However, if required to link two sections of forest together it may be appropriate for a trail to use a short section of public road open to motorized traffic. In such situations, appropriate measures must be taken to ensure that it is not possible for a cyclist to cycle directly onto a road without first dismounting. Appropriate signage should be used both on the off-road bike trail and on the public road.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Source: [www.trails.ie/national-trails.com](http://www.trails.ie/national-trails.com)

| Class 1- Biking Trail      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Description</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat trails intended for use by all ages and all types of bikes, including children's bikes with stabilizers.</li> <li>• Wide enough to accommodate two-way usage</li> <li>• Must be traffic-free.</li> <li>• Even consistent sealed surface with no trail features or obstacles.</li> <li>• Has low gradient to ensure slow speeds and safe using any direction.</li> <li>• May use bridges and boardwalks.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Site Suitability</b>    | City/City Fringe or Core Recreational Area                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Trail Surface</b>       | Consistent sealed surface, or compacted material. Minimal loose material no larger than one-quarter of an inch.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Trail Width</b>         | Range: 7ft. to 10ft. wide                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Trail Gradient</b>      | Range: Flat to Maximum 5%<br>Desirable: 3% or less                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

Source: [www.trails.ie/national\\_trails.com](http://www.trails.ie/national_trails.com)

### Typical Class 1 Biking Trail



| Class 2- Biking Trail      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Description</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small gradients but essentially level trails to ensure slow speeds and travel in any direction.</li> <li>• Wide enough to accommodate two-way usage.</li> <li>• Should be traffic-free.</li> <li>• Very minor grade reversal but no other trail features can be included.</li> <li>• Will be suitable for bikes with tag-a-long, but not bikes with stabilizers or child seats.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Site Suitability</b>    | City/City Fringe or Core Recreational Area                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Trail Surface</b>       | Consistent sealed surface, or compacted material. Minimal loose material no larger than one and half inches.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Trail Width</b>         | Range: 6ft. to 8ft. Wide                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Trail Gradient</b>      | Range: Flat to Maximum 5% downhill, 10% uphill grade<br>Desirable: 5%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

Source: [www.trails.ie/national\\_trails.com](http://www.trails.ie/national_trails.com)

## Typical Class 2- Biking Trail



| Class 3- Biking Trail      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Description</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moderate gradients and narrower trails suitable for use in one direction only</li><li>• Wide steep decent must not be included</li><li>• Requires a basic level of competency in bike control</li><li>• Suitable for mountain bikes only</li><li>• May include some uneven surface with unavoidable obstacles or rock steps and protruding obstacles such as roots.</li></ul> |
| <b>Site Suitability</b>    | Core Recreational Area or rural landscape/forests                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Trail Surface</b>       | Variable and slightly uneven surfaces including some loose material not greater than two inches in size. Rock steps of not more than two and quarter inches and protruding obstacles such as roots no larger than one and half inches above the trail surface                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Trail Width</b>         | Range: 3ft. to 7ft. Wide                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Trail Gradient</b>      | Range: 5% downhill, to maximum 8% downhill grade, 15% uphill<br>Desirable: 6%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

Source: [www.trails.ie/national-trails.com](http://www.trails.ie/national-trails.com)

## Typical Class 3-Biking Trail



## Mixed-Use Trails

Many trails have the potential to be mixed use trails which can be used by two or more user categories. Such trails, sometimes known as “greenways” are typically shared by walkers and cyclists, and can also include other enthusiasts.

Most mixed use trails/ greenways will be similar to Class 1 or Class 2 walking, biking or horse riding trails in that they are wide, well surfaced and have little or no gradients. These characteristics are essential because of the variety of users and bi-directional use of these trails.

Shared use trails may include more challenging gradients and surfaces but for the purpose of this document, it is assumed that the majority of such trails will be intended for the casual user.

| Greenway/Mixed Use Trail   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Description</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relatively flat trails intended for use by walker and bikers of all ages.</li><li>• Wide enough to accommodate tow-way usage</li><li>• Even consistent sealed surface with no trail features or obstacle</li><li>• Has low gradient to ensure slow speeds and safe use in any direction.</li><li>• May include paths, rural traffic free lanes, forest roads, etc.</li></ul> |
| <b>Site Suitability</b>    | City/City fringe or Core Recreation Areas or Rural landscapes/forest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Trail Surface</b>       | Consistent sealed surfaces, or compacted material. Minimal loose material no larger than 20mm. May have dual surface – hard sealed surface for bikes and parallel softer compacted surface for walkers.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Trail Width</b>         | Range: 6.5ft. to 10ft. Wide<br>Desirable: 8ft.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Trail Gradient</b>      | Range: maximum 5% downhill to 10% uphill.<br>Desirable: 5% average                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

### Typical Mixed Use Trail



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## Trail Criteria

Prioritizing Trails can be accomplished in many ways. In the case of Clay County Greenways and Trails plan where no trails have been established, Clay County sponsored two open houses using surveys and maps. Through this compiled information from local citizens, it was decided, which trails would become primary, secondary and tertiary.

### Primary Trails

A primary trail is a trail that is deemed most important in the sequence of development and construction in the building of a trail system. In the case of this study, each municipality has its own primary designation of trails.

Primary trails are usually considered the main part of the trail system linking one segment of a trail with another. Primary trails are many times located in more populous areas linking residential zones with commercial zones or vice versa. The primary trails are usually the widest trail system running through an area. The Primary Trail should be designed to accommodate many types of users and their needs. Features should include the smoothest and the most direct connection from residential or commercial areas while providing a scenic route for commuters traveling home or to places of business.

### Secondary Trails

Secondary trails are developed behind or sometimes in conjunction with primary trails, but are deemed less important to enthusiast. In the majority of situations, secondary trails are considered a branch or an additional segment of a trail system often times leading into forested area or green spaces and are usually used less than primary trail systems.

Bikers, runners and walkers can comfortably travel along this path, whether it's for exercise, pleasure, or en route to another destination within a designated area. Secondary trails are usually a series of mileage loops that have been laid out along this system to create easily navigated routes ensuring the highest level of comfort traveling through a green space.

### Tertiary Trails

Take enthusiast into even more intimate spaces, these soft media trails snake their way into the most pristine habitats within a given area. Traveling through lush vegetation on enhances opportunity for wildlife viewing and quiet refuges from the other activities within the park. Runners and walkers will be thrilled to have an alternative type of material that is less abrasive to their joints and offers a unique tactile experience when moving over tertiary trails.

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## Reminder to the Reader

As a reminder to the reader, the first open house was held at the Flora Public Library, 216 N. Main St., Flora, Illinois on February 20, 2014 from 6:30P.M.-8:00PM. Approximately 48 people attended the Open-House. The attendees consisted of: four Steering Committee Members; two members of the local news; four members of the Rotary Interact High School Service Club; 21 Flora residents; two were Clay County Residents; two Xenia residents; and, four Clay City residents. Most everyone filled out surveys and many took extra surveys with them.

The second open house was held again at the Flora Public Library on May 20, 2014 from 6:00-7:30PM. This time approximately 15 people signed the attendance sheet with three of them being current members of the Steering Committee. A summary of the survey results compiled from the February 20, 2014. Items discussed were: priorities of interest, review of proposed routes, and progress & priorities report card. From this information, goals and objectives and project prioritization factors were developed based on the input from the public and best planning practices.

The following maps are results of the public open houses and progress meetings held at the Flora Public Library. The reader should realize that project planning, and completion may vary, subject to funding and community support. These maps should not be construed as definite planning on the part of any entity or municipality.

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## Proposed Greenways and Trails Maps

### Clay County

- Primary Walking Trail
- Secondary Walking Trail
- Tertiary Walking Trail
- Primary Biking Trail
- Secondary Biking Trail
- Tertiary Biking Trail
- Primary Mixed Use Trails
- Secondary Mixed Use Trails
- Tertiary Mixed Use Trails

### Flora

- Primary Walking Trail
- Secondary Walking Trail
- Tertiary Walking Trail
- Primary Biking Trail
- Secondary Biking Trail
- Tertiary Biking Trail
- Primary Mixed Use Trails
- Secondary Mixed Use Trails
- Tertiary Mixed Use Trails

### Charley Brown Park

- Charley Brown Park Primary Walking Trail
- Charley Brown Park Secondary Walking Trail
- Charley Brown Park Biking Trail
- Charley Brown Park Mixed Use Trail

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## Louisville

- Primary Walking Trail
- Secondary Walking Trail
- Tertiary Walking Trail
- Primary Biking Trail
- Secondary Biking Trail
- Tertiary Biking Trail
- Primary Mixed Use Trails
- Secondary Mixed Use Trails
- Tertiary Mixed Use Trails

## Clay City

- Primary Walking Trail
- Secondary Walking Trail
- Tertiary Walking Trail
- Primary Biking Trail
- Secondary Biking Trail
- Tertiary Biking Trail
- Primary Mixed Use Trails
- Secondary Mixed Use Trails
- Tertiary Mixed Use Trails

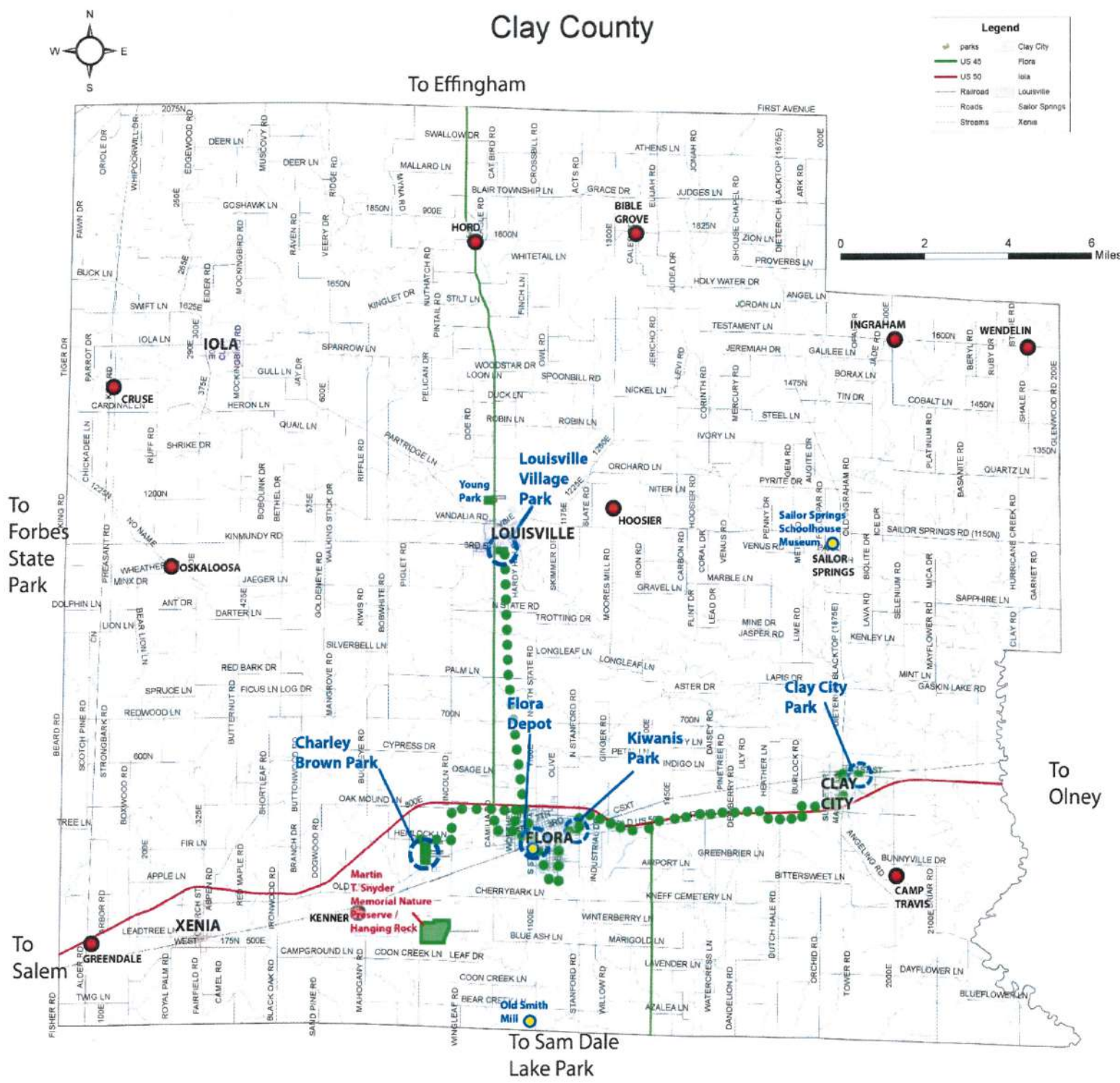
## Xenia

- Primary Walking Trail
- Secondary Walking Trail
- Tertiary Walking Trail
- Primary Biking Trail
- Secondary Biking Trail
- Tertiary Biking Trail
- Primary Mixed Use Trails
- Secondary Mixed Use Trails
- Tertiary Mixed Use Trails

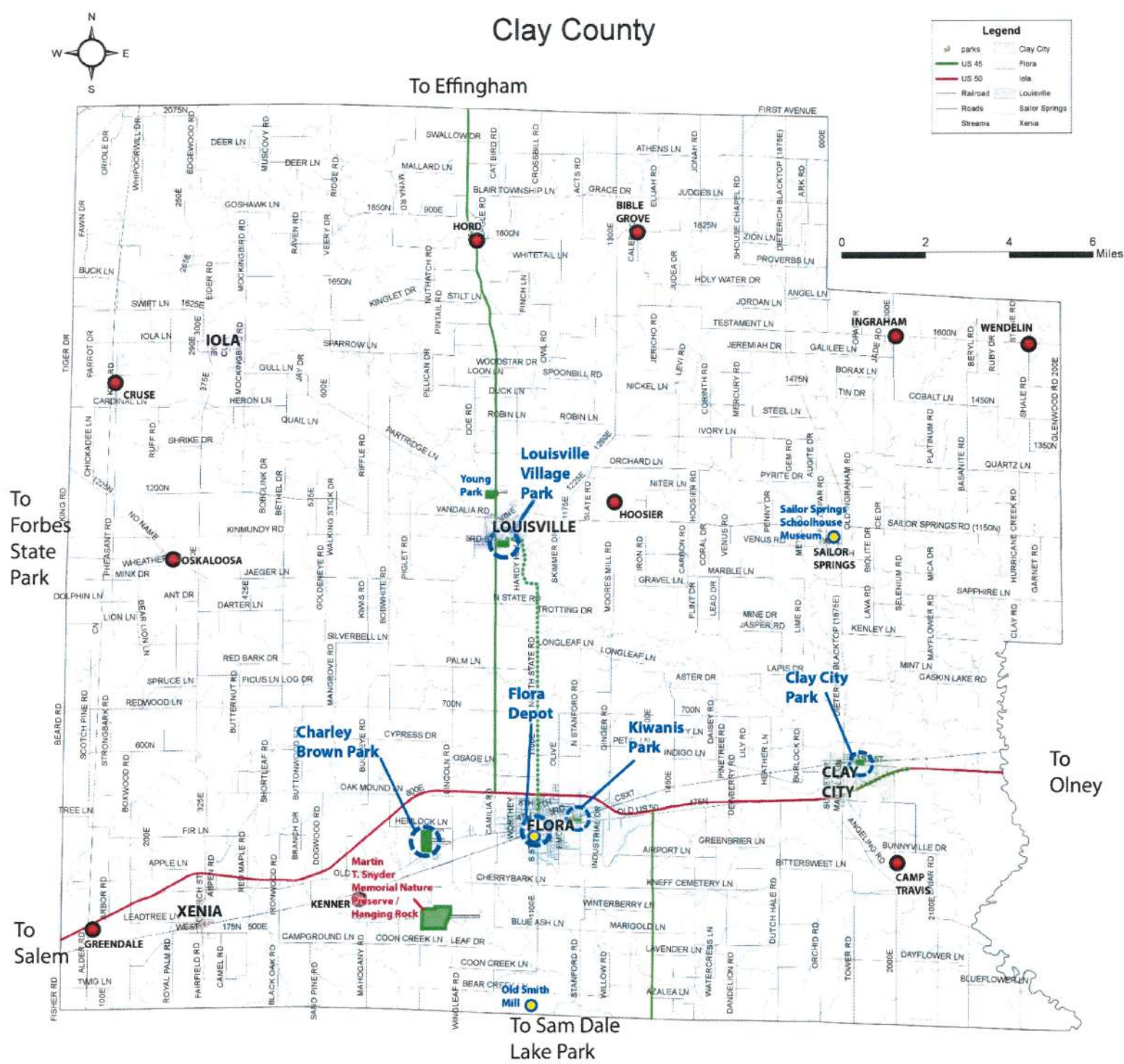
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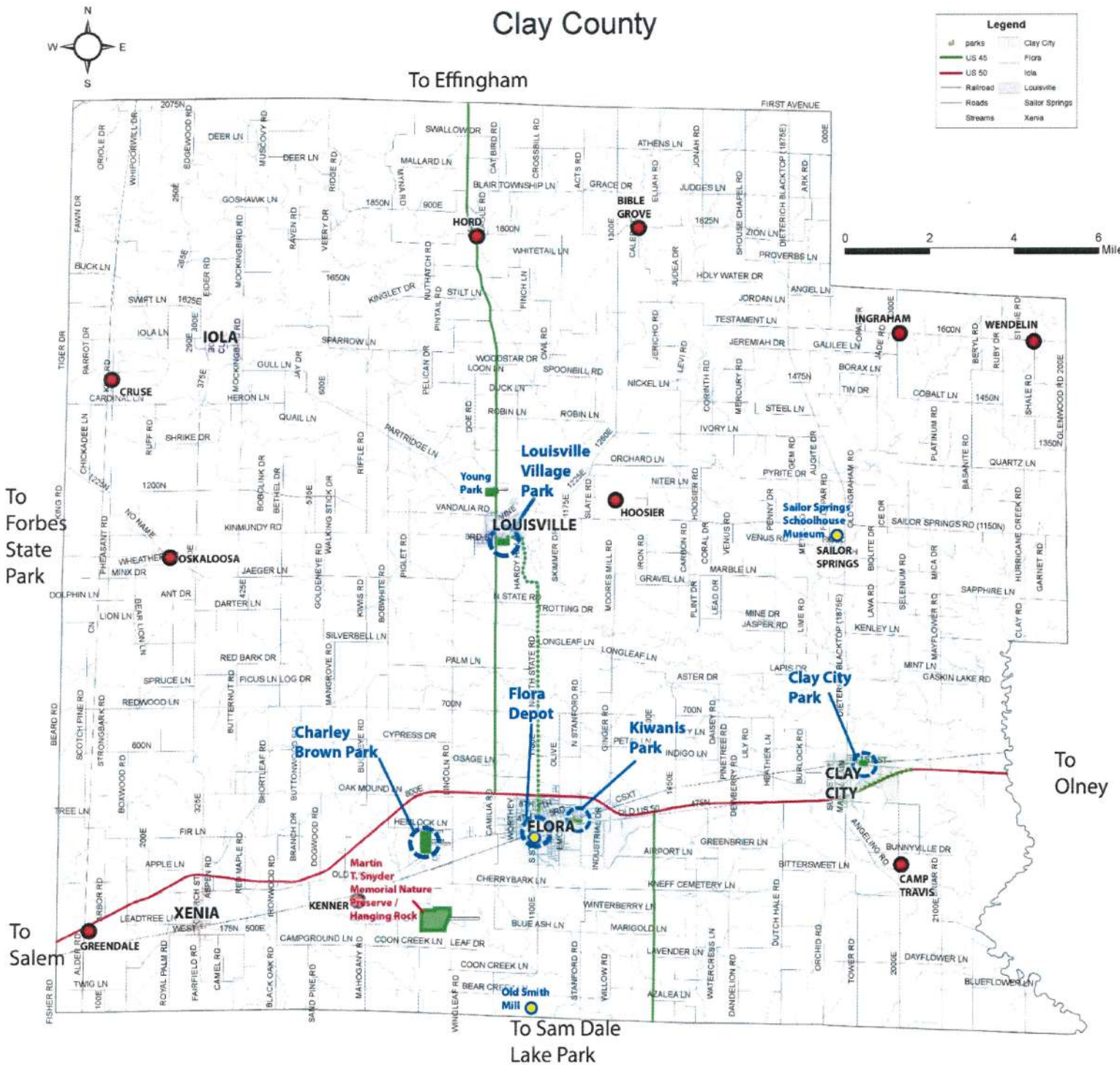
# Clay County: Proposed Primary Walking Trail



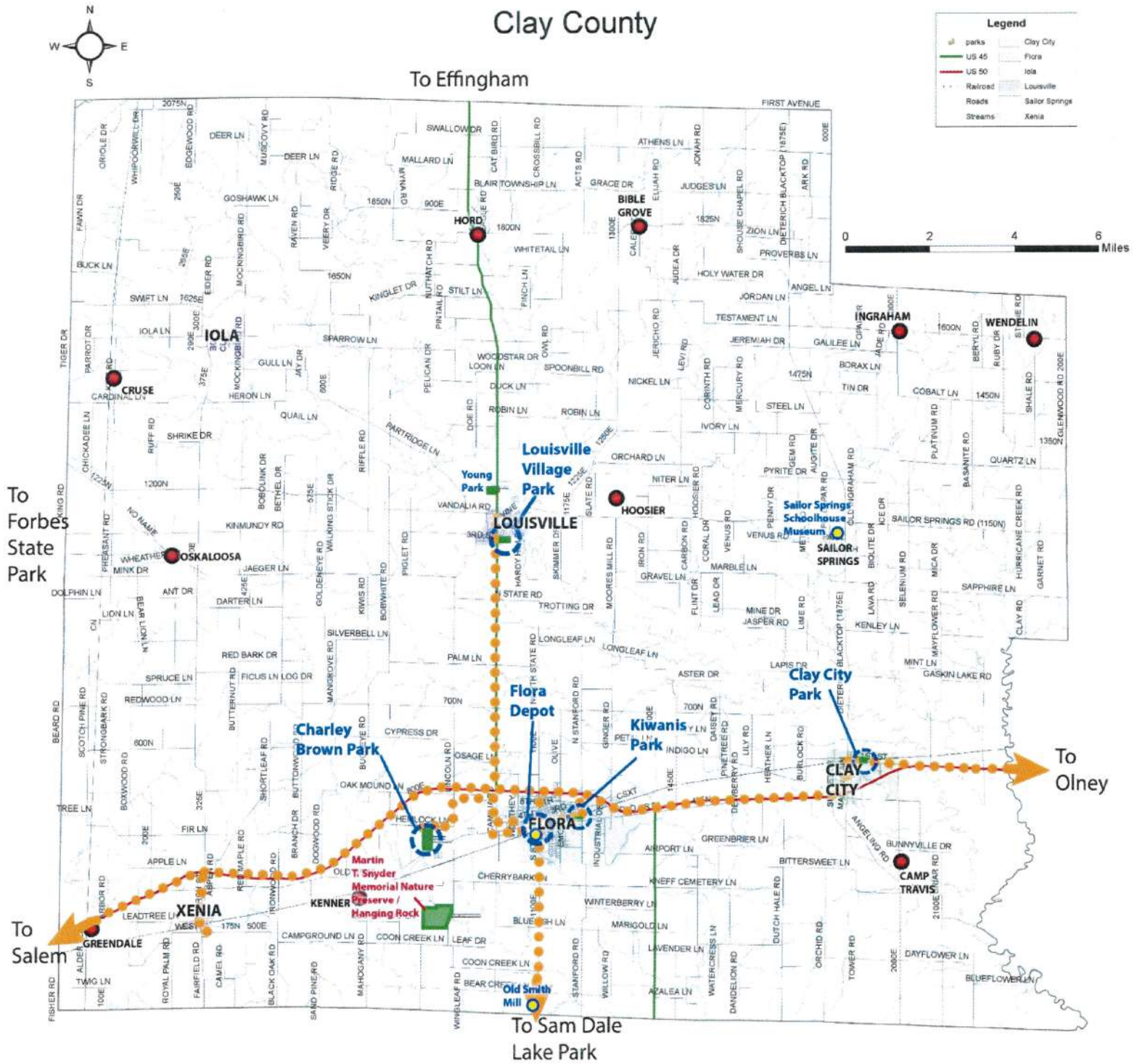
# Clay County: Proposed Secondary Walking Trail



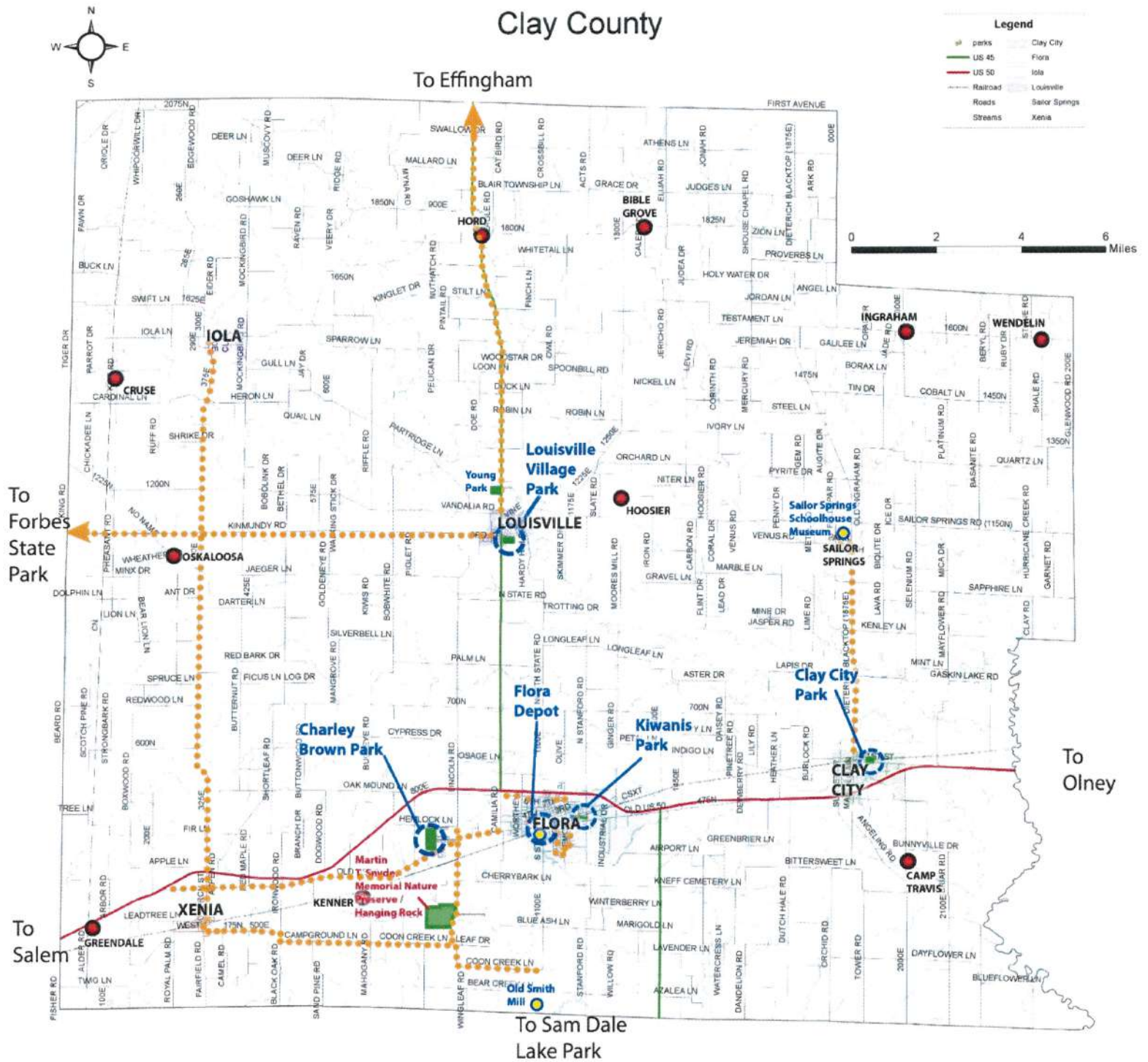
# Clay County: Proposed Tertiary Walking Trail



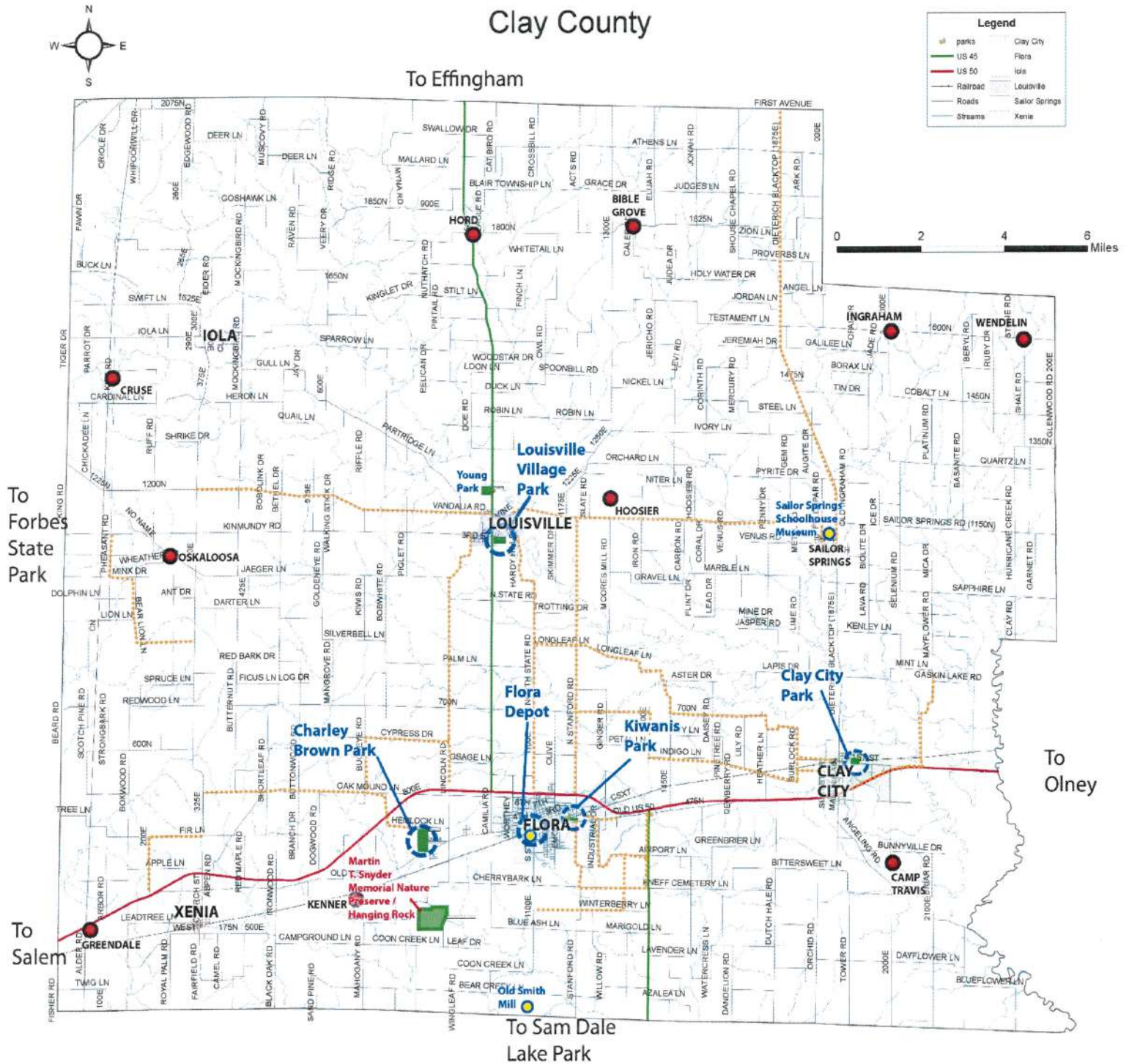
# Clay County: Proposed Primary Biking Trail



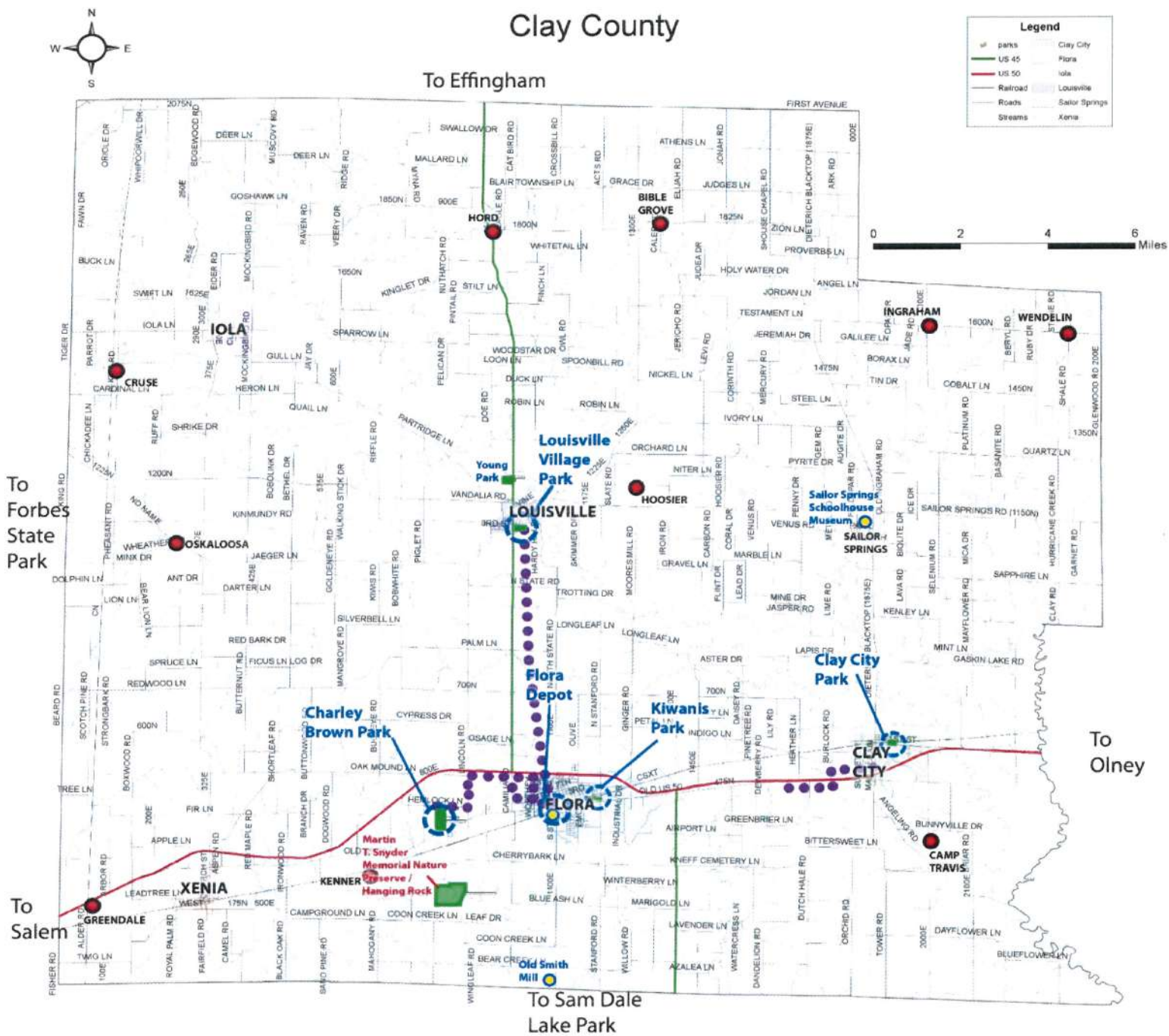
# Clay County: Proposed Secondary Biking Trail



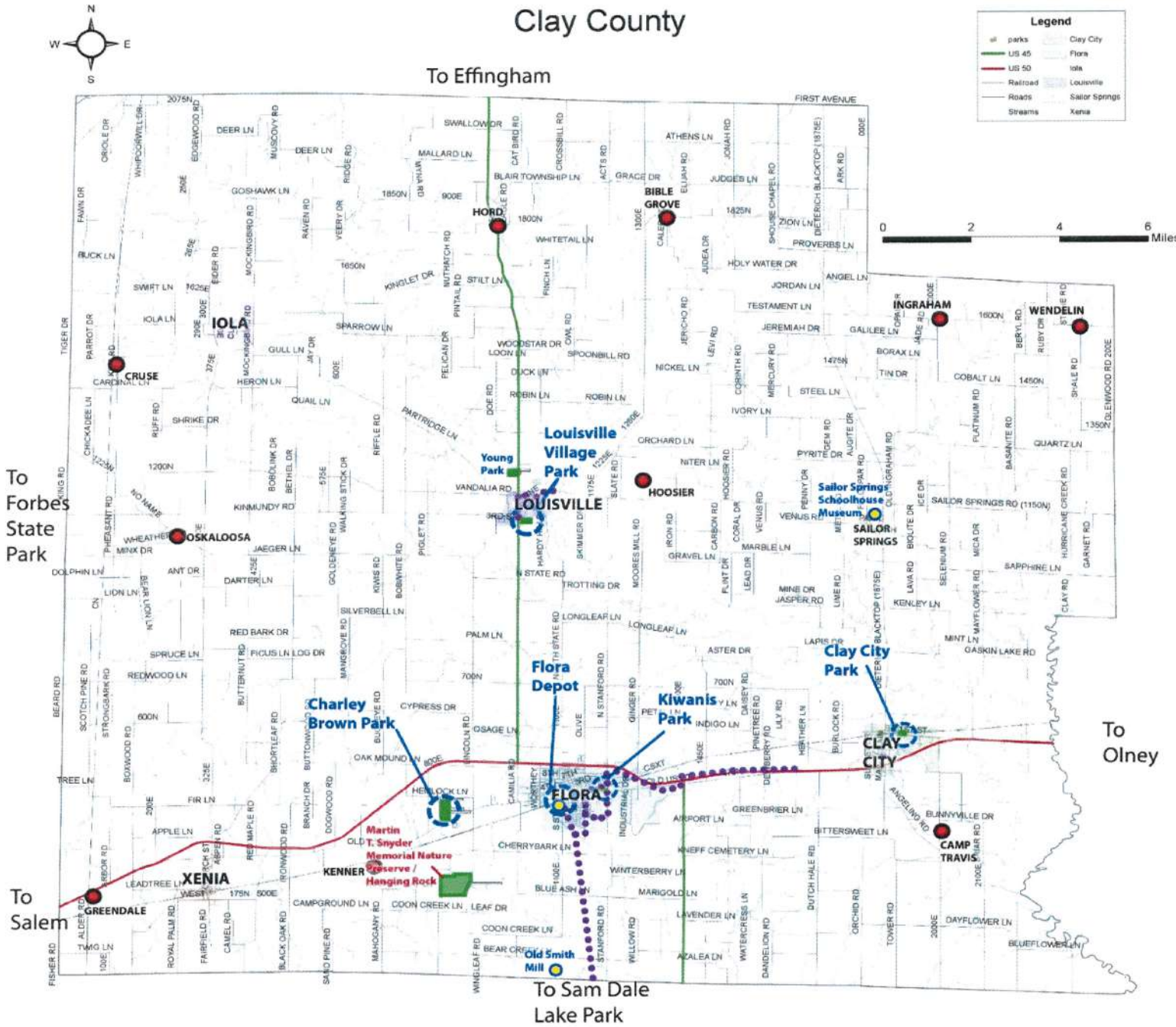
# Clay County: Proposed Tertiary Biking Trail



## Clay County: Primary Mixed Use Trail



# Clay County: Secondary Mixed Use Trail



# Clay County: Tertiary Mixed Use Trail

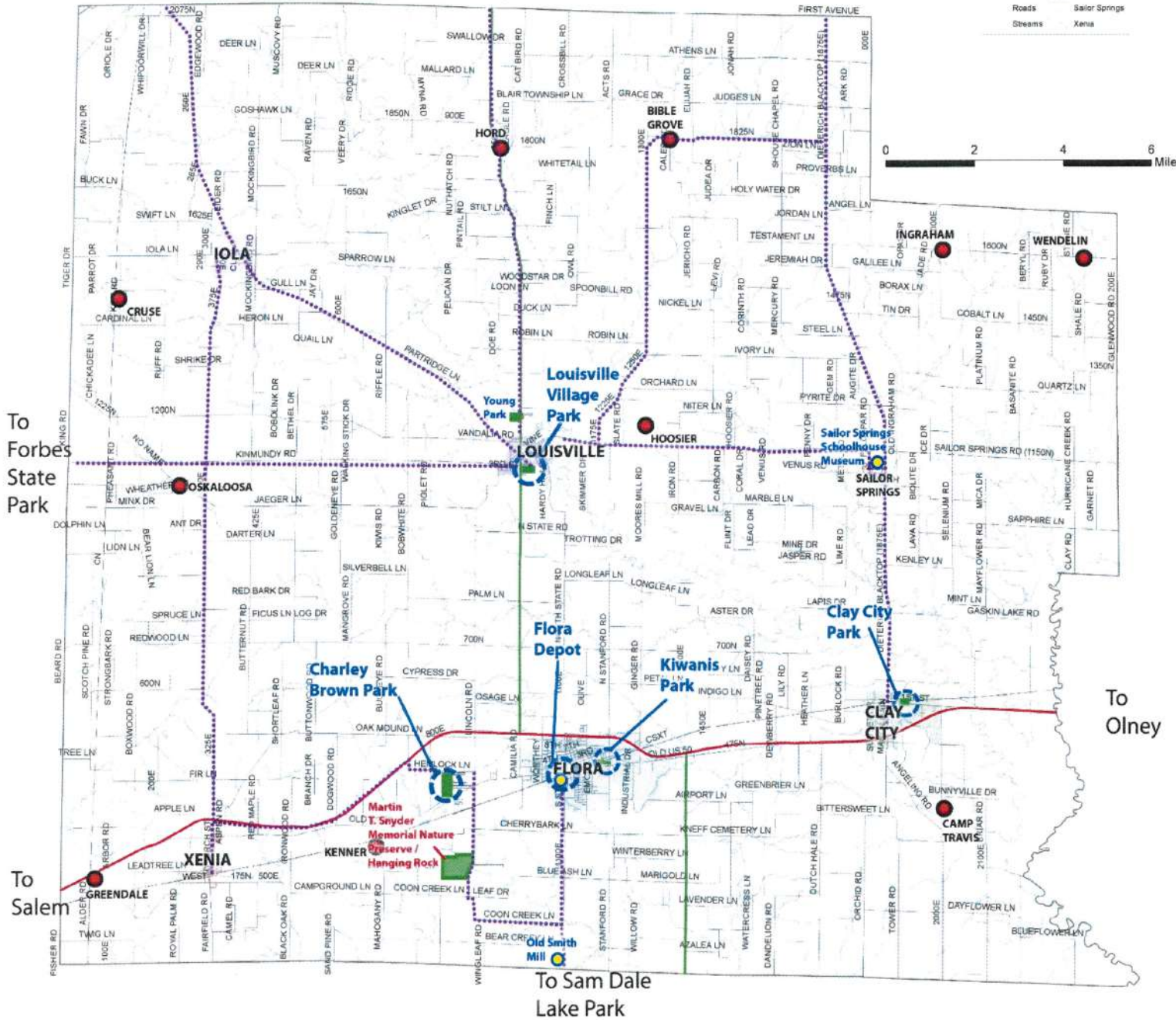


## Clay County

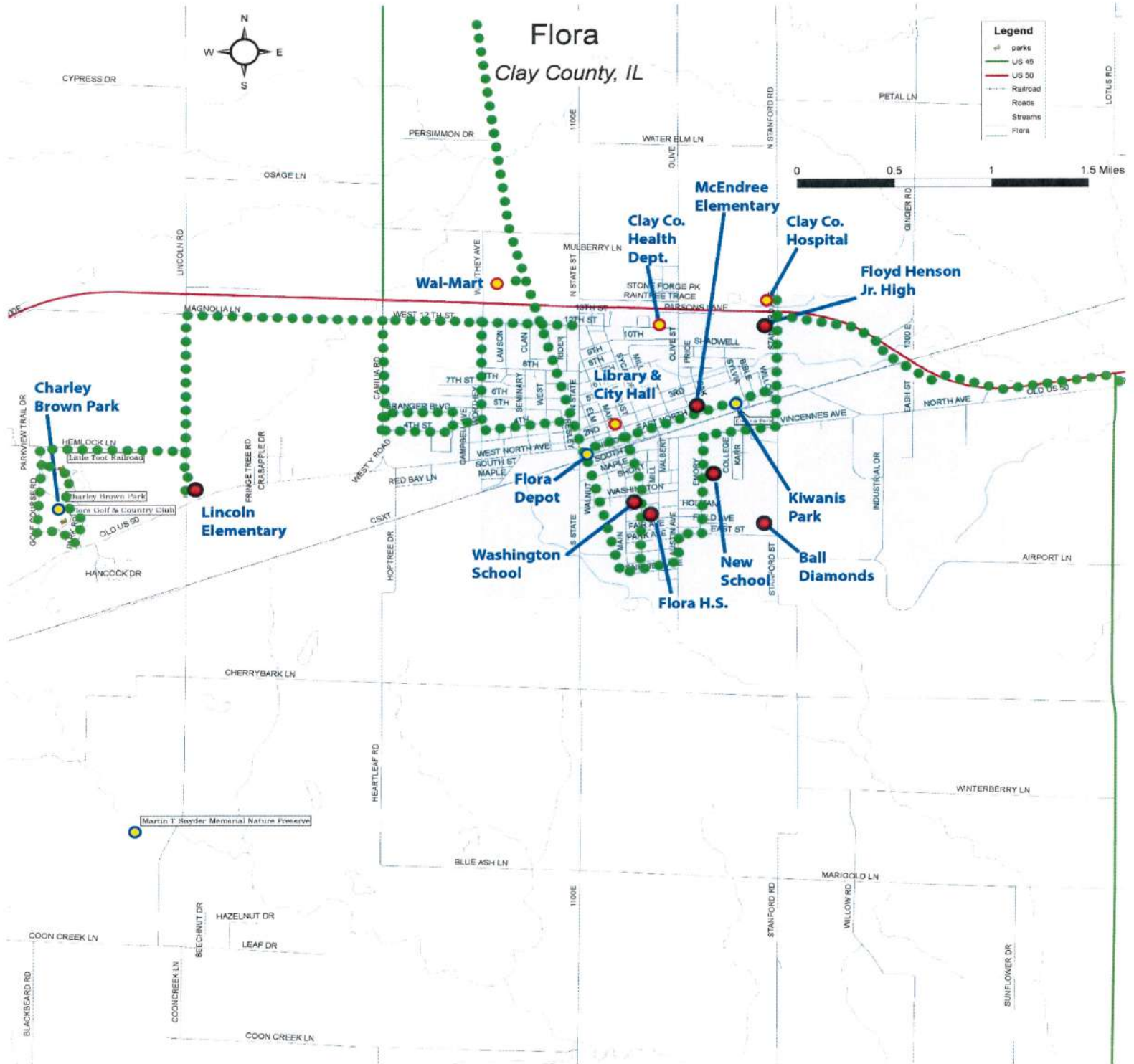
To Effingham

| Legend |                |
|--------|----------------|
|        | parks          |
|        | US 45          |
|        | US 50          |
|        | Railroad       |
|        | Roads          |
|        | Streams        |
|        | Clay City      |
|        | Flora          |
|        | Iola           |
|        | Louisville     |
|        | Sailor Springs |
|        | Xenia          |

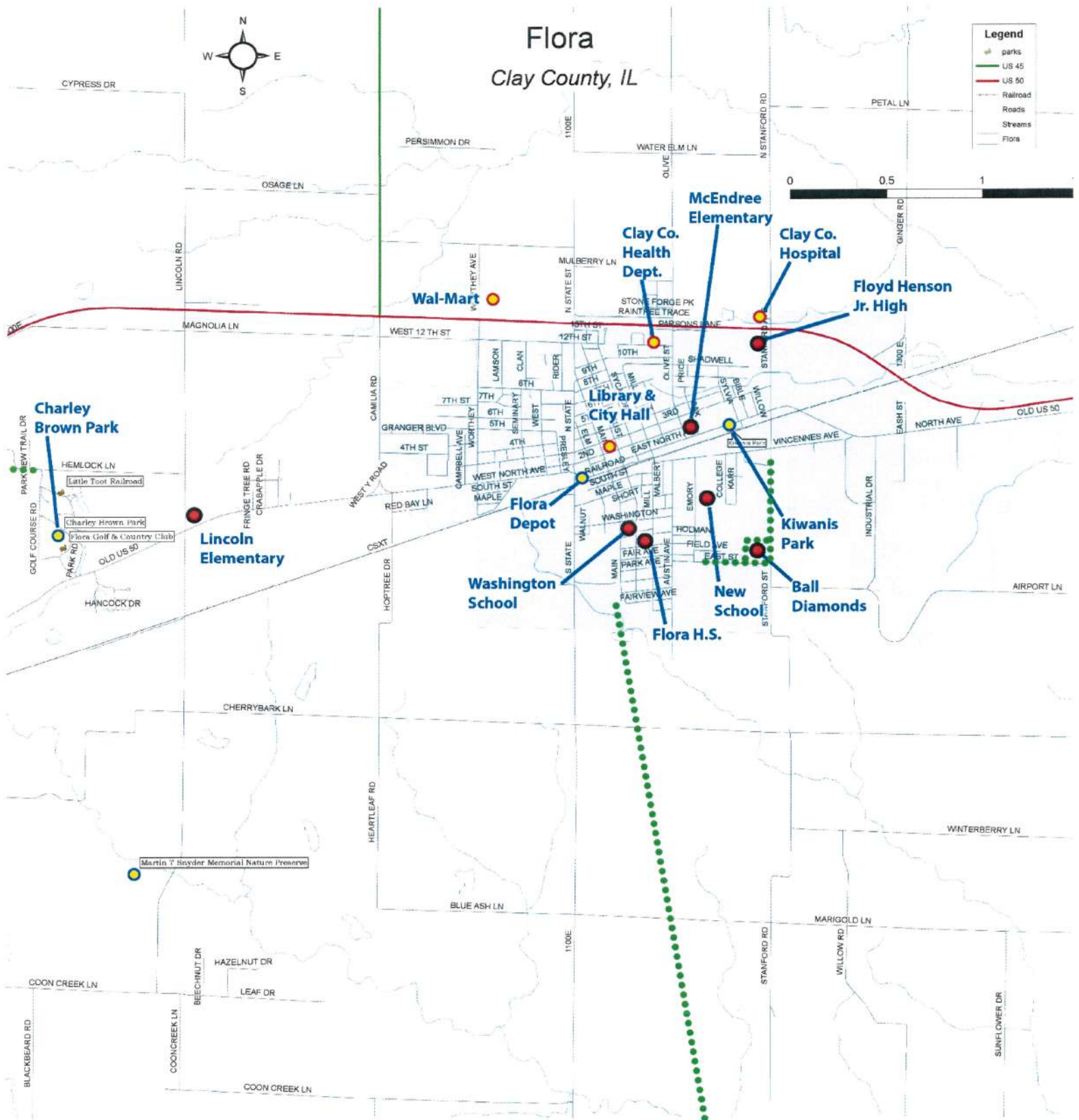
0 2 4 6 Miles



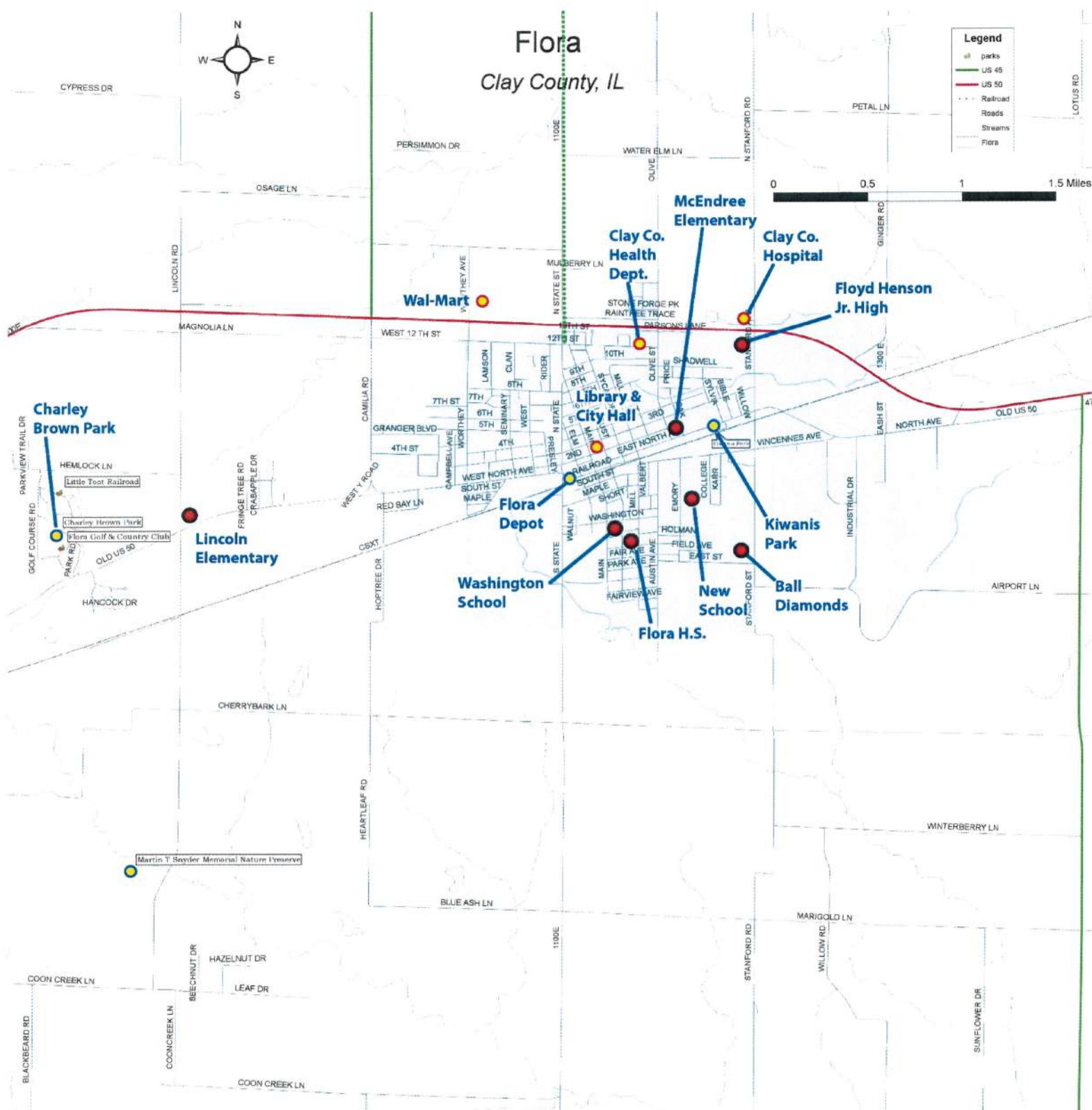
# Flora: Proposed Primary Walking Trail



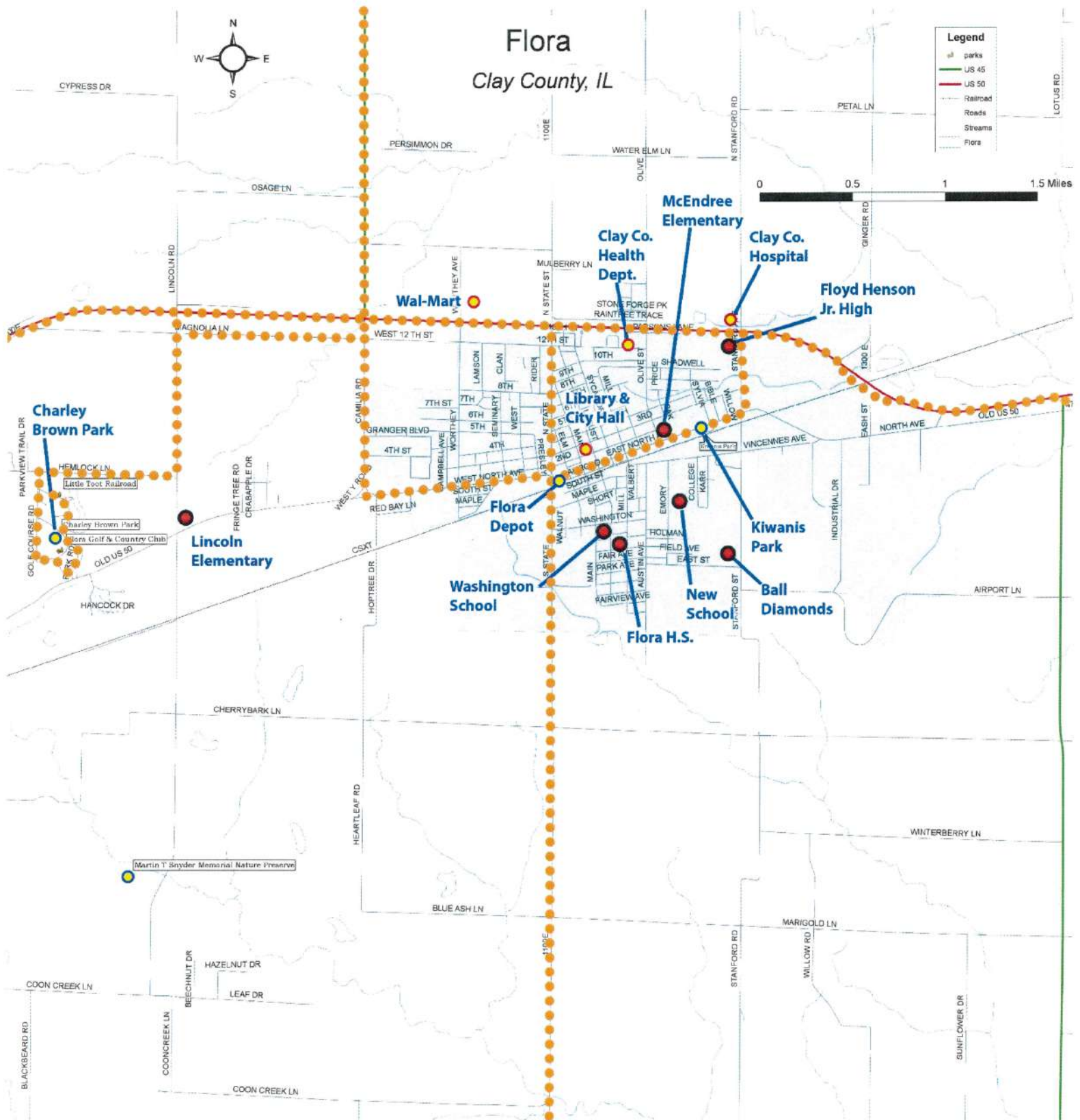
### Flora: Proposed Secondary Walking Trail



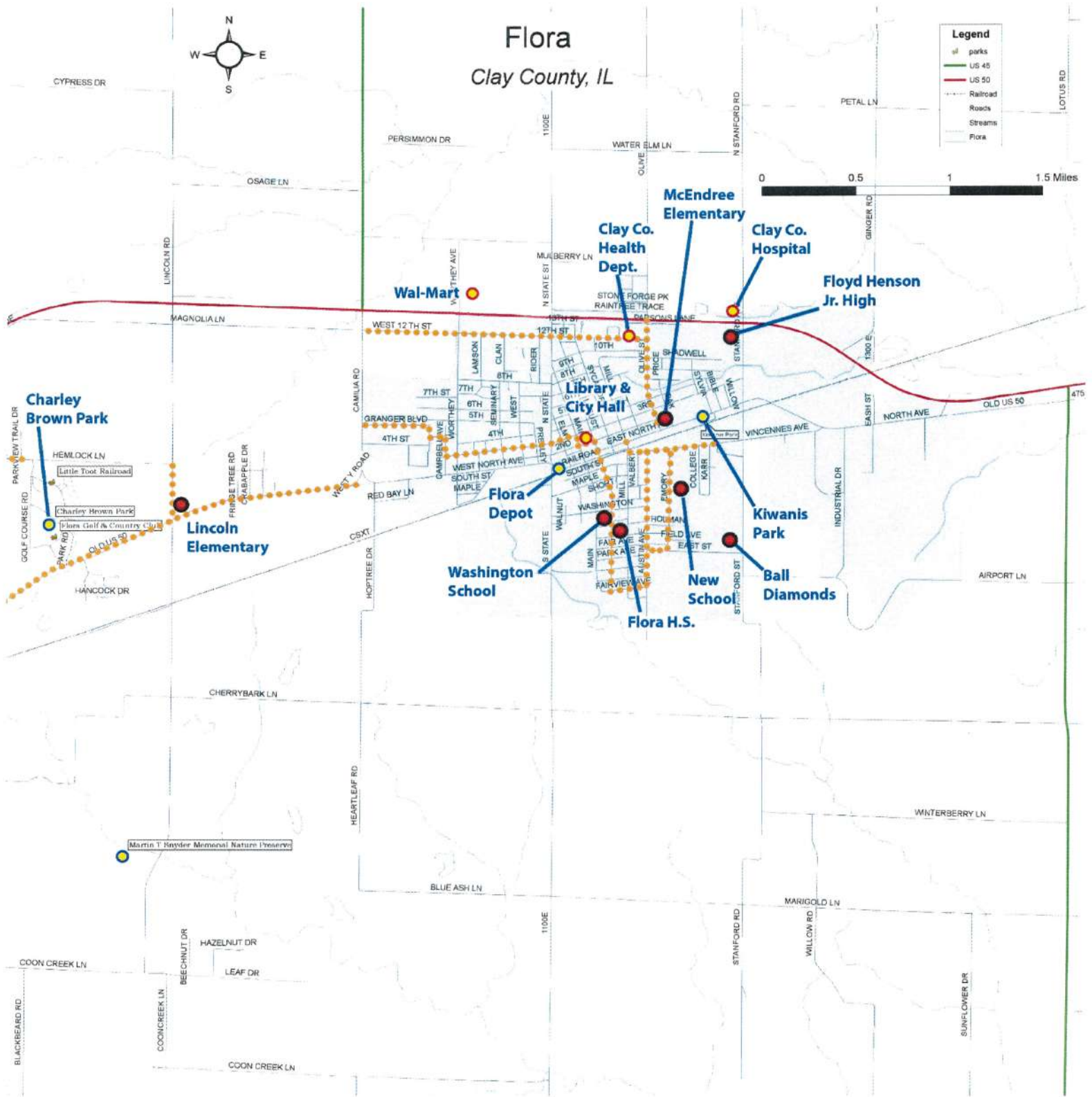
### Flora: Proposed Tertiary Walking Trail



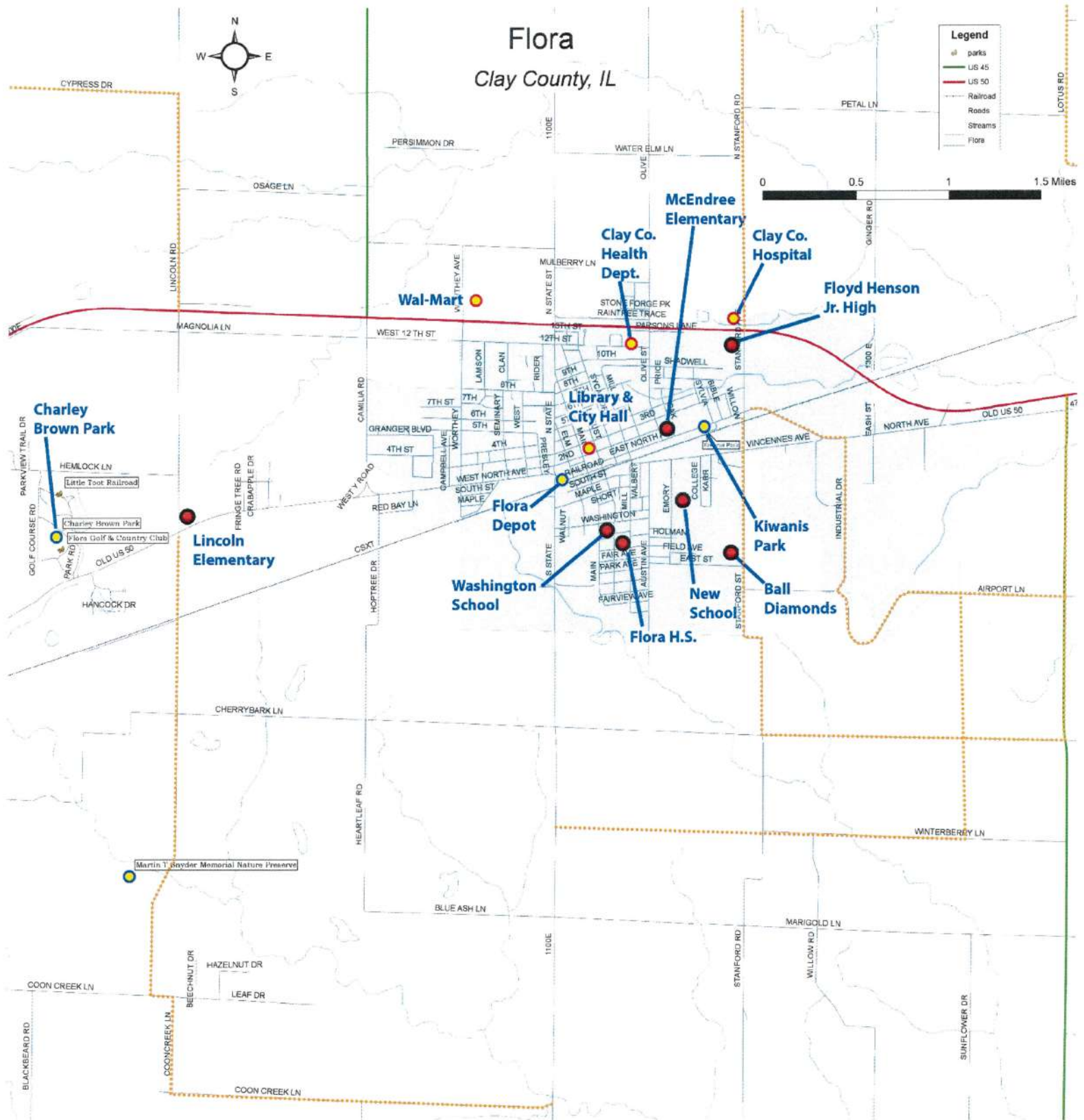
# Flora: Proposed Primary Biking Trail



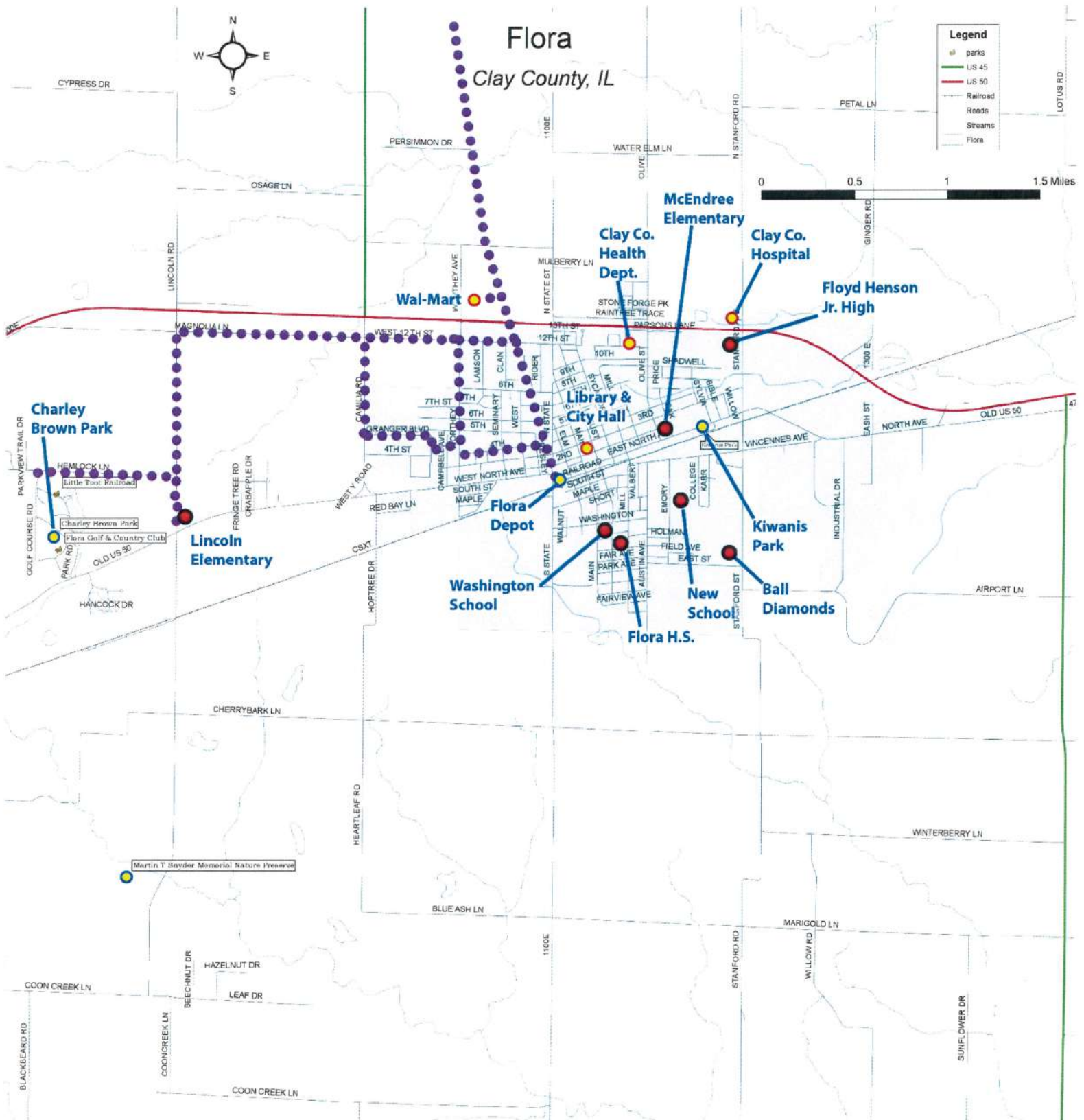
### Flora: Proposed Secondary Biking Trail



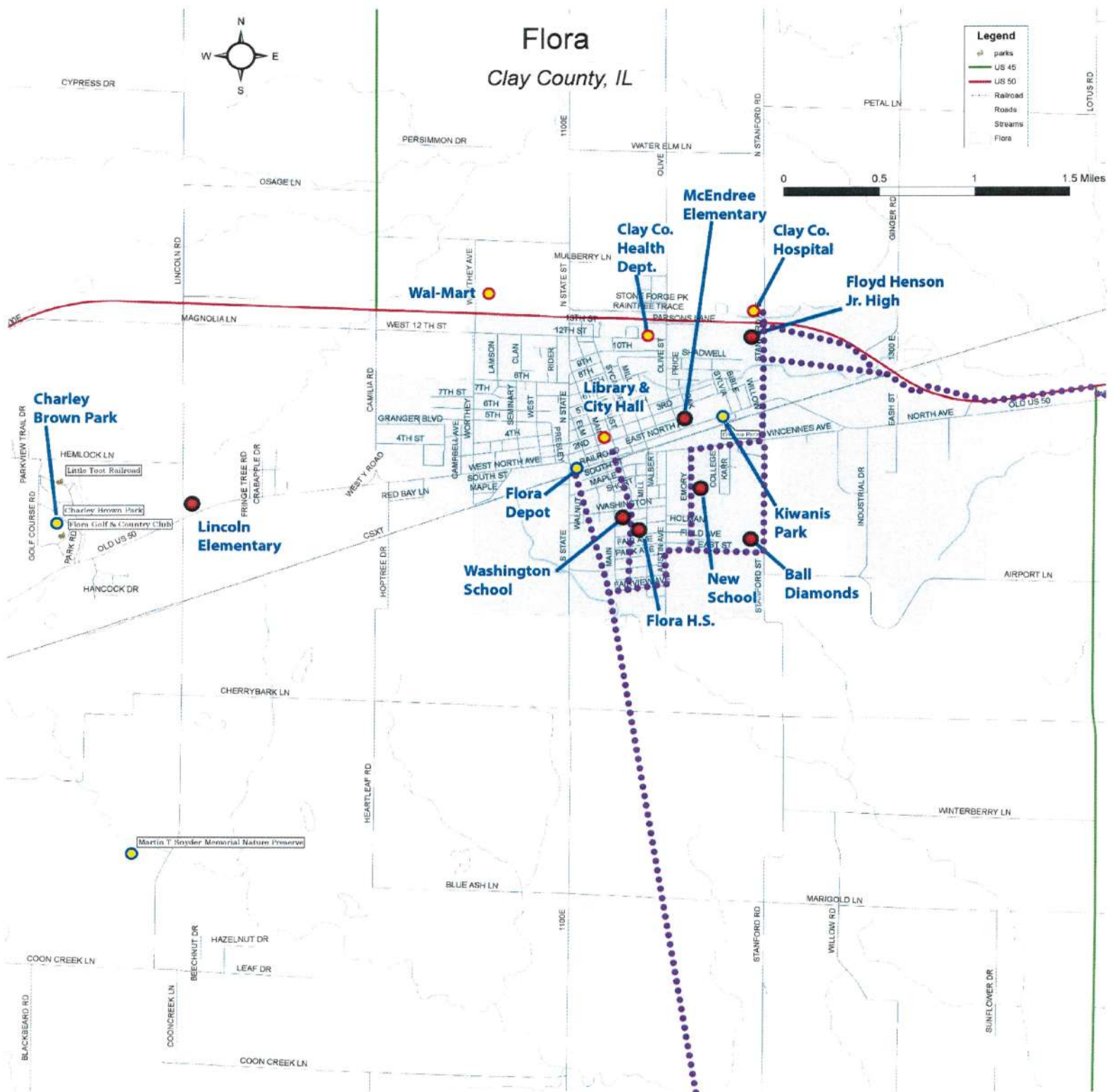
# Flora: Proposed Tertiary Biking Trail



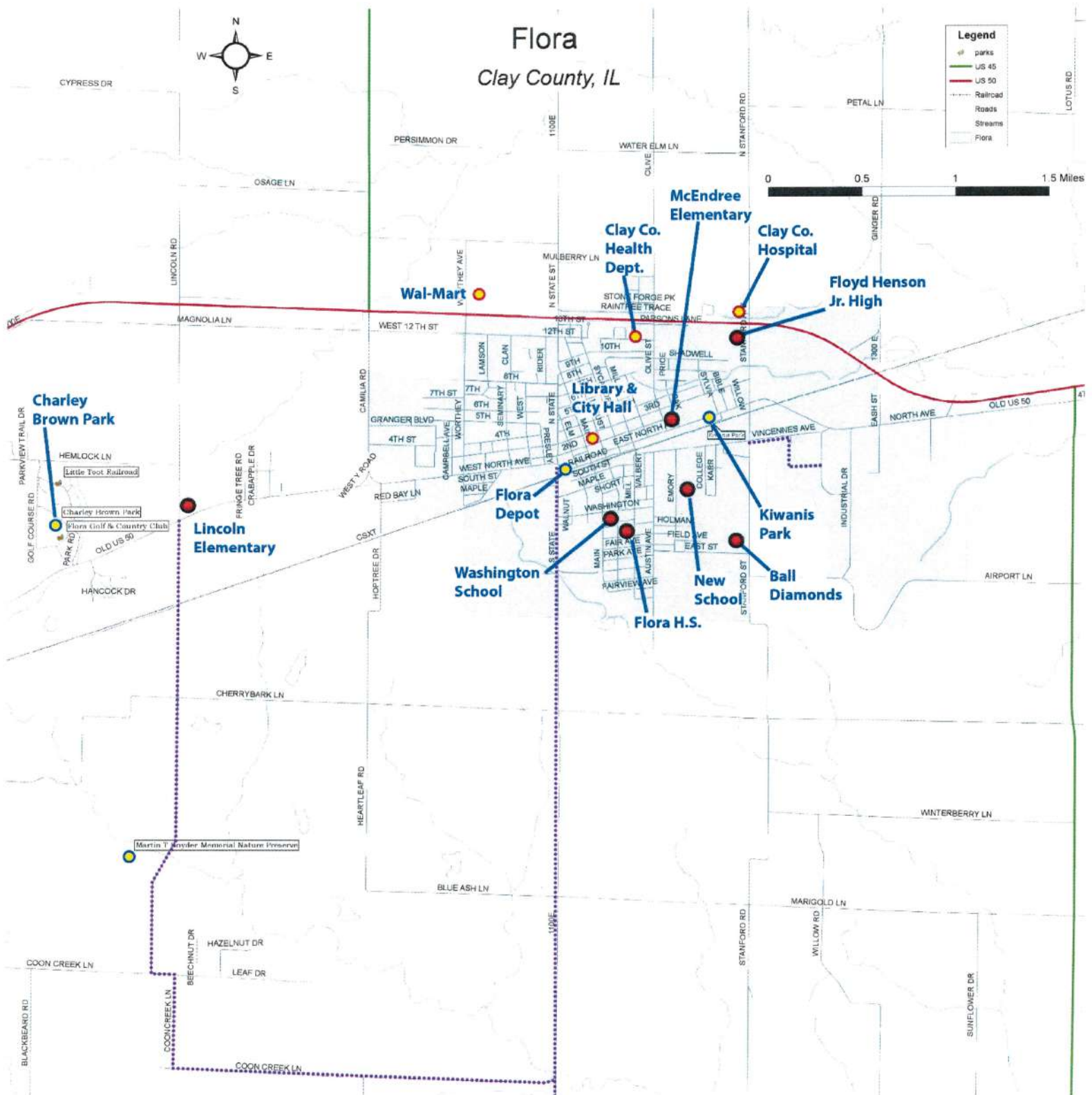
# Flora: Proposed Primary Mixed Use Trail



## Flora: Proposed Secondary Mixed Use Trail

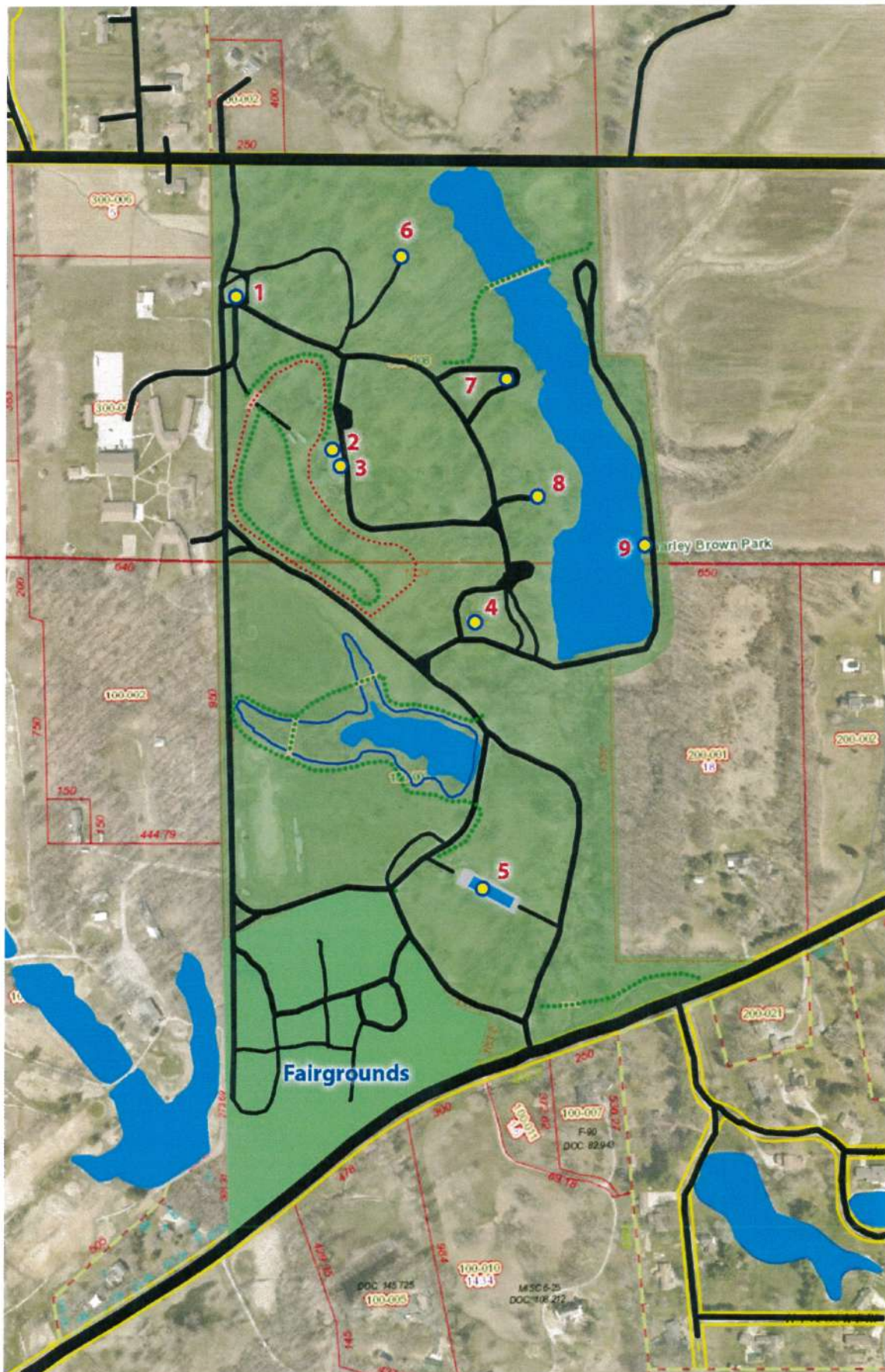


# Flora: Proposed Tertiary Mixed Use Trail



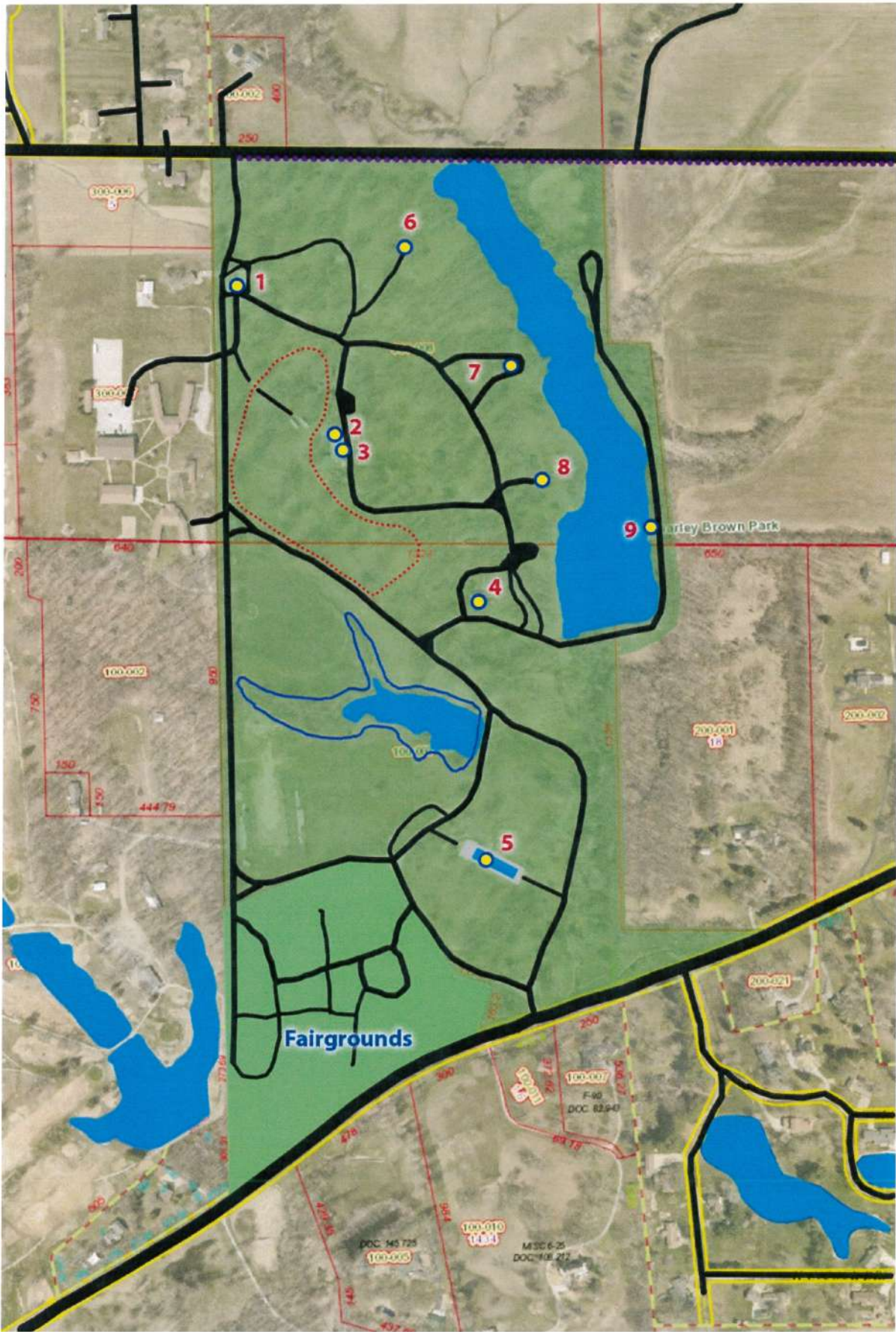


## Charley Brown Park: Proposed Secondary Walking Trail

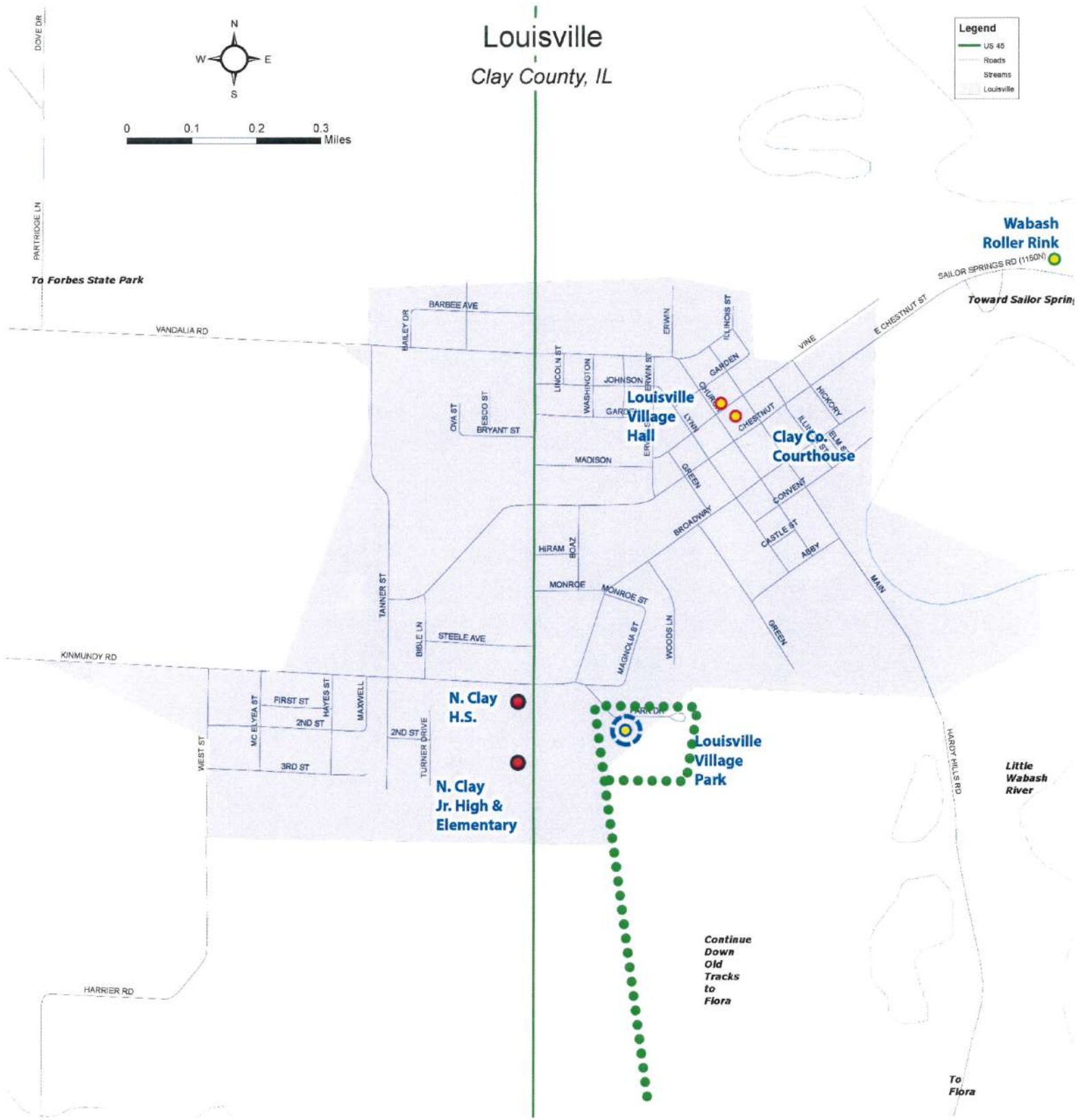




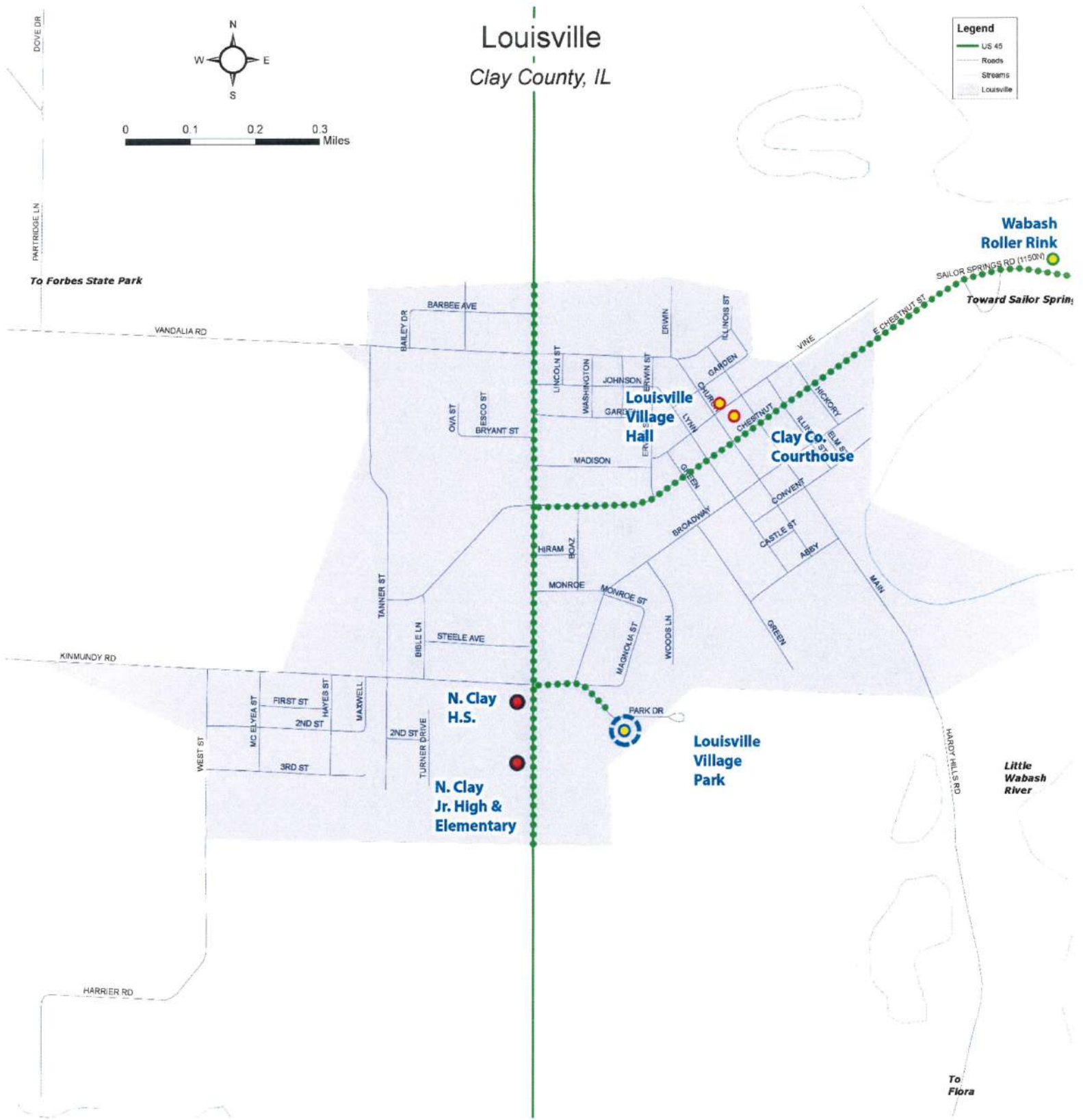
Charley Brown Park: Proposed Mixed Use Trail



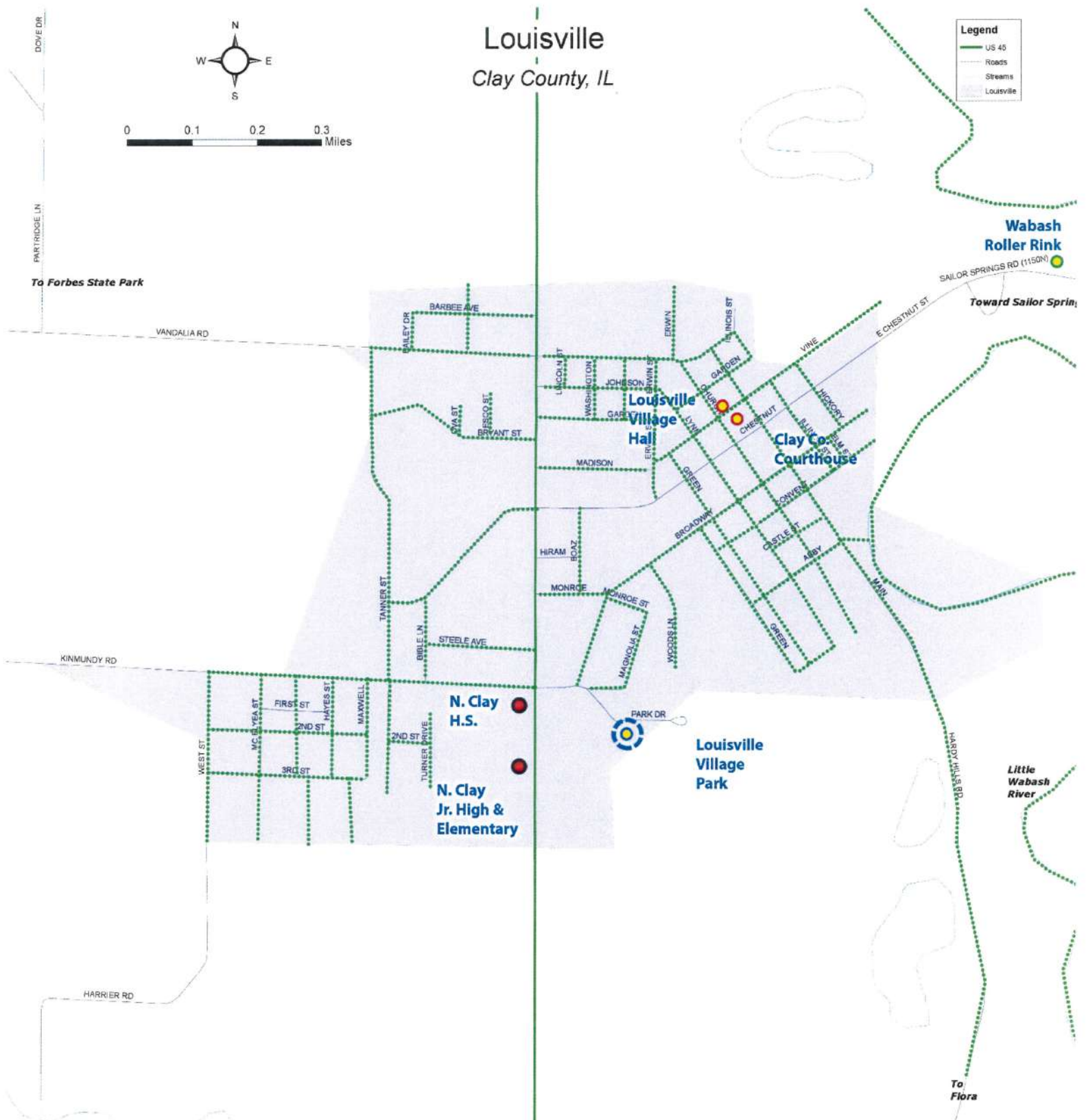
# Louisville: Proposed Primary Walking Trail



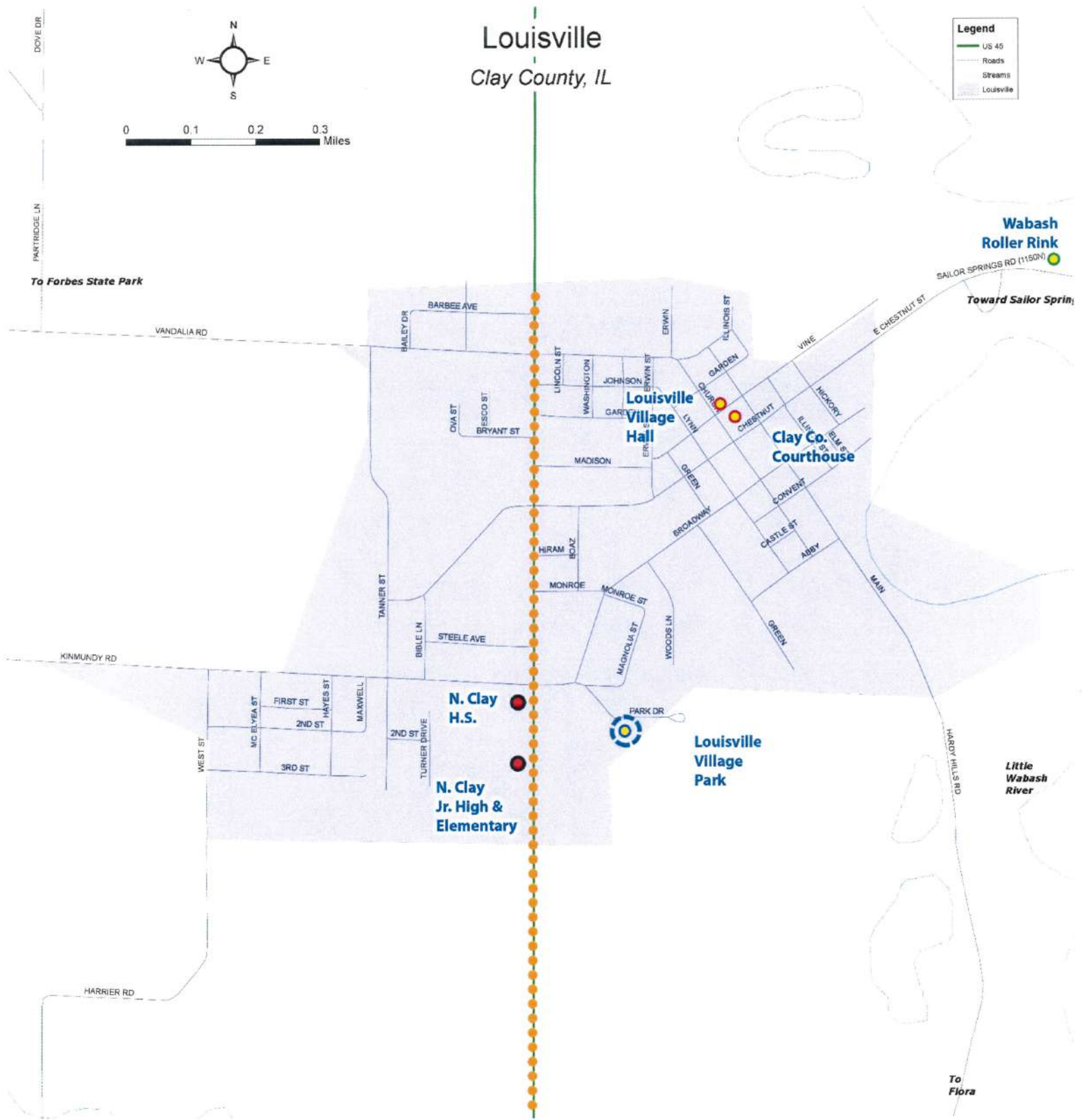
Louisville: Proposed Secondary Walking Trail



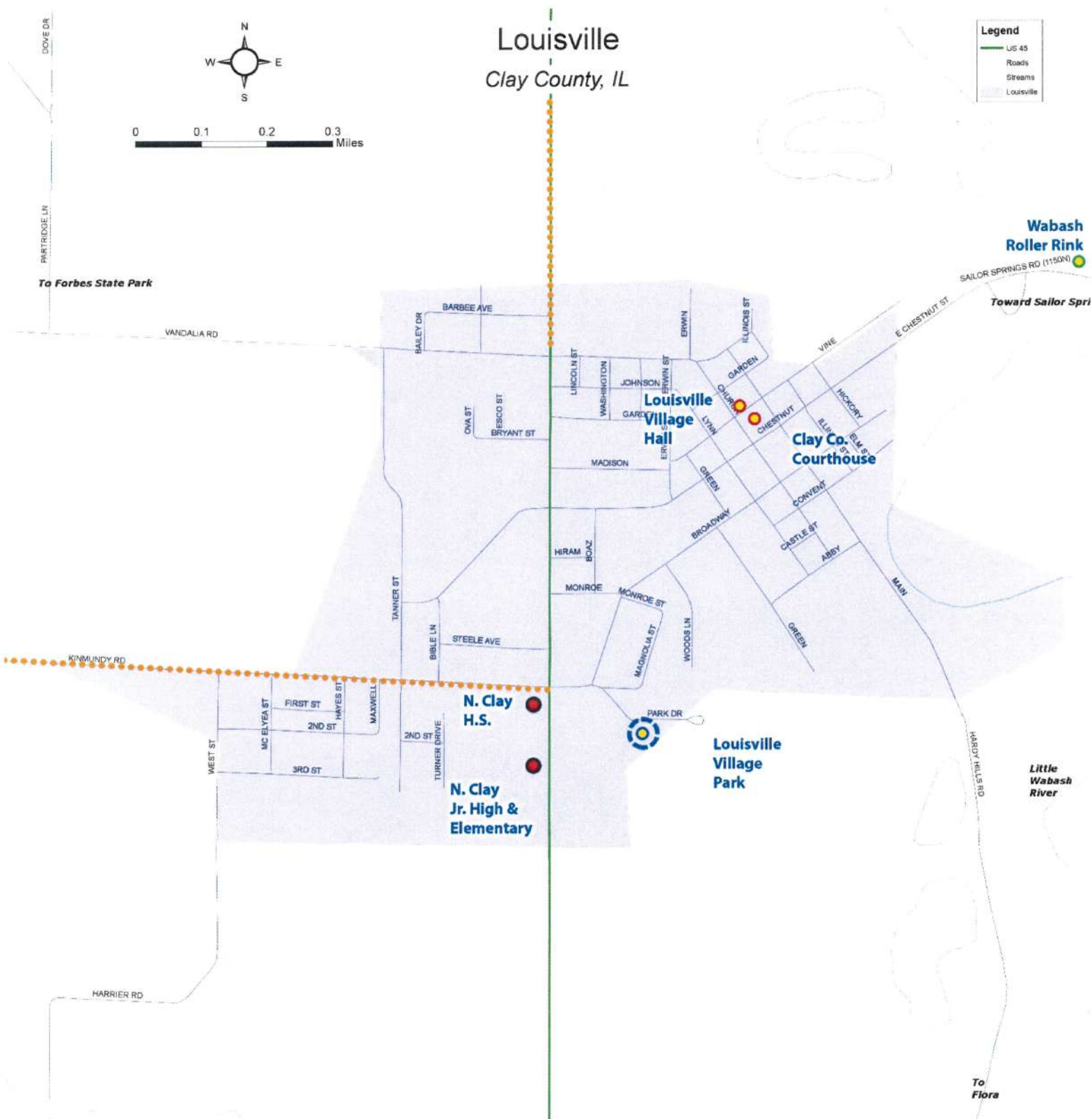
# Louisville: Proposed Tertiary Walking Trails



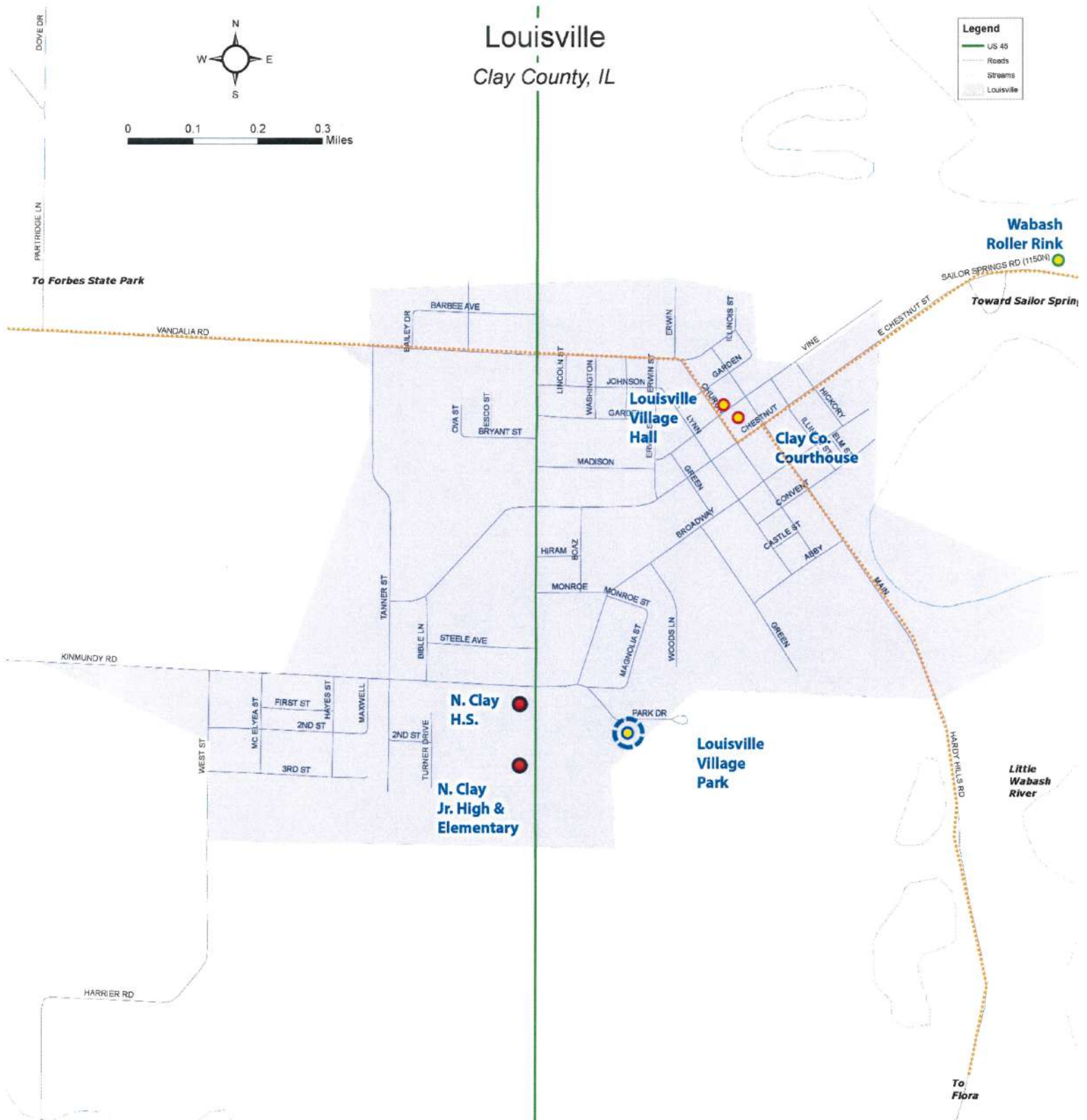
Louisville: Proposed Primary Bike Trail



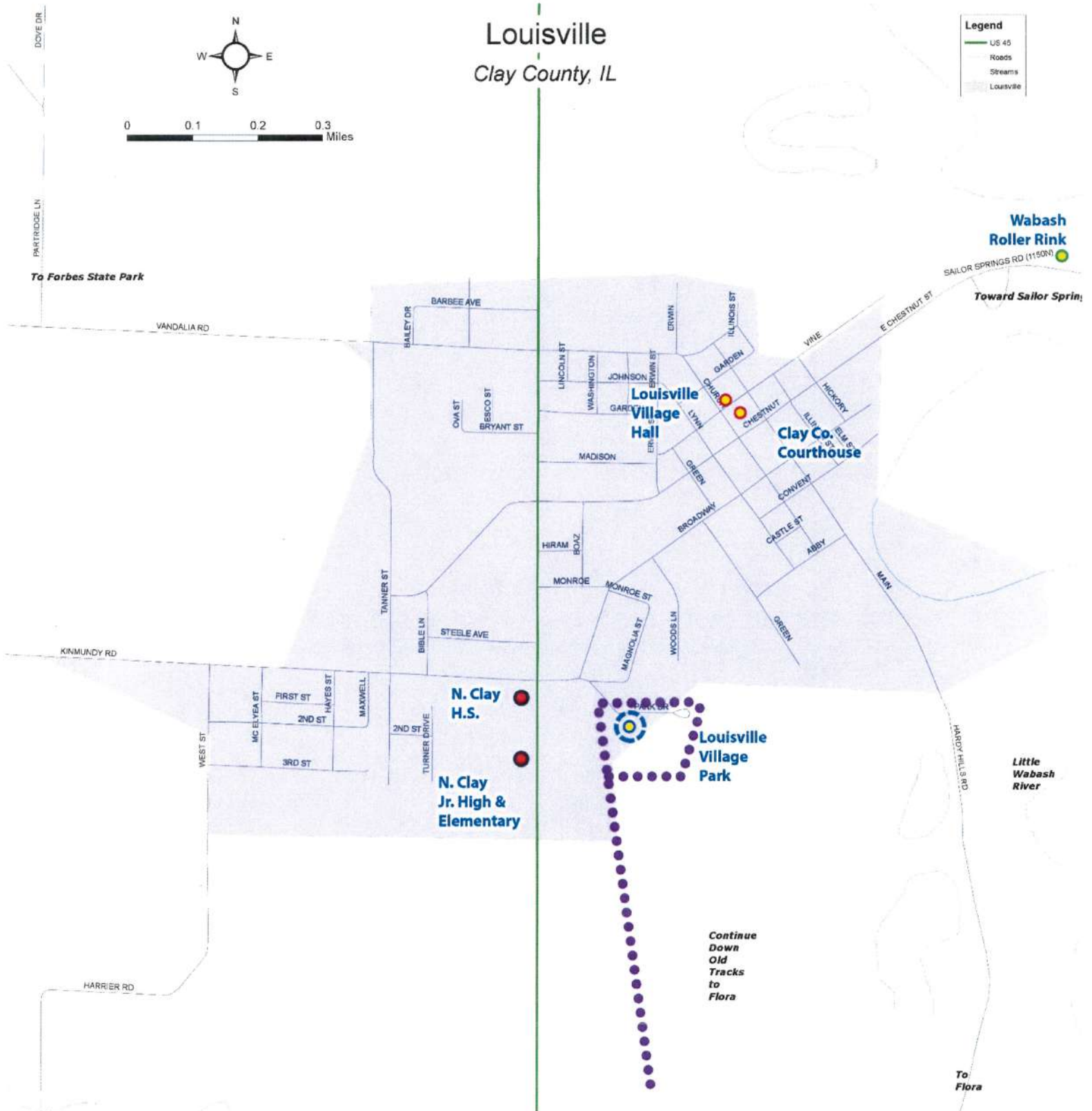
# Louisville: Proposed Secondary Bike Trail



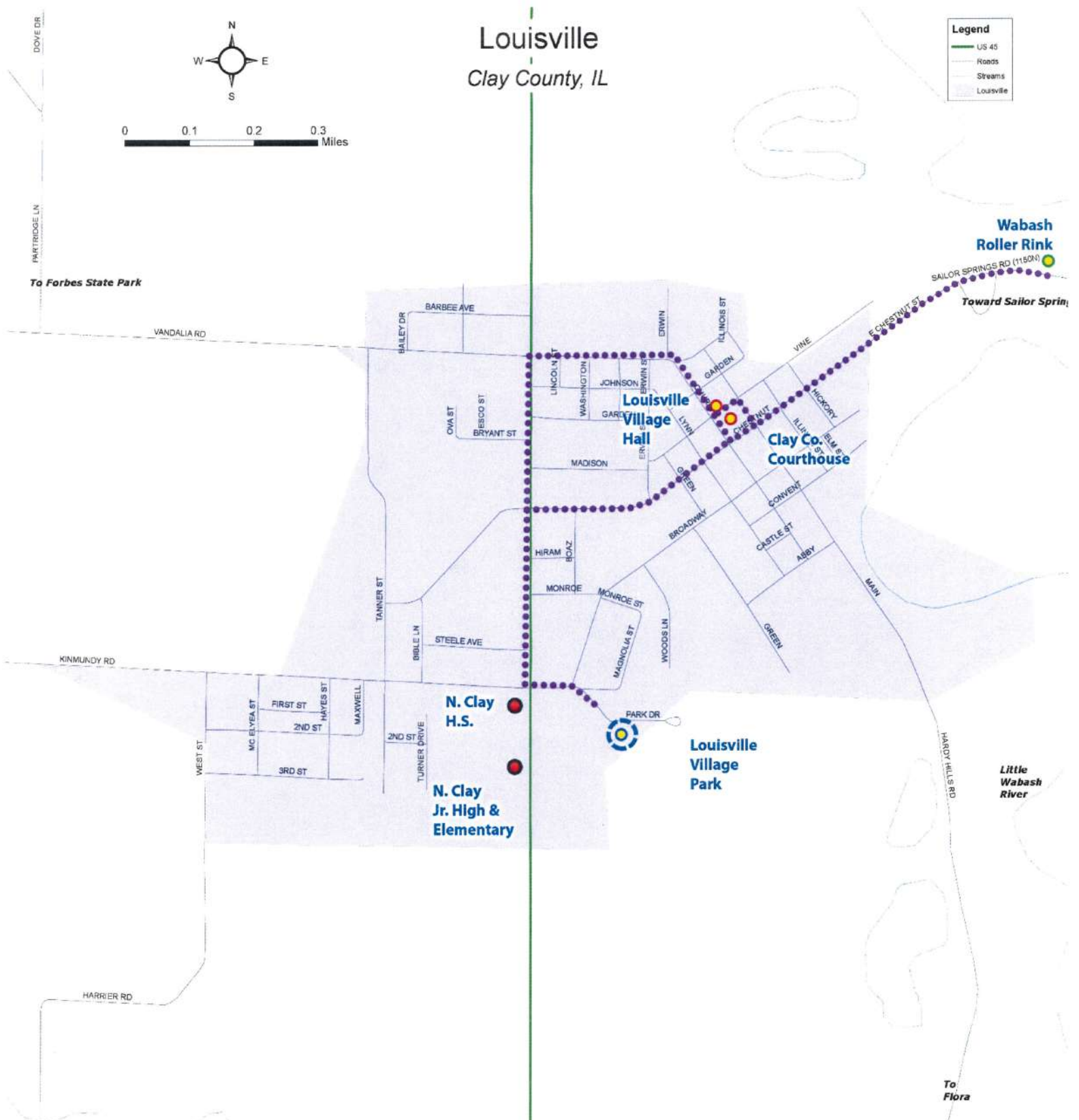
# Louisville: Proposed Tertiary Bike Trails



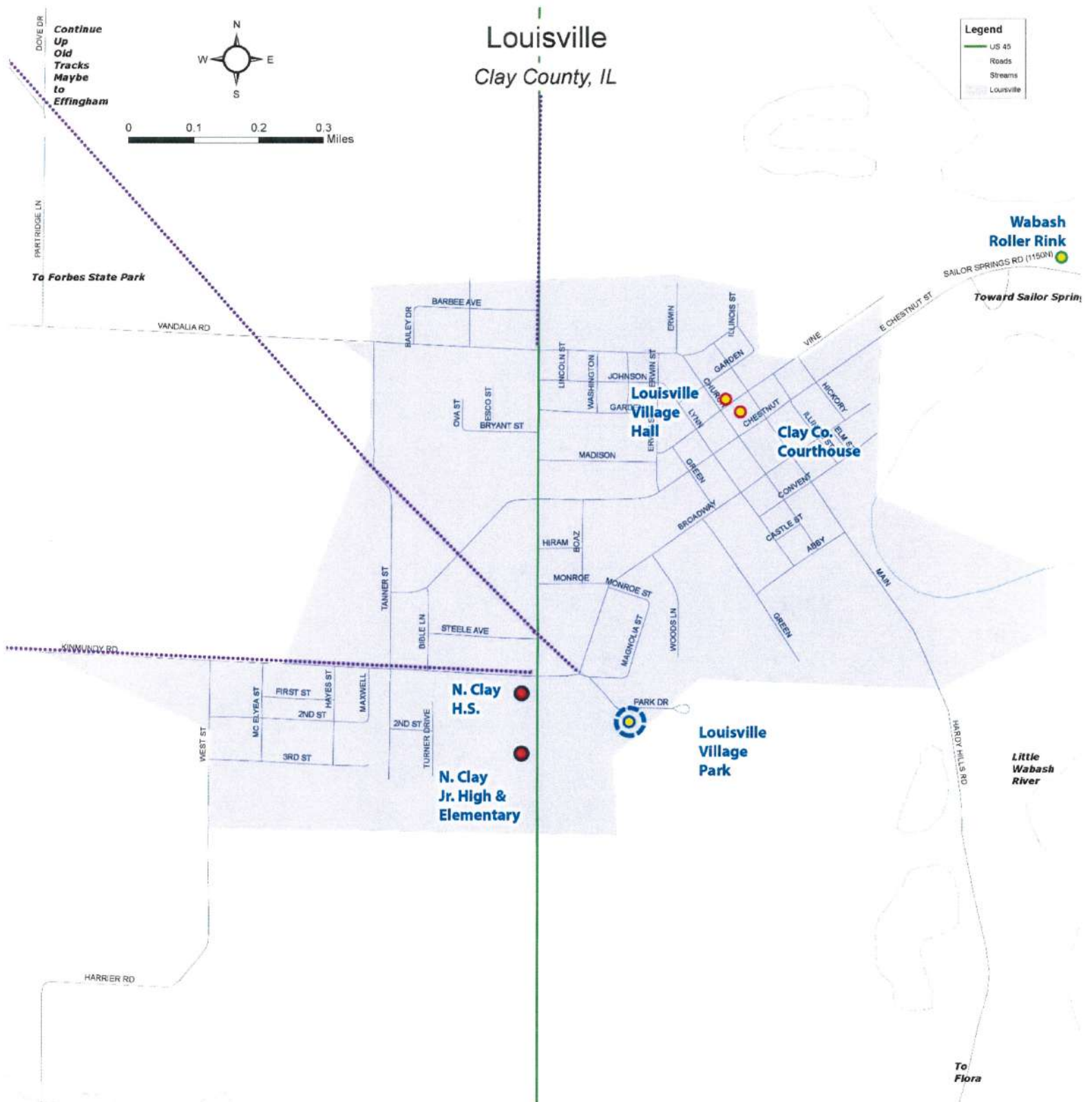
# Louisville: Proposed Primary Mixed Use Trail



# Louisville: Proposed Secondary Mixed Use Trails



# Louisville: Proposed Tertiary Mixed Use Trails



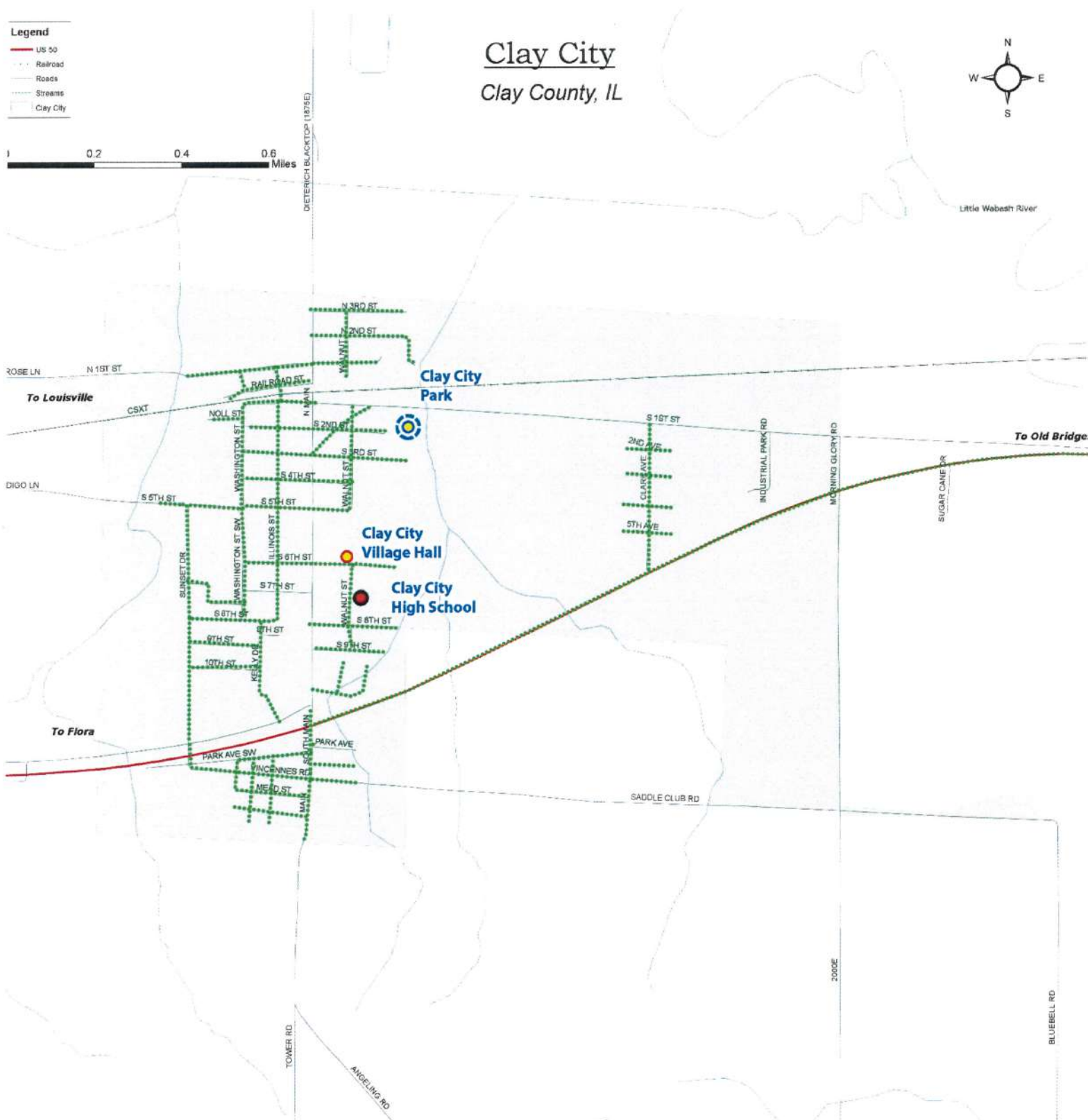
## Clay City: Proposed Primary Walking Trail



Clay County, IL



## Clay City: Proposed Tertiary Walking Trail



## Clay City: Proposed Primary Biking Trail



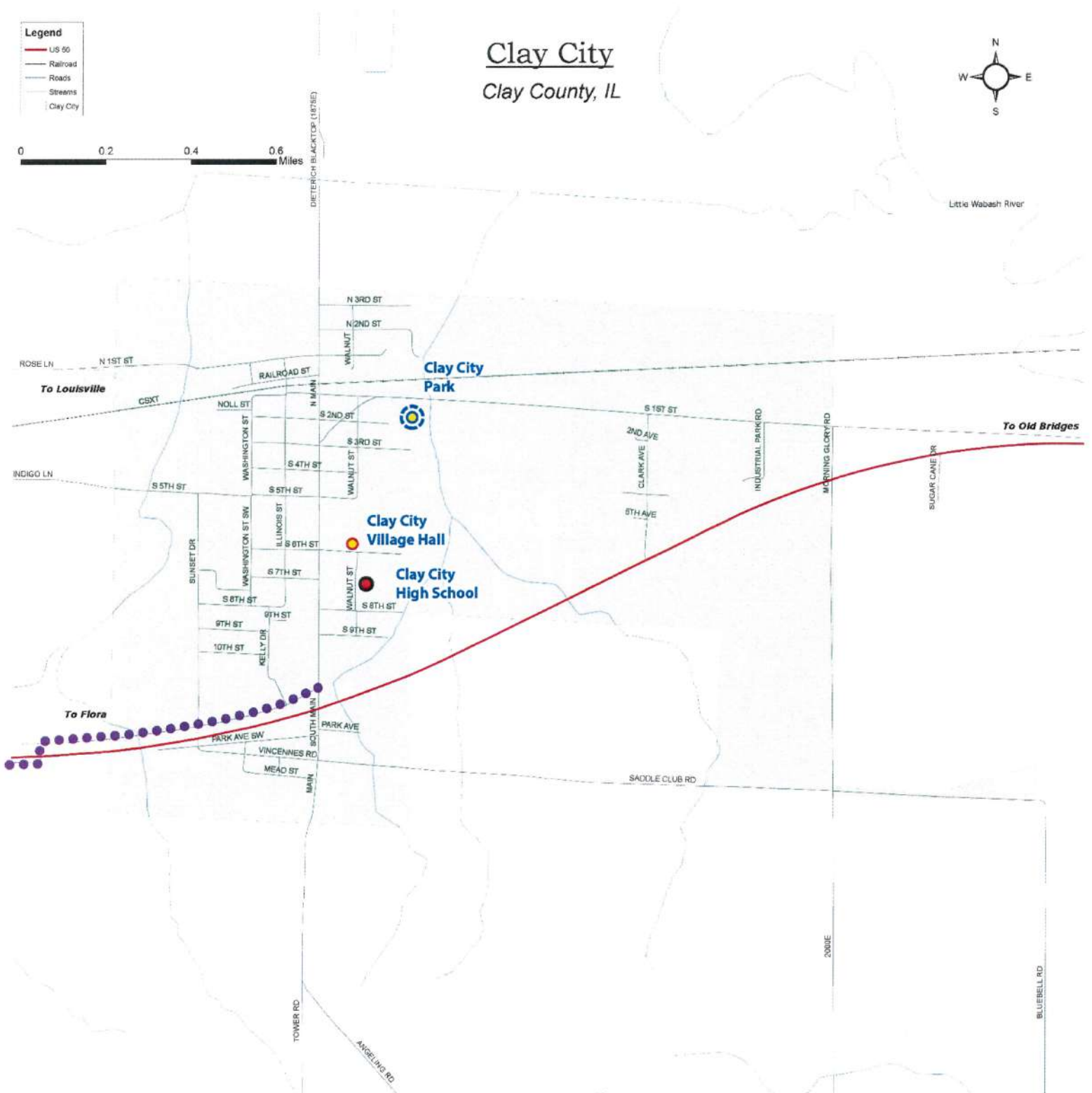
## Clay City: Proposed Secondary Biking Trail



## Clay City: Proposed Tertiary Biking Trail



# Clay City: Proposed Primary Mixed Use Trail



## **Clay City: Proposed Secondary Mixed Use Trail**

**None Proposed During the Public Open House**

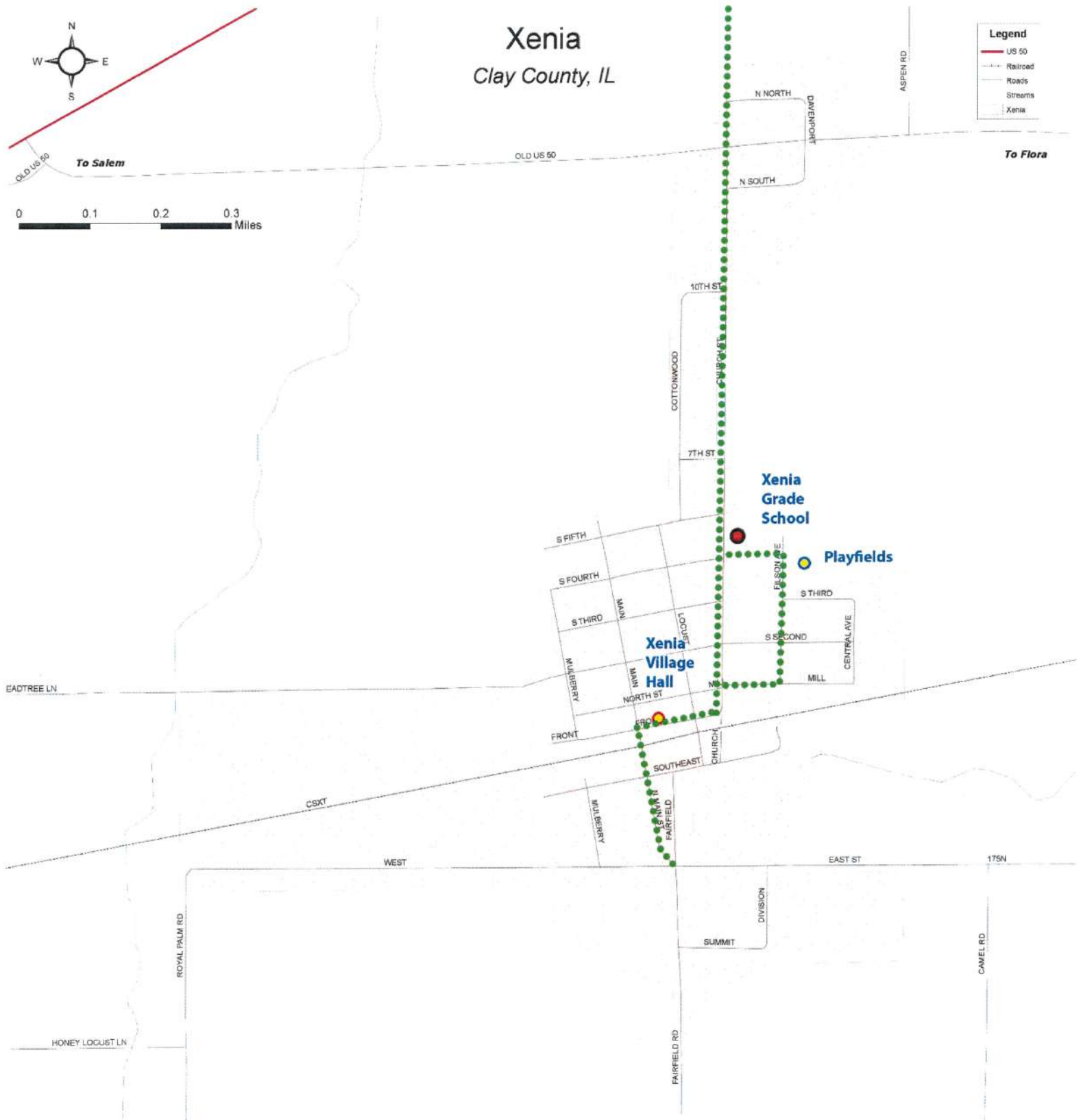
## Clay City: Proposed Tertiary Mixed Use Trail



## **Xenia: Proposed Primary Walking Trail**

**None Proposed During the Public Open House**

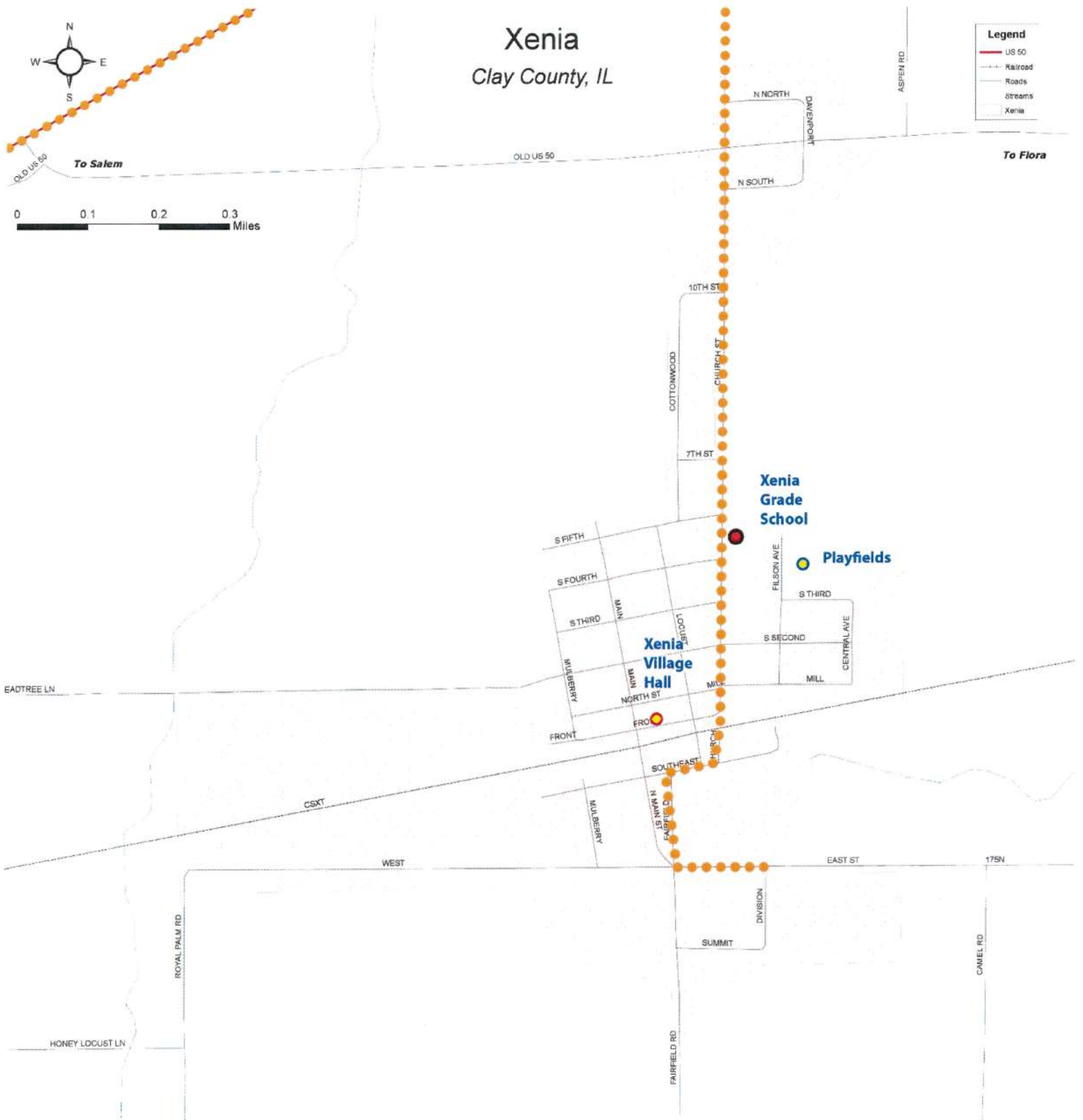
# Xenia: Proposed Secondary Walking Trail



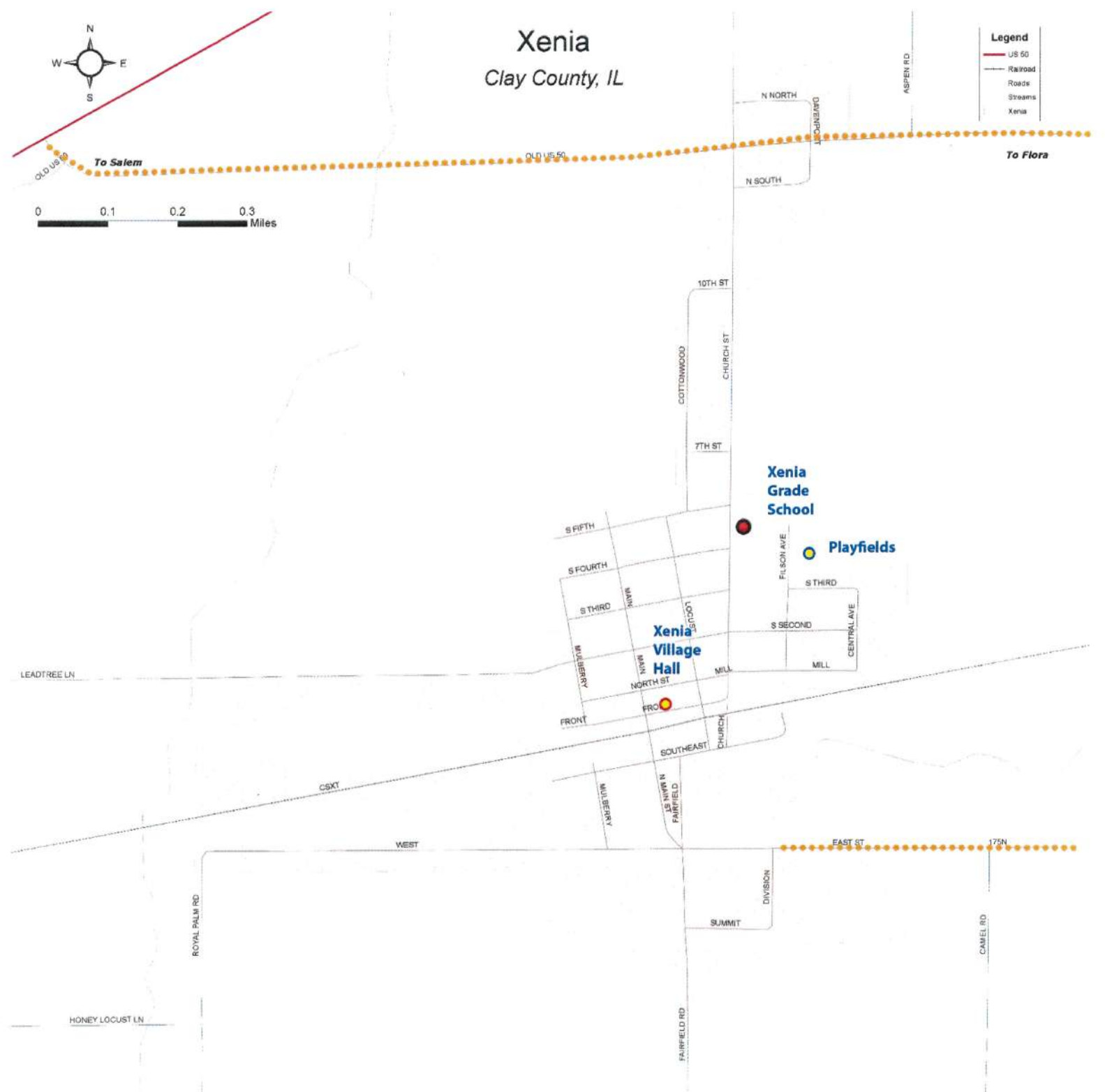
## Xenia: Proposed Tertiary Walking Trail



# Xenia: Proposed Primary Biking Trail



# Xenia: Proposed Secondary Biking Trail



## **Xenia: Proposed Tertiary Biking Trail**

**No Tertiary Biking Trail Proposed During the Public Open House**

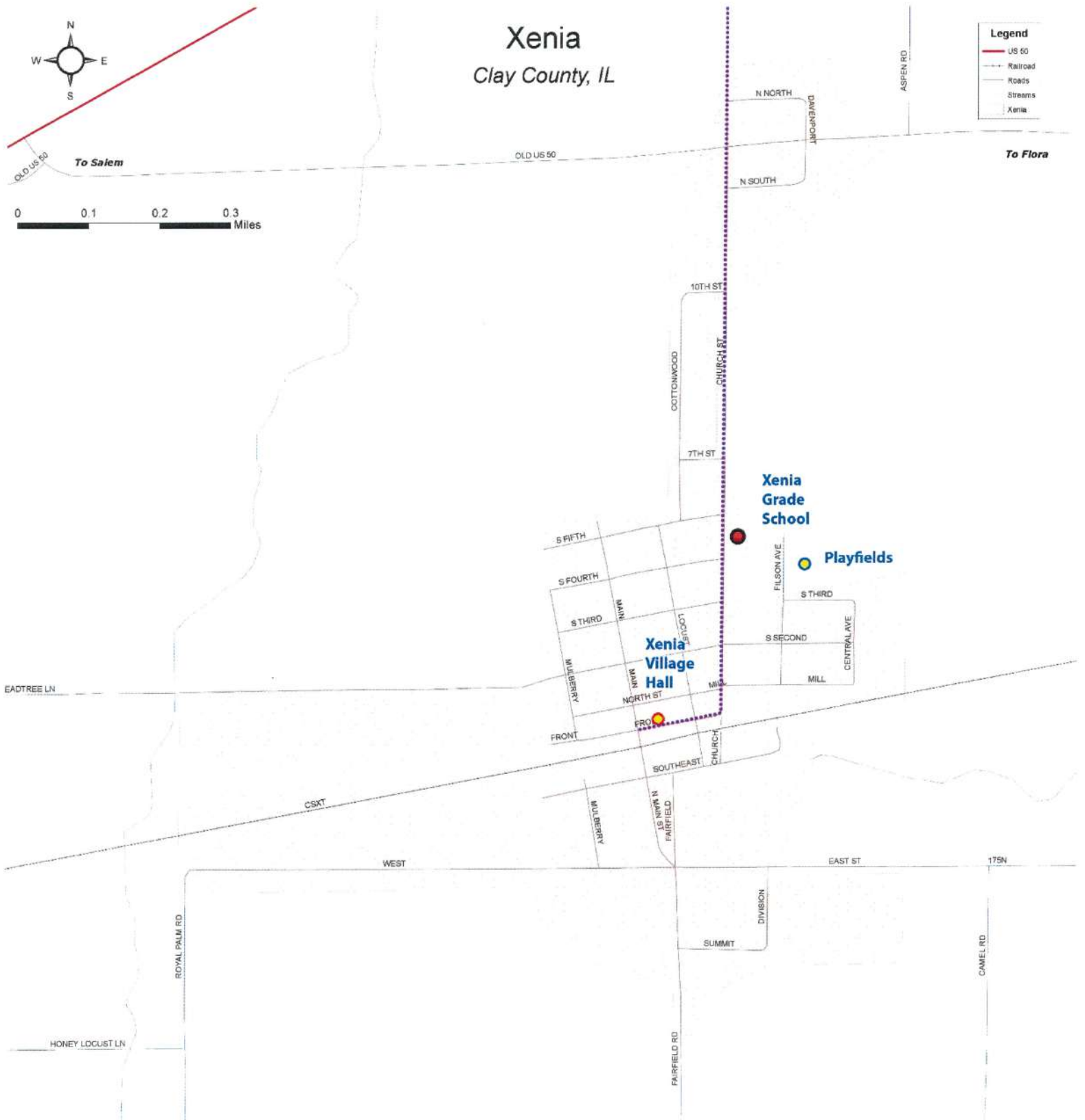
## **Xenia: Proposed Primary Mixed Use Trail**

**No Primary Mixed-Use Trail Proposed During the Public Open House**

## **Xenia: Proposed Secondary Mixed-Use Trail**

**No Secondary Mixed-Use Trail Proposed During the Public Open House**

# Xenia: Proposed Tertiary Mixed Use Trail



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## Funding Sources

Each year, local government receives a set amount of funds from federal and state government in the form of Motor Fuel Tax among others. Local governments also have funding set aside within their own budgets for transportation projects. The vast majority of this funding is allocated by these agencies to roadways projects. A small portion can be allocated to pedestrian and/or bicycle projects. Usually, most agencies must seek funding from external forces for the majority of proposed greenways and trails projects. Trails for the Twenty-First Century offers a list of finding sources for greenways and trails projects.

## Federal Sources

- Formerly SAFETEA, The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) is a funding and authorization bill to govern United States federal surface transportation spending. It was passed by Congress on June 29, 2012, and President Barack Obama signed it on July 6 of the same year.
- Funding for bicycle and pedestrian transportation is reduced and consolidated into a broader program called "Transportation Alternatives." Half of this funding will go to metropolitan planning organizations and the other half will go to states, which may choose to use the funds for other purposes. Bicycle and pedestrian advocates were highly critical of this change, anticipating a 60-70% drop in funding.<sup>14</sup>
- The federal "Recreational Trails Program" (RTP), through Illinois Department of Natural Resources was created through the National Recreational Trail Fund Act (NRTFA) as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and re-authorized by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). This program provides funding assistance for acquisition, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of both motorized and non-motorized recreation trails. By law, 30% of each states' RTP funding must be earmarked for motorized trail projects, 30% for non-motorized trail projects and the remaining 40% for multi-use (diversified) motorized and non-motorized trails or a combination of either.<sup>15</sup>
- In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 204(b)(5), the Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program or (PLH) funds are available via the state of Illinois Department of Transportation for "any kind of transportation project eligible for assistance under Title 23, United States Code, that is within, adjacent to, or provides access to" Federal lands or facilities. Under the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 204(b) (1)(A), the PLH funds are available for transportation planning, research, engineering, and construction of the highways, roads, and parkways, and of transit facilities within the Federal public lands. Under the provisions of Title 23.
- U.S.C. 204(b) (1)(B), the PLH funds are also available for operation and maintenance of transit facilities located on Federal public lands.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Bicyclists oppose 'bad bill for biking and walking' in highway funding compromise - The Hill's Transportation Report

<sup>15</sup> <http://dnr.state.il.us/OCD/newrtp2.htm>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/discretionary/plhcurrsla3.cfm>

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#### Federal Sources cont.

- The Community Development Block Grant Program, through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, offers grants to communities for neighborhood revitalization, economic development and improvements to community facilities and services, which trails.<sup>17</sup>
- Conservation 2000 is a long-term, state-supported initiative to protect natural resources and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities in Illinois. The program, which became law in 1995, implements strategies for maintaining the viability of Illinois' soil and water resources into the 21st century and beyond. Several state agencies share responsibility for administering Conservation 2000 funds. The Illinois Department of Agriculture oversees the program's agriculture-related components.<sup>18</sup>

### State Funding

- The Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program is a state-financed grant program that provides funding assistance to local government agencies for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space. The federal Land & Water Conservation Fund program (known as both LWCF and LAWCON) is a similar program with similar objectives. Both are managed in Illinois by the Department of Natural Resources with concurrent application due dates, equal grant maximums and similar general rules. Projects vary from small neighborhood parks or tot lots to large community and county parks and nature areas. The state program is financed by a percentage of the state's Real Estate Transfer Tax. The federal program is financed nationally by revenue from OSOD leases.<sup>19</sup> (May 1<sup>st</sup> to July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year).
- The Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program was created in 1990 to financially assist eligible units of government acquire, construct, and rehabilitate public, non-motorized bicycle paths and directly related support facilities. Grants are available to any local government agency having statutory authority to acquire and develop land for public bicycle path purposes. (Due March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year).
- Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program provides funding for community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historical, aesthetic and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure.
- Safe Routes to School through the Illinois Department of Transportation is a program that can be used to fund eligible infrastructure projects such as: new sidewalks, repaired sidewalks, ramps, traffic calming or speed reduction devices, separation of bike and pedestrian traffic from vehicle traffic, pedestrian signals, sight improvements, and more. Non-infrastructure activities such as traffic enforcement, lower speed limits near schools and more are also eligible for grant funding.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.hudexchange.info/nsp/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://agr.state.il.us/conservation/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://dnr.state.il.us/OCD/newoslad1.htm>

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## Local Sources

- Sales taxes can be used to raise funds for trails acquisition and development.
- Impact fees are one time charges levied by a local government on new development. They can be used to finance trails and other projects located outside the boundary of development.<sup>20</sup>
- Local governments can require developments to provide public trails as part of development.<sup>20</sup>
- General obligation bonds can be used to fund greenways and trails projects, but many require referenda.
- The Capital Improvements Plan can have a yearly greenways and trails appropriation.
- Many trail project occurs simultaneously with new road projects.
- Transportation Improvement Program could provide opportunities for joining geographically similar project that save both time and money.<sup>20</sup>

## Private Sector Funding

- Many types of foundations can be solicited for trail funding. Local business and manufactures are the most likely to take part in this type of funding.
- A land trust is typically a nonprofit organization that is set up by the county or by a private party for the protection and conservation for real-estate, this can include greenways and trails corridors and many times a good way to access rights of way.
- Local businesses can sponsor or pledge funds or volunteer employees. Funds can be used for specific items or trail amenities with the idea of advertisement on the amenity or trailhead. Volunteers can be used from trail construction to maintaining the greenway or trail.
- Committees and stakeholders can hold fund raisers for projects.
- “Buy a Foot” program can also be established so that businesses and citizens alike can purchase a segment of the trails.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Champaign County Greenways & Trails Plan

<sup>21</sup> Champaign County Greenways & Trails Plan

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Public private partnerships are the most successful way to fund a greenways and trails project. “To be truly successful, implementation of a trail project should not become the sole responsibility of the local government, but a collective pursuit that includes residents, business, and organizations.”<sup>22</sup>

## Land Acquisition

There are a variety of methods that local and state governments, nonprofit organizations, and landowners can use to acquire land for greenways and trails projects. Trails for the Twenty-First Century outlines these methods in more detail. When using these options, a real estate attorney should be consulted in preparing and executing agreements for land and trails.<sup>23</sup>

- Donations by landowners should be solicited before paying cash for land. “The best way to solicit donation is to negotiate with the landowner on an individual basis, making sure to explain all the income tax deduction and tax credit benefits (donations of land for public recreation and conservation purposes are considered charitable gifts”). (Flink, p.122)
- Trail easements, licenses, and revocable permits are ways to acquire the use of land for trail purposes without obtaining full ownership of the land.
- Land dedication occurs when landowner or developers dedicate corridors for trail use, typically accomplished when tracts of land are subdivided. Some communities require developers to dedicate land for trail or open space use, while others provide incentives for developments to do so.
- Fee-simple purchase gives one full title to property, and all rights associated. However, this is the most expensive means to acquire land for trails, but is effective in achieving full ownership of the land.
- Bargain sales occur when a landowner voluntarily sells land or an easement on land at below-market value for trail purpose. The landowner may be eligible to take charitable deduction from federal and state income taxes for the sale of the land.
- Right of first refusal allows one to match a person’s offer received by the landowner at a future time, if and when the owner decides to sell the property. It could be beneficial to have an understanding of the purchase price up front to avoid the potentially higher cost of land when the landowner decides to sell.
- Lease purchase allows the acquirement of land via a time-specific lease, with conveyance of ownership interest or donation of the land at the end of the lease term.

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<sup>22</sup> Flink, Trails for the Twenty-First Century, pg. 134

<sup>23</sup> Flink, Trails for the Twenty-First Century, pgs. 121-122

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## A Springboard into Action

How will the Clay County's Greenways and Trails System look in 20 years? The answer is no one knows exactly how the Clay County Greenway and Trails System will look in 20 years. Each part of the Greenways and Trails Plan will help lead Clay County and its stake holders in the direction of best practices. The difficulty with this process is finding funding for this type of projects, overcoming physical and environmental obstacle and merge that with public sentiment with individual organization agency priorities. Many project never come to fruition because of these factors, despite being listed as a priority for local agencies and organizations.

There is no doubt that the agencies and organizations that become involved with this plan will identify projects through its own planning processes. Despite the limitation, the public opinion and suggestion gathered during the county-wide project should be saved to help specify the ideal for the general system and identify project for the long term. Plans being formed by local agencies can benefit from public comment because optical funding sources can see that there is a community support for the project(s). This plan should also serve as a guide to best practices once development of projects begin.

## What's Next?

The Clay County Greenways and Trails Steering Committee has numerous expectations of themselves and other stakeholders in the greenways and trails process:

- Comments, opinion, and proposed projects that were provided through public comment and surveys, will be considered in every planning process that involves potential greenways and trail development of the next 20 year.
- Local agencies that participated in this plan's creation will actively implement the plan and invite or consider collaboration with other organizations.
- Project identified for implementation in this plan will be considered by relevant local agencies and implemented where possible given funding availability, environment, and geography constraints.
- Clay County Greenways and Trails Committee members will remain dedicated to the plan, meeting periodically (no less than four times per year) over the 20 year planning horizon to discuss projecting prioritization, funding sources, and implementation measures as outlined in the plan.
- This plan will be periodically amended as project list change and new information become available. The greenways and trails steering Committee does not foresee the need for updating this plan in its entirety for at least five years.

This plan can be considered successfully implemented if all goals, objectives, and project outlines herein are completed within the next 20 years (by 2035).

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## **Appendices**

**A. Timeline Concept**

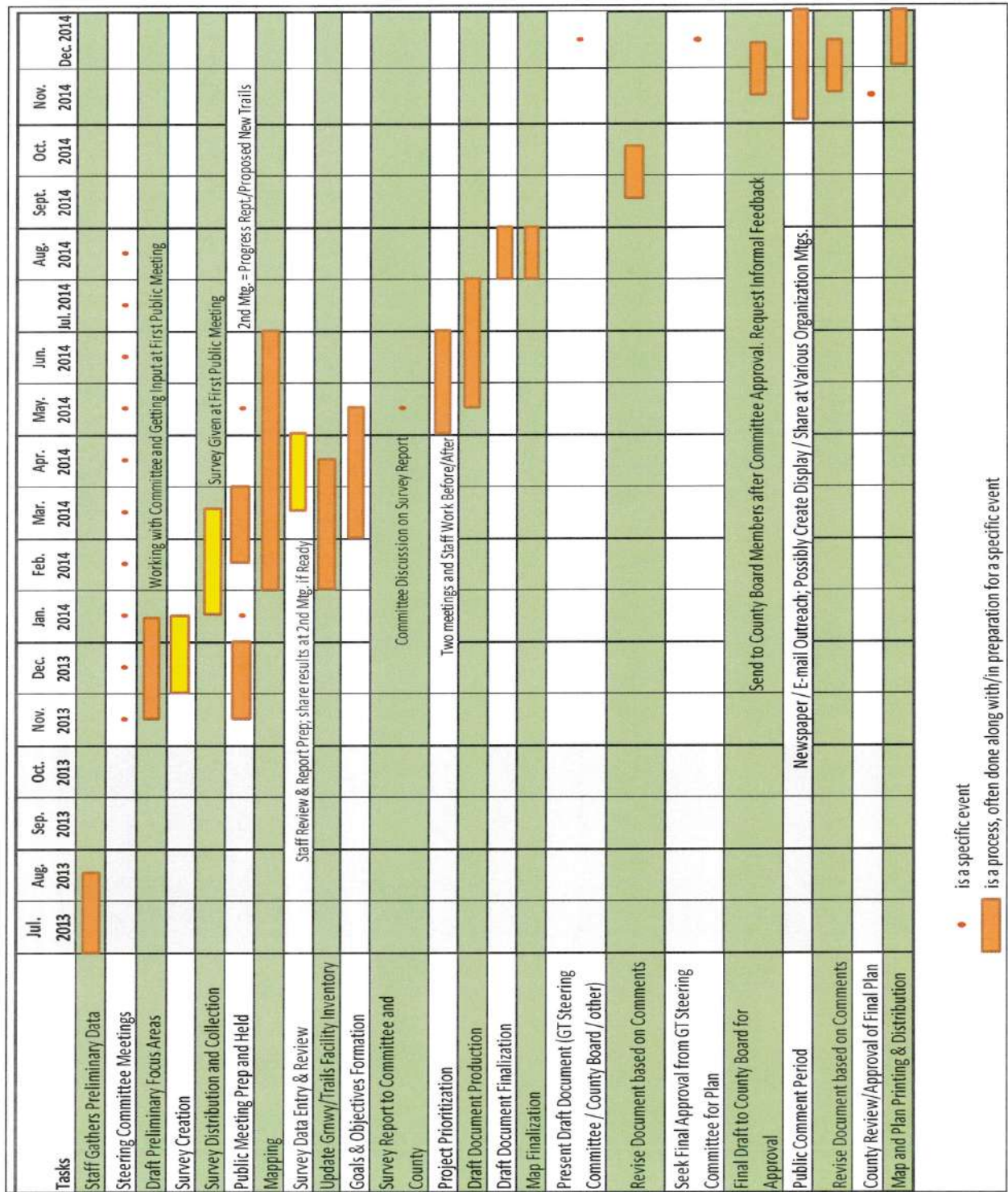
**B. Residential Survey Form and Analysis**

**C. Open House Report**

**D. Progress & Priorities Meeting Report**

**E. Meeting Minute**

## A. Time Line Concept



## B. Residential Survey Form and Analysis

# Clay County Greenways & Trails Survey

Clay County is conducting this survey as part of a Greenways & Trails Study for the future needs of its residents. Greenways are corridors of undeveloped land, often along rivers or between communities, used for recreation or environmental preservation. Trails come in various forms. Some start naturally as deer paths while others are created by people. Paved and unpaved trails and greenways are enjoyed by outdoor enthusiasts, history buffs and people exercising or traveling on foot, by bicycle, horseback or other means to destinations within and around the community. While Clay County has no fixed bus stop routes, Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT) and RIDES Mass Transit serve the region through pick-up service. For those who do not drive, a network of trails can help residents reach important destinations and catch their bus. Please take a moment to share your information and help us improve Clay County's future Greenways and Trails plan.

1. Do you agree that Clay County residents would benefit from greenways and trails that connect rural communities and forest preserves?
  - a. ☐ I strongly agree
  - b. ☐ I agree
  - c. ☐ My opinion is neutral
  - d. ☐ I disagree
  - e. ☐ I strongly disagree
2. Do you support using a combination of federal, state, local and private funds to establish a countywide network of greenways and trails to connect with other county greenway and trail systems throughout central Illinois?
  - a. ☐ I strongly support this idea
  - b. ☐ I somewhat support this idea
  - c. ☐ My opinion is neutral
  - d. ☐ I am somewhat against this idea
  - e. ☐ I am strongly against this idea

*For questions 3-9, the term "walking" should not include short distances such as the walk from your car to your home or from the parking space at your workplace to the front door.*

3. In an average week, how many times do you walk or bicycle for the purpose of...

| Going to work/school: | walk                     | bike                     |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. 0 times            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. 1-5 times          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. 6-10 times         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. 11-15 times        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. > 15 times         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Going shopping: | walk                     | bike                     |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. 0 times      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. 1-5 times    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. 6-10 times   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. 11-15 times  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. > 15 times   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Question 3 cont.**Recreation/Exercise:      **walk**    **run**    **bike**

- |                |                          |                          |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. 0 times     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. 1-5 times   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. 6-10 times  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. 11-15 times | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. > 15 times  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Personal/Visiting Friends:      **walk**    **bike**

- |                |                          |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. 0 times     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. 1-5 times   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. 6-10 times  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. 11-15 times | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. > 15 times  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. The last time you walked, ran, or biked, where did you start your trip? Please list place, address, or intersection:  
Walk/Run: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bike: \_\_\_\_\_
5. The last time you walked, ran, or biked, where did you end your trip? If you ended your trip at the same place you started, please write "SAME": Walk/Run: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bike: \_\_\_\_\_
6. If the starting point of this walk/run/bicycle trip was not your home, how did you get there? **walk/run**    **bike**
- |                            |                          |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. I drove myself          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. I was given a ride      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. I took a bus            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. I rode a bicycle        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Other                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. N/A (started from home) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
7. During your **walk or run**, did you travel on (mark all that apply):
- |                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> A sidewalk along a street                |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Along a road with a sidewalk             |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> Along a road with no sidewalk            |
| d. <input type="checkbox"/> An unpaved path or trail                 |
| e. <input type="checkbox"/> A paved path other than a sidewalk       |
| f. <input type="checkbox"/> A wooded/other natural area without path |
| g. <input type="checkbox"/> A lawn or grass area without path        |
| h. <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____             |
8. During your **bicycle trip**, did you travel on (mark all that apply):
- |                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> A sidewalk along a street                  |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> On a marked bike route along a street      |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> On a paved street with no marked bike road |
| d. <input type="checkbox"/> On an unpaved/gravel road                  |
| e. <input type="checkbox"/> A paved path or trail                      |
| f. <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____               |

Surveys can also be mailed to: SCIRPDC, 120 S. Delmar Ave., Suite A, Salem, IL 62881

9. During your **walk or run**, did you experience problems with any of the following (mark all that apply):

- a. ☐ Bicycle riders on the same path
- b. ☐ Skaters on the same path
- c. ☐ Muddy trail
- d. ☐ Crossing busy street(s)
- e. ☐ Not enough light to see well
- f. ☐ Had to step up curbs/climb stairs
- g. ☐ Broken/uneven sidewalk
- h. ☐ Fear of possible crime
- i. ☐ Dogs
- j. ☐ Frequent car danger
- k. ☐ Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

10. On your **bicycle trip**, did you experience problems with any of the following (mark all that apply):

- a. ☐ Pedestrians on the same path
- b. ☐ Skaters on the same path
- c. ☐ Cars/trucks turning in front of you
- d. ☐ Cars/truck doors opening in front of you
- e. ☐ Other hazardous actions by drivers
- f. ☐ Need to share a busy street
- g. ☐ Bad Pavement
- h. ☐ Dogs
- i. ☐ Hazardous railroad crossings
- j. ☐ Hazardous storm drain grates
- k. ☐ Fear of possible crime
- l. ☐ Low branches or other obstructions
- m. ☐ Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

11. How close is the nearest trail/path or bike path to your home?

- a. less than a mile away ☐ ☐
- b. 1-3 miles away ☐ ☐
- c. 4-8 miles away ☐ ☐
- d. 9-15 miles away ☐ ☐
- e. ☐ I know of no trails within Clay County
- f. ☐ I know of no bike paths within Clay County

12. On average, how often do you use the trail/path or bike path from question 11?

- a. I do not use it ☐ ☐
- b. 1-2 times per month ☐ ☐
- c. 1-2 times per week ☐ ☐
- d. 3 or more times per week ☐ ☐
- e. I am not sure ☐ ☐

13. If you use a trail or bike path on a regular basis (not sidewalks), please indicate where it is:

Trail: \_\_\_\_\_

Bike Path: \_\_\_\_\_

What changes would improve this **trail** or **bike path**?

- |                                 |                          |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Better pavement              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Better landscaping           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Connections with other paths | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Make it longer               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Eliminate obstructions       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Better lighting              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Other (please specify):      | _____                    |                          |

14. Do you consider yourself an active (check all that apply); ☐ walker, ☐ runner, or ☐ bicyclist?

15. Do physical disabilities or limitations prevent you from using pedestrian trails and/or bicycle paths in Clay County? If you care to, please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Please list locations and destinations that would benefit from a walking or bicycle path in Clay County:

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Where do you see the need for greenway/trail heads and what kinds of amenities would you like to see?

\_\_\_\_\_ Bike Racks ☐ Parking ☐ Restrooms ☐  
Route Map ☐ Boat Launch ☐ Other ☐

18. What kind of transportation improvements would you like to see within Clay County over the next 20 years?

\_\_\_\_\_

19. What is your community/zip code? \_\_\_\_\_ How many people live in your household?

Please tell us about the members of your household:

| Age             |       | Age             |       |
|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| Yourself: _____ | M / F |                 |       |
| Person 1: _____ | M / F | Person 4: _____ | M / F |
| Person 2: _____ | M / F | Person 5: _____ | M / F |
| Person 3: _____ | M / F |                 |       |

We would appreciate any additional comments you may have to share:

## C. Open House Report



# Clay County Greenways & Trails Open House Report

**Open House #1: Held at Flora Public Library, 216 N. Main St., Flora, IL  
6:30 – 8:00 PM, January 20, 2014**

## ATTENDANCE

Forty-one people signed the attendance sheet, although it appears five to seven additional people visited the open house without signing up. Thus, we estimate a total of 46 to 48 people. Of the attendees; **four** were represented as committee members, **two** were members of the local news, **four** were members of Rotary Interact High School Service Club, **21** were Flora residents, **two** were Clay City residents, **two** were Xenia residents, and **four** were Clay County residents. Most everyone filled out surveys and/or took extras with them.

## MAPPING

People provided ideas for new routes and drew in existing routes on all maps except for Iola. Concept maps will be developed on the computer, showing the results of these ideas.

### STATIONS

## Trail Uses – Features Desired

The following remarks were shared for consideration by the committee:

1. Rails-to-Trails (state funding)
2. Connections to Other Cities
3. Lighting
4. No Crushed Stone
5. No Wood Chips
6. No All-Terrain Vehicles
7. Cross Country Skiing Opportunities
8. Look at Old Hwy. 50 using that roadbed
9. Include flat walking routes for patient rehabilitation
10. Possible camping areas/hostels (cots, showers)

## Areas of Concern

The following remarks were shared for consideration by the committee:

1. Dogs
  - a. Safety
  - b. Waste
  - c. Leash Rules Needed
  - d. Strays
  - e. "Beware of Dog" Signs if Owners do not Cooperate
2. Upkeep – Who is Responsible (Volunteer Organizations?)
3. Paved v. Gravel?
4. Will there be Areas of Shade?
5. Safe Road Crossings (Signs)
6. Trail Width (Wide Enough)
7. Bike v. Walking – Designated Areas
8. Benches
9. Rest Areas
10. Bridges
11. Water Fountains
12. Maps
13. Who is in Charge of when Trails are Open or Closed?
14. Water Availability
15. Parking at Trail Heads
16. Four-Wheel ATVs and Golf Carts
17. Crushed Limestone Better Priced
18. That it is not Going to Get Done!
19. Biking Surface = Not Gravel
20. Wider Roads and Add Bike Lane
21. Pedestrian/Cyclist Road Rules
  - a. i.e. Riding or Running on Wrong Side of Road



# Clay County Greenways & Trails Progress & Priorities Report

Held at Flora Public Library, 216 N. Main St., Flora, IL  
6:00 – 7:30 PM, May 20, 2014

## ATTENDANCE

Fifteen people signed the attendance sheet, with **three** of them being current members of the CCGTC, **one** being a past member and **one** being the facilitator from South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission (SCIRPDC). For this meeting, we offered to provide follow-up materials to those individuals providing contact information. Five people provided such information.

## PRESENTATION

Dan Sulsberger, of the City of Flora, made opening remarks and gave a history of the overall planning process to date. Jonathon Hallberg, of SCIRPDC, provided a summary of the survey results and shared a list of proposed routes based upon survey responses, committee work and the January 20, 2014 open house comments. Next, those in attendance provided comments and asked questions about the proposed routes and overall next steps. Sue Pettit, Clay County Board Chair, gave closing remarks, summarized the plan for completion of the study, and thanked those who could attend for their time and input.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

### Priorities of Interest

Part of the community feedback segment was to have a way of deciding which proposed trail or greenway projects should take the precedent over other options. Those in attendance were asked to review a list of priorities with the understanding that, the more priorities a project met, the more impact its development would have. The following list of priorities was shared with the audience:

- |                                                     |                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Addresses Safety Needs                           | 6. Creates Economic Benefit                                             |
| 2. Integrates and Connects Destinations             | 7. Can Be Maintained Easily                                             |
| 3. Is Cost Effective                                | 8. Is Accessible to Many Groups (elderly, youth, bikers, walkers, etc.) |
| 4. Protects and Enhances Cultural/Natural Resources | 9. Can be Expanded                                                      |
| 5. Creates Social Benefit                           |                                                                         |

Those in attendance agreed that the shared priorities were good criteria for judgment. They also suggested the following:

1. Consider durability and long-term maintainability in addition to just ease of maintenance.
2. Projects that include shade and comfort features will see more use and be safer in the heat.
3. At trailheads and rest stops, the permitting/facilities available to put up a tent would be helpful for people bicycling over long distances (this remark was clarified over the phone the day after the event).
4. The provision of drinking water along the routes should be included as a high priority.
5. Trails that address fitness needs, with stations for certain forms of exercise, would fulfill a community health and fitness need. These are often called "parcours" (this remark was sent by fax as the individual could not attend the presentation).

## Reviews of Proposed Routes

**Countywide:** Hallberg had made a point of attempting to provide routes to all schools in some form and explained that including these routes in the plan would ensure they would have a higher potential for a Safe Routes to School Grant or similar funding source. Those in attendance remarked on the following:

1. Clay City Elementary School is gone and should be removed from the map.
2. Lincoln Elementary School in Flora and the Xenia Elementary School will close as soon as the new school is completed in Flora. They may have other community uses in the future though.

Someone had asked about the cemetery near Iola where Daniel Boone's sister is supposed to be buried. Hallberg mentioned that he could not find any information to that effect and had discussed it with committee members as well, all of who had not heard of this. Hallberg shared that the county's GIS system has all cemeteries and historical schoolhouse locations listed. He stated that he would include locations for all of these.

**Flora Routes:** Hallberg was asked to include a walking or biking route to connect with the ball fields on Stanford Road.

A resident remarked that he walks along Old Route 50 from Xenia to Flora and asked why it was not included as a walking route. Hallberg remarked that there were deep ditches on either edge of the road and stated he had concerns that it was even safe for bicyclists. He stated he would share the request with the committee.

**Xenia Routes:** The bike route from Xenia to Iola, listed as a third-tier bike route, is called Xenia-Iola Road. It is a preferred route to get between the two communities if you are using a bike and those in attendance agreed that it sees a lot of use, despite safety issues. If it were made a second-tier route and studied further, it has potential for a lot of use.

People heading south on Route 13 would have a safe route to Johnsonville. It is six miles longer than other alternatives but, on bike, is much safer. Also, Johnsonville Lake is an area attraction and should be included as a destination, or at least remarked upon given that it is out of the county.

Hallberg asked if anyone knew where the secondary route that heads east after going south of town connects to. Folks commented that it connects with Coon Creek Road and is a pretty ride. It is a convenient way to get to Smith Mill, south of Flora and has little traffic.

**Clay City Routes:** Old Route 50 at the north edge of town goes above it and connects with the bridges to the east on the way to Olney. While the ditches are deep and there is little extra public space for a bike lane, it still would benefit from markings for bikes. It would be safer than what is shown on the map, where new Route 50 is suggested for bikes. That stretch, from Dieterich Blacktop east to the bridges also has narrow road edge and a lot more traffic. People remarked that they thought it would even be unsafe for walking.

Some folks asked if it was even necessary to make improvements to all of the routes mentioned. They stated that it may be enough to make the public aware that these are popular biking routes and deserve a look. Many of them have light traffic. Hallberg agreed and stated that the tiered system being proposed might be best used as a means of determining future improvements rather than gauging usage.

## Progress & Priorities Report Card

Attendees were given sheets to indicate what they thought of the routes proposed for each community and for the county's rural roads. The sheets were set up so that folks could grade whether each type of route in each community was accurate, what they would change, and why they would change it. The following responses were issued:

**Countywide:**

| What would you change?                                                                                            | Why?                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| As a walker, biker and mother, I would be quite hesitant to travel on a path with direct access to heavy traffic. | I would prefer a path.                           |
| Please connect access from railroad path to Wal-Mart.                                                             | For practical purposes (for walkers and bikers). |
| Xenia-Iola Rd. needs to be a main bicycling route.                                                                | Because it is a direct route.                    |
| Hardy Hills is not "all-weather"                                                                                  | It is muddy at times.                            |
| Johnsonville – Forbes – Charley Brown (as sec. bike route).                                                       | Lake-to-lake ride.                               |
| Xenia-Iola Rd. – move up to secondary                                                                             | (blank)                                          |

Other Comments:

- I love the idea of this – exercise, better access, etc.
- All ranks for biking, walking and mixed-use routes are accurate.
- The primary biking and walking routes for the county are accurate (no comments on secondary or tertiary). Two separate responses had this.
- Reach to all the populations centers of county and areas of interest.

**Flora Routes:**

| What would you change?                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Why?                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I would opt for the walking and mixed-use trails from Flora to Charley Brown to be farther south – a straight shot across from around 4 <sup>th</sup> St. (or 3 <sup>rd</sup> ). No roads going west, so would need all right-of-way. | (blank)                                                               |
| Xenia to Flora needs a walkway path.                                                                                                                                                                                                  | I walk it.                                                            |
| Shortest routes possible for walking to Charley Brown Park for multi-use.                                                                                                                                                             | Kids/elderly to the park from town.                                   |
| Include industrial park area to provide transit to work for both walk and bike (mixed use)                                                                                                                                            | Provide alt. way to work that is safe and does not require a vehicle. |

Other Comments:

- All ranks for biking, walking and mixed-use routes are accurate.
- All primary biking, walking and mixed-use routes are accurate (no comments on secondary or tertiary).

**Louisville Routes:**

| What would you change?                                              | Why?                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I would keep – use of old rail beds.                                | (blank)                                                                                            |
| Continue Basswood Dr. out to Louisville Blacktop for bicycle route. | Provide access to Wabash River and skating rink; Basswood Drive is an unmaintained county roadway. |
| Keep old rail beds as a path for all.                               | (blank)                                                                                            |
| (blank)                                                             | Skating rink is very popular.                                                                      |

Other Comments:

- All ranks for biking, walking and mixed-use routes are accurate.

**Clay City Routes:**

| What would you change?                                                         | Why?                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Make wider shoulders on U.S. 50 eastward. Make part of US 50 widening project. | Narrow shoulders toward Olney. |
| Wider shoulders on Rt. 50 through Clay City (bike route).                      | Safety.                        |
| Include area by school to ball fields (walking route).                         | (blank)                        |

Other Comments:

- All ranks for biking, walking and mixed-use routes are accurate.
- All primary biking and walking routes are accurate (no comment on mixed-use, secondary or tertiary).

**Xenia Routes:**

| What would you change?                                                                                                      | Why?    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Keep use of “Lap” of new Route 50 to and from Xenia / Flora, along with county road route w/ Coon Creek / Blue Mound Route. | (blank) |

Other Comments:

- Add Xenia-Iola Rd. (two attendees wrote this).
- All ranks for biking, walking and mixed-use routes are accurate.

## E. Monthly Meeting Minutes

### Clay County Greenways and Trails Committee

#### Monthly Meeting Minutes

Held at Anthony's Wild West, Flora, IL – approximately 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Nov. 7, 2013

**Present:** Jerry Stringer, Randy Bukas, Jacque Lueking, R.C. Franklin, Brittani Walker, Dan Sulsberger, James Patrick, Jonathon Hallberg

**Absent:** Sue Pettit, Dina Hilmes

**Introductions:** Hallberg shared some background on the Commission and outlined the purpose of the committee; 1.) quality control to ensure the plan addresses county needs; 2.) drive participation by constituent communities and tap into the collective intelligence in the area; 3.) interpret the public's feedback and prioritize goals; and 4.) assist in publicizing the effort to move the plan forward.

Each committee member present shared a little about themselves and what they would like to see the plan address. The following preliminary suggestions may provide valuable starting points for the plan:

Bukas shared the following ideas:

1. As a runner and biker, he has spent a fair amount of time driving the county looking for routes that would be both safe and interesting for personal use.
2. A hiking trail through Charlie Brown Park would be beneficial.
3. Route 50 and Route 45 might be key locations for some kind of non-motorized pathway within the county.
4. Bike route from Flora to Sam Dale Park/Johnsonville Lake recommended.
5. Bike route from Flora to Forbes State Park recommended.
6. Route from Hardy Hills Road in Louisville to Flora recommended. Much of this road is owned by City of Louisville so ROW issues are minimal. This road turns into N. State Rd.

Lueking shared the following ideas:

1. A route from the Depot along 12 St. to Lincoln School Rd. and then to the entrance of Charlie Brown Park is needed to link a safe path from Flora to the park.
2. Given that Charlie Brown Road is cleared, it would be nice to get rid of the merchant buildings and establish a covered multi-use arena there where everything from equestrian events to cancer walks could be held. This could logically function as a trail head as various equestrian amenities might be located there as well.
3. Try to connect Charlie Brown Park to Xenia. Route TBD.
4. There is an old railroad track from the Depot in Flora to W. 12<sup>th</sup> St. This is a logical choice for trail conversion.
5. A horse trail to Dairy Queen would be nice (starting point unrecorded).

Lueking provided a map (enclosed) that outlines a variety of possible routes as well.

Walker shared the following ideas:

1. She does a lot of jogging between Louisville and Flora, mainly on roads, and finds the experience to be somewhat dangerous.
2. The concept of a trail along old Route 50 connection to Noble has merit; north side to south side.
3. The railroad in Flora going north to Louisville and south to Cisne is a logical conversion.
4. Very interested in deciding on destinations/developing attractions, such as the arena described by Lueking.
5. A nice model for what might be created in Clay County is the multi-use trail from Pena to Taylorville.

Franklin shared the following ideas:

1. As a former resident of Caramel, IN, he sees the value in establishing an active network of trails in the county as a community attraction. Caramel had 32 miles of trails.
2. The group will need to consider allegations that the new trails will cause an increase in crime. Some group discussion occurred about how this issue comes up in almost every planning process for trails.
3. Franklin is a member of the Clay City Board of Trustees.
4. He walks about five miles every day.
5. People may not see the need for trails now, but if they had them available, they would use them.

## Meeting minutes cont.

6. The trails must link people together and provide a social opportunity.

Patrick shared that a lot of companies shopping communities for future plant locations do pay attention to the community amenities available, such as trails and other recreational opportunities.

From here, general discussion occurred and the following other points were discussed:

1. Perhaps a trail along the Little Wabash River would be a good idea. It provides a natural greenway that links Clay City to Sailor Springs and also Louisville and Flora. Walker also commented on this idea.
2. The cemetery south of Xenia has an Indian burial ground. This might be a good destination for history buffs.

### **Committee Role**

The committee discussed one of their role as providing local “boots on the ground;” folks who are connected to the community in a way that SCIRPDC is not. Groups to consider approaching were as follows:

1. The Oil Belt Christian Camp Church near Charlie Brown Park.
2. WNOI Radio Station has community announcements just before or after their R&B Reviews program. Walker has gone and spoken with them before and Hallberg agreed to accompany for announcements about the plan to help publicize the first public meeting.
3. Rotary and other service groups were also to be approached and engaged in discussion.

Other roles of the committee discussed included:

1. Providing quality control, to ensure that the plan moves in a direction that addresses the needs of Clay County’s citizens, schools, companies, various age groups, etc.
2. Prioritizing goals based upon the public’s feedback from meetings and surveys
3. Publicizing the plan process and benefits, and driving participation.

### **Moving the Plan Forward**

Committee members discussed the role of the plan. Sulsberger pointed out that the plan can be used as a vehicle for obtaining grant funds to help pay for future trails projects. Patrick elaborated that the plan is an essential component to grant funding because it shows that a public process has occurred whereby consensus was generated about how a proposed grant project fits in with specific goals and objectives. Hallberg said that the plan will also identify ways that community groups and government officials can work together in order to build consensus; that the planning process is as much about generating momentum as it is about generating a final document.

Beyond that, Hallberg stated that other goals of the plan include; 1) documenting demand by the public/creating buy-in; 2) framing priorities and discussing the benefits of trail development; 3) sharing and classifying existing resources (historical, cultural, natural, scenic driving, walking, non-motorized, waterways, unused, needed); and 4) creating a roadmap for future projects.

Walker asked if the funds provided to SCIRPDC related to the Clay County Plan were to be used for funding trails and if this was just the first step. Hallberg stated that the funds were to pay only for the study itself. Rather than the first step of an overall program that was funded, the grant pays for the study, which becomes part of the equation for attempting to garner future funds.

### **Timeline**

Hallberg stated that the process would likely take about a year, erring on the side of caution and in consideration of other SCIRPDC obligations. He would be the primary contact to the group, with Patrick running support. Hallberg stated it would be important to get the media involved early.

Hallberg shared a timeline that started back in June of 2013, explaining that SCIRPDC’s server was down and he could not update it. The group went over the timeline and made suggestions for alteration. Hallberg stated that he would provide the group with a new timeline.

### Meeting Schedule

The committee recognized that a common meeting date and time should be established in order to assure the most folks could attend and continuity of dialog and progress occurs. The following schedule was to be established:

**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each Month at 7:30 a.m. – default location: Flora City Hall Conference Room**

The next meeting will be on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

### Survey Structure & Distribution

The committee began with a discussion about how best to distribute the survey. Mail-out was seen as cost-prohibitive, as was leaving the survey at area supermarkets, where people may not be willing to set aside time to take it during a shopping trip. The group determined that providing the survey directly to civic organizations, schools and other parties of interest might be the most expedient way to obtain feedback. In addition, a copy of the surveys could be available at each city and county office where folks could fill it out during routine visits. The survey would be distributed at the kick-off of the first Community Meeting.

Hallberg passed out a copy of the Champaign-Urbana Greenways and Trails Survey. The group informed Hallberg and Patrick that there are currently no official trails within the county so many of the questions might not be adaptable. Hallberg asked each committee member to circle the number of the questions they thought were the best fit for Clay County and put an “X” over the number of questions they thought did not apply. The group did so and passed their survey back for Hallberg’s preparation of a draft survey of the county.

The following key topics were to be included as part of what the survey should uncover information on:

- |                                                     |                                                                      |                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| • Walking/Jogging Habits                            | • Respondents’ Perceived Level of Interest by the Community at Large | • Safety Concerns / Crime                  |
| • Fitness Level                                     | • Importance of Lighting                                             | • Funding Issues                           |
| • Destinations for Non-Motorized Travelers          | • Transit Service Use                                                | • Age Group / Demographic Information      |
| • Current Trail Use                                 | • Trail Head Need / Interest / Amenities (parking, etc.)             | • Comment Area                             |
| • Level of Interest in Future Trails by Respondents |                                                                      | • Try to keep to one page (front and back) |

### Public Meeting Structure

Hallberg provided the outlines of how Effingham County and Champaign-Urbana conducted their public meetings. Because of the time constraint, he asked that the members review the approaches and send him their thoughts via e-mail. He would then prepare a template for discussion at the next monthly meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 pm.

## E. Monthly Meeting Minutes

# Clay County Greenways and Trails Committee

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## Monthly Meeting Minutes

*Held at Flora City Hall Conference Room, 131 E. Second St., Flora, IL  
December 19, 2013*

**Present:** Randy Bukas, R.C. Franklin, Dina Hilmes, Jacque Lueking, Sue Pettit, Jerry Stringer, Dan Sulsberger, Brittani Walker

**Absent:** none

**Guests:** Jonathon Hallberg (South Central Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission)

The meeting began at 7:32 am.

## Appointment of Chair

Hallberg asked if the committee was considered a public body. Pettit stated that, because of their appointment by the County Board, it is. She stated that the public notice was posted at the County Building as requested and Sulsberger stated that it was also posted at Flora City Hall. The group discussed nominating a committee chair. Sulsberger nominated Lueking to be committee chair, seconded by Bukas (motion carries).

## Survey

**Document Review:** Hallberg shared an updated copy of the survey and outlined the changes made. He noted that the order of answers on questions #1-3 is reversed on the version at his office and stated he would ensure it is changed on the final version.

Bukas asked about adding a cover page to the document to outline what a “greenway” is and provide some context to the survey. Hallberg stated he planned to add a small sign at each fill-out location to help people learn more about the project and that he would add that definition. The group decided that it would be better for folks to have the information with the survey as a cover page. Hallberg asked if the committee would consider the inclusion of a small flyer or poster at each location to draw attention to the survey and the committee members agreed to that as well.

Hallberg stated he had not yet addressed Lueking’s e-mail about questions #1, 2, 3 and the questions about bus stops. For question #1, Lueking shared that some people might consider the term, “quality of life,” strange or might not understand what that means. She asked if a different term could be used to help respondents make the connection between trails and their benefits, such as recreation. Hallberg stated that focusing only on recreation could cause problems for communities who cite the survey to apply for grants that focus on non-motorized transportation to specific destinations, such as “Safe Routes to School” or the “Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program.” Walker suggested changing the language to, “Do you agree that Clay County residents would benefit from greenways and trails that connect rural communities and forest preserves?” The committee agreed that the change would improve the question.

Lueking stated that mentioning tax dollars may concern people. Stringer remarked that it could cause a negative reaction and also recommended changing the question. Bukas stated that question #2 is redundant with question #3, as it is unlikely communities will fund projects without a grant. Lueking suggested changing tax dollars to, “federal, state, local and private funds”, for question #3 to introduce the idea of public-private partnerships and make the question less alarming. The committee agreed to eliminate question #2 and change question #3 as recommended. They agreed it would make space in the survey to allow for all answer choices for each question to appear along with questions in the same column and on the same page.

Franklin recommended that the bottom of page one indicate that the survey is continued on the other side. Hallberg said he would make the change.

Lueking stated that question #15 may confuse people as she knows of no bus stops in the county. Pettit remarked that Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT) has door-to-door para-transit routes but that there are no bus stops.

Hallberg mentioned that RIDES Mass Transit, which has service in 11 counties, does go through Clay County and he thinks there may be a fixed stop within Clay County. He stated that the question could document the need for improved public transportation in the region for the elderly, disabled and those who use public transportation to get to work and run errands. He outlined how public transportation improvements link closely with access to non-motorized routes and might strengthen funding applications if noted. He closed with the request to include the question as a means of furthering the goals of public transit initiatives in the region. The group agreed to include the question. Hallberg stated he would further research CIPT and RIDES Mass Transit to outline their coverage and services in the county for the study. Bukas requested that the cover page include some mention of these two organizations as well.

One of the committee members asked if the survey could include a write-in for respondents' community or zip code. Hallberg stated he would add it to question #23.

Additional discussion occurred about questions #18 and 19 being combined but the committee agreed it could be left separate if not possible.

**Locations:** Hallberg proposed the following locations at County offices for posting the survey because people likely filled out forms, made payments and waited there; Clay County Circuit Clerk, County Recorder/Clerk's office, and County Treasurer's office. Pettit stated that the Treasurer's Office would not be as ideal because people do not pay property taxes until late summer and early fall. She encouraged Hallberg to ask department heads to provide surveys to county staff, who would likely respond.

Hallberg proposed the information area at the County Hospital. Lueking recommended also including CCH Medical Clinic and Clay Medical Center. Walker recommended including the Louisville and Marshall Clinics.

Other locations Hallberg proposed were Flora City Library, and the village halls of Louisville, Sailor Springs, Xenia and Iola. The veterinary clinics in the area were also recommended. Hallberg asked if these being private clinics, would agree. No determination was made on whether to include them.

Hallberg stated he would approach the Advocate-Press and WNOI about putting the survey and important dates on their calendars. Lueking stated the Clay County and Flora websites should also be included. Pettit and Sulsberger agreed.

Stringer asked about sharing the surveys with the schools, as students would be likely trail users. Hallberg shared he was concerned about numbers and the survey budget, especially with the addition of a cover page. Stringer recommended surveying only the high school physical education classes and stated the teachers would likely be willing to distribute and collect the surveys in the school.

**Distribution and Collection:** Walker had asked Hallberg if he was available to speak at a Rotary meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup>. Hallberg agreed and stated that morning would be a good date for him to distribute printed surveys to various locations. Sulsberger said he would be available to help. Hallberg stated he planned to deliver 100 surveys to most locations but he might need specific numbers for some of them.

Walker told Hallberg she would distribute the surveys to Louisville locations and to the Interact Club. She stated she would talk with the Co-Op Coordinator, Jan Bible and distribute to her as well.

Lueking agreed to share the survey at the hospital, the clinics in Flora and to 4-H, where she would speak briefly about the project as well. She asked Hallberg to prepare 100 copies for the survey for each location.

Stringer stated that he would contact the area schools to get numbers for Hallberg and would distribute to them.

Stringer asked how many surveys would be considered statistically significant. Hallberg said the Champaign-Urbana survey went out to 3000 people in the county and asked how many people were in Clay County. Pettit stated it was around 12,500. Hallberg stated a good response rate for mail-out surveys is about 15%. Bukas stated a 15% response rate would amount to about 1,800 people, which may be ambitious. Stringer asked if a low response rate would create a challenge for future grant applications. Hallberg stated he believed reviewers of grant applications would focus on the fact that there is a county plan and whether a specific project was in it but would not be as concerned about how scientific the survey was. He shared the benefit of the survey is more in what the committee learns and the attention drawn to the opportunities citizens may not have considered.

The committee agreed on a deadline of January 30, 2014.

## Public Meeting Planning

**Location and Date:** Hallberg stated that, considering the January 15<sup>th</sup> WNOI radio spot and the committee meeting occurring the next day, it would be important to time the public meeting. He said he knew that the format was scheduled for later in the agenda but thought it may have some bearing on the kind of location chosen and asked if the group had any concerns about Bukas' recommendation for an open house with stations where people could attend at their leisure. No concerns were raised. Bukas recommended Flora Public Library. Sulsberger said the Depot could be used but it would be on the second floor and the Library might have better accessibility. The group agreed the Library would be best.

After reviewing various calendar dates, January 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> were selected. Walker stated that the 20<sup>th</sup> is closer to the radio spot and would be the best choice for creating momentum. She recommended the 27<sup>th</sup> as an alternate date in the event of bad weather. Sulsberger stated he would check the calendar of events to be sure the library was free. Pettit stated that, because the 20<sup>th</sup> is Martin Luther King Day, there can be no public meetings officially held by the county, and therefore, the event should be promoted as an "Open House." Sulsberger stated there is usually a City Council meeting that afternoon and recommended the time be set at 6:30 PM and end at 8:00. The committee members agreed.

**Format & Needed Materials:** Hallberg shared ideas to get the group started. He said surveys should be included so a table with chairs would be needed. He thought the following idea stations would be helpful: 1) Destinations/Routes (needs - Village/County Maps, markers, and easels with paper), 2) Trail Use/Features Desired (needs - markers, easels w/paper), 3) Concerns (same needs). He stated he would prepare a rotating PowerPoint slideshow with brief statements about the benefits of trails, photos of attractions in the county, and examples of trails within the state that folks may be aware of. Finally, he stated a short kick-off speech might be beneficial and asked if Lueking or Pettit would be interested. Both declined and Hallberg stated he could do it if necessary but it might be more meaningful coming from a community member. He asked Walker who said she can do so if it will benefit the event. It was recommended that a five-minute opening remarks speech occur at around 7:15 and shortly after the midway point of the event. The group discussed some photo locations that would be ideal for the slideshow and said they would send some to Hallberg.

Stringer stated it would be important for the committee to recommend routes for the event. Discussion began about routes, including the old rail spur in town, Hardy Hills, Old Rte. 50, the Vincennes Ave. route to the industrial park and others. Hallberg said, while he could try to put these on a map, he was not familiar with many of the locations. He asked if it would be alright for the committee to create an example map as a group at the next committee meeting through a process similar to what might occur at the Open House.

Hallberg said he is trying to repair the Commission plotter so he can print large maps in-house for participants to draw on. Pettit stated that the County has excellent water line maps that might be useful for the project and that Hennigan & Associates, the county's consulting engineers, might be able to print them off. Sulsberger stated he would contact them and see about having copies printed off free. Hallberg stated that, if not free, he could use funds from IDOT that are dedicated to the study.

## General Promotion

**Facebook Promotion Page:** Hallberg shared that a Facebook page would be a convenient alternative to a committee website due to the ease with which it can be created and the potential for interaction. It could be used to share other example trails and local amenities, take suggestions, promote organizations of interest, point to funding resources, market upcoming events, provide the survey, share the final study, share photos from events, share information about the committee and project, and function as a springboard for sharing other events such as 5k runs. He said that it was crucial to investigate what kind of social media policy the County has. Pettit stated she could check with the county attorney on the subject and get back to him.

Hallberg said the administration of the Facebook page could include all committee members. He said he wanted to be careful about censorship but also avoid people posting irrelevant materials. Hilmes offered the suggestion of having one committee member in charge of moderating the page. The committee decided that, for the time being, each member who has Facebook could be listed as a moderator and then see how the process went.

**Upcoming News Spot:** Walker stated there would be three microphones available for those who wanted to speak. Hallberg stated he would be available to add ideas but stated committee members are known in the community and recommended they use this opportunity to promote the trails initiative. Lueking, Walker and Sulsberger all agreed to