

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Oct. 24, 2017



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District to receive \$680,000 CMAP grant for Great Western Trail extension

GENEVA, IL — Riding a bicycle along the trails in Kane County is about to get a little easier, thanks to a forthcoming grant to the Forest Preserve District from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

In a press release, CMAP announced Oct. 11 that it will award the Forest Preserve District of Kane County a \$680,000 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant to extend the Great Western Trail from LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve in St. Charles to Randall Road, along abandoned railroad right-of-way.

Currently, LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve is the farthest east you can go on the Great Western Trail. The TAP grant would link LeRoy Oakes with Randall Road in St. Charles, which would then allow riders to link-up with the Fox River Trail via local roads.

The trail extension is one of 39 improvement projects awarded grants.

“We have wanted this trail extension for a long time, for both trail connectivity and safety reasons,” said Forest Preserve District Planning & Development Director Jerry Culp.

“By connecting the Great Western Trail to the Randal Road Trail, it allows users to get to the underpass across Randall Road, just north of Dean Street. This will keep users from having to ride on Dean Street, which has a narrow shoulder and a speed limit of 45 MPH. Using local roads and LeRoy Oakes East Forest Preserve, riders can get to Red Gate Road, cross the Fox River to Fox River Bluff West Forest Preserve, and then access the Fox River Trail,” he said.

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“We applied for this grant knowing there was federal transportation funding available to assist agencies like ours in providing alternative routes of transportation. Purchasing a railroad right-of-way is costly. This grant will pay for 80 percent of the cost to acquire and construct the project. This is a great way to stretch our tax dollars and get more accomplished with our funds,” Culp said.

In total, CMAP awarded \$256 million in grants to improve transit, roads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities for 39 transportation projects that will reduce congestion, improve air quality and enhance non-motorized transportation.

To see a full list of projects, visit CMAP’s website at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/mobility/strategic-investment/cmaq/program-development>. For more information on the Forest Preserve District, visit www.kaneforest.com.

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