

CALL FOR PROJECTS

Issued on July 19, 2024. Applications due by August 12, 2024.

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council

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INTRODUCTION

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council (BHRC) encourages eligible municipalities to apply for its Northwest Illinois (NWIL) Streets/Sidewalks Walkability Assessment Program (SWAP).

SWAP is funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation. In 2024 and 2025, BHRC will assist selected municipalities in creating walkability assessments. The program's purpose is to identify opportunities to improve active transportation and accessibility within the selected municipalities.

Walkability is the ability of residents to access amenities and services by walking or rolling within a reasonable distance (usually 15-30 minutes). It considers factors of the built environment such as sidewalk condition and continuity, ADA compliance, and pedestrian comfort, among others.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The type of walkability assessment is determined by the size of the municipality.

1. For small municipalities (pop. <1,500) that want a general assessment of their community's walkability, BHRC will:
 - a. survey up to three priority routes within municipal boundaries as identified by local stakeholders;
 - b. organize a walk audit with local stakeholders for one priority route;
 - c. conduct a sidewalk gap audit of all municipal or neighborhood streets using Google Earth and Maps;
 - d. analyze municipal data and maps related to demographics, community facilities, and infrastructure;
 - e. review municipal ordinances and planning documents for opportunities to improve active transportation and accessibility.
2. For small municipalities with a specific project or funding opportunity, BHRC will modify the above general assessment to prioritize those areas and actions related to the project. Certain listed tasks may be replaced with actions more suitable to the desired project or funding opportunity.
3. For large municipalities (pop. \geq 1,500) with a specific project or funding opportunity, BHRC may:
 - a. conduct a survey of the project area (neighborhood-level assessment only);
 - b. analyze demographic, community facility, and infrastructure data;
 - c. identify best practices related to the project;

- d. review city ordinance and planning documents for opportunities for improvement related to active transportation.

The project/funding opportunity will determine the specific tasks. BHRC will negotiate the project scope with the community.

At the end of the assessment, BHRC will deliver a report to the municipality outlining work completed as well as describing action items and funding recommendations. Past walkability assessment reports can be found on our website: <https://www.blackhawkhills.com/transportation>

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Applicants must be an incorporated municipality in one of the following Illinois counties: Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, or Whiteside and may also not be located in East Dubuque, Byron, Stillman Valley, or Davis Junction.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

- Summer 2024 Selection: September 2024 to February 2025
- Fall 2024 Selection: December 2024 to May 2025

COSTS

No matching share is required. Municipalities are responsible for their own staff time and travel expenses.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Applicants must submit the following to be considered:

1. Program application
2. Community maps (street and sidewalk map, parcel map, zoning and land use maps, water and sewer map, other map that supports the planning process)

The application and supporting documents must be submitted on or before August 12, 2024 via the following link: <https://arcg.is/Obj4aL>. Questions can be emailed to info@blackhawkhills.com.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

BHRC will review applications using the following criteria:

Criteria	Points	Sub-Criteria
Need for Walkability Assessment	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a clear need for an assessment of municipal active transportation infrastructure • Shows understanding of the active transportation issues currently facing the applicant's community • Demonstrates basic familiarity with active transportation • Consideration of community facilities (schools, libraries, health clinics, etc.) and goods/services providers (bars, restaurants, gyms, etc.)
Future Use of Assessment	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes how the assessment will relate to the municipality's long-term transportation planning • Demonstrates how the assessment will be a living document
Application Completeness	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pertinent sections of the application are filled out • Short answer responses are detailed • If applicable – has provided a robust overview of the project or funding opportunity