

ALTONWORKS.

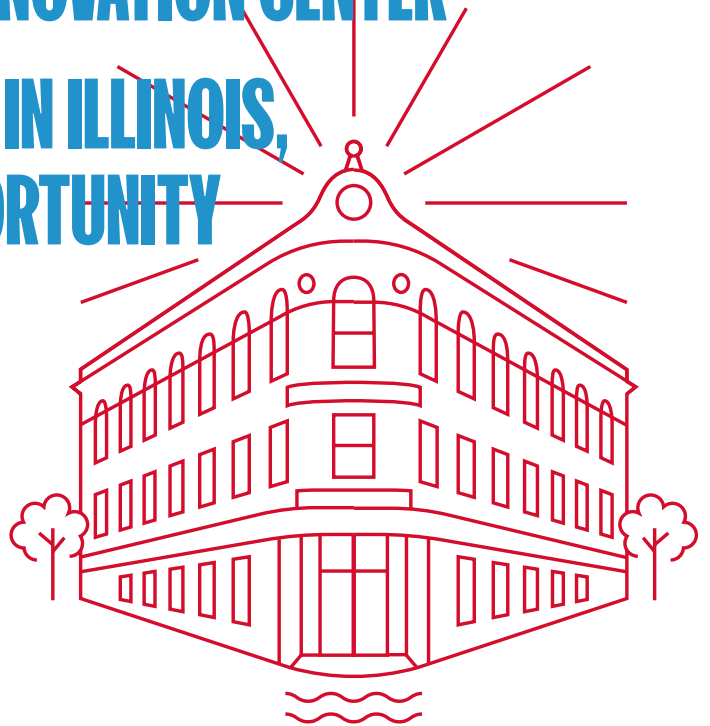
ACTIVATING REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS

**FEDERAL, STATE, & LOCAL LEGISLATIVE
ADVOCACY AGENDA**

ALTONWORKS WEDGE INNOVATION CENTER

**OUTDOOR RECREATION IN ILLINOIS,
SEIZING A TIMELY OPPORTUNITY**

2023



Dear Community Partner:

Sometimes it just takes a small group of big dreamers, thinkers, and doers to inspire extraordinary progress. That's exactly what is happening in Alton, Illinois.

Please accept this Federal, State, and Local Legislative Advocacy Agenda as an invitation to join us on our journey to revitalize a historic Downstate Illinois city that has all the qualities that people want in a modern community. This effort requires many partnerships with local, state, and federal governments and other private and public sector partners. Through our government relations team, our efforts are about more than just securing a line item in the local, state, and federal budgets. AltonWorks makes every effort to obtain resources, foster relationships, and advance key strategic partnerships to support our goal of a revitalized region with Alton as an inspirational driver.

As an Alton resident, business owner, and entrepreneur, my wife Jayne and I have joined forces to reimagine the future of Downtown Alton and create a city that can be a model of revitalization for communities across the country.

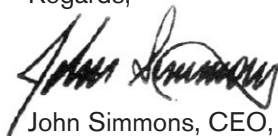
Jayne and I believe that a strong downtown is the foundation of a thriving community. Along with the City of Alton, business and civic leaders, and hundreds of supporters and volunteers, we aspire to serve as a catalyst to reposition Alton as a 21st century national model for social equity, economic mobility, and overall livability. We believe through meaningful partnerships, self-determination, hard work, and an inclusive process, we can demonstrate how informed planning and leveraged private-public investment in a strategically located community like Alton can lift the entire region.

We believe so much in Downtown Alton's potential, that we have committed more than \$70 million dollars of investment to inspire others to participate in this remarkable community. To date, the fire has been ignited with several businesses and residents who have chosen Alton as their place to live and work.

At AltonWorks, we have identified six focus areas that serve as key influencers of regional prosperity, align with federal, state, and local community building priorities, and bring about positive social change. You will learn more about that within this document.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these transformational ideas to change the face of Downstate Illinois. In the 21st century, young families, talent, retirees, and displaced workers are all seeking "livability." Beyond opportunities for employment, they are looking for access to safe and affordable housing, higher education opportunities, well-developed transportation networks, inclusiveness and equity, safe neighborhoods, and a cleaner environment. We believe in the future of Alton, and we hope you do, too. Your partnership and support is essential to help make these ideas a reality.

Regards,



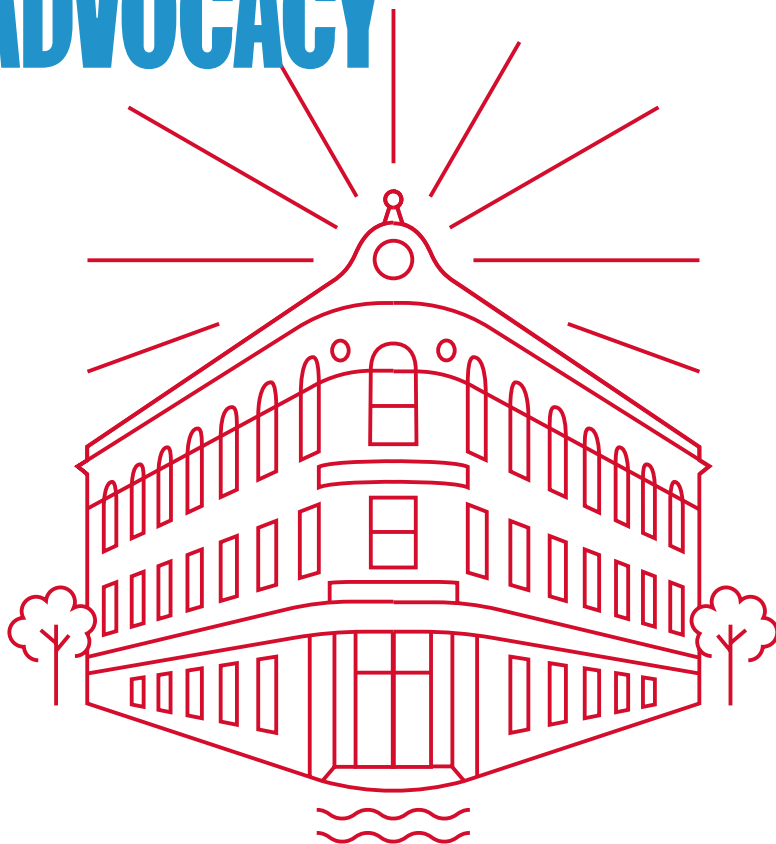
John Simmons, CEO, AltonWorks

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MARCH 2023



ALTONWORKS.

AltonWorks is a social impact redevelopment company focused on the revitalization of Historic Downtown Alton as a healthy, thriving, walkable city, and as a regional hub for reinvention and resiliency in Downstate IL.

AltonWorks was founded on the principles of livability, environmental stewardship, social justice, and inclusivity and believes in rebuilding communities for optimum social impact.

In addition to development, AltonWorks serves as an intermediary organization and offers thought leadership, planning, convening, and connecting, adding capacity to the Region's ability to attract funding, expand social impact, catalyze economic growth, and anchor downstate recovery.

AltonWorks 2023 Federal, State, and Local Legislative Advocacy Agenda details policy positions and priorities that can help the region address challenges and opportunities at each level of government. AltonWorks has developed a strategic direction that focuses on improving digital equity, innovation, livability, transportation, and regional economic development in southwestern Illinois.

AltonWorks needs both legislative advocacy of our positions as well as direct requests for funding for projects and priorities detailed below.

FUNDING REQUESTS

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AltonWorks Actionable and Measurable Framework for Transformational Placemaking

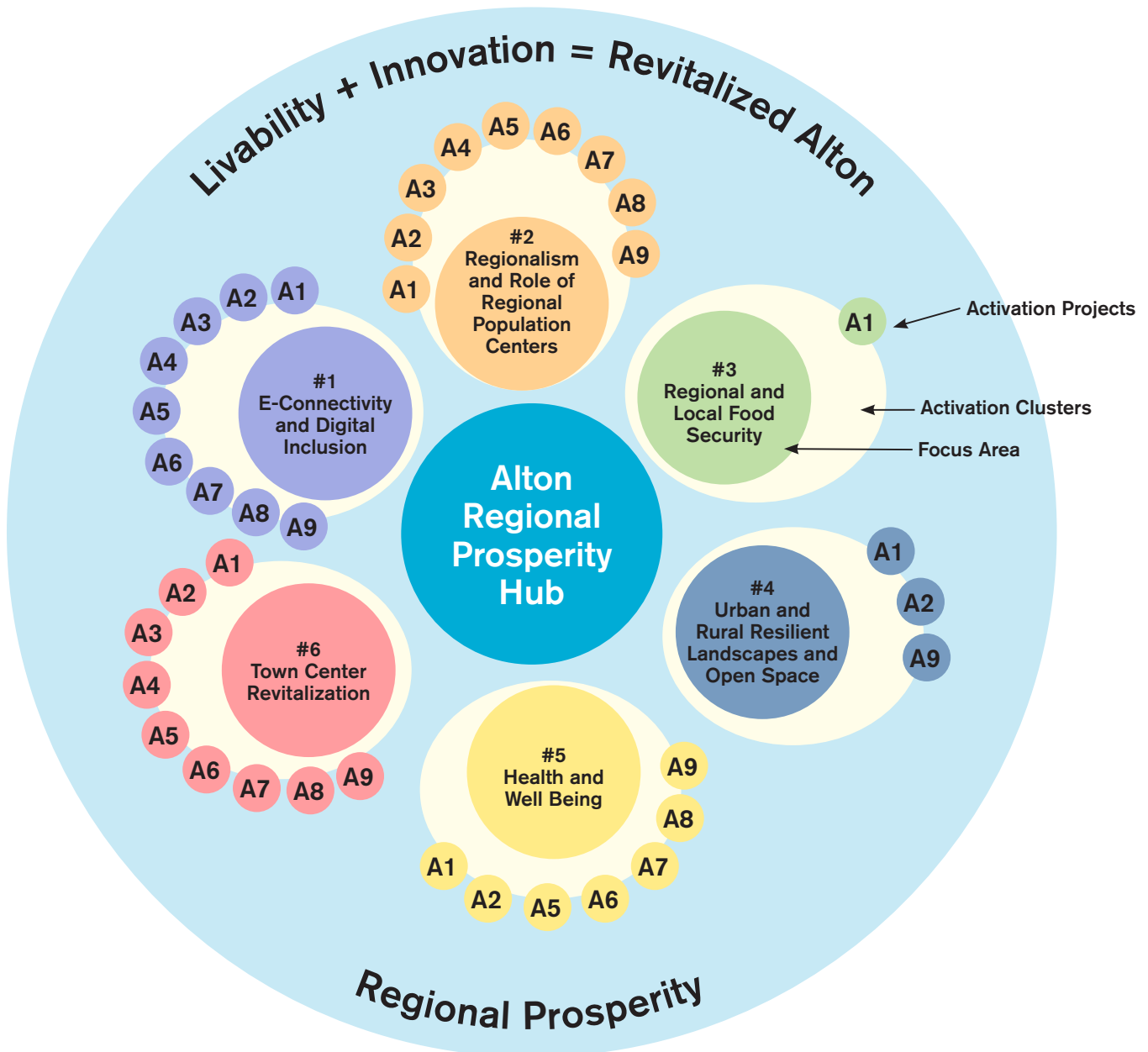
AltonWorks is advancing livability and community building through a series of interconnected Activation Projects in six Focus Areas. Each project is designed to foster innovation and a vibrant urban core.

The Focus Areas emerge as key influencers of regional prosperity, align with federal, state, and local community-building priorities, and bring about positive social change. Taken together, the projects become Activation Clusters, attract public and private partners, instill confidence, and build momentum.

Alton becomes a hub of Regional Prosperity.

Jacoby Arts and Innovation District Activation Projects

- A1. Flock, Food Truck Park & Bar
- A2. Park Park
- A3. Wedge Innovation Center
- A4. Lucas Row
- A5. Jacoby Arts Center and Offices
- A6. Regional Broadband Connectivity
- A7. Workforce Housing
- A8. Great Streets Broadway Streetscape
- A9. Riverfront Activation Strategy



Wedge Innovation Center

Alton, IL

Wedge Innovation Center (Wedge), Innovation District, Incubator, Accelerator, and Co-working Space

Support the development, growth, and expansion of the Wedge and associated improvements for the Innovation District, and two Incubator and Accelerator programs.

Asks

- Secure US Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding for technology for the Center with SIUE partnership. \$500K
- Secure US Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding for video conferencing equipment and tie in with Illinois Innovation Network/SIUE. \$500K
- Secure US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and CEJA funding for the SIUE Pilot Energy Transition Economy Jobs Program. \$950K

Advocacy

- Brief members of the IL General Assembly Committee on Higher Education about the Wedge and its partnership with SIUE. SIUE to secure funds.
- Advocate to legislators for DCEO Advantage IL program funding for use and deployment in the Wedge.
- Advocate to Treasurer's office for funding from the Illinois Treasurer Investment Program for use and deployment in the Wedge.
- Advocate to Legislators and Governor to seek placement of DCEO Regional Office in the Wedge that will also serve as a regional DCEO grant support office to provide technical and related assistance to downstate municipalities seeking grants and other state programs including CEJA.
- Advocate for the development of a regional Geo Data Center in the Wedge.
- Secure offices of a Venture Capital firm in the Wedge to aid in deployment of funds for entrepreneurial and business development.
- Secure a satellite office of the Illinois Small Business Development Center in the Wedge with US Small Business Administration Services.
- Provide resources and incentives for local governments to complete the community energy, climate, and jobs plans as described in the state Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA).
- Support development of a Health Services Center Cluster utilizing state, federal, and local health services facilities with eventual planning of a medical district.
- Advocate to Legislators and Governor to seek placement of the Office of Outdoor Recreation in the Wedge.

The Wedge is designed to drive regional economic equity and connectivity. AltonWorks is seeking transformational change to create prosperity and diverse opportunities for all.

Background

The Wedge Bank and the Elfgen building are iconic and visually striking historic buildings at the corner of E. Broadway and E. 3rd streets—the geographic center of AltonWorks' revitalization plans in Alton, IL.

To make that transformation possible, **AltonWorks will invest an estimated \$29 million to stabilize and restore the Wedge and Elfgen buildings to become modern accelerator, incubator, and co-working spaces** — an eighteen-month project that will transform an entire block of vacant buildings, serving as a catalyst for the revitalization of downtown Alton as a healthy, thriving, walkable city and regional hub for innovation and resiliency in Downstate IL. **This project leverages a \$20 Million appropriation from the State of Illinois to AltonWorks to build a Fiber Network in the City of Alton.**



The Wedge will foster economic growth and create jobs.

The Wedge will support early-stage, growth-driven companies through education, mentorship, and financing. It will house startups, space for individuals or teams, and more established companies who want to accelerate their businesses or develop new technologies, products, or systems. The Wedge will have a positive impact on the entrepreneurial ecosystem, attracting interested businesses, investors, seed and early-stage financing, and media attention, all of which benefit the local and wider regional economy. AltonWorks is working on a partnership agreement with SIUE to operate and manage programs at the Wedge. This brings a host of innovative programs to the business community, a depth in workforce training, and research and consulting expertise in areas that modern businesses require.

The Wedge will partner with SIUE on management, operations, and programming, and connect businesses with academic research and innovation across the entire region.

The Wedge Innovation Center will create jobs for members of the community and attract displaced workers who seek the improved livability of Alton. Once open, it will create 249 permanent full-time and 62 permanent part-time jobs, with an average wage over \$43,000 per year. The Wedge Innovation Center will be a catalyst for revitalizing Downtown Alton, employing a diverse demographic of Alton's residents, and spurring further development, new businesses, and additional jobs for a vibrant twenty-first century city.

Great Streets Implementation Alton, IL

Great Streets Plan Implementation, Market Street and Broadway Improvements, and Transportation improvements

Asks

Great Streets

- Phase 1 – Engineering for remaining 15 blocks \$1.2M
- Phase 2 – Implementation from Ridge to Henry \$5M
- Phase 3 – Implementation from Henry to Alton Street \$12.5M
- Phase 4 – Implementation from Alton Street to Piasa \$10M
- Phase 5 – Implementation from Ridge to Central \$7.5M
- Phase 6 – Implementation from Central to Monument \$7.5M
- Total for all phases \$43.7 Million

Bridges to Prosperity

Planning and Engineering \$1.2M

Advocacy

- Support the further development of the Great Streets Plan and funding for the implementation of project phases (1-6) through the US Department of Transportation and the Illinois Department of Transportation. Overall project need is \$25M to \$44M for plan implementation.
- Support full and expanded funding of all state and federal transportation enhancement grant and other discretionary programs.
- Support expanding the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program funds for streetscape, pedestrian friendly, and complete streets projects.
- Support and track within USDOT the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant program that will reconnect Alton's Riverfront with downtown.

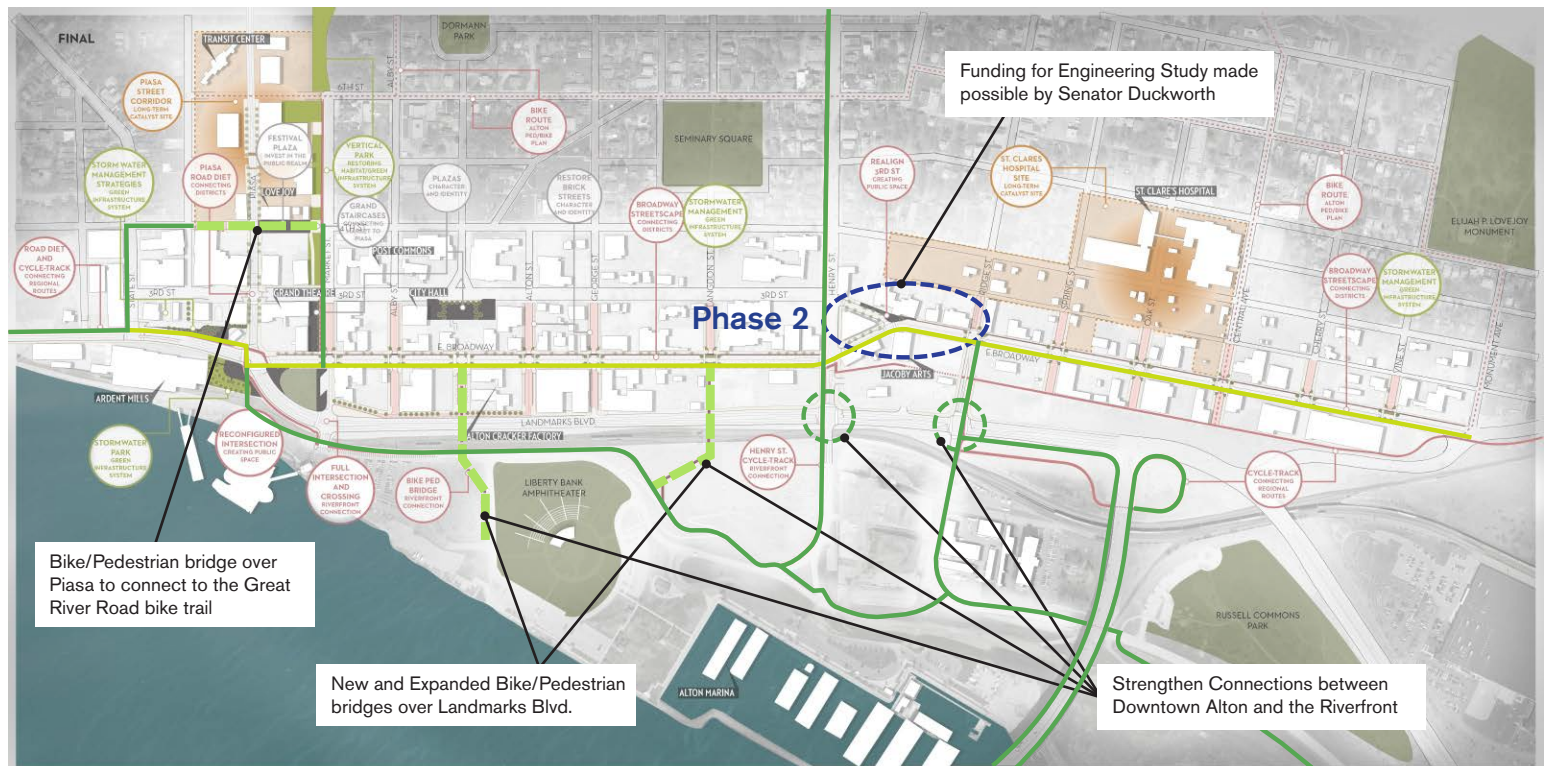
Great Streets and Bridges to Prosperity will create access and build economic development across the community.

Background

The City of Alton received a grant from East West Gateway to commission a The Great Streets design effort which was completed in June 2020. The plan reimagined Broadway as a welcoming and vibrant streetscape that serves as a modern main street for a revitalized Alton. \$500,000 in funding for engineering has been obtained by Illinois Senator Tammy Duckworth and will be available summer 2023.

AltonWorks and the City of Alton are now seeking phased funding for implementation of the Great Streets plan and hopes to establish an impactful public-private partnership, resulting in a complete transformation of Downtown Alton, paving the way for attracting new businesses, jobs, and residents and stopping the population decline in the region.

Recent federal and state infrastructure bills provide an unprecedented opportunity to improve our infrastructure. AltonWorks fully supports the implementation of these infrastructure programs and advocates continued expansion of the funding mechanisms to expand these needed infrastructure improvements.



Riverfront Activation Plan

Alton, IL

Alton Riverfront Activation Plan Development and Implementation
Support the development of an Alton Riverfront Master Plan along with the creation of a National Great Rivers National Park

Asks

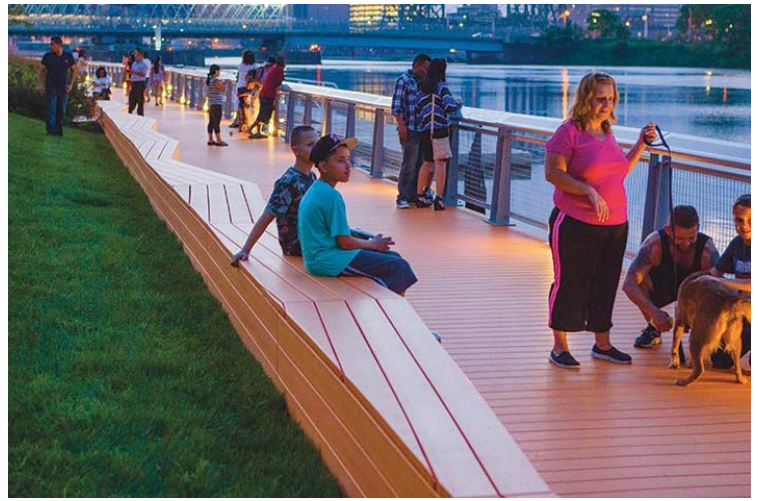
- Secure funding for an Alton Riverfront Study Plan with the USACE under the Public Assistance to States Program. \$650K
- Secure funding for an update to the Illinois Great Rivers Scenic Byway Plan and associated transportation enhancements. \$850K
- Secure funding through the USDOT Office of Ports funding for planning a Port of Alton. \$150K
- Work with the US Army Corps of Engineers and City of Alton for improvements to the Lock Wall for improved mooring facilities for cruise ships. \$850K
- Secure funding to plan for the development of a Great Rivers National Park for Illinois and Missouri. \$750K

Alton's Riverfront could become a national outdoor recreation destination with enhanced cruise ship port, and biking, paddling, pickleball, and climbing.

Advocacy

- Advocate within the Illinois Department of Transportation Waterways Office about the importance of the Cruise Industry with GRR.
- Support funding expansion for grants and budget programming for outdoor recreation and river/waterway access programs for boating, fishing, and other opportunities.

The 33-mile Federal Scenic Byway could become Great Rivers National Park and bring billions in economic development to the region with Alton as the gateway.



TOD Development at HSR Station Alton, IL

Transit Oriented Development around the Alton Multimodal Transportation or High Speed Rail Center on Homer Adams Parkway could become a prime location for economic growth.

Multi-use development with the relocated Argosy Casino, retail, restaurants, sports dome with e-gaming, and housing. Connect to the Alton Riverfront with EV buses

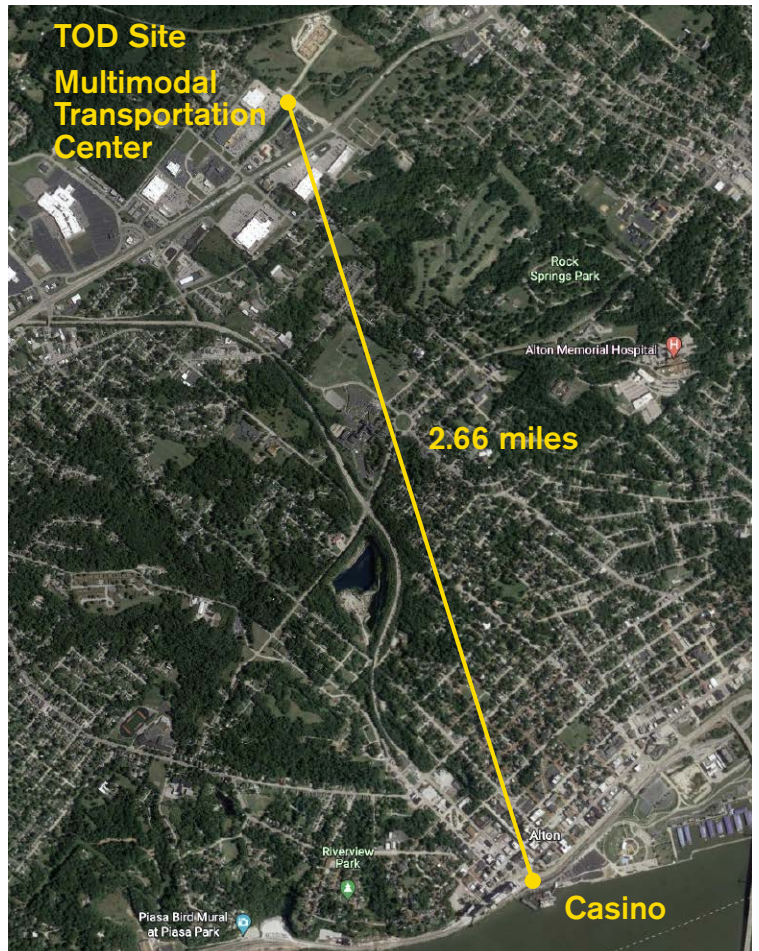
Asks

- Secure funding for comprehensive area development plan for TOD development at the Alton HSR site and associated development with a relocated Argosy Casino. \$400K

Argosy Casino Alton could relocate to the TOD site and become a regional entertainment destination with retail, restaurant, hotel, and video gaming sports dome.

Advocacy

- Support funding for IDOT for an expanded High Speed Rail Office.
- Support the creation of a statewide HSR Plan for Illinois.
- Advocate for a downstate member of the HSR Commission.



Broadband Deployment and Digital Inclusion

Alton, IL

Alton Broadband Deployment and Implementation

Continue to support and enhance the deployment of broadband throughout Alton

Asks

- Seek additional funding through state and federal sources to complete the deployment of the Alton Broadband project. \$5M
- Seek funding to create a SW Regional Broadband Planning and Deployment Center in the Wedge Innovation Center that includes planning, training and development facilities. \$850K
- Access to enterprise grade broadband is only as strong as its weakest link. Funding to make sure that all households have PCs or tablets is essential to realizing all the potential that broadband offers. Alton Forward is looking for grant opportunities to provide hardware to all low-income residences in Alton. \$1M

A City-wide enterprise-grade fiber network will catalyze and transform digital access, education, healthcare, and workforce throughout Southern Illinois.

Advocacy

- Advocate for locating NTIA facilities to aid in planning and regional operations within the Wedge.
- Pursue federal and state legislation that assists the tax structure of broadband ownership, management, and implementation.
- With a 25% poverty level and all local school age children qualifying for free or reduced lunch in our public schools, Alton Forward has a goal of providing broadband to these households free of charge. Provide a state rebate that would augment the FCC discount to help in this goal.



Food Hub

Alton, IL

Riverbend Food Hub Access Plan Development and Implementation

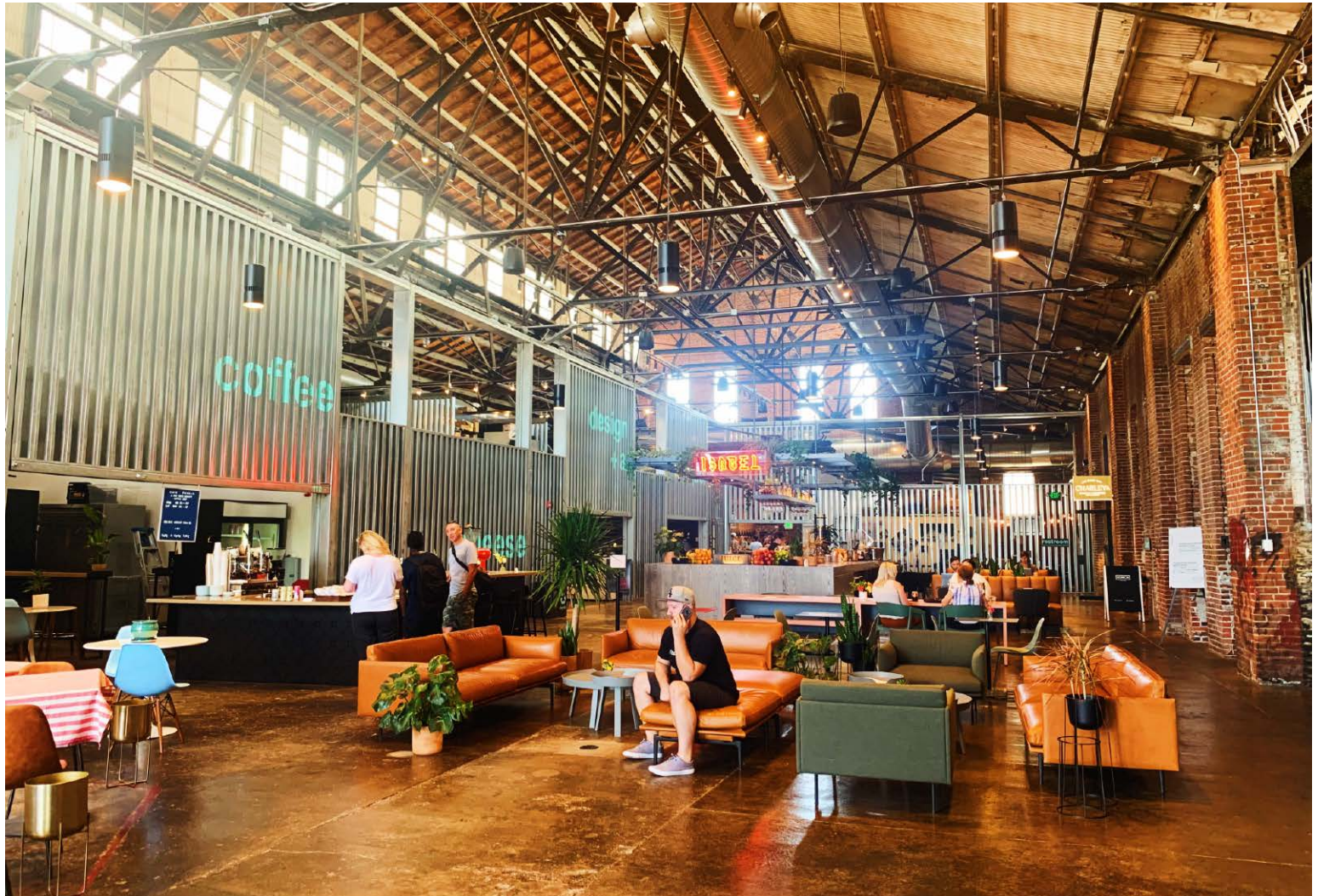
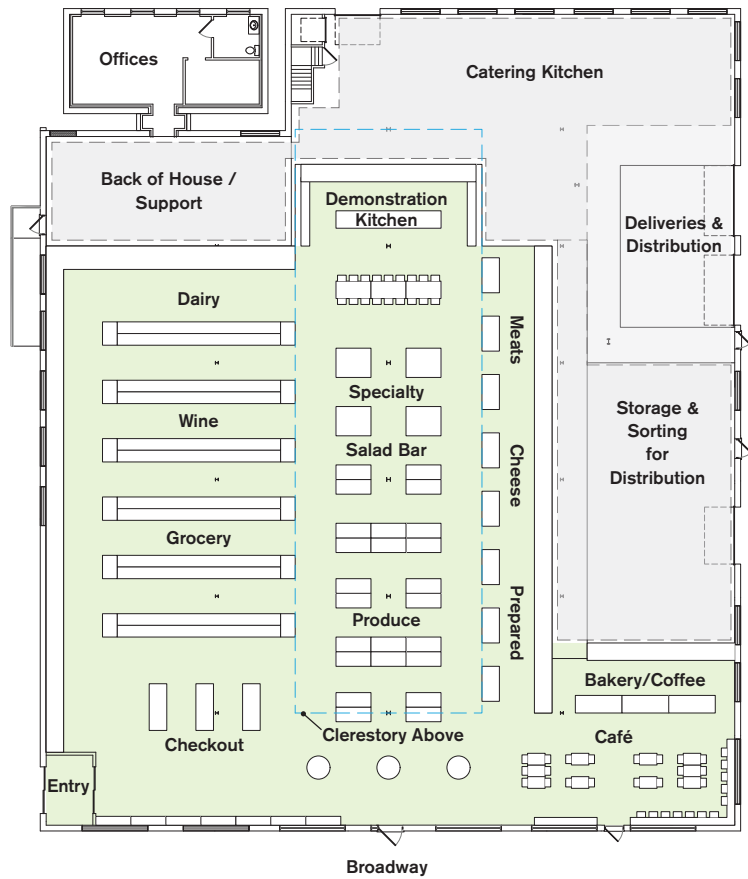
Support the development and implementation of a Food Access Action Plan for the Riverbend region. **Alton Food Hub** creates a sustainable food processing and distribution system, offers fresh, local produce, and other grocery products, develops and scales local food entrepreneurship, provides test kitchens to equitably serve the community, trains a culinary workforce, and educates community members on healthy food systems, all in support of underserved, local, and regional residents and the rural farming community. The Hub will partner with the Wedge Innovation Center and SIUE on culinary and food tech workforce training and entrepreneurship. Plans are in development

Asks

- Secure funding to develop and implement a Regional Riverbend Food Hub Access plan. \$750K
- Secure funding through the farm bill for the Alton Food Hub. \$12M

Advocacy

- Work through programs under DCEO and the US Department Agriculture through the reauthorization of the 2023 Farm Bill.
- Support the Governor's \$22M program request for the Illinois Food Access and Grocery Incentivization Initiative to help increase access to fresh food and improve food security in Illinois.



Regional Broadband Connectivity

Alton, IL

Alton Regional Broadband Connectivity Network: Utilizing a \$20M appropriation from the State of Illinois, AltonWorks, a social impact, private redevelopment company, will construct a fiber optic network throughout Alton, headquartered at the Wedge Innovation Center, to deliver symmetrical, ten gigabit-speed, enterprise-level service to the business incubator's tenants and to Alton residents and businesses. Alton will be one of only a few cities in the region to have this level of service. The investment will create a core broadband service capability and thus long-term economic development opportunities, livability, and positive social impact throughout the City of Alton and the region. Fundamental to the fiber network is the goal of digital access, literacy, and equity for all residents of Alton.

The regional aspirations are larger. AltonWorks with its regional partners, committed to 21st Century livability and prosperity, believes there is an opportunity to create a significant innovation and technology platform in the center of the US. We propose to connect the Wedge Innovation Center to other nearby regional innovation districts and new facilities in Downstate Illinois at Litchfield and Quincy, Illinois. Perfectly positioned in this region of working rivers and working lands, we see the potential for the region to develop future technologies for food, energy, and climate innovation, in collaboration with the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency and other key capacity builders.

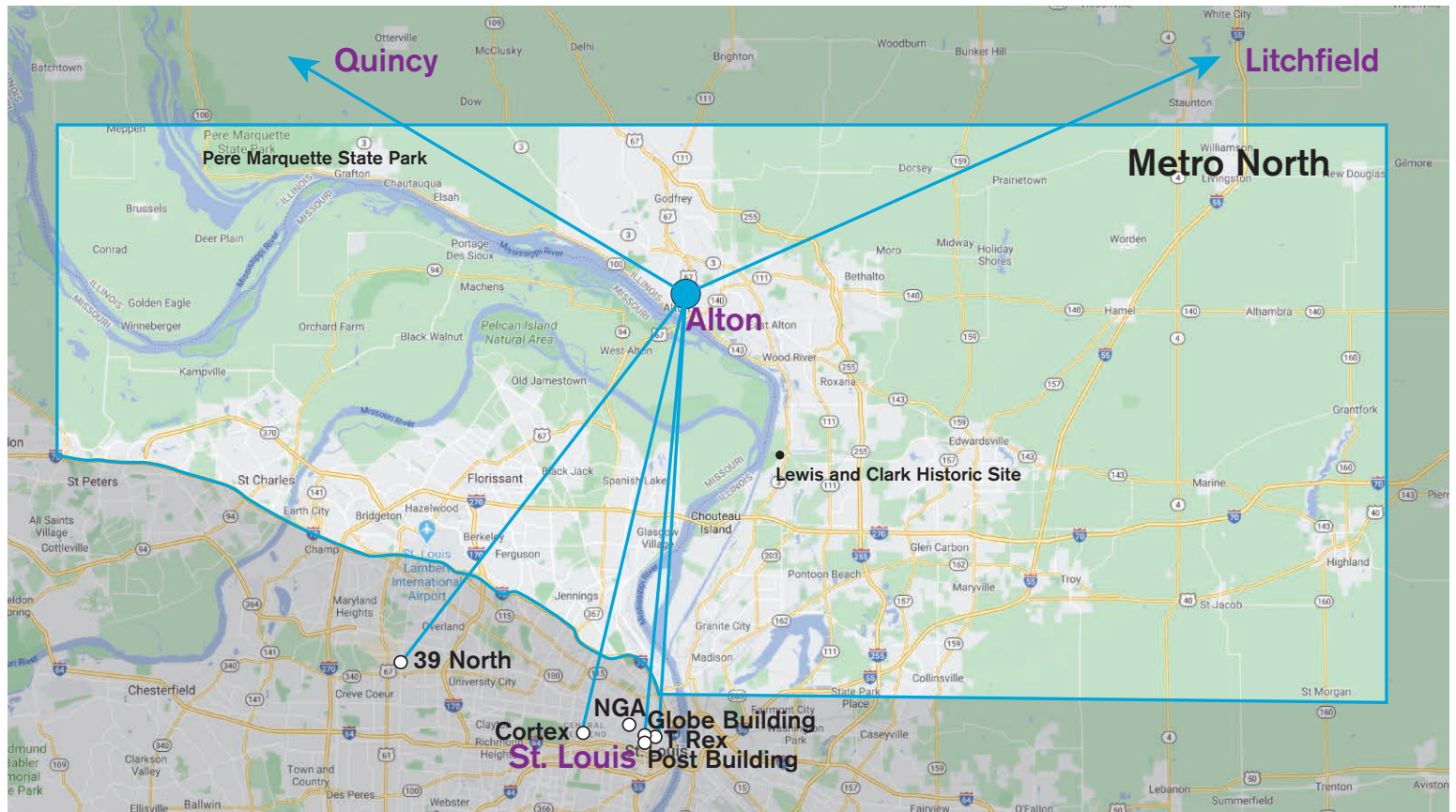
The requested funding for the first step in connecting Alton's fiber network to regional innovation hubs in Southern Illinois is to add a data center and network connection point in the Wedge Innovation Center. This project will strengthen Alton as a regional hub in the broader base of innovation in the heart of the US where important technology advances and equity funding are growing. The data center will attract businesses that are looking for this added amenity of data storage. This will be beneficial to the community in the level of company and related jobs that the data center will attract to the Wedge Innovation Center.



CTC Technology & Energy is a DC-based consultant in the broadband industry and provides strategic counsel and engineering services to the State of Illinois and several Illinois communities. They are a consultant to AltonWorks and have provided an overview and detailed drawings and specifications for the construction of the space and the equipment and technology required for the data center. The City of Alton will serve as a fiscal agent for this project which will generate growth and economic benefits for the city. This project is a companion project to the Alton Wedge Innovation Center.

Illinois Senator Durbin has Requested – \$500,000 for FY23 in Congressionally Directed Spending

Federal Funding Requested for Construction and Equipment – \$500,000



AltonWorks Priorities

Alton, IL

Federal Initiatives

AltonWorks advocates these priorities for the Federal government to pursue:

- Continue American Rescue Plan Act EDA programs and funding levels that support regional economic development. This includes the Build Back Better Challenge, the Good Jobs Challenge, and the Economic Adjustment Assistance program.
- Continue programs like the Thriving Communities Initiative through the reauthorization process so that investment decisions across transportation, land use, and housing have long-term federal support from HUD and USDOT.
- Provide targeted assistance and funding through programs like the Thriving Communities Initiative to build communities' capacity. This includes support for basic engineering, a major barrier that many disadvantaged communities face when planning local projects.
- Create a joint office between USDOT, HUD, and EDA to provide comprehensive support to regions with federal funding opportunities that address transportation, housing, and economic development.
- Increase funding for transit available under the Highway Trust Fund
- Enact a comprehensive strategy to identify, create, and implement sustainable revenue sources for the region's transit system.
- Modernize processes for making transportation funding decisions. This should prioritize demonstrable system needs, align with federal funding and regional plans, and promote transparency.
- Fully fund and implement new IIJA programs like the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment program for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- Expand East West Gateway's programming authority for funding available under FHWA's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). HSIP provides federal aid to help significantly reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- Identify dedicated resources that provide local governments with funding support for implementing ADA provisions.
- Create a competitive grant program to incentivize municipalities to provide for more road space to non-vehicle users, design self-enforcing streets, and institute other measures that can calm traffic and improve traffic safety.
- Fully fund and implement new IIJA programs like the Healthy Streets program that will enhance the resilience of communities and transportation infrastructure across regions.

State Initiatives

AltonWorks supports these priorities for the State of Illinois:

- Support laws and regulations that promote economic development and do not impose unreasonable costs on businesses and their customers.
- Support fully funding the development and update of a master plan for Pere Marquette State Park – the state's largest park.
- Support the funding of continued infrastructure improvements in the state's parks and at Pere Marquette.
- Public Private Partnerships (P3) have become a partial solution to the present funding crisis as lawmakers search for ways to infuse the funding apparatus with private dollars. AltonWorks supports finding all available financing options to meet identified capital needs and believes that P3s should be explored on a case-by-case basis and implemented when appropriate.
- Provide annual funding to support implementation of the Regional Planning Act and comprehensive planning for the state's MPOs like the Southwestern Illinois Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission (SIMAPC).

- Institute tax increment financing (TIF) data reporting standards to allow planners and researchers to assess TIF expenditures, impacts, and the effectiveness of TIF across the region.
- Secure further guidance and technical assistance on local infrastructure design and deployment to make EVs a more effective mobility solution.
- Expand capacity at the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to address traffic safety concerns in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion by creating a Safe and Complete Streets Coordination Bureau.

Local Initiatives

AltonWorks supports these priorities for the City of Alton

- Complete the RFP and secure services to update the Alton Comprehensive Plan.
- Work with the City to develop Remote Work Incentives for relocation to Alton.
- Invest in and utilize a Geographic Information System for the City of Alton.
- Update the City's Zoning Ordinances.
- Work with the US Army Corps of Engineers on a comprehensive sub area plan for riverfront master planning.
- Continue to dedicate and identify additional sources of funding to maintain the Marina and associated supporting facilities for the Port of Alton.
- Develop a comprehensive site database for economic development purposes.
- Create a One-Stop Economic Development function for City Hall.
- Develop marketing and collateral materials for marketing Alton.
- Support increased code enforcement and zoning violation enforcement to maintain safe and healthy neighborhoods.
- Support Alton's Public Safety departments like Police, Fire and EMS to improve services and efficiencies.
- Support the Alton Public Works department plan for a Comprehensive Street Improvement Plan.

Thank you

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AltonWorks Wedge Innovation Center, 620 E. Broadway, Alton, Madison County, IL 62002 City of Alton

AltonWorks is a social impact redevelopment company focused on the revitalization of Historic Downtown Alton, IL as a healthy, thriving, walkable city and as a regional hub for reinvention and resiliency in Metro North.

AltonWorks was founded on the principles of livability, environmental stewardship, social justice, and inclusivity, and believes in rebuilding communities in ways that catalyze other redevelopment, spark transformational change, and create optimum social impact. AltonWorks' Vision is: *"Welcoming, Healthy, Innovative and Livable Alton, the Vibrant Hub of Metro North. An Inclusive Community of Purpose. A Next Century City."*

A Need for Innovation

The Wedge Innovation Center (Wedge) establishes an accelerator, incubator, co-working space, and digital hub, focused on social impact innovation, and specializing in livability, clean tech, and climate tech to benefit everyday lives. The Wedge is an essential catalyst for the revitalization of Alton, establishes a community of innovation, and leverages the \$20 Million Broadband appropriation from

the State of Illinois. It restores two historic structures, the Wedge Bank and the Elfgen Building on East Broadway in the heart of Historic Downtown Alton, to become a signature, iconic representation of the digital future of Alton. It creates over 106 temporary construction jobs, 249 permanent full-time jobs, and 62 part-time jobs, and it offers training programs in collaboration with local unions, educational institutions, and city and county organizations to build and operate future fiber networks and to bring people into the digital economy, especially giving under-served populations the necessary skills and technical training to compete for higher paying jobs in the many industries and businesses currently looking for employees.

The following narrative establishes the context and need for the Wedge on E. Broadway, Alton's Historic Main Street, its importance as an economic development catalyst for Alton and the business community, and its significance as two preserved historic, iconic buildings repurposed for modern-day use at the center of Alton's traditional business district.



E. Broadway, Alton's Historic Main Street

E. Broadway, Alton's Historic Main Street

Alton, IL is a special, historic river town on the banks of the Mississippi River, 20 minutes north of downtown St. Louis. Founded in 1837, Alton is located at the confluence of three of America's great rivers: the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Illinois. Historically, this area served as an important transportation corridor for the movement of people, farm commodities, manufactured goods, ideas, literature, and music. A vibrant manufacturing city in the 1960s, Alton is on its way to remaking itself for the 21st century. Major private and public investments are already being made in community and regional revitalization.

The terraced, historic downtown commercial district anchored by its architecturally significant main street, E. Broadway, provides visitors and residents with an unparalleled riverscape and viewshed. Historic architecture is being preserved and repurposed. Alton features vibrant and characterful streetscapes, a variety of choice downtown residential options, a local food and entertainment scene, and an authentic vibe with 21st century amenities, and soon, enterprise-grade fiber connectivity, co-working space, and high-speed rail to Chicago's Union Station.

As a collar community to St. Louis, Alton is well-positioned regionally as an affordable alternative to urban congestion with cost-of-living advantages, essential services, and livability amenities unavailable in more remote locations in Downstate Illinois. Alton also enjoys safe access to thousands of acres of public lands, miles of hiking and cycling trails, mountain bike gravity trails, paddling opportunities on the Mississippi River National Water Trail, rock climbing at Illinois' largest state park, and is the Gateway to the Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway. This stretch of the river also boasts the highest number of registered recreational boats and rental slips on the upper Mississippi River.



Old Bakery Beer



Hansen Meat Co.



YMCA Building



Alton Riverfront

Alton is surrounded by rich farmland and a wealth of available water resources. The region is also home to many small family and startup farms. Some specialize in organic vegetable production, including Theodora Farms in Godfrey and Three Rivers Community Farm in Elsah, while others focus on pasture-raised meat production such as Fresh Pasture Farms in Millstadt and Coriander Fields in Dorsey. Alton's independent coffee shops, many restaurants, pie shops, and certified organic craft brewery are utilizing the region's many heritage producers, orchards, and farms. Alton is becoming the hub of this food ecosystem transformation and local and regional food culture, in turn, strengthening small farms and producers, making healthy foods more accessible and affordable, and engaging chefs and restaurants to innovate, all benefits for the local community. Alton's first food truck park, Flock, operated by a local family and featuring local food, opened May 2022 and anchors Ridge and E. Broadway.



Alton is the hub of a local food ecosystem

Alton has access to more than 30 institutions of higher education including Lewis and Clark Community College, Principia College, Southern Illinois University, Washington University, and St. Louis University and is home to the SIU Dental School. It also lies in the heart of a major center of healthcare. OSF St. Anthony's Health Center is part of the OSF Healthcare System, headquartered in Peoria, and Alton Memorial Hospital is part of the BJC Healthcare System, which is headquartered just across the Mississippi River in St. Louis. Barnes-Jewish Hospital and its physician partners at Washington University School of Medicine are listed among the nation's elite medical centers.



OSF St. Anthony's Health Center

Alton boasts an ethnically and racially diverse population with a racial makeup of roughly 72% White, 25% Black, and 1.5% Hispanic or Latino population with a median age of 35.

Disinvestment and Lack of Long-term Economic Development Strategy

Even with so many advantages, Alton, like so many communities in Downstate Illinois, also suffers from shuttered factories, declining populations, and high rates of poverty and faces a variety of capacity issues that influence access to capital and to infrastructure including internet, health and wellness, land use, and economic growth.

AltonWorks recognizes these issues and seeks to create transformational change by addressing these systemic challenges and is committed to collaboration with local, regional, and state entities to better the lives of everyone in Alton and across the region.

Far too often, the traditional economic redevelopment approach produces what passes for growth in an attempt to chase revenue but carries with it unplanned cost externalities that can leave too many behind. How can this model be changed into one that focuses on livability and long-term sustainable growth with a core goal of retaining and attracting talent? An economic development strategy that puts people and making their lives better first has a greater chance of creating long-term change through placemaking, smart main street development, and rewarding job creation than one aimed at quick returns for a select few.

The City of Alton provided detailed evidence that shows how the project is located in an area that has experienced major economic disinvestment, job loss, or other form of particular economic hardship.

Socio-economic conditions in Alton are relatively weak compared to many of its Metro East peers. The citywide median income (\$38,000) is considerably lower than the county median (\$57,000) and only 10% of households earn more than \$100,000 annually (compared to 34 and 38% in Edwardsville, and O'Fallon, respectively). Consistent with regional and national trends, the local economy continues to shift from manufacturing to service-based industries, although Madison County is excelling in attracting jobs in wholesale trade likely due to the success of Gateway Commerce Center. While a majority of the city jobs are in traditional blue-collar industries (manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation, warehousing, and construction), an almost equal share is in healthcare, where continued growth is expected.

One of the expressed principal aims of the governor's economic plan is to revitalize downstate communities and to retain talent throughout the state. As Alton seeks to reclaim its place as a regional destination and the center of economic growth, it is facing challenges of disinvestment, population loss, and a declining tax base. Like many areas in the St. Louis region, the City of Alton is struggling with a shrinking population and has lost approximately 2,400 residents (8% decrease) since 2010. It continues to experience a demographic shift with an increasing number of senior citizens, while the population of younger workers and families has decreased. The loss of approx. 600 college age residents, who would be a prime market for quality downtown residential units, is particularly notable. This overall population loss, as AltonWorks | © 2023 AltonWorks



Alton has suffered from job loss and lack of investment

well as a lack of new development, has led to declining property values. The aforementioned factors present a considerable challenge for the community, and thus begs the question—how can Alton reposition itself to be attractive to the next generation of residents and investors?

AltonWorks is actively seeking other funding to leverage approx. \$18 million in project private investment and spur additional public and private investment that will dovetail from redevelopment of the Wedge. The creation of P3 opportunities, business start-up/incubation, and broadband infrastructure development to support emerging industries will hyper charge the revitalization of the downtown corridor.

The City of Alton provided information that the proposed project area and businesses within the area have been significantly harmed by the Covid-19 health and economic crisis.

The project area is located within Alton's central business district and houses a variety of retail, professional service, entertainment, and food & beverage vendors. The relatively weak socio-economic conditions of the area were further exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis. The pandemic led to the cancellation or delay of various development projects and also led to numerous permanent business closures. Such closures can be attributed to a variety of factors including but not limited to: declining revenues, mandated capacity limits, pandemic related supply chain issues, lingering fears of communal settings, etc. Nonetheless, the breadth and depth of the pandemic's effects are far reaching. The number of active business licenses within the city of Alton declined by approx. 40% year-over-year (2021). To that end, the City of Alton (Zip Code 62002) has been identified as a Disproportionately Impacted Area (DIA) by the Dept. of Commerce and Economic Opportunity under the auspices of the Back to Business (B2B) program.

The City of Alton has reported a \$1.6 million revenue loss for the period ending 3/31/21. In an effort to arrest the decline and support small businesses, the City of Alton expended \$320,000 in CARES Act funding in the form of small business grants. Furthermore, the City of Alton is completing its due diligence for the anticipated expenditure of \$21 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Although current regulations largely prohibit the use of such funds for economic development purposes, said funding will be necessary to eradicate the lingering effects of the pandemic on the business sector and the community as a whole.



Aerial view of the Wedge, Lucas Row, and Jacoby Arts Center and Lofts

AltonWorks’ Vision for the Revitalization of Alton

AltonWorks believes Alton and the region can be a place of opportunity, equity, and purpose for its residents and businesses and emerge as an important regional hub in Downstate Illinois and St Louis’ Metro North: a model of livability, resiliency, and innovation and a preferred relocation destination for young families, retirees, displaced workers, and entrepreneurs.

Acquisition of Property

AltonWorks was launched in early 2018. Establishing a foothold for change in the built environment began with locating and pursuing acquisition of key properties in the historic downtown business district along E. Broadway and fostering a spirit of renewal. AltonWorks acquired 25 historic buildings in Downtown Alton as well as 34 vacant lots in residential areas adjacent to downtown. Properties include the Wedge Bank, the Elfgen, Stratford Hotel, Grand Theatre, The Jacoby, Lucas Row, The Telegraph, and Alton Tire.

Repairing the Damages of Deferred Maintenance

For too long these vacant, shuttered properties robbed the community of vibrancy, job creation, and social and economic opportunity. A critical mass of commercial properties in historic downtown business corridor has now been acquired.



Alton Tire



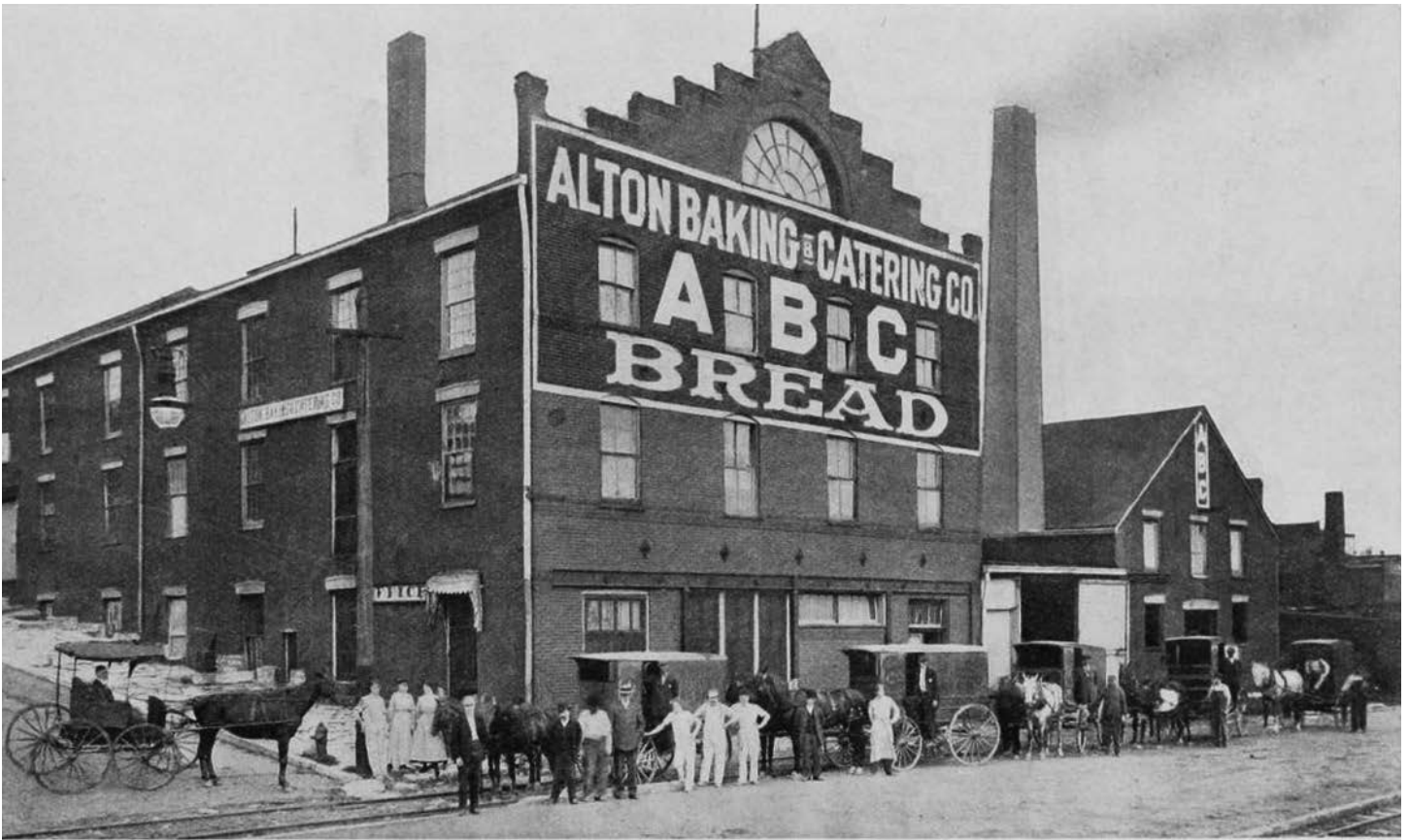
Stratford Hotel



Peipert House



Lucas Row



Alton Baking and Catering

AltonWorks has steadfastly worked to reverse the many years of deferred maintenance on these properties: abating asbestos and mold, tuck-pointing walls, repairing or replacing damaged and leaking roofs and broken glass, shoring walls and floors, evaluating building systems while always checking to ensure that no building elements, details, or materials with historic significance are disturbed in a way that could compromise their eligibility for historic tax credits, i.e., masonry mortar, windows, roof parapet copings, etc. Significant architectural artifacts have been removed and stored for repair and refurbishment. Each building was extensively photographed, measured, and documented. CAD architectural plans have been completed and the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been consulted.



Third Street

Registering Alton's Historic Commercial District with the National Park Service

AltonWorks funded a three-year effort to add Historic Downtown Alton to the National Register of Historic Places. 84 contributing buildings were documented, tens of thousands of pages of records and photos were reviewed, public meetings were held, and the application has been completed, submitted to, and approved by SHPO and the National Park Service resulting in a large expansion to the Middletown Historic District. AltonWorks' 25 historic properties that line Alton's main street, E. Broadway, will be restored to their original architectural beauty and repurposed for 21st Century use over the next several years. This will be a major contribution to the viability and vitality of E. Broadway.



Third and Piasa Streets



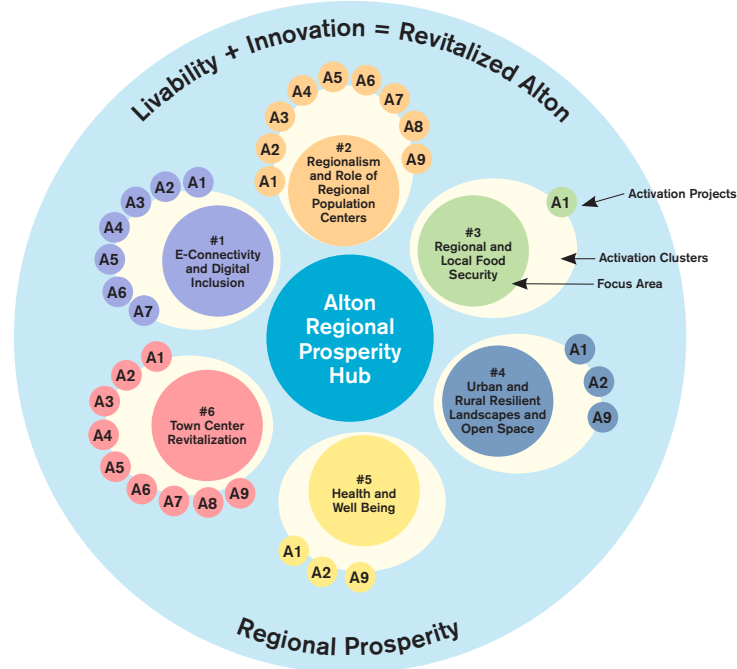
Placemaking Master Plan

In 2019 AltonWorks developed a placemaking master plan for revitalization along with strategies to rebuild Alton's historic main street as a safe, walkable, vibrant urban street, full of character with three distinct districts: Jacoby Arts and Innovation District, Broadway Makers District, and Grand Entertainment District, each with its own take on the cultural, arts, and blue-collar maker heritage of Alton. Initial projects were to renovate two historic properties with loft apartments and repurpose the Grand Theatre into a music club and live entertainment venue, the beginnings of the rebirth of Alton as a beautiful and iconic river city. AltonWorks worked in collaboration with the City of Alton and other local organizations.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, like everyone else, AltonWorks, faced with a good deal of uncertainty, initially stepped back but remained steadfast in its commitment to positive social change and began to look at regional and local revitalization as a sum of actions that all link to livability.

A Framework for Transformational Placemaking was developed to advance livability by implementing community building projects and programs in six interconnected Focus Areas: 1) E-Connectivity, 2) Regionalism and Role of Alton as Hub, 3) Regional and Local Food Security, 4) Urban and Rural Resilient Landscapes and Open Space, 5) Transformational Health and Well Being, and 6) Town Center Revitalization. By activating projects in these focus areas, the community benefits holistically from these catalytic Activity Clusters, confidence builds, and change begins to happen. By activating projects in these focus areas, the community benefits holistically from these catalytic Activity Clusters, confidence builds, and change begins to happen. Through extensive studies and information

gathering, AltonWorks determined that Alton, in order to arrest its decades-long economic decline, needed to change the Alton promise. It needed a promise/brand that sparked freshness, energy and pride. That new promise/brand is "innovation." Forward-looking innovation provides the catalyst for investment in Alton and will foster improved livability for all its constituents. Innovation is reflected in each of AltonWorks activation projects. Through its innovative



Jacoby Arts and Innovation District	
Activation Projects	
A1. Flock Food Truck Park	A6. Regional Broadband Connectivity
A2. Park Park	A7. National Community Developer
A3. Wedge Innovation Center	A8. Great Streets Broadway Streetscape
A4. Lucas Row	A9. Riverfront Activation Strategy
A5. Jacoby Arts Center and Offices	

AltonWorks Master Development Plan						1. E-Connectivity and Digital Inclusion	2. Regionalism and Role of Regional Population Centers	3. Regional and Local Food Security	4. Urban and Rural Resilient Landscapes and Open Spaces	5. Health and Well Being	6. Town Center Revitalization
AltonWorks	Timing	Activity	District / Projects	Status	Schedule						
Phase 1	2018 - ongoing	Acquisitions	Alton Downtown Historic District								
Phase 2	2018 - ongoing	Vision, Master Plan	Revitalize Alton / Regional Hub								
Phase 3	2020 - 2025	Planning / Implementation	Jacoby Arts & Innovation District								
A1			Flock Food Truck Park	Complete		x	x	x	x	x	x
A2			Park Park	Construction Documentation		x	x		x	x	x
A3			Wedge Innovation Center	Out to BSI for bidding		x	x				x
A4			Lucas Row	Construction Documentation	Bidding 7/8/22	x	x				x
A5			Jacoby Arts Center and Offices	Construction Documentation		x	x				x
A6			AltonWorks FiberNet	Negotiations with DCEO / Partners		x	x				x
A7			National Community Developer	Planning / Budgeting		x	x				x
A8			Great Streets Broadway				x				x
A9			Riverfront Activation Strategy				x		x		x
Phase 4	2023 - 2026	Planning / Implementation	Broadway Makers District								
B1			Ciao Bella				x				x
B2			Alton Tire				x				x
B3			Karen's Crafts				x				x
B4			Telegraph				x				x
B5			Prairie Peddler				x				x
B6			Steve's Antiques				x				x
B7			Country Meadows				x				x
Phase 5	2023 - 2028	Planning / Implementation	Grand Entertainment District								
C1			Grand Theatre				x				x
C2			Stratford Hotel				x				x
C3			Grapevine				x				x
C4			Plaza				x				x
C5			Royal Office				x				x
C6			401 Market			x	x				x
C7			YMCA				x				x

programs, uses and digital assets, the Wedge becomes a turnaround, innovative, inaugural, regional and Alton asset that will brand Alton as innovative for decades to come.

Community Engagement

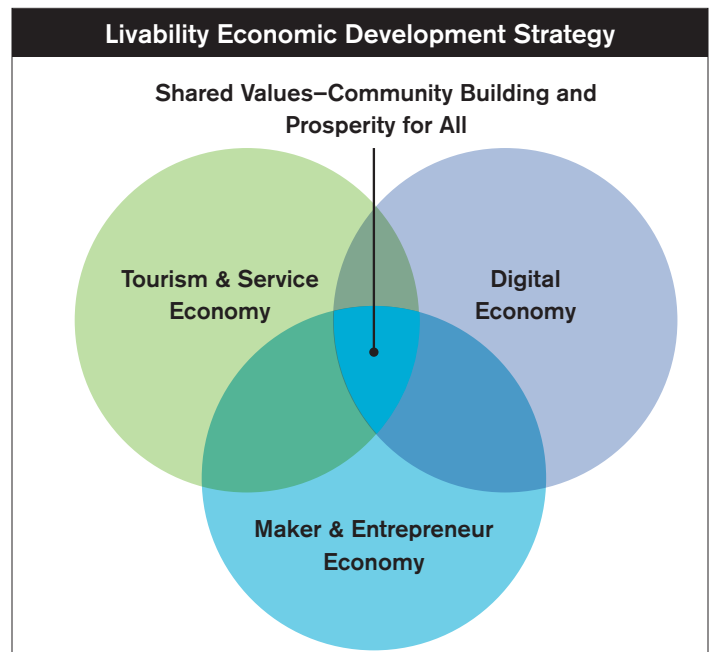
Early on in the development of the revitalization activation strategy, AltonWorks sought the advice and opinions of community stakeholders, hosting conversations with leaders, residents, government officials, and organizations, and meetings with numerous agencies and companies such as Bi-State Development Agency, which is the regional metropolitan planning agency, City of Alton, OSF Healthcare, 100 Black Men, and Alton Main Street. In July 2020, AltonWorks opened its community engagement storefront at 601-603 E. Broadway. Illinois Governor Pritzker attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony along with many other government officials. Since its opening, the storefront has hosted several community livability working group meetings, briefings, and workshops, and is emerging as a forum and platform for civic groups and the general public to provide formal and informal input and ideas regarding community revitalization challenges and opportunities.

AltonWorks took steps to organize and form a separate 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Alton Forward. Directors were seated, bylaws passed, Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of IL, and IRS standing sought and received. A community advisory group has been meeting to discuss community needs and opportunities. This effort has been partly sponsored by AltonWorks and supported by Alton Forward. One central goal of this effort will be to formulate a community wide civic enterprise to build the community's capacity for collective impact. Capacity building, innovation, and problem solving, and arriving at shared vision for our

community and region's revitalization will be key. Alton Forward surveyed over 100 civic organizations to provide an inventory, rapid condition assessment, and alignment through dialogue toward the prioritization of projects and programs in the six Focus Areas. The role of The Wedge Innovation Center will be crucial and serve as a key early activation project and organizing principle for rallying community confidence about our future.

A Broadband Appropriation Triggers an Economic Development Strategy based on Livability and Innovation

In April 2020, AltonWorks received a \$20 million broadband appropriation from the State of Illinois. AltonWorks can now



Historic Downtown Alton Placemaking Master Plan



launch Alton into the digital economy. This, along with the realization that tourism, activated by the natural assets of Great Rivers Confluence region, a growing outdoor recreation sector, and the intrinsic livability assets of Alton, was already the biggest economic driver for the community, and the original premise of a maker economy developing on a revitalized main street aided in the formation of the AltonWorks' Economic Development Strategy. Based on Livability and Innovation with three interconnected areas: Digital Economy (fiber network construction, fiber-dependent businesses, start-ups), Tourism/Service Economy (outdoor recreation, hospitality, retail, food & beverage), and Maker and Entrepreneur Economy (entrepreneurs, IP creators, artists, creatives, producers), this strategy is focused on Alton becoming a place where people want to live and thrive. AltonWorks believes that innovation is foundational to

transformational change and underpins the overall strategy. Each area of economic development overlaps and sustains the others by creating communities of people who support each other.

In the 21st century, young families, talent, retirees, and displaced workers are all seeking 'livability'. Beyond opportunities for employment, they are looking for access to safe and affordable housing, quality childcare, higher education opportunities, well-developed transportation and mobility networks, inclusiveness and equity, safe neighborhoods, a cleaner environment, and community amenities. AltonWorks understands this and is determined to work with its public and private partners to build the destination that people want. The pandemic has revealed a need and urgency to 'build it back better.' AltonWorks aspires to see Alton and the Metro North revealed as a preferred relocation destination in downstate Illinois.

A New Fiber Network for Alton

The Illinois Capital Development Board award of \$20 Million was secured to support AltonWorks capitalization of a community 'fiber based' broadband program, AltonWorks FiberNet, beginning with the downtown business district. This funding focuses attention on optimizing the impact that broadband can play in community and regional revitalization. This funding isn't just about broadband; it's about what broadband and e-connectivity can mean in a post-pandemic society: connecting students and teachers; patients and healthcare workers; employees with their companies; and businesses with their customers. The digital economy allows people to live where they want to live, and AltonWorks



Gov. Pritzker and John and Jayne Simmons attending ribbon-cutting ceremony

believes that Alton can offer the best of what talent is seeking: livability - a healthy, active, innovative community, a vibrant downtown, a growing, people-focused economy, and access to thousands of acres of beautiful, accessible public lands and outdoor amenities at the confluence of three great American rivers.

Over the next 24-36 months, AltonWorks will construct a fiber optic network throughout Alton that will deliver symmetrical, ten gigabit-speed, enterprise-level service to Alton residents and businesses. All users will be connected with fiber laterals, and wireless antennas will be installed to bathe the area in robust, free Wi-Fi. The investment will create a core fiber service capability for hundreds of businesses and city residents—as well as long-term economic development opportunities and positive social impact—throughout Alton.

Households and businesses in Alton generally have access to consumer-grade broadband services. But the area lacks enterprise-grade services—highly specialized products for large companies and organizations that require highly reliable broadband. Enterprise services typically include guaranteed bandwidth and strict service-level agreements (SLA), and quality-of-service (QoS) guarantees—which are a necessity not just for large organizations with sophisticated IT operations and in-house IT staff, but also for the type of small, knowledge-based businesses and tech-related start-ups that might create and retain jobs in Alton and the region. And as seen during the pandemic, fast and reliable broadband is now necessary for everyday life.

Enabling affordable, enterprise-grade broadband services presents a key opportunity for economic prosperity and social equity. Affordability is critical because, all other things being equal, a company that needs these services will choose to locate where it can pay hundreds of dollars per month rather than thousands—and where it will not have to wait months for a provider to connect its office to an existing network. Likewise, households seeking high quality connectivity and affordability will drive up adoption rates and benefit a greater segment of Alton's entitlement community where presently 26% live at or below the poverty line.

Leveraging AltonWorks FiberNet to Create a Community of Innovation

With big data and big bandwidth remaking many sectors of the economy, from medicine to manufacturing to finance, as well as emerging industry clusters including the outdoor and active living industry, access to abundant bandwidth is only becoming more critical to enabling innovation and entrepreneurship. The type of companies AltonWorks is seeking to attract to downtown Alton—whether large or small—will require high-end enterprise services but often cannot pay thousands of dollars per month. The proposed investment in fiber to Alton's buildings will ensure Alton has these high-end services readily available at a cost a small company or startup can afford. As tenants harness the potential of the AltonWorks FiberNet's gigabit connection,

they may identify business opportunities that only fiber broadband connections can enable. The fiber will support entrepreneurs as they grow ideas into sustainable businesses.

The Wedge Innovation Center

To optimize the fiber network and the digital economy as a central focus in Alton, AltonWorks is developing the Wedge Innovation Center (The Wedge).

AltonWorks is collaborating with Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) on management and operations for the Wedge. SIUE is committed to leveraging the expertise of its faculty, staff, and students to support sustainable communities, economic and workforce development, and equity-minded projects that improve the region, state, and world. Their expertise in applied science, research, and data analysis, as well as their many outstanding academic programs fit well with AltonWorks' desire to catalyze transformational change. Several programs, such as the Center for Sustainable Communities and Entrepreneurship, the Small Business Development Center, GeoMarc (SIUE's geospatial analysis center), and the Center for Predictive Analytics are under consideration to locate some of their research and consulting functions to the Wedge. SIUE is also interested in exploring co-branding partnerships in ways that align with the University, the Board of Trustees, and the State of Illinois. These discussions and an MOU are underway between SIUE and AltonWorks.

The Wedge will support early-stage, growth-driven companies through education, mentorship, and financing. It will house startups, space for individuals or teams, and more established companies that want to accelerate their businesses or develop new technologies, products, or systems. It will be the home of the AltonWorks FiberNet made possible by funding from the State of Illinois. The Wedge will have a positive impact on the entrepreneurial ecosystem, attracting interested businesses, investors, seed and early-stage financing, and media attention, all of which benefit the local and wider regional economy.



The Fiber Network will enhance everyday life



The Wedge Level 3 - SE Corner Interior

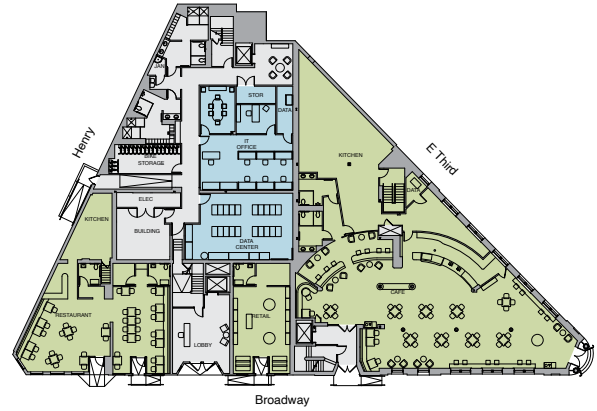
According to the 2011-2-15 census, Alton is severely distressed, 26% of the people in Alton live in poverty, income is 74% of the Area Median Income, and the unemployment rate is 1.5 times that of the national average. By creating The Wedge, AltonWorks can change the dynamics. Tangible benefits to the community include free Wi-Fi, job training, apprenticeships, digital library, and an event space for networking and training events. Co-working space will be offered at discounted rates to those who need it.

In a post-Covid-19 world, open space, active living amenities, and careers based on a new digital and green economy will be sought after for 'relocation destinations' of choice for young families, teleworkers, entrepreneurs, talent, retirees, and small manufacturers. Alton is well located to be a digital, innovation, manufacturing, and transportation hub, close to St. Louis, and can emerge as an important regional center and Next Century City for applied solutions in green environments, regional food security, healthy community design, and active living that emerge from The Wedge Innovation Center. AltonWorks is actively working with area workforce development organizations, our community college district, and labor leadership regarding apprenticeships and internships, and building digital access, proficiency, and opportunity.

Renovating Two Historic Buildings into the Wedge

The building project comprises renovating the historic Wedge and Elfgren buildings that make up the 600 block of East Broadway in the heart of Alton's historic business district. The building exterior will be restored and includes roof replacement, parapet cap restoration, brick, and stone cleaning and tuck-pointing, window replacement, and retail storefront renovation with improved visual connection to the street. The ground level Broadway exterior of the Elfgren building will be restored to c. 1955 with tile water table and large-format tile and trim to match the aesthetic of a Vitrolite façade that was lost to subsequent alterations. The original flat-iron entry of the Wedge building will also be restored. The existing sidewalk/streetscape will be functionally and visually improved with ADA curb cuts, planters, and bike racks. The building systems will be replaced, including water, electric, and HVAC, and the building interiors will be renovated to support the various Wedge businesses and programs. Existing ground floor retail spaces will continue to house retail establishments and the former bank lobby will house a community café.

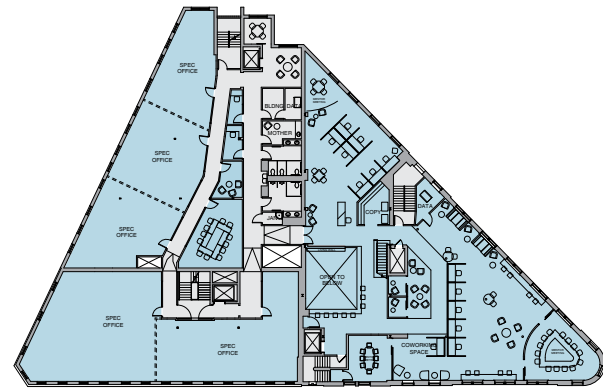
The Wedge - Level 1



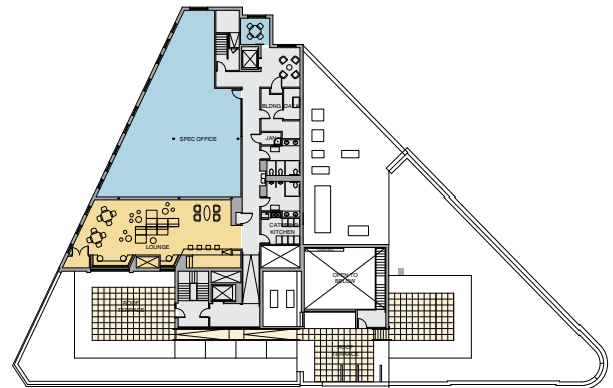
The Wedge - Level 2



The Wedge - Level 3



The Wedge - Level 4



In preparation for the Wedge Innovation Center project, mold and asbestos abatement was completed on the Wedge and Elfgen buildings in Q3 and Q4 2021.

After a rigorous selection process, the general contractor for the Wedge Innovation Center has been secured: BSI Constructors, Inc. of St. Louis. They are in the process of preparing budgets and schedules for construction of the project.

In keeping with Historic Tax Credit requirements, the public spaces (lobbies, public corridors, and public stairs) within the buildings will be retained and where historic finishes remain, those finishes will be restored. In the Wedge building, this includes the historic Wedge Bank Lobby with terrazzo floors, marble and wood wall finishes, and coffered, domed ceiling. Retail spaces will be restored with wood floors and twelve-foot hard ceilings. Private portions of the buildings that once housed commercial office space will be reconfigured to support the needs of modern commercial office and co-working space users and tenants. Shared office space, private office suites, and amenities including bike storage, locker rooms, shared kitchen, and shared meeting spaces will be added.

A new atrium with skylight will link the roof level and two upper levels of the Wedge building, bringing natural light down into the building while offering access to roof terraces. The main stair and elevator in the Elfgen building will be extended to the fourth level, solving code and accessibility issues, and also offering access to roof terraces on both buildings that take in sweeping views of the Mississippi River.

Job Creation

The Wedge will create jobs for existing members of the community and attract displaced workers seeking the improved livability of Alton for relocation. The Wedge will create 106 full-time jobs during construction. Once open, it will create 249 permanent full-time and 62 permanent part-time jobs, with an average wage over \$43,000 per year. Eighty-four percent of the permanent jobs created will have a living wage, twenty percent will be accessible to persons without a 4-year college degree, and ninety percent will be hired from the surrounding community. The Wedge Innovation Center will be a catalyst for revitalizing Downtown Alton, employing a diverse demographic of Alton's residents, and spurring further development, new businesses, and additional jobs for a more secure future. Based on an established federal multiplier, the Fiber Optic Network described above will create an estimated 34 direct jobs related to construction and installation, as well as induced and indirect jobs in considerably larger numbers due to the fiber-connected buildings and wireless access throughout Alton.

Because AltonWorks is a social impact redevelopment company, it believes in the social enterprise of investing in the community and its people. It will work with workforce development agencies including the Southwestern Illinois WorkNet for Madison County to fill many of the jobs this project will bring to Alton. AltonWorks is especially excited about the State of Illinois partnership with Coursera and its emphasis on Information Technology skills and certificates. Working with Illinois WorkNet can assist in finding qualified, pre-screened long-term, unemployed applicants, and Illinois' Re-Entry Employment Services Program can help connect the formerly incarcerated with jobs created by this project. AltonWorks looks forward to working with Challenge



Wedge Innovation Center from E. Broadway and Henry Streets



Looking West on E. Broadway at the Wedge Innovation Center

Unlimited in Alton to help community members with disabilities reach their full potential. AltonWorks intends to be inclusive and representative of our community.

105 of the permanent jobs and an additional 90 of the temporary construction jobs created by this project will require less than a 4-year degree. Regardless of skill-level, part-time employees are expected to receive partial or pro-rated benefits; and full-time employees, full healthcare coverage and retirement savings opportunities (401k).

Minority Inclusion Plan

The construction of the Wedge includes a commitment by AltonWorks and BSI Constructors, Inc. of St. Louis to use 25% Minority and 6% Female workers.

The Wedge Innovation Center is committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as defined below:

Diversity: Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning style.

Equity: The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically under served and underrepresented populations, and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assure equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

Timeline for Wedge Innovation Center

Construction Documents Complete	June 1, 2022
Finalize Bids and Funding Sources	November 2022
Building Permit Obtained	December 2022
Construction Begins	December 2022
Construction Complete	1st Quarter 2024
The Wedge Opens	Late Summer 2024

Inclusion: The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate and bring their full, authentic selves to work. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in the words/ actions/thoughts of all people.

All employees will receive DEI training.

The Wedge will strive to hire a workforce that reflects the diversity of Alton.

Spending with BEP Vendors: 15%

Education, Events, and Outreach

The Wedge will have monthly education events and other community events. Free Wi-Fi will be provided throughout the building. Reduced or free rent will be offered to select workforce development agencies.

The expected total population served annually with community services is 21,000 and the low-income population served

annually is 6,300. The number of low-income served annually is assumed to be 30% of the total served based on census data. The Wedge will reach out to organizations such as LaunchCode and CoderGirls and to universities and community colleges to expand internship programs which may substantially increase temporary and internship opportunities.

The expected total served annually with commercial goods and services is 157,240 and the low-income served annually is 47,172.

The restoration of the Wedge Bank and Elfgun Buildings into the Wedge Innovation Center will be a dramatic change on E. Broadway and signal a positive shift for Alton and the region. The Wedge establishes a visible presence in the



The Wedge will offer training to bring the workforce into the digital economy

heart of Alton that the digital economy has arrived and with the emphasis on social impact innovation, all willing residents and locals will be able to receive training, access co-working space, and participate in the digital future. The preservation of the architecturally significant building will preserve and enhance the aesthetics, historic character, urban memory, and identity of the area. This will be the first building along E. Broadway to utilize historic tax credits for revitalization, and this will set the tone for future redevelopment along this historic main street.

Accelerating and Incubating Social Impact and Positive Change

AltonWorks wants to improve the opportunities and resiliency of the region and its residents. To spur economic development and sustainable job creation, AltonWorks is seeking partners and tenants for the Wedge Innovation Center and welcomes startups, existing businesses, entrepreneurs, social impact organizations, and healthcare and educational institutions to join as key foundational partners in this effort to make a positive social contribution, transform the Alton and the region into a livable community and preferred relocation destination, facilitate and collaborate on activation projects and programs that foster opportunity and social equity, and jump-start sustainable economic development for the region. Many organizations have expressed interest in becoming part of the Wedge.



The Wedge will offer space and amenities for startups and businesses

The Catalytic Benefits of Investments in the Wedge and Fiber

An investment from the City of Alton in the Wedge Innovation Center would exponentially boost not only the Wedge and the business, entrepreneurial, and minority communities it will serve, but it will also activate and enhance the benefits of the new Fiber Network that is funded by a \$20M appropriation from the State of Illinois.

The Fiber Network will create extremely reliable connectivity for the numerous established businesses and retailers in Alton. And it will contribute to greater desirability in terms of high-bandwidth connectivity for residential premises. The Wedge's co-working space will be a draw for residents who want to telecommute. This will attract new entrepreneurs and remote workers searching for a highly livable community—and help retain residents who might otherwise move elsewhere to pursue job opportunities. AltonWorks' vision for investing in the Wedge and the Fiber Network is a strategy and means to create opportunity for small companies and residents in downtown Alton. These opportunities, in turn, will support social equity, placemaking, and community livability. These investments support each other and will make Alton a significant participant in Downstate Illinois' digital economy. AltonWorks believes that existing businesses will thrive with enhanced fiber and the Wedge's culture of innovation. New start-ups and other businesses will relocate to Alton to take advantage of these as well as the other livability strengths and low cost of living that Alton offers.

In short, this world-class, robust fiber infrastructure and the Wedge Innovation Center will equitably support a mix of business, retail, and residential users to maximize the vitality and livability of downtown Alton as part of AltonWorks' broader revitalization and placemaking efforts.

Building a Livable Community

AltonWorks will continue to develop projects and programs that relate to the six Focus Areas as opportunities arise and is actively seeking collaborations with like-minded organizations and companies. AltonWorks' Flock, a Food Truck Park and Bar, on E. Broadway at Ridge, will be part of the Secure Regional Food Ecosystem. Theodora Farms, an organic farm owned by John and Jayne Simmons, is the catalyst for the



Flock, Food Truck Park & Bar

idea to link healthy food farmers and producers with restaurants and families to create a safe, economical, and equitable supply of food for the region.

Redevelopment of Two Historic Buildings for Housing Adjacent to the Wedge

Lucas Row and the Jacoby Building, two beautiful historic buildings across the street from the Wedge, will be renovated with Historic Tax credits. Lucas Row will provide twelve new apartments with modern amenities and great views of the Mississippi. The Jacoby Building will be restored to house the Jacoby Arts Center on the first floor and lower level and large, open, loft-like office space on the second and third levels. AltonWorks will begin construction on these projects in Fall 2022, adding to the critical mass of revitalized historic buildings in the Jacoby Arts and Innovation District. The AltonWorks' master plan for revitalization includes development strategies for each of the 25 historic buildings that will be implemented over time depending on market and economic conditions and social impact.

New Mixed-Use Workforce Housing

Alton has not had any new residential construction in the Downtown area for over ten years. AltonWorks commissioned a multifamily study that recommended 500 units over the next five years. After identifying three sites for residential development all within a block of the Wedge, AltonWorks began a search for the right partner and is now working with a national developer to build 250 units of mixed-use workforce housing, phased over the next several years.

Great Streets Program

In 2019, the City of Alton was awarded a significant grant for a Great Streets Plan on Broadway which aligned with the AltonWorks master plan. AltonWorks and the City of Alton have applied for IDOT and federal funds to implement these improvements in the public realm. The new streetscape includes traffic calming measures, wider sidewalks,

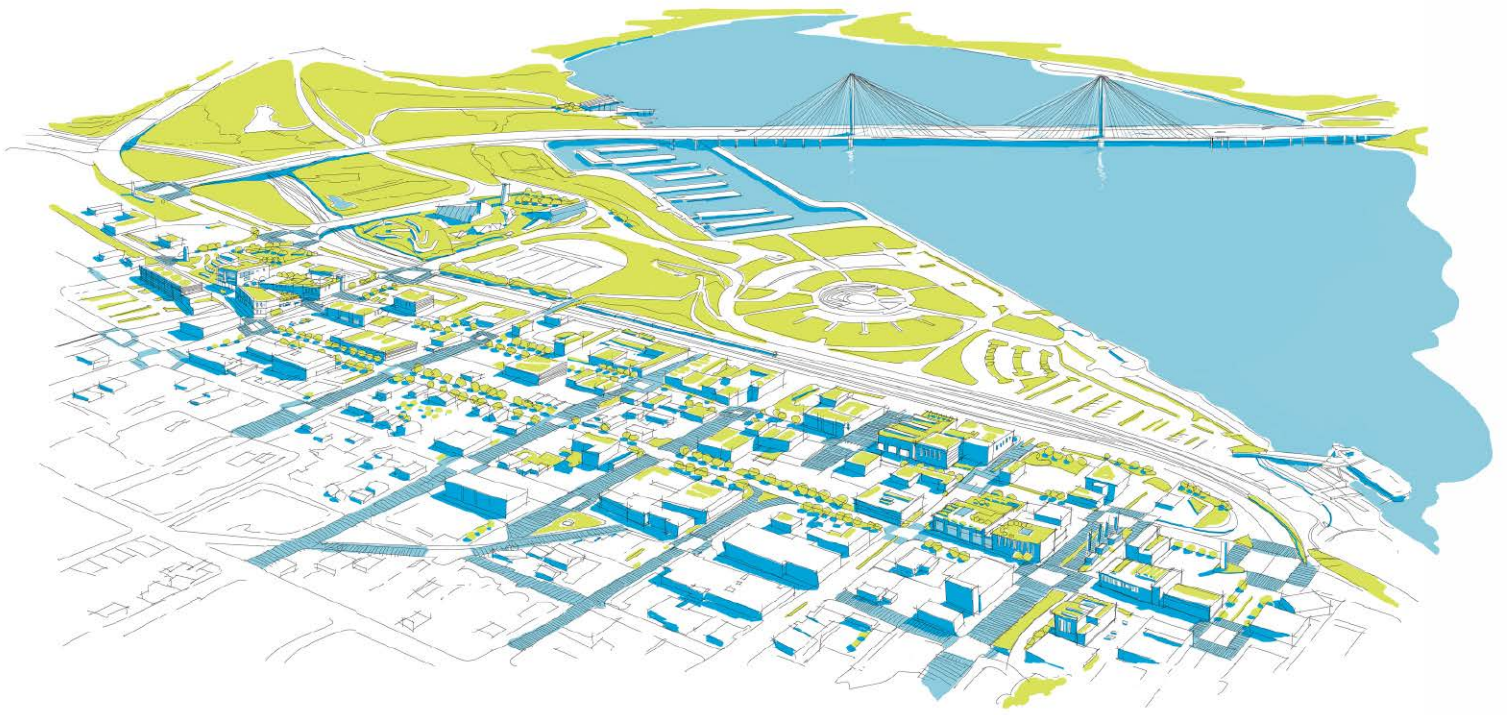
landscaping, lighting, signage and wayfinding, and bicycle pathways. These improvements will augment the AltonWorks goals of a safe, walkable, attractive, and livable downtown. In 2021, the City of Alton was awarded a \$500,000 grant to prepare detailed engineering designs for the section of E. Broadway immediately adjacent to the Wedge Innovation Center. Completion of the design will qualify this stretch of E. Broadway for further State and regional funding to construct the inaugural phase of Alton's Great Street.



Lucas Row



Jacoby Arts Center and Jacoby Lofts



Regional Transformation and Collaboration

In developing the overall strategy, revitalization master plan, and regional transformation initiative, AltonWorks has found alignment with the Federal Task Force for Rural Prosperity, the USDA Rural Development RISE program, The Great American Outdoors Act, the Rebuild Rural America, and Invest in America legislative initiatives moving through Congress, and the Corps of Engineers Five Year Civil Works Strategic Plan. At the state level, AltonWorks found strategic and practical alignment with the IL Five Year Economic Development Plan released in October 2019, the 2020 Illinois Health in All Policies Act effort to build healthy resilient Illinois communities, as well as coordination with the Illinois Green Economy Network and the recent findings of their June 2020 “Building a Resilient Economy” reporting including their recommended Five Point Call-To-Action Strategy.

AltonWorks has reached out to the Southwest Illinois Area Regional Planning Commission and has consulted their 2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) approved by US EDA as part of the RPC’s federal Economic

Development District; reviewed the most current Madison County, IL Comprehensive Plan; and attended briefings with the offices of Senators Durbin and Duckworth.

AltonWorks leverages local and regional assets to inform a sustainable long-term strategy for revitalization. Our economic development strategies transcend revenue and job growth. Our plan is grounded in livability, innovation, positive and transformative social impact, and local and regional prosperity. Today, a job is simply not enough. Individuals and families are seeking choices and affordability in housing, healthcare, and childcare, safe and walkable neighborhoods, infrastructure that supports next generation digital and telework opportunities, and a very strong, vibrant quality of life. They want a welcoming community that boasts a high degree of social capital and sense of place. AltonWorks’ community revitalization aspirations, planning, and implementation process places the Wedge Innovation Center as a foundational economic development catalyst for Alton’s and the region’s recovery strategy.

Outdoor Recreation in Illinois, Seizing a Timely Opportunity



Photo by Jenna Carlie, © 2023 Jenna Carlie

Context and Case

Over the last seven years, 18 states have created offices of outdoor recreation, task forces, or policy advisors to provide state advocacy for growing economic activity and prosperity driven by a robust outdoor recreation economy. This effort is also directed at promoting health and wellness through active living, and ensuring conservation and stewardship of public lands and waters while educating and engaging children in the outdoors. This advocacy also manifests an effective point of contact to businesses, stakeholders and different levels of government that care about and depend on a strong outdoor recreation industry. These states have recognized the exploding trend in outdoor recreational use, its impact on regional and local economies, its livability influence, and its contribution to revealing preferred relocation destinations for young families, displaced workers, retirees, and entrepreneurs.

Celebrating America's Great Outdoors

On June 5, 2019, the U.S. Senate officially designated June 2019 as 'Great Outdoors Month.' 'Great Outdoors Week' began under President Clinton in 1998 and has grown under the Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations into a month-long celebration of the outdoors.

In September 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that outdoor recreation now makes up 2.2% of U.S. GDP, generating \$778 billion in gross output and supporting 5.2 million jobs. Federal data shows that the inflation-adjusted GDP for the outdoor recreation economy grew by 3.9% in 2017, eclipsing the 2.4% growth of the overall U.S. economy.

“As we enjoy the great outdoors — from national parks to our own backyards — let us rededicate ourselves to conserving our Nation’s natural spaces for our own well-being, and for the health, safety, prosperity, and fulfillment of generations to come.”

President Joe Biden



Photos courtesy of riversandrout.com

On June 1st, 2021, President Biden signed a Proclamation on National Great Outdoors Month. He encouraged all Americans to explore our Nation's beautiful outdoor spaces. In the proclamation, President Biden states, "As we enjoy the great outdoors — from national parks to our own backyards — let us rededicate ourselves to conserving our Nation's natural spaces for our own well-being, and for the health, safety, prosperity, and fulfillment of generations to come."

Promoting America's Renewable Advantage: Open Space

National Great Outdoors Month also gives Illinoisans an important moment to reflect on leveraging Illinois' natural capital for renewable uses and enjoyment to reveal the entire portfolio of our premier outdoor recreation gateways and destination(s) and to reveal Illinois' top tier contribution to our Nation's optimization of Outdoor Recreation, Nature-Based Tourism, and Active Living assets and the economic and livability benefits they can support.

Illinois' brand as a premier destination for outdoor recreation, heritage tourism, and active living; as well as the active stewardship of Illinois' natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources can be significantly expanded and contribute to destination building across the entire state and be a difference-maker in the revitalization of Downstate Illinois and invigorate regional and local economies.

In Illinois, our current outdoor Recreation Economy already generates over \$16.7 billion annually just under 2% of Illinois' total GDP.

Fully Activating and Revealing Illinois' Premier Outdoor Recreation Destinations: A Big First step...

To initiate the development of an Outdoor Recreation Focus, IL Governor Pritzker could announce his signing of an Executive Order Creating the Illinois Outdoor Recreation Task Force and his intention to work with the Illinois state legislature to officially establish an Illinois Office of Outdoor Recreation.

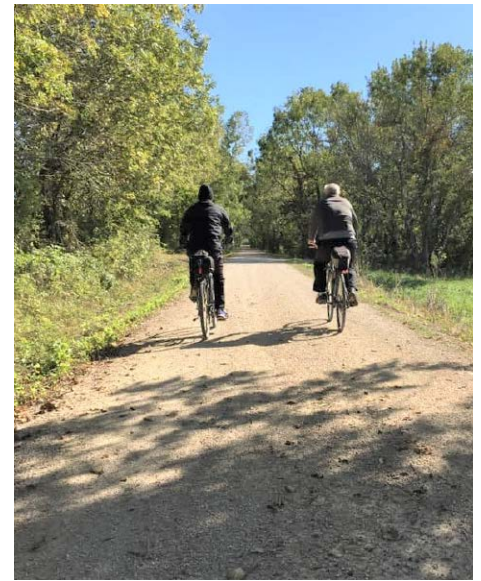
Almost immediately following the announcement and the signing of the Executive Order, Governor Pritzker's appointed Task Force could develop recommendations and an action plan to strengthen and enhance the business climate for the outdoor recreation industry in Illinois beginning with a key roll-out of early activation projects and work products.

“It all begins with a recognition of the advantage we too often take for granted: thousands of acres of publicly accessible lands along one of the most iconic rivers in the world, the Mississippi, at the place where two other great American Rivers come together, the Illinois and the Missouri.”

Cory Jobe, President & CEO,
Great Rivers & Routes



Photos courtesy of riversandroutess.com



An Illinois Office of Outdoor Recreation, once established, could host the Task Force and an established state-level and Governor-appointed Outdoor Recreation Commission. Key policy advisors would be sought to serve as the state Outdoor Recreation leads to develop and implement efforts in bolstering Illinois' outdoor recreation economy and to:

1. Promote active living lifestyles and their contribution to resident health and wellness.
2. Ensure conservation and stewardship of public lands and waters.
3. Develop anchoring efforts to expand Illinois' multiple cultural and heritage tourism platforms.
4. Educate and engage children and young people in the outdoors with a 21st century Environmental Education 3.0 platform.
5. Facilitate active living lifestyles and ensure recreational opportunities are available and beneficial to Illinoisans of all ages and abilities.
6. Serve as a point of contact to businesses, stakeholders, and different levels of government that have a part in Illinois' outdoor recreation industry and others who are concerned and care about the sustainability of Illinois' great natural landscapes, our parks, and the very livability of our communities.

The new office could be positioned inside the Illinois Office of Tourism within the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, working in close collaboration with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Governor's Commission on outdoor recreation experiences.

Augmented by staff from multiple state agencies, this new element in state government could work with regional and local interests to activate the relationships between open space and regional livability, talent attraction and retention as well as improving quality of life through expanded opportunities and access to high-quality, outdoor recreation experiences.

Finding Alignment with the National Governor's Association

The National Governor's Association has developed a guiding set of standards and

Let's work with the Illinois State Legislature to establish an Illinois Office of Outdoor Recreation to catalyze economic development and livability for everyone.



Pere Marquette State Park, photo courtesy of riversandrout.com

principles to address the promotion of active and healthy outdoor living and lifestyles. These standards are known as the Outdoor Recreation Industry Confluence Accords.

These Accords embody principles contained in the foundational pillars of conservation and stewardship, education and workforce training, promotion of economic development, public health and wellness. The Accords were developed in 2018 by the Confluence of States, a bipartisan group of eight trailblazing states, to promote and advance best practices for all states to consider.

The original Confluence Accord signatories were outdoor recreation directors from the states of Colorado, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming on behalf of their governors.

There are now 18 states with offices of outdoor recreation or task forces created or under development following recent legislation.

During the summer of 2019, the first summit of the National Governors Association (NGA) Outdoor Recreation Learning Network convened. Governors from Maine, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Vermont and many state outdoor recreation directors joined NGA for the launch of the network at the NGA Summer Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, in July.

This network was created to help governors and their staff to seek new ways to leverage each state's unique natural, cultural, and historical resources to advance economic, workforce, health, and environmental benefits. Through peer-to-peer exchanges, the network spotlights strategies that states can use to advance outdoor recreation.

It is highly recommended that during 2023, the State of Illinois, led by Governor Pritzker, join these 18 States and sign onto the Outdoor Recreation Industry Confluence Accords.

A Focus on Early Results and Activation of a New Outdoor Recreation Economy in Illinois

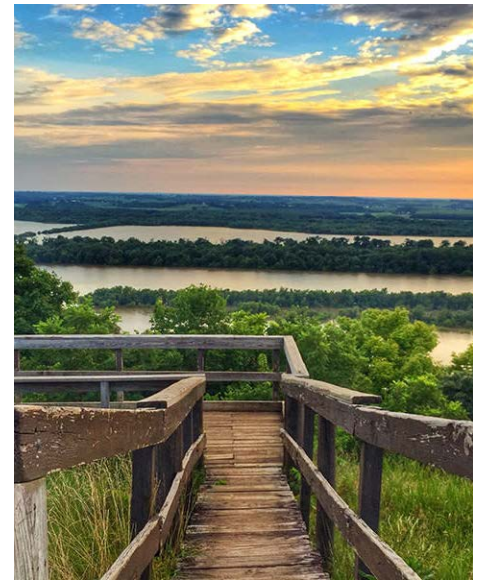
Initially, a small number of Illinois regional outdoor recreation innovation hubs could be recognized to establish forward-leaning regional footholds for our new recreational economic focus and our active living destination building effort. These hubs would be strategically located across the state.

“Pere Marquette offers geologic wonders, access to two great American rivers, abundant flora and fauna, as well as historic and cultural landmarks. We are united with others in the region in our commitment to build a world-class outdoor recreation destination and active living culture.”

Chris Hespen, Site Superintendent,
Pere Marquette State Park



Photos courtesy of riversandrout.com



Special early consideration could be given to anchoring efforts at our big flagship state parks built during the 1930s (Starved Rock, Giant City, and Pere Marquette). These parks with their large public land footprints and iconic historic lodges could become major outdoor adventure getaways. Our great rivers and large reservoirs, and natural lakes, and national forests also present equal opportunities.

To insure that this new Illinois outdoor initiative makes a well-timed and impactful contribution to our state's overall livability, regional working groups could evolve to support local and regional early activation of key natural attractions. Regional working groups focused on areas like transportation and livability, or open space and livability, or affordable housing and livability could encourage a shared narrative and convergence of ideas and innovation around livability, while immediately bolstering cooperation and collective impact borne of shared purpose and activating 21st century model communities for livability. A common theme and metric applied to community building could be catalytic in activating scalable and difference making transformation.

A model for this approach is taking shape in Downstate Illinois where livability is being embraced as the endgame, and economic and community development are approached in a planned for manner, not to simply chase revenue, but to drive livability outcomes. The Great Rivers Confluence Region along the length of the Meeting of the Great Rivers Federal Scenic Byway is one such place that is moving aggressively and strategically with private and public participation toward harnessing the great natural resources and public spaces of their big rivers corridor. Plans are already underway in the Metro North collar communities of the Calhoun, Jersey, and Madison County to convene two initial working groups one focused on 'Open Space and Livability' and the other on 'Transportation and Livability.' Each of these groups will provide valuable insight into outdoor recreation activation opportunities and strategies while also finding their place and contributing to an overarching livability narrative.

Building and Sustaining a Lasting Outdoor Recreation Legacy

Once an initial wave of key activation projects and work products are in place and our new Office of Outdoor Recreation is up and running, our Statewide, regional, and local comprehensive plans must more strategically address the benefit of transformational place making. Building the capacity for planned-for betterments and an outdoor recreation friendly culture of business and governance will be crucial to sustaining our Illinois Outdoor Advantage. The concept of Transformational Place making will be central to this effort.

“Here in the Metro North area above St. Louis, we are building 21st century destinations, not only for leisure travelers, but for relocators. We believe this is acutely important in Downstate Illinois where the state continues to lose population. At the very center of our efforts is livability driven by transformative placemaking.”

Pat McGinnis, Senior Advisor,
AltonWorks